The Sun.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 1912.

Entered at the Post Office at New York as Second Class Mail Matter.

Subscriptions by Mail, Postpaid.

DAILY, Per Month	$0 50
DAILY, Per Year	6 00
SUNDAY, Per Year	2 50
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Year	8 50
DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Month	75

Postage to foreign countries added.

All checks, money orders, &c., to be made payable to THE SUN.

Published daily, including Sunday, by the Sun Printing and Publishing Association at 170 Nassau street, in the Borough of Manhattan, New York. President and Treasurer, William C. Reick, 170 Nassau street; Vice-President, Edward P. Mitchell, 170 Nassau street; Secretary, Chester S. Lord, 170 Nassau street.

London office, Effingham House, 1 Arundel street, Strand.

Paris office, 6 Rue de la Michodière, off Rue du Quatre Septembre.

Washington office, Hibbs Building.

Brooklyn office, 106 Livingston street.

Regular readers of THE SUN, daily and Sunday editions, may subscribe for the paper to be sent by mail to them in any part of the country at the rate of 75 cents a month; daily edition, 50 cents a month; additional postage to foreign countries. Addresses changed at option of subscriber. Order may be sent through any newsdealer or to this office.

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The Disheartened Police.

The intelligent if anonymous friend whose letter on the Rosenthal case we print in another column believes that the unfavorable criticism brought out by the attitude of the police in the Rosenthal case has seriously hampered the department in its search for the murderers. We wish we could convince ourselves that sensitiveness to reproof accounted for the inefficiency of the peace officers in this hunt. We cannot, nor does our correspondent succeed in convincing us. Neither are we able to join in his animadversions on the course pursued by the District Attorney in the investigation.

Let our correspondent consider all the facts. A man about to reveal to the prosecuting attorney the corruption and criminal acts of an important if subordinate policeman was shot to death on Broadway at a busy corner. In spite of the presence of a number of policemen his assailants escaped in an automobile. The first step toward the arrest of the criminals was the tracing of that automobile. Our correspondent asks if "immediately after the murder the police did not run down the ownership" of that car. The answer to this is contained in an article printed in THE SUN recently, part of which is subjoined:

"The number, 41313 N. Y., was plainly visible on the gray car for at least twenty minutes before the killing. No policeman was able to see the number correctly. They made curious reports at the West Forty-seventh street station house. The blotter displays several incorrect numbers.

"As usual in crimes of such gravity, the District Attorney and the Police Commissioner were called by telephone and told what had happened. The District Attorney went as fast as an automobile could take him to the West Forty-seventh street station. The Police Commissioner stayed at home. Deputy Commissioner DOUGHERTY, who was at his home in Sheepshead Bay, came to the city speedily, but meanwhile incurable blunders had been made.

"At the West Forty-seventh street station the District Attorney found matters jumbled and mixed up. He happened to hear that a young man who had supplied a number for the gray automobile was in a cell. The District Attorney ordered the young man's release and from him obtained the correct number, 41313 N. Y. This was the beginning of accurate and productive work in the murder investigation."

The entry on the police blotter which shows how apparently confused the police were is in part as follows:

"At about 2 this A. M. HERMAN ROSENTHAL of 104 W. 45th st., 38, white, U. S., gambler, married, while standing in front of the Hotel Metropole 43d st. East of B'way was shot and killed by one unknown man about 24 yrs. white 5 ft. 5 or 6 in. smooth face, dark complexion and hair, dark clothes and soft hat, who after shooting ROSENTHAL jumped into a waiting automobile No. 13131 or 14131 N. Y. a slate colored touring car which contained four other young men smooth faces the touring car proceeded East on 43d st. to Madison ave. and North on Madison ave. to 58th st. where all trace of same was lost by Lieut. FRYE, who had pursued said touring car in taxicab No. 25256 N. Y. owned by JOHN HORAN of 415 East 83d st. assisted by Ptl. LYNCH and MADIGAN of the 26th precinct and Ptl. FILE of the 32d Precinct."

Thus the District Attorney found a man who was expected to implicate policemen in criminal practices murdered, the police at sea, and, as subsequently developed, officially recording an incorrect number for the escaping murderers' motor car while confining in a cell the man who had the correct number. We shall not speculate as to what might have happened had the District Attorney not been on hand to cause the release of the incarcerated young man who had this invaluable information, but we congratulate him on the presence of Mr. WHITMAN in New York on the morning of July 16, 1912.

The District Attorney, naturally and logically, doubted the efficiency of the police in this particular case from that moment, and his judgment was sustained by an unerring popular approval of his course. We shall not recite the incidents which subsequently supported his lack of confidence in their ability to perform the services expected of them in the ensuing investigation. It is worth while, however, to call attention to the fact that the description of one SAMUEL SCHEPPS, which was distributed broadcast by the police, was inaccurate and misleading.

