

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS.

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PENSIONS AND SOCIALISM.



VARIOUS trains of argument have been used to justify the indiscriminate and lavish distribution of pensions in which the national government has lately been indulging. Every intelligent man who is not blinded by partisanship apprehends the true cause—a determination to be rid of the Treasury surplus in any way productive of political results, and therefore under the guise of patriotic gratitude to secure the vote of the soldiers in the late war with it. But so adroit is the reasoning of those who seek political benefit therefrom that they not only deceive others but even themselves by sophistries which cannot too often be exposed. The present, the immediate future, and the times of posterity may be influenced by them and a bias given to other matters with even more disastrous results.

We are told that the state owes a debt to those who have endangered their lives in its service, and that the payment of pensions is an obligation like that incurred by contract.¹ Every one admits the obligation, but the ground of it is a sense of gratitude which establishes no right for those who have served and suffered. Viewed from any standpoint there is no department of the public service more glorious than that of the coast guard or life-saving patrol. Every station along the shore bids defiance to the elements. Restless and treacherous ocean, stormy winds, and blackest night combine against the seafarer. But the surf-boatmen sometimes baffle them all and bring safe to land tens upon tens and hundreds upon hundreds of human beings with precious lives. The personal risk of every member of every crew is extreme; exposure produces disease

and brings on premature old age. The whole character of the work demands the utmost devotion, and not only subjects the men to intellectual and physical strain but jeopardizes their lives. And yet their pay is a pittance, the pay of the day laborer; neither individually nor corporately do they demand a money reward from the rescued and government grants only temporary pensions. He who saves lives has simply done his duty, and in private life would be regarded as a monster if he demanded all or any of the wealth of those whose lives had been spared through his agency.

On the other hand gratitude is expected from the rescued, and if he does not show it men mark him down as less than human. And gratitude is shown by some return, but not one commensurate with ability, for that would be compensation and destroy gratitude, which rests on a sense of obligation and honor. Hence even if the state were not the sovereign which it is, daily bestowing on the man benefits which he can only acknowledge but never requite, still the ground of its obligation to surviving soldiers and the families of those who died would be gratitude, and gratitude measured by the personal good will of its citizens.

And speaking of the sovereignty of the State we come to the legal aspect of this question of debt. The field is too large for extended discussion. It is believed that there is absolutely no precedent for the contention seriously made by so many advocates of the present pension system, that the claim of the soldier for support is a legal claim like any other presented for services rendered. The powers of the judiciary under which the individual seeks redress from the State are all granted by one of the parties concerned, to wit, the political

¹ For a veteran soldier's views on the subject of pensions, see a communication from George L. Kilmer in *THE CENTURY* for August, 1889.—EDITOR.

sovereign, and limited to such pleas as deal with unfulfilled obligations laid upon the political corporation by its members. Local governments are responsible for the condition of roads and the proper lighting of streets, for sanitary conditions in certain instances, and can be sued for failure to perform their duty, the damages to be commensurate with the loss. But such governments were created for that purpose and lay taxes expressly to fulfil it. Was it ever conceived, however, that a householder should have the right to demand damages for the silver stolen by a burglar, the theft being possible by reason of inefficient police supervision? Could his family, if he were murdered in defense of his property, demand a pension of the state for their support? And the theory becomes the more absurd when it is urged that the soldiers who were once in arms saved the Union, that in so doing they preserved for us all that we have and all that we enjoy, and that therefore we are niggards when we refuse to share and share alike on the ground of a technicality in the laws which justice demands should be remedied by statute. The truth is that man as a social and political being incapable of either physical or spiritual welfare without the state has therefore a double character. On one hand his personality, his manhood, his right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness must be his first concern. On the other hand all these come to him only in organized society; and in the necessary sacrifices, even to the risk of life, which he has to make for it under the safeguards of constitutional government he is merely performing an act of enlightened selfishness. Whatever obligation is incurred is one with the conditions of his existence in the personality which is everything to himself, which is in fact himself. In this way he is the state in a truer sense than that in which Louis XIV used the phrase.

