

The recipient is informed that money is needed for ice for the ambulance ship and is requested to make four copies of the letter and send to as many friends and then return the original to the sender with ten cents enclosed. There are one hundred letters in the chain, and the one who receives the letter marked one hundred is to return the letter without making any more copies.

This letter chain fraud business has been exposed at various times, but it seems necessary to call attention to it again, when the sympathy of people is appealed to in behalf of the wounded soldiers. It is easily demonstrated that a chain of one hundred letters, each recipient forwarding four copies to as many friends, would reach more people than there are in the United States. Were each to send the ten cents asked for, the amount to be expended for ice on "the ambulance ship" would be large enough to bring down an iceberg or two from the Arctic ocean. It is evident that this chain letter business is an attempt to obtain money under false pretenses. The originator ought to be hunted down and asked to give an account of himself.

#### THE WORK OF THE PEACE COMMISSIONERS.

It looks as if Spain at the outset had gained a diplomatic advantage over the United States by having secured Paris as the place of meeting of the peace commissioners. Public sympathy in France is undoubtedly with Spain in the present crisis, and it is hardly conceivable that the negotiations can be carried on in the French capital without being influenced to some extent by the prevalent sentiment. Berne or Stockholm would have been more suitable for the purpose than Paris. The selection is made, however, and the necessity of having representatives in close touch with the American people and resolved to carry out the nation's will is more urgent than if the commission were to meet on more neutral ground. From now on there will be a battle of diplomacy, and this country must emerge from that with victories no less signal than those won on the scenes of carnage on sea and land. It is true that the world stands amazed at the sudden development of unity, bravery and efficiency of the citizens of this country in the face of the foe; an equally striking picture of American diplomacy must be presented to the world in order to render the triumph complete.

Senor Sagasta is credited with the remark that the Spaniards have at least one consolation, and that is the knowledge that in Cuba and the Philippines they have bequeathed to the United States almost insurmountable difficulties, which for many years they (the Spaniards) can render still more formidable, should it be their policy to do so. This is significant. It is perfectly true that the difficulties confronting this country after the war are great. The problem is to maintain order and establish a firm government in Cuba, and as to the Philippines it will probably devolve upon the United States to prevent a reign of anarchy, at least for some time; and this must be done with the aid of troops, who, as experience has taught us, are subject to decimation by deadly fevers, unless precaution is taken to preserve their lives. But from the outset Spain should be prevented from "rendering these difficulties still more formidable," by maintaining agents of the government for the sole purpose of stirring up rebellions and fomenting strife. For that

is evidently the "policy" indicated by Sagasta as a future possibility. The peace commissioners need to be wide awake on this point.

Then there will undoubtedly be a strenuous effort made by the Spanish representatives to induce our government to take the responsibilities for all or part of the so-called Cuban debt. This should be firmly declined. The fact is that this debt was not contracted by Cuba but by Spain and was incurred chiefly for the purpose of holding the Cubans in bondage, and no small part of the money obtained was actually stolen by the administrators of Cuban affairs. Why should either Cuba or the United States undertake to pay that money? Not long ago Cuban patriots offered to pay a reasonable part of that debt as a price of their liberty, but the offer was declined. Since then Spaniards have devastated the island and decimated its population, rendering it almost impossible for the people to discharge Spanish financial obligations in addition to restoring their country to prosperity. There would be no justice in saddling any part of that debt on Cuba.

Another matter of importance to this country is that the terms of peace as finally agreed upon should provide for some approximately adequate compensation for the cost of the war. A demand for the cession of the Philippines and the Ladrone islands, in addition to Porto Rico, would be very modest, especially since Spain, as far as can be seen, will never again be in a position to exercise sovereignty over those distant possessions.

It will take time before these and various other matters are finally settled, and their importance is such that our peace commissioners must be the ablest statesmen of the country.