There must be some reason other than childish sulking under rebuke to account for the incapacity to serve the public interest so glaringly displayed by the police in the Rosenthal case. For honest members of the force we share the sympathy that all must feel. But as we sympathize we recall that shocking indecency of a false marriage performed some years ago for two innocent immigrants by a policeman in a police station before an amused and interested platoon. We remember the sorrow and distraction of that man and woman when, after living together as man and wife, they learned they had been tricked. We retain a sharp memory of the inquiry that followed, in which every policeman present in that station swore nobly that he knew nothing of the revolting incident. As this recurs to our mind we are moved to ask, What ails the honest men in the police force?

Woman Suffrage.

The political activity in the present campaign of so many clever, energetic and accomplished women, the posts of official responsibility and cooperation given to so many women, are additional evidence of the increasing force of women in politics and of the value set upon their political services by the trousered politicians. One doesn't have to be actually decrepit to remember when there was something almost ludicrous or eccentric about a woman in politics. At most her oratorical skill was regarded. We see them now in places requiring sound judgment, exquisite skill, tact—which nobody will deny them—in short, having an opportunity to show in practical political work those qualities that have been admired so much in their administration of charities and in their religious and educational occupations and avocations.

Of course there is something of ornament, of the figurehead, in much of the "work" assigned to many of them in the canvass. Of course many of the politicians of the inferior sex still have their tongues in their cheeks when they laud their woman coadjutors. And if with reverence it may be said, there may be even in some of the petticoated sovereigns that innocent delight in parade and glory, that worship of buttons, that fills the dethroned lords of creation with infinite ecstasy every four years. With those matters of leather and prunella we needn't meddle; nor concern ourselves about "the growing recognition," as the napless phrase goes, of the available merit of woman for campaign work. How about woman suffrage? Is that going to be helped by these political demonstrations and campaign responsibilities of the women?

Let us remember how the case stands. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats have heard of woman suffrage so far as may be judged from their national platforms of 1912. Only the Progressives beam on it. The Colonel loves it with a brand new and ferocious ardor, especially in those Western States where it exists. Wherever "Votes for Women" means "Votes for THEODORE," be sure that THEODORE will pant for woman suffrage as the hart for the water brooks or the Bull Moose for the White House. Will it help or hurt the "cause" that it is practically associated with a single party and that the head and root of that party is an indefatigable artist at "improvising lifelong convictions"? No doubt his thunderings against "race suicide" are heralds of a distant purpose to preach suffrage for children in arms.

We hear a good many folks of sound and disposing mind and blessed with even judgment say that woman suffrage is coming, that it is near, that the enlarged share of women in the politics of the day is a sign and precursor of triumph; that even the Bullmoosian movement will work for its good, that the madness of the Militants is forgotten; that, in fact, the male politicians need the women's votes. The question whether the women want to vote is too ancient to ask or must be regarded as settled by the enthusiasm of those that do.

Are these things so? We only repeat what we hear. We speak agnostically, neither believing nor disbelieving; except that we disbelieve utterly in women's incapacity at least to equal the lofty intellectual and moral stature of the present masters of our destinies.

The Minister to Greece.

The selection of the Hon. JACOB GOULD SCHURMAN to represent the United States at Athens will command general approval.

In the ordinary course of international affairs Athens is an interesting but not a considerable diplomatic post. Despite the rapidly increasing Greek emigration to America, commerce between the United States and the Ægean remains relatively insignificant and the occasion for diplomatic action infrequent. But as each day's foreign despatches now reveal, the near as well as the far East is facing great changes, and great international readjustments seem inevitable there.

In such a crisis in the Balkans and the Ægean, with the attention of Europe once more fixed upon the progress of events in this corner of the globe, the United States is fortunate to have as its representative in Athens a Minister of the character and distinction of the president of Cornell University.

Doing Worse Than Nothing at Washington.

Has something of the dog day madness which the climate of Washington in August unquestionably induces entered into the spirit of the statesmen who divide their useful labors between the two houses of Congress and the baseball park? This is perhaps the most charitable view that can be taken of two legislative bodies which compress into small compass of time acts that destroy the reputation of the country for international good faith, reduce the programme of naval defence and leave the army of the United States without pay.

The session of Congress which precedes a Presidential election is notoriously a time for smart political manœuvring rather than actual or even honest legislative performance. But if the country is resigned to a session which does nothing and is interminably long about it, will it be equally patient with a Congress which does wrong daily and adds defiance of popular wishes to the initial affront which its own stupidity delivered?