Many classes of men go to war; but for our purposes they may be separated into two categories—those who serve for gain whether as wages, booty, or political advancement, and those who serve for honor and patriotism. With the former we have nothing to do; they embark like every adventurer on an enterprise the success of which is all their own if it comes, and the risks of which they must therefore take. But the citizen-soldier who enlists from a sense of duty, jeopardizes his lawful calling, and with cheerful courage and self-denial ventures all for his country and his home—does not he also receive pay? There may be two opinions as to this question. If the comparatively small sum which is given to the soldier either in the ranks or as an officer is an adequate return for his services in a difficult and dangerous occu-

pation then there is an end of it, and there is no obligation on the part of the employer lasting for the lifetime of the employee. But many things combine to discredit this view. In the first place if we compare two men of equal parts and equal social standing, one fighting in the field, the other pursuing his occupation at home, the pay, equipment, and rations of the former are far less than the earnings of the latter, about sixty per cent. being a fair estimate. The soldier can sustain life and spare something for the support of those who are dependent upon him. And that is all; there is no question of growing rich by honest means in the military profession. On the other hand he pays no tax on his income and is not subject to forced contributions except in the uncertainty of pay day. It looks as if the burden of war were thus divided between the fighting citizen in the ranks and the tax-paying citizen at home. But in the second place the salaries of professional soldiers in the regular army are certainly calculated with reference to the lifelong pension paid on retirement or disability. This pension is as much a part of the remuneration as the full pay during service, the total being spread over a lifetime to guard against imprudence, thriftlessness, or misfortune on the part of the recipient. If then the volunteer soldier, as is normally the case, receives the same pay as the regular or less without promise of pension, it follows that the idea of compensation does not enter into the offer of either bounty or monthly payment made on enlistment. Taking therefore either horn of the dilemma, that the citizen soldier either does or does not receive hire, he is neither legally nor morally right in demanding a pension for disability, much less for service. The state in emergencies has the power and the right to the assistance in some form of all its citizens, and by the enforcement of war contributions upon the capital of all and upon the labor of the non-combatants equalizes in a measure their burden with the service of those who fight.

It appears then that the citizen soldier has neither a moral nor a legal right to a pension. But, if so, why have most civilized nations been in the habit of granting pensions to disabled soldiers? The answer is one creditable to human nature. Gratitude, wisdom, and a sense of merciful compassion prompt us to a liberal pension system on the ground of disability. At the close of the civil war we were told, and properly so, of the nation's widows and orphans, of the nation's dependents, and the nation's wards. To all who take great risks, whether of life, property, or credit in the public service, we owe an endless debt of gratitude. Such a debt cannot be paid, and so the world has de-

vised a system of military promotion or decoration, of societies and uniforms, which are a public proclamation of the nation's debt. Distinction and honor in some form are the rewards of merit, and human experience has stamped as both inexpedient and dangerous any attempt to transmute them into money.

Giving to honor grace, to danger pride,
Shine, martial Faith and courtesy's bright star
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the
brow of war!

But the general common-sense and right feeling of mankind realizes that for the disabled, for the widows and young children of the fallen, something more must be done. After the close of the war Americans showed themselves more grateful and lavish than any people had ever done. Every provision for the care and comfort of the sufferers was made in hospitals and soldiers' homes, and pension laws on a scale of liberality never before known were enacted. The sums granted were large and were steadily increased by successive acts; in one class of pensions from twenty-five to seventy-two dollars a month for the honorably discharged private. The restrictions as to those who were to receive the pension of the killed were so magnanimous as to give it to a widow, child, dependent mother or orphan sister, and three years after the war additions were made so as to increase the pension by a fixed sum (\$2.00 monthly) for every child under sixteen. The whole system was right and most creditable to the nation. Under this plan the number of pensioners increased steadily as might have been expected for ten years after the war. There were 85,986 in 1865 and 238,411 in 1873. Under the same system the decrease in numbers as was natural then began, falling until the passage of the Arrears of Pensions Act in 1879, at the rate of about 2500 a year, the figures for 1878 being 223,998. Correspondingly the disbursements ran from \$8,525,153 in 1865 up to \$33,077,383 in 1871, decreasing to \$26,844,415 in 1878. But since that date the number of pensioners has increased to 550,000 in 1890 and the appropriations for pensions to something over \$100,000,000, without deficiencies.