#### A MOST PALPABLE "FAKE."

"The laws of Mexico provide that a Mormon who wishes to take a second wife must present a certificate, signed by his first helpmate, to the effect that she is willing; and he must also have the express consent of the second wife and her parents, says the Philadelphia Inquirer."

The Tribune published the above on Sunday morning without comment, for what purpose we know not. The writer seems to be entirely ignorant of the subject of which he writes.

The laws of Mexico, we are informed, do not recognize any but monogamous marriages and only when contracted within the prescribed forms of the civil law; and while a man and woman may be married by religious ceremony, it is not a legal marriage. As to the matter of "certificates" and "consent" mentioned in the above, in regard to plural marriages, the laws of Mexico require no such thing, as such marriages have no legal recognition. Concubinage is said to be practiced by Mexicans, and the Mexican government is extremely tolerant or willingly ignorant of it, as other governments sometimes are in relation to certain irregularities, but in matters of civil forms and legal requirements in relation to marriages the government is strict and unflinching.

#### THE SUEZ CANAL.

That great engineering and commercial achievement the Suez Canal, was recently brought into renewed prominence through the phillandering back and forth of Admiral Camara's squadron, with his efforts to get through and to take on coal at Port Said. It is unlike any other canal on earth, and enjoys the anomaly of being destitute of locks, reservoirs, gates or

pumping engines, and connecting as it does two great bodies of water of about equal altitude has but little motion and is properly an artificial strait between the two.

Notwithstanding the fact that the canal has been in successful operation for many years and is well known of all men, it is nevertheless a theme of great interest.

It was projected and carried through by the late Ferdinand de Lesseps, who began his plans in 1849. After a great deal of preliminary scheming and contriving, in which the financial question played the most important part, the work of excavation was actually begun in 1860 and pushed steadily along except for one interruption which occurred two years later by reason of a change by death in the viceroyalty of Egypt, the new ruler being for a time intractable because of the enormity of the concessions required. Louis Napoleon bridged over this difficulty with an advance of \$18,000,000, after which the work was pushed to a finish, the great canal being completed in 1869. It is eighty-eight geographical or about 100 statute miles in length, running in a straight line from Suez on the Mediterranean about one-fourth of the distance, the remainder being quite crooked. It ends at Suez, on the northern end of a neck of the gulf of Suez, and the whole distance, with all the traffic through it, is controlled directly from the main office near Suez. The canal is lit up with electricity at night, so that traffic goes on at all hours and all times.

The following interesting data are from an article in a recent number of the New York Tribune:

"The average time of transit for the 3,409 ships which passed through the canal in the year ending June, 1897, was fifteen hours and fifty-three minutes. About two-thirds of these ships were English, the remainder being divided among the other European nations. The canal tolls at this time were 9 francs a ton for laden passenger or cargo vessels and for ships of war; 6 francs 50 centimes a ton for ships in ballast and without passengers; 10 francs for each adult passenger and 5 francs for each child. Mail steamers and war ships are generally able to secure some reductions from these rates. By a convention signed on October 29, 1888, the Suez canal was exempted from blockade. It was agreed that it should be neutral at all times, and that no part of it should be fortified. Vessels of all nations, whether armed or not, and whether belonging to nations at peace or at war, are allowed to pass through it."

It is said that the going in and coming out of the canal by Admiral Camara's fleet cost the snug little fortune of \$50,000. It was money thrown away, of course, but then that was one of the smallest considerations which Spain has been guilty of throwing away never more to be recovered. All her efforts to cope with the American forces were blunders, but in the case just cited she never even gave herself a chance to "have a race for her money." All that goes into the coffers of the Suez canal stays there, so far as the investor is concerned.

#### MANILA IS OURS.

The Stars and Stripes now wave over the citadel of Manila.

On Saturday last, as the dispatches have it, the great and only Dewey demanded of Captain-General Augusti the unconditional capitulation of the city, to which demand no reply was returned. At the expiration of the sixty minutes the guns of the American ships were once more turned, and perhaps for the last time, upon the Spaniards, and their brazen mouths no