After all, the Senators who are tearing up treaties and proclaiming further and preposterous extensions of Monroe Doctrines, the Representatives who are busily engaged in contributing their best effort to reduce the American naval programme to the measure of that of Greece or Spain, must have at least a passing interest in the approaching election. Many of the Representatives must certainly hope for a renomination, however justly doubtful they may be of obtaining a reelection.

All the Democratic indignation at Presidential vetoes of tariff measures, all the pious horror of Republican Senators at the "treason" of fellow partisans may seem interesting and even necessary stage business at Washington, but the fact is that for the electorate in general the Panama Canal disgrace and the naval scuttle are rapidly assuming the size of real as contrasted with imaginary campaign issues.

The preservation of the national honor by the observance of treaty agreements, the continuance of national safety by the annual provision of means of national defence, finally the protection of the dignity of the army and the comfort of the private soldiers by the prompt payment of the enlisted man, these things the country has a right to expect of Congress even in a Presidential year. Failure to perform their simple duties invites and should receive punishment, not by partisan division, for on all these three issues at least we believe the great parties are in perfect harmony, but by a vast majority of the voters.

The "Practical Man" Again.

While it supplied certain new details of relatively minor importance the testimony of ex-Governor B. B. ODELL, Jr., concerning the Harriman episode in the 1904 campaign is interesting and useful, as it further corroborates evidence already known and believed.

The letter of the late E. H. HARRIMAN to the late SYDNEY WEBSTER set forth in detail the story of his visit to the White House at the invitation of THEODORE ROOSEVELT, then President of the United States, to discuss the State campaign in New York. Mr. HARRIMAN'S subsequent activity, the $240,000 he raised and turned over to the Republican National Committee, if ex-Governor ODELL'S memory is correct, are facts so well established as to need little corroboration.

But ex-Governor ODELL'S testimony serves the valuable purpose of recording an interesting and characteristic episode in the career of a man who his most ardent supporters now proclaim has oddly changed in spirit and purpose since he described both Mr. HARRIMAN and himself as "practical men," in a refreshingly frank communication.

One detail of ex-Governor ODELL'S testimony is worth noting. It is the testimony of a living man. Not until WEBSTER and HARRIMAN were both dead did Colonel ROOSEVELT become vocal on this subject, and then through the agency of the Hon. GEORGE R. SHELDON. As ex-Governor ODELL'S evidence confirms all other public records of this little incident save Mr. SHELDON'S contribution, it is probable that the public jury will accept Mr. ODELL'S own characterization of conflicting testimony.

The facts are that THEODORE ROOSEVELT thought New York State was doubtful and requested the late E. H. HARRIMAN to raise a quarter of a million to avert the peril; whether the National or State Committee received the money, what ancillary bargain Colonel ROOSEVELT made over the Senatorial election, are minor although not uninteresting details.

The chief value of Mr. ODELL'S testimony is not that it confirms but that it recalls a fact.

The election of FRANK FUNK as Governor of Illinois would set the State back. It does not change the fact to call him a Progressive. —*Chicago Tribune.*

Is Colonel ROOSEVELT the only fact (or fiction) that is changed by calling him a Progressive?

It is painful to hear Colonel BRYAN bellowing at Colonel ROOSEVELT. Augurs ought to respect the dignity and traditions of their trade.

Having now had three Sultans in four years Morocco can claim the distinction of being the home of the "recall."

In France, at least, the impression must be that in JULES MASSENET she has lost her most distinguished composer of music. He was the flower of her academic teaching, the holder of the grand prize of Rome, a professor at the Conservatoire, the composer of the modern operas most approved by the Parisian public. He met the requirements of the national taste, for his operas have kept their place in the repertory of the Grand Opéra and the Opéra Comique. Abroad they have been received with respect and enjoyment, if not with enthusiasm. In New York, at any rate, it is not unfair to attribute what interest his operas have aroused to the personality of the singer in the principal part rather than to the music, as in the case of "Manon," of "Thais," of "Le Jongleur de Notre Dame." The popularity that has transposed GOUNOD'S "Faust" or even THOMAS'S "Mignon" to the hand organ he certainly missed.

His undoubted talent, within its limitations, will be esteemed by musicians, for he is uniformly graceful, harmonious and sentimental. His operas are likely to keep their hold on the French stage, much as those of his predecessor in home reputation of half a century ago, AUBER, did. They mark an interesting phase in French music, one that touches the past, however, rather than the future.

The Jack Rose Cocktail.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* While you are always 97 per cent. right you are wrong on the Jack rose cocktail. This is made from one lime and Jersey applejack, with cracked ice; hence its color, from which it takes its name.

ROCHESTER, August 14. JOSEPH SHERMAN.

The Bright Side of Life.

Noah chuckled.

"This is the only way to avoid hay fever," he cried.

He relished to see the polecats wiped off the earth.

THE ROSENTHAL CASE.