This growth in pension expenditure has been brought about by several causes, some of which are in themselves not connected with wrong tendencies in the nation as a whole, but inhere in the insufficiency of all human devices. One of these is the practical impossibility of determining on legal evidence such as the Pension office demands the fact of disability—so that many worthy cases were without remedy under the old statutes. Another is the tendency of men under the prevailing evolutionary philosophy to trace the causes of disease to

remote periods, and surviving soldiers who are now growing old and suffering from the ordinary physical ills which herald approaching incapacity for labor trace their origin with unerring certainty twenty-five years back to the hardships and exposure of camp and field. Still a third is a sentiment, one of the purest in the human mind and ordinarily very rare in American life—that of veneration. But uncommon as it is, and splendid as it is in the right place, the adversary is using it for bad ends.

Special cases call for special remedies, and in our earlier history the feeling had sometimes good, sometimes bad practical results. So arduous and meritorious were the services of the officers in the Revolution regarded, that the country bestowed upon them in 1785 a service pension. But many of them had no other return for private means expended in the public service, and the measure was not abused. In 1818, however, when, as Madison said, "Most of the survivors of the Revolutionary struggle had paid the debt of nature, but some still living and not provided for by existing laws were reduced to indigence and real distress," Congress passed a bill to pension every soldier who had served nine months or more, and "was in need of assistance from his country for support." The expectation of Mr. Bloomfield, the promoter of the bill, was that there would be something over 700 pensioners under it, and that the annual expenditure would be about \$40,000. The fact was that public morality was so debauched by the prospect of getting something for nothing that the appropriation required in the first year was a little less than two and in the second nearly three millions. Congress was therefore driven to pass stringent measures in 1820 to diminish fraud and punish offenders; but in 1822 there remained 12,331 pensioners under that bill, and there are still a number on the rolls. In 1832 we granted service pensions to some of the soldiers and sailors of the war of 1812 and in 1871 to such as were sixty-two years of age. We have at present 9000 pensioners of that war on our rolls. In 1878 we followed the same policy with reference to the survivors of the Mexican and Indian wars. In all such cases we acted from a sense of veneration. We waited long, set a limit at the age beyond which men work with difficulty, and the total number under all such bills is about 117,000. Nevertheless the claim is made and reiterated, that the precedent for dependent and service pensions was set by the fathers, the wise men of old. If the pension office would relax its stringent rules as to evidence, and the cases of soldiers not disabled while in service, but afterward incapacitated by disease for labor, should be handed over to the local authorities, where they belong under

our federal system, the moral force of such arguments would be spent as far as the government at Washington is concerned. But there is no remedy for the folly which, dazzled by the logic of extremes, would apply the veneration argument for dependent and service pensions to the veterans of the civil war, except imminent national bankruptcy.

Even under the normal disability statutes many men of means draw substantial sums of money year by year. Every one of us has personal knowledge of individuals well-to-do in various walks of life, day-laborers, tradesmen, professional men, who think it not only no harm but thoroughly just to increase their income and their comfort by drawing from other taxpayers what they do not really need. The community at large sustains them in their course of conduct, which is either taking advantage of a technicality, their disability coming under the language of the statute not precluding self-support, or else accepting money as compensation for services rendered. It is to be hoped for the sake of American honesty that the latter is the conscience-salve applied by such persons. But a lofty principle of independence and patriotism should forbid it, and the State should refuse it to those who have not a nice sense of honor. If notions of that kind were to pervade a whole community it would be an end of strength in the government should other wars arise. No land dare deliberately enter upon the uncertainty of war knowing that the surviving soldiery would expect and demand so lavish a reward in the event of success and that public opinion would uphold their mercenary spirit. If the tender compassion shown by right feeling to the few is to degrade the many, destroying their self-respect and extinguishing the heroism of peace, then our nation is verging to its decline and American virtue is to go down before petty temptations.

But mischief of this kind produced by the selfishness, greed, or thoughtlessness of a comparatively small minority could be checked if the majority were sound in its views and scrupulous in its conduct. Since 1879, however, there have been many symptoms of tendencies in the national mind which indicate neither lethargy nor happy-go-lucky good-nature, but point to a thorough reversal of old and tried opinions as to the essentials of American life. Some facts which justify such a fear are clear. See how tolerant we have been of inequality in taxation and the creation of privileged classes. Many illustrations might be given, but we confine ourselves to pensions.

During the last war there were enlisted into the Union armies 2,778,304 men, of whom 2,418,082 survived. There were 489,000 on

the pension rolls at the beginning of last year, and about 1,100,000 are still living. The inception of this process of inflation in expenditure dates back to 1879, fourteen years after the war, when under the operation of a reasonable but humane pension system a diminution in the number of pensioners and in the expenditure for benefactions to disabled soldiers and their families had been constant for six years. The theory up to 1868 had been that five years of pension arrears was more than enough, in other words that within that period any disability contracted in service would show itself. But in 1879 all such limitations were discarded and Congress passed a bill, the notorious Arrears act, which became a law, granting to every successful claimant of the nation's bounty the amount of his monthly dole dating from his discharge from the service. This statute withdrew no less than \$500,000,000 from the national treasury. The deed was the more flagrant because previous bills of the same nature had failed under the scathing denunciations of the great leaders in the war, and one of them had actually been vetoed by President Grant. He declared it to be "needlessly extravagant, uncalled for as offering the most dangerous inducements to fraud, as not demanded by the soldiers themselves, and as likely to benefit them less than the pension and claim agents who were the real authors of the measure." The act of 1879 was a victory not for the honest pension agent, but for the "pension shark."

Since that date there has been a steady succession of similar measures varying from the stealthy private bill to the most monstrous proposals for service pensions on a scale of extravagance hitherto unheard of. President Cleveland said in one of his vetoes: "Every relaxation of principle in the granting of pensions invites applications without merit and encourages those who for gain urge honest men to become dishonest." If to those weighty words he had added by saying: those who for gain or for partisan purposes urge honest men to become dishonest—he would have exactly portrayed the next stage of development in the disastrous agitation. The great accumulations in the national treasury were a standing menace to honest government and a clear indication of a dangerous and unscientific system of taxation. They furnished therefore an irresistible argument against the conditions under which we were living. Hence some means must be contrived to distribute the surplus and empty the treasury. Adroit and unscrupulous managers were quick to take advantage of the fealty of one great party to the economic system now in vogue, and enlist its representatives in the plan of indiscriminate

pensioning. They speciously represented that it was either that or the over-throw of protection. Other attacks on the surplus had been made and had failed. This was the last resort and it succeeded. Public opinion was swept from its old moorings and the second stage to the end was passed. We now have a law granting a pension to every man who served for ninety days, and was honorably discharged; if he suffer under a permanent disability not caused by his own vicious habits "which incapacitates him from the performance of manual labor in such a degree as to render him unable to earn a support." The nation maintains every soldier who cannot maintain himself, without regard to his services, to his sufferings for his country, or the reason of his disability. The hero covered with honorable wounds, the faithful and courageous soldier who served long and bore the brunt of battle, is now no better than the deserter, the straggler, the bounty-jumper, and the coward. Could the true military spirit of any people bear up and survive such a blow? Already within the year¹ more than 600,000 applications have been made under the measure; \$30,000,000 have been added to the pension appropriation; if the demands are favorably considered next year \$80,000,000 will be needed, and the grand total expenditure will be something like \$200,000,000.