A Defence of the Police Based on Certain Misunderstandings.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I do not wish to take up the cudgels for the police force of New York, to excuse its shortcomings or condone its graft, but I hold that articles like that of THE SUN'S this morning "Where Were the Police?" take unfair advantage of the situation and do a substantial injustice.

While dealing out heavy condemnation of the police results in the Rosenthal case is it not well to recall the exact situation? Immediately after the murder did not the police run down the ownership of the "murder car" and arrest Libby and Shapiro? After that a peculiar condition appeared.

The District Attorney at once evinced his extreme distrust of the police. It was made known that no one outside his office had any power to deal with the criminals still at large. Every inducement was held out to them to trust Mr. Whitman for mercy and every warning given them to beware of having anything to do with the police. It was even given out that there was a sort of premium on information that would incriminate policemen. I will not say how just and salutary all this may have been; but, backing it up, came the announcement that Detective Burns and some other private agents were and had been at work tracking down Rosenthal evidence for Mr. Whitman and tracing police graft for him in general.

At first the Rosenthal criminals, having stocked themselves with alibis, surrendered leisurely at Police Headquarters; later their counsel treated direct with the District Attorney, as high contracting parties, and now we find the District Attorney warning the Little Rock captors of Scheppa to hand the prisoner over only to his emissary.

My point is that under such circumstances it is palpably absurd to blame the police in this case for "helplessness." The District Attorney's tactics would render Fouché "helpless" if the astute Frenchman was Chief of New York police. It would even seem that the District Attorney had that aim. It all may be part of a well laid plan to get at the very root of the matter of gambling and sexual vice in New York and their connection with corruption in the police ranks. So far one may applaud it, but do not let us misunderstand it.

I say this because a police force has other duties in a great city besides hunting the keepers of gaming places and hounding the unfortunate women and unspeakable men who live off sexual vice. These social sins affect a relatively small percentage of our great population. Gamblers and prostitutes are not one in 500 of our population. Offences against public order and the defence of property are the large things that the police must look after, but in doing these they must now operate under this induced distrust at a tremendous disadvantage.

In other words, in the course of a criminal inquiry one branch, the legal, of our anti-crime machinery has found it advisable, let us say, to paralyze the other, the normally operative branch. How it will work out heaven only knows. The District Attorney cannot think of permanently administering the police faculty in New York to the exclusion of the police force itself, but it is in that direction he seems headed.

We may of course envisage a situation, to be brought about politically in the near future, which would put the police force under outside control; but even that, one can see, would seek to develop police efficiency and not the present induced paralysis.

Let me, then, put my thought plainly: the District Attorney has overdone the discrediting of the police. Mr. Waldo may be a negligible factor in police expertise, but his good faith is to my mind unimpeachable. Mr. Dougherty certainly acted with vigor and effect until the Whitmanian webs encircled his arms and legs. So, doubtless, of many others.

In this I, for one, see a certain loss, even in the work on the Rosenthal murder. Results more effective from the standpoint of justice than the wholesale granting of immunity to the Roses, Webbers, Vallons, Scheppses, &c., might, I believe, have been reached.

The underworld learns its lessons quickly. It took instant advantage of Mayor Gaynor's calling a halt on the use of the police club; it is doing the same with the new idea of laughing at the police.

As I said at the start I am not defending the police, but urging a plea in mitigation of the criticism hurled from glittering pen points at them. If they are as bad as Mr. Scheppa suggests, namely, 9,000 bad out of a total of 10,000, why, there is little to be said. One may suspect the authority, however. If it is the other way about and there should be 9,000 good and 1,000 bad or doubtful, then Mr. Whitman is far from right in "pounding" the force at every opportunity.

This will not be written in vain if it shall lead in any degree to a normal joining of effort for the good of society between the legal and operative forces, the District Attorney and the police. Why not?

CITIZEN OF '76.

NEW YORK, August 13.

Energetic Action to Correct the Police Needed.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The diary of the murder case in this morning's SUN is interesting and gives needed information of police activities—or inactivities.

You should continue the diary, giving the progress made day by day.

Surely we have gone far enough to prove the incompetence of the Mayor and his appointee, the Police Commissioner. Should not some energetic action be arranged for at the coming citizens' meeting?

As those charged with the welfare of the city and the good conduct of its affairs seem entirely neglectful we should have somebody at work to redeem its good name.

It is to be hoped that the revel of crime which seems to have been fostered by the police authorities will be forced to cease, but surely some exemplary punishment is due for outraged law and decency.

NEW YORK, August 13. E. T. W.

Recent Searchers of the Scriptures.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Permit me to expose the pretence to piety of these gentlemen who have been quoting so glibly from the Scriptures.