The next step, that to a *service* pension law, is easy. If more than two-fifths of the total cost of national administration is to be taken from the earnings of one set of men for the support of another, why not say three-fifths or even four, and swell the annual outlay of the Federal government to seven or eight hundred millions? Words like these have actually been used in the Senate of the United States. It is as easy to say one sum as another. They tell us this is not a cheap nation; and advise us "to be noble"! Yet we must face the facts and the direction in which they point. A most striking historical parallel could be drawn. Rome won her great and early wars, in con-

¹ 1890. The figures for 1891 are of course not available.

² See the "Weekly Tribune," for July 9, 1890, editorial "Time to Halt," which shows that about half the entire revenue of the Federal government is paid to an eightieth of the population at the per capita rate of \$224 a year. The exact amount of the pension appropriation including deficiencies for last year was \$167,824,733.33.

On July 30, 1890, the editor explained officially the attitude of the paper to pensions. The Tribune "has stoutly maintained that the soldiers of the Union armies are entitled to a Service Pension"; "that the ability of the government to grant a Service Pension would necessarily depend on what other legislation was enacted," and as a canvass showed that *seventy-five per cent. of the veterans preferred the Service Pension Bill first*, but the G. A. R. committee on pensions fa-

trast with Carthage and other nations, by the valor of her own citizens. But no reward was too great for the generosity of the nation to bestow on her victorious legions. Expectation and performance finally laid such a burden on her that mercenaries had to be employed for economy's sake, until at last the professional soldier realized his power and became the arbiter of her sinking destinies. Since then the tale has been more than twice told. Can we too, like the great and unsuccessful Austrian premier Prince Schwarzenberg, learn nothing from history? If we were really paying pensions instead of indulging in the dangerous trifling with the eighth commandment which is called in these days by various euphemisms we would abide in practice by the standard meaning of that word. Prussia under Frederick the Great distributed annually to disabled veterans less than one week's expenditure in the United States at present, and the total German pension appropriation to-day after three great wars fought within thirty years is about nine millions of our money. France gives somewhat more. Grant thought that \$27,000,000 annually was not only an ample but a lavish provision for those who had suffered in the last war, barring all schemes of back-pay, service and dependent pensions which he denounced as highway robbery. Garfield in 1872 said that nothing but unwarrantable extravagance would increase the pension list above \$29,000,000 a year. But we have changed all that, and the great surplus being annihilated at one stroke, by the next the utmost resources of this rich land will be taxed beyond endurance, unless we come to our senses and retrace our steps.²

There are extant a few copies of the first volume of a work by Freeman entitled: *The History of Federal Government from the beginning of the Achaian League to the disruption of the United States of America in 1861*. Mention of the title brings a smile to the faces of most of us, possibly a blush to that of the author; and yet if the date had been advanced

vored the Disability Bill which is now a law, and as that bill makes greater demands than the treasury can meet, the veterans, "poorer as a class than they would have been had they not served . . . will cheerfully stand aside until after the really dependent and helpless have been cared for and *until the proper time comes for renewing their own appeal before Congress.*" The italics are mine.

On February 9, 1891, was published a strong and sensible editorial calling attention to the change in public opinion due to excessive appropriations and the disclosure of abuses in the pension department. It gives warning that if it appears that "the system is an instrument of plunder rather than of national gratitude" the payment of pensions to the deserving may cease. It calls for a revision of pension rolls and the reform of abuses, but there is not a word withdrawing the claim that a Service Pension would be righteous if only there were money in the treasury.

about thirty years and for disruption had been substituted centralization — the title would not have been so misleading after all. Philosophers tell us that the whole man is, in the phenomena of which he is the theater, the cause and the spectator. In this fact lies the difficulty of founding a scientific personal psychology. Much the same thing is true of national psychology, but while all analysis is distinction all distinction is not separation. If, therefore, we discover in ourselves many actions which point in one direction unmistakably, it will not do to reply that we mistake what is accidental for that which is essential. The almost unrebuked and unbroken trend of our legislation is towards centralization and state socialism.