They may prate of Armageddon and pen verse after verse of the Holy Writ, but they are convicted by their own writings.

They have not so much as looked between the covers of their Bibles or even blown the accumulated dust of years therefrom. Else why do these learned gentry give the title of the last book of the New Testament in the plural?

I can picture them as little Willie returns from Sunday school asking him where the book of Hezekiah is and giving each other a knowing wink. H. D. MURPHY.

JERSEY CITY, August 14.

Can I Sell You Some Insurance To-day?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Twenty years ago on September 12 I gave up smoking two cigars a day at a cost of 10 cents for both and took out a twenty year life insurance policy at a cost of $28.50 a year, rather less than my two cigars cost, so I could still have an occasional smoke.

I now find that the cash value of this policy is $711.32, which points a moral and adorns this tale, and I can prove it. Here is cold, clammy cash enough to pay the first instalment on a house or to use for many another purpose when the shadows fall to the eastward, as they are now doing. There are 200,000 young men in this city who can duplicate this experience. Needn't give up the cigars, but in some way or another they can save eight cents a day every day in the year.

NEW YORK, August 14. R. A. DEM.

The Fattening Antifat.

Hamlet was wishing that this too, too solid flesh would melt, thaw and resolve itself into a dew.

"But corporations are fatter after dissolution," we reminded him.

Immediately he saw the hopelessness of the case.

THE PORT OF NEW YORK.

Consideration of Its Needs an Important Task for the Community.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* It is a satisfaction to an old SUN reader to see that THE SUN can always find some space, no matter how red and green the murder stories may be, nor how full of alleged heart beats the scandals of the day may appear, to say a word or two for some of the questions that bear directly on the actual welfare of the city.

This is inspired by your comments on the situation in the port. Nobody seems to care whether or not New York is great because of its natural harbor or whether its natural harbor is great because of New York city; and when a publication can find the time to say an intelligent word or two concerning things of this nature it surely ought to be commended.

I see that there is a State commission that has made a preliminary report to Governor Dix, calling attention to the critical situation lying in the lack of modern equipment to handle express steamships. It is the first time that I have heard of this State commission, and whether it is a real commission or whether it is just a fancy political arrangement or not need not worry any one, because it certainly has done something in starting what should be of big interest to every New Yorker.

No person need have a profound knowledge of conditions of the docking facilities of the city to appreciate the fact that New York is going to get a punch that will hurt its vanity as much as anything that has happened to it in a long time if some of those foreigners who are putting their money into thousand foot boats suddenly decide that they will take a chance and see if they cannot create a satisfactory berthing station somewhere else than at big, overfed, self-satisfied, sensation hungry Manhattan Island. F. J. C.

NEW YORK, August 14.

SOCIALIST ALIENS.

What Judge Hanford Asserted in the Oleson Case.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Judge Hanford's decision in the Oleson case, cancelling the naturalization of a socialist, of which Mr. Stimson speaks in his letter to THE SUN, may be found in 196 *Federal Reporter*, page 562. It has been grossly misrepresented, and the Judge was undoubtedly correct on the facts before him.

He did not attempt to specify what a citizen of the United States should or should not believe, on any subject, as has been said of him; but that one seeking to become such a citizen must in good faith comply with the statute, as was his duty, since the statute says:

That no person who disbelieves in, or who is opposed to organized government, or who is a member of or affiliated with any organization entertaining and teaching such disbelief in * * * shall be naturalized or be made a citizen of the United States.

Oleson admitted under oath that he did not believe in our Constitution, and in substance that his oath to "support and defend" it, taken in open court, was a false one. He also frankly admitted that he did not believe in organized government and that his brand of socialism sought to abolish it. What was the Judge to do?

T. J. JOHNSTON.

NEW YORK, August 14.

KING ARCTURUS.

A Gigantic Sun Whose Fire Is Now to Be Seen in the Western Sky.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* King Sirius is the brightest sun of night visible during the winter months; King Arcturus is the brightest sun of night visible in these latitudes during the summer evenings. King Arcturus, even at his best, is hardly comparable with King Sirius; but nevertheless the former is a gigantic sun, and one does not study his furious and flaring fire without admitting that King Arcturus is, taken in all, a greater sky furnace than is either Queen Vega or King Antares.

King Arcturus is situated firmamentally at the bottom of the kite shaped constellation of Bootes, and is rather easily "discovered," for the curving handle of the well known Dipper points somewhat accurately in his direction. This great sky king is now enthroned more and more in the western firmament, and will descend more and more to the westward as summer and fall pass away. This sidereal revolution of King Arcturus occurs year after year with sidereal accuracy; a revolution in common with all the other suns of night around the pivotal point of Polaris, the north star. Arcturus of Bootes may be called "harbinger of spring" and "farewell of summer," since he rises before the first of March and seems to wane about the close of August. Although he is easily the brightest gem of his constellation, Bootes contains other brilliants, such as Nekker and Izar.