We are no longer on the verge of socialism, we are in it, far advanced in both the principle and practice of what was but a very few years ago an abhorrent doctrine to all Americans. Nothing can explain our tolerance of the present and prospective pension expenditure but socialism of an extreme and dangerous type. It is not formulated as such a movement in the national mind, perhaps not even in the minds of most men who favor it. But no other explanation can be found for our legislative career than the insidious increase of state socialism as a force in the land. Protection, admirable within limits as a means of national growth and the conservation of balance between classes, has gone to lengths which were never contemplated by its early and philosophical advocates. What masquerades to-day under that name is simply the distribution to one class in the community of what belongs to another. The legitimate demands of a well-planned system of internal improvements have been exaggerated into River and Harbor Bills which grow as does nothing else but evil report. The practical politician, as he calls himself, knows that in their current shape they are merely the means of distributing a percentage of the national revenues among henchmen who do not necessarily waste the money, but do use the employment of laborers to influence votes. Nearly successful were the attempts made to parcel out what is the property of the whole country among the people of one section under the name of educational grants. But the climax is reached under a system approaching, not socialism but communism in the pension measures already operative and those which are seriously proposed as possible. Bishop Berkeley's panacea for Ireland was: "Let them be good." Any political system, however vicious, will work, in a way, where citizens have lofty principles and exercise self-restraint. But where thousands and millions of people with neither principle nor self-control are brought under a

polity the corner-stone of which is manhood suffrage, the danger is clear. Demagogues struggle to buy votes at any price, trusting in their star, or Jesuitically justifying the means by the end; and more insidious still is the gradual dissemination of the feeling that where civil and political equality are universal, economic and social equality must follow as a corollary.

Some curious psychological phenomena are revealed to the close observer of American life. One of these is the substitution of legality for morality in the minds of vast numbers who lie outside the immediate limits of that educated and polite society within which we are sadly familiar with the idea, "Get wealth, my son, honestly if thou canst, but get wealth." But even the children of honest God-fearing immigrants hold the same view. They are educated in the common schools too often just far enough to have the pride of opinion and fear of the masses without the check-wheel of moral training. Soon comes the discovery that any religion which demands of its adherents a rigid outward observance of ritual is an object of ridicule among their schoolmates, and false pride destroys the hold of ancestral belief. Growing to manhood they lose along with their religious profession the morality which had its sanction in faith. So unconsciously they change the religious sanction for a legal one and pass into the unfortunate mental attitude of the servant who declared to a possible employer that she was neither a Roman Catholic nor a Protestant — she was an American. Among large numbers of a higher social rank there is the same confusion, but in their case it is largely due to easy good-nature. Holland, the greatest of the late English writers on jurisprudence of a certain school, defines a legal right as that which a man can get without the use of force, *i. e.*, by means of organized public opinion. The natural conclusion then is that whatever desirable thing can be had from whatever source is to be taken if only public opinion does not condemn. It is awkward if the taker land in jail, and in that case of course the means by which he laid hands on others' property are highly reprehensible. But if he escape the condemnation of the courts a large section of society, high or low, receives and secretly admires him. And if legislation, the law of the land, invites thousands to dishonesty why shall not the leaven of legality permeate the whole lump?

In reality it was by an appeal to such undeclared but powerful sentiments that our present socialistic condition was reached. Loud and noisy outcries were made to a forced, exaggerated, and unreal sentiment of gratitude in the case of pensions. National self-preservation was the plea in the matter of educational

grants. The amelioration of the condition of the poor and general blessedness, without any experiences of suffering, are the professed ends of the Nationalists; and the single tax will not merely aid the poor, it will abolish poverty. All such arguments are made by men of the highest probity, but they are also the fleece in which the wolf disguises himself. So with the various responses to them. There are many ill-balanced enthusiasts who forget that if the ten commandments had never been promulgated amid the thunders of Sinai, both tables would still be valid to-day as the crystallization of human experience in society. But far more numerous are the thoughtless, would-be honest people who find human law a tangible standard and fail entirely to grasp either the nature or validity of ethical principles. An English chartist was told that if the wealth of all the Rothschilds were equally divided among all the men in England his share would be about seven shillings. "I ha' naught to do with it," said he, "I ha' six pun' in the bank myself."

Militant socialism finds unblushing and public support in two classes of organizations of differing degrees of respectability. One class acts under the mask of ostensible ends; the other manfully avows its purpose. The right of association is one of the most important in the history of free government, but there are so-called political societies which have neither political nor moral aims. They exist solely for the creation and distribution of spoils, that is, of taking by the machinery of the state large sums of money from the pockets of individuals which are not needed for good government and putting those sums into their own pockets. An even more scandalous procedure is perhaps the more common, that of taking for personal and private ends the money raised and needed for good government and leaving the duties of office unperformed. Scarcely a great city in America is without some such hall, ring, or machine, as it is variously called. Such socialism does not of course deserve so comparatively decent a name. It is adroit rascality taking advantage of the insufficiency of all human devices. Sometimes associations of the purest aims sink temporarily or permanently into similar practices.

When our armies were disbanded in 1865 the whole world looked on in delighted wonder as the men and officers returned to the duties of private life with the same ease and readiness with which they had taken up arms. There was no blustering, no lawlessness, no discontent. They were even better men in every walk in life than they had been before by reason of the severe discipline they had undergone. Gradually, however, as they watched

with discontent the process of reconstruction, and misapprehended in some measure the temper of their gallant but defeated foes, their association became closer and their meetings more frequent. At last the Grand Army, theoretically organized for laudable purposes of sociability and the perpetuation of the most ennobling memories and sentiments, became more or less a political organization. It took new strength as a body with political aims, and for a time stood blameless even in the eyes of unsympathetic opponents. But in so doing it lost its moral force and hold on the nation as a disinterested band of war-worn veterans who had deserved well of their country. In its latest stage the question is asked whether it be even a legitimate political association. Its foes within its own household try to make it a machine with all the ear-marks of "bosses," "demands," and "workers." It has many honorable members who do not sympathize with its course, men who abhor dependent and service pensions as the devil's device to degrade the military profession into a huckstering trade. But so far the country has vainly waited for them to organize for the reform of their society from within or for a rupture and protest from without. The one great object of the war had been Union, to prevent present and future disintegration and avoid the disastrous example of Europe in the contiguity of States with discordant interests and therefore perpetual wars and enormous armaments, taxing every man, woman, and child for their unproductive support. But the brave defenders of this sound principle have helped in peace to bring about exactly what they fought to prevent by war, *viz.* unjust and unnecessary taxation. We spent for the war on the northern side thirty-five hundred millions between 1861-65, excluding the expenses of states, cities, and towns and the values destroyed by Confederate privateers. What the war cost the South can never be known. But since 1865 we have already disbursed in pensions one-third of the total expense of the national government for the war, and will probably on the present system spend as much more. If service pensions become the rule our outlay will far exceed the cost of our own war in its entirety, saddling us with a permanent annual expenditure sufficient to support the enormous armaments of France and Germany combined. At this moment the 62,000,000 people in the United States are annually paying \$44,000,000 for a military establishment, \$22,000,000 for a navy, and \$160,000,000 for pensions including deficiencies — a total of \$226,000,000, which is 80 per cent. of what the combined 86,000,000 people of France and Germany together pay for their armaments. We bemoan their sad fate and the