It has been estimated that King Arcturus is distant from our tiny planet some 200,000,000,000,000 miles, and that he is approaching us at a velocity approximating sixty to 250 miles every second. This vast velocity of Arcturus is one of his most noticeable characteristics, for our own smaller sun is travelling through space at a velocity approximating only twelve to twenty miles a second. At a velocity of say 200 miles, this grand sidereal king would travel toward us in a year about 6,000,000,000 miles or approximately the distance across the dimensions of our solar system.

CHARLES NEVERS HOLMES.

BOSTON, August 12.

Phœnix Globe Encirclers.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* July 12 THE SUN contained a despatch from Los Angeles asserting that "records for encircling the globe have been smashed by E. J. Scott and J. A. Allan of Phœnix, Ariz., who set out June 3 from Los Angeles and made a circuit of the globe in thirty-nine days."

Investigation by the postmaster in Phœnix and by the editor of the *Arizona Republican* of Phœnix and by correspondents of Los Angeles papers in Phœnix establishes that Messrs. "Scott" and "Allan" were and are unknown in that place. It occasions doubt in the minds of a number in Phœnix and elsewhere whether the supposed tourists made the trip in thirty-nine days. Not only are the tourists reported as "unknown" after a long and patient search, but the searchers do not find that bankers in Phœnix had even heard of the travellers prior to the despatch, much less had financed the trip, as was reported.

I have a record for belting the world westward in forty-six days, and believe that the supposed time of Messrs. "Scott" and "Allan" is not proved.

DANIEL D. BIDWELL.

EAST HARTFORD, Conn., August 14.

The Peanut Not a Nut.

The Department of Agriculture has decided that the peanut is not a nut.—*News item.*

O luscious little peanut brown,
Far from the sunny South,
The most delicious morsel man
E'er placed within his mouth,
Companion of the circus days,
We feel most deeply cut,
For men of science now declare
That you are not a nut.

For years we've cracked your brittle shell
And munched your luscious meat,
Believing in our souls you were
The proper thing to eat.
For indigestion and all ills
You were commended, but
How can you beneficial be
Since you are not a nut?

O peanut, roasted on the walk
And sold to countless men,
We grieve! You never can be quite
The same to us again.
Life somehow seems a dreary thing,
Our door to joy is shut,
We're dazed; we cannot crack a smile
Since you are not a nut.

Some time I hope to wake at morn
Out from a troubled sleep
And find the sun is shining bright
And find no clouds to weep.
I hope to see on walls of white
In lasting letters cut:
"Awake! Awake! Believe them not,
The peanut is a nut!"

JOS COGN.

IN MARCO POLO'S TIME.

The Great Venetian Traveller Knew of Watertight Compartments.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The following is from "Marco Polo's Travels," latter part of the thirteenth century. The ships referred to are East Indian vessels:

"Some ships of the larger class have, besides the cabins to the number of thirteen, bulkheads or divisions in the hold, formed of thick planks let into each other. The object of these is to guard against accidents which may occasion the vessel to spring a leak, such as striking on a rock or receiving a stroke from a whale, a circumstance that not infrequently occurs; for, when sailing at night, the motion through the waves causes a white foam that attracts the notice of the hungry animal. In expectation of meeting with food it rushes violently to the spot, strikes the ship and often forces in some part of the bottom. Water, running in at the place where the injury has been sustained, makes its way to the well, which is always kept clear. The crew, upon discovering the situation of the leak, immediately remove the goods from the division affected by the water, which, in consequence of the boards being so well fitted, cannot pass from one division to another. They then repair the damage and return the goods to that place in the hold from whence they had been taken. The ships are all double planked; that is, they have a course of sheathing boards laid over the planking in every part."

Watertight compartments seem to have been known for a long time.

NEW YORK, August 12. G. DAVIS.

GHOSTS.

Why Do They Avoid Him Who Waits to Welcome Them?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have never met a ghost, but just now I am admirably situated to welcome one. The house I am staying in is very old, and naturally very comfortable. My bedroom has been haunted for years. There is a young lady who has been seen to walk about the room at 12 P. M. precisely, reading a love letter, but she has never troubled me. There isn't, I am told, the slightest doubt that an ill advised wretch shot himself by that window yonder, but he has never taken the trouble to return to the scene of the tragedy while I have been here. This unpardonable discourtesy makes me think that even among ghosts there is only a survival of the fittest, and I am afraid that wherever I go I shall have to pass my life not only fearless of ghosts but never seeing them. Psychical societies say ghosts must exist, but I have never seen the necessity.

When a person tells you "I saw it with my own eyes" the best reply is that our own eyes are just what we mustn't believe. Some philosopher has pointed out that we ought to see everything double except the few objects in the centre of vision, which satisfactorily explains the fact that there is a good deal of truth in wine. A genius sees abnormally, that is veraciously. Have you ever seen two uncouth, horrible monsters all of a sudden on the ceiling? If you haven't your eyes are not in good working order. Go to any oculist and he will tell you about Purkinje's images. They are worse than ghosts, for they are the real "shadows of the network of blood vessels of the retina microscopically magnified." Everybody ought to see them, when certain conditions are present and the light is right. Unfortunately ghosts won't appear in the light, and they are not by any means geniuses or the reflections of geniuses, although their handwriting is despicable.

So I'm afraid I shall have to give up my ambition for spooks. The other night I fancied Father Christmas was coming down the chimney before his time, but it was fiction, as usual. The chimney swallows were responsible. Once again I woke to a more thrilling sound, and thought at last I was listening to the music of the future, but, alas! it was only a screech owl in a neighboring thicket.

Says the farrier in "Silas Marner": "If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and in lone places. Let 'em come where there's company and candles." To which the disgusted answer came, "As if ghos'es 'u'd want to be believed in by anybody so ign'rant."

I suppose that's the reason why ghos'es won't oblige me. L. T. H.

MARSHALL, Va., August 13.

DOBBLER'S ONLY RIVAL.

Again the Flatbush Dulcimer Emits a Melodious Burst.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have "fallen down" rather badly on my promise to write you often. You see I've moved from New Rochelle to Flatbush, and consequently my chief sources of inspiration have undergone real and psychological changes.

Compared with New Rochelle, the ideal, Flatbush is as a loaf not yet risen. This I say partly because it is true, partly to aid the Mayor of New Rochelle in his town advertising campaign. Great little city, that Forty-five Minutes from Broadway.

You will be interested to learn that I am engaged in a unique enterprise—training a team of picked Flatbush mosquitoes to battle with New Jersey's best for the national pest championship. And now that we're chatting along so pleasantly, what has become of Harold Dobbler? His "Ode to a Brick" still haunts me. Perhaps he'll come back if I invade his field as follows.

TO A RIVET.

I saw them fling you through the air
And catch you in a bucket,
And ah, methought, since you were hot,
What a singular piece of luck it
Was that you didn't miss the mark
And strike and burn their faces,
Which you would have hit if they'd let you go,
As well as other places.
O rivet, just because you're small,
Are you insignificant?
No, no, we ought not call you so,
And as for me, I sha'n't.
You see a hole and in you go,
Then have your head flat beaten,
And there you stay for many a day,
Until you're all rust eaten,
Doing your part in the great work
Of holding buildings firm.
Ah, if we mortals could from you
Th' evident lesson learn!

FLATBUSH, August 14. DON ACORE.

The Price of Coal.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have just read in THE SUN that coal is going up in price. Can you or your readers inform me whether this is due to the price of corn (to feed the coal) or to the increased production of gold? Probably some of the economists who engaged in the recent discussion of the increased cost of living could throw some light on it.

INNOCENT PUBLIC.

NEW YORK, August 14.

The King of the Coaching Line.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Hugh Jennings has signed a contract to manage the Detroit team for two years more and the fans of the American League are happy. Jennings is the most popular manager and the greatest character in baseball. He brought a second division club to the top of the heap and won three pennants with it. Every time the Detroit team visits New York the fans turn out in droves. Not all of them go to see the team play ball, even though they have such a star as the mighty Ty Cobb in the ranks. A large number of them go to see Jennings cut humorous capers on the coaching lines.

His methods on the lines are original and have never been successfully imitated by coachers of other teams. Many have tried but all have failed. Jennings stands in the good graces of fans all over the circuit and his dismissal from the league would have been a body blow to those who enjoy his coaching. And when it comes down to a question of real baseball it was Jennings who installed winning ball into the team. N. A. F.

NEW YORK, August 14.

To a Frolic Bostonian.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I would recommend to "J. P. R." a perusal of J. M. Barrie's "Better Dead." Such "frolics," as he terms them, were never intended for antediluvians of 101, although it certainly was "real cute" of him to discover that the conditions do not apply to any age over 99.

But what would he? Is not that "age limit" enough for all practical purposes?

LOWELL, Mass., August 14. JAY BEE R.

Commendable Example.

Knicker—Governor Wilson wants only small money contributions.

Bocker—Wish my wife was a Democrat.

PENSION DELAY PUTS THOUSANDS IN WANT

Pitiful Scenes at New York Agency as Dependents Tell Their Sorrows.

BLAME LIES IN CONGRESS

Nearly 50,000 Aged Persons in This City Rely Upon Nation's Bounty.

Thousands of army and navy veterans of the civil and Spanish wars and widows of veterans in this city have been reduced to distress through the failure of Congress to make an appropriation for pensions and the consequent inability of the local agency to disburse the funds usually at its disposal on the fourth day of each quarterly month.

One has only to wait in the anteroom of the pension agency at 65 Bleecker street a few minutes to get an idea of how much this pension money means to those dependent upon it. Many who draw pensions live on the edge of poverty and regulate their expenditures so as to have just enough to tide over the few days that usually elapse between the time they send their vouchers and the receipt of the pension. More than a week has now passed since payments were due and there is no relief through action by Congress.

The total number of pensioners in this city on July 31 was 48,883. Of this number approximately 29,000 are veterans and 19,000 are widows of veterans. Of the veterans of the army there are about 21,000 and of the navy about 8,000.

There is paid out quarterly by the agency in this city about $2,000,000. All of this money is due on the fourth day of the quarterly month.

On August 5 Acting Pension Agent L. S. Fountain received from Washington by wire $1,000,000 with instructions to distribute it as far as it would go among the army veterans. From that amount he now has a balance of $87. None of the navy veterans has been paid.

Meanwhile there have been hundreds of letters and telephone calls as to why the pensions have not been paid. The correspondence has become so voluminous that two clerks have been assigned to open the letters and mail them back with a brief explanation that payment is delayed because Congress has failed to make an appropriation. In many of these letters the writers have made appeals so moving that Mr. Fountain in his report to Commissioner Davenport has asserted that "the withholding of their pension money is criminal."

One woman writes that she is almost distracted. She says that illness has made it impossible for her to work and that her pension money alone stands between her and destitution. Another says that her tradesmen, who usually give her credit toward the end of the quarter because they expect the pension money will enable her to pay, have told her that they cannot let her have more supplies. Others appeal in behalf of children or other dependents. A perusal of the letters affords an unpleasant picture of the condition that has arisen.

But it is in the personal visits of pensioners to the agency that Mr. Fountain and those who work there find their gravest problem. There they come face to face with those who are suffering. In the last few days they have been coming by the hundreds, the blind, the maimed and those whom poverty has broken in body and spirit. Some unable to pay car fare have walked great distances and are overcome when told that there is no money. In many instances Mr. Fountain has given them enough to get back home. In a few cases he has called messengers to see that an old man and woman got back safely.

Over the window at which these persons make their complaints is a sign reading, "Pension Payments Are Delayed for Want of Funds, Congress Having Failed to Make the Required Appropriations." This suffices for some, but the majority do not understand and the circumstances have to be explained. One gray haired woman stopped before the window yesterday. She had just been told that she would have to wait, that there was no money. She said she didn't know what she would do. The pension was all she had. She lived alone and had walked much further than she should. She was crying when she said that she had never asked for charity but felt that she would have to.

Not less affecting were the appeals of old soldiers who have slipped away from what they were and whose lives are now spent in cheap lodging houses along the Bowery. They complain that they are being turned out into the street because their room rent is not forthcoming.

Piled in the office are the thousands of vouchers that have come in. Clerks are busy getting ready for the quick distribution of the money as soon as it arrives. There will be no delay so far as the local agency is concerned.

At the root of the matter is the inability of the Senate and the House to agree as to what should be done with the pension agencies in cities. As in former years the House opposes the continuance of the agencies and wants a central distributing agency at Washington. The Senate refuses to agree.

PENSION DISPUTE ENDED

And Appropriation Bill, Long Held Up, Will Now Pass.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 14.—The House and Senate have reached an agreement on the question of the abolition of the seventeen pension agencies. This will result in the passage of the pension appropriation bill that has been in dispute for more than two months.

Senator McCumber, chairman of the Committee on Pensions, presented to-day an amendment abolishing the pension agencies on January 31, 1913, after which date pensioners will be paid through the disbursing clerk of the pension office here. This will effect a considerable saving and also will hit a large number of Republican officeholders.

TYPHOID CASES DECREASING.

Brooklyn and Queens Epidemic Centre.

Yesterday's reports on the typhoid situation were encouraging, according to Dr. Walter Bensel, sanitary superintendent of the Department of Health.

"The situation is normal with the exception of the epidemics in Brooklyn and Queens," he said. "To-day's returns show a decided decrease, so much so that the department considers the epidemic virtually over and is devoting its attention now to searching out the causes.

The day's returns showed five cases for Manhattan, ninety since August 1, as against 141 the year previous; one for The Bronx, fifteen in all; seven for Brooklyn, 188 in all; nine for Queens, eighty-seven in all; none for Richmond, one in all.

For the entire city twenty-two cases were reported, making 326 since August 1, which is twenty-seven more than the record of 299 last year.