oppressive burdens under which the men, women and children of old Europe groan. But this is the pass to which we have come: 86,000,000 of French and Germans pay \$265,000,000 for armaments and pensions—63,000,000 of Americans already pay \$226,000,000. A simple sum in ratio. At our rate they would disburse \$308,000,000, about \$40,000,000 more than they actually do. And yet the appetite of some posts in the Grand Army whetted by the Disability Pension Bill is clamorous for more! This democratic land, neutral, industrial, and devoted to the arts of peace, is to be taxed for war reasons far beyond the dreams of the most ardent war-lord of Europe. Not long since you could scarcely open a newspaper without reading of the "demand" made by some post for a service pension.

It seems almost a waste of time and energy to say anything about avowed theoretical socialism in the face of such unavowed practical communism. But I have tried to find the most dispassionate and yet the frankest statement of its aims and the argument by which it tries to support them. It seems most tersely and candidly put by Bax in an essay first published in one of the leading English reviews and now reprinted in a volume to which it gives its title, "The Ethics of Socialism." The author claims, and he is in substantial harmony with the latest exponents of socialism, that according to its ethic every man should identify himself with humanity not in the way of self-sacrifice to other individuals as such but by the identification of the material conditions of individual well-being with those of social well-being. This being an economic age these conditions are economic. We ask ourselves in passing whether this is not on the whole a truthful generalization of the drift of the popular mind and the tendency of legislation. But hear the writer in his own words: "In what I may term a concrete ethic self-sacrifice can never be more than an accident. The substance of such ethic consists not in the humiliation of self before God but in the identification of self with humanity. By this we should observe is not especially to be understood the 'living for others' of the current Christian ethics which at best means sacrificing oneself for other individuals as individuals. What we here mean is . . . that affirmation of self with or identification of self in society which in the first instance can only be brought about by the identification of the material conditions of individual well-being with those of social well-being." Put in less philosophical terms this seems to mean that we are not, as the Christian ethic claims, to live for others but on others. Legal right, not duty, is the rule of conduct. The obligations of the moral law and

the golden rule must yield to changed standards just as far and as fast as public opinion can be brought to tolerate them. The organization of the socialists is on the whole more dignified than that of the advocates of indiscriminate pensions because it is open and avowed, but as far as the latter have gone it looks as if their aims were identical. Even the German socialists, fiercest of their kind, now propose to abandon strikes and boycotts except in emergencies of the most extreme sort. They too propose to appeal to the majority. This is not caution or gentleness born of recent emancipation, as has been suggested, but shrewdness. They believe, wrongly we hope, that they no longer need force for their schemes, but that what is done every day under specious pretexts by others may be done through peaceable agitation and openly by themselves.

There is one aspect of the whole matter to which allusion has incidentally been made which deserves somewhat further emphasis. The giving and taking of money where service has been rendered are honorable acts. They are honorable in a still higher degree where necessity is relieved by an able and generous patron; as when the feeble, aged, or incapable are cared for by the state. But they are dangerous in every respect to both parties where neither service is rendered nor real want exists. The legitimately pensioned soldier is a man worthy of all respect; but the individual who masquerades as a disabled soldier where military service had nothing to do with his weakness is an impostor or self-deceived. When a great class of such men are offered and accept grants from the treasury (that is from the pockets of their fellow-citizens) not only is their own manhood destroyed, which might be endured, but there rises at once a far more serious menace to the public welfare in that their example becomes contagious. There was an old debate among the encyclopædists as to whether strong individuality be the representation of class or differentiation from class. The man who widely differs from all of his kind is eccentric; class type makes the strong personality. If this be true the pauperization of any class will produce representative paupers whose effrontery rests on the support of numbers. This is already happening, and the men with glib tongues and spurious arguments who support measures such as we are discussing grow more numerous and influential every day. We are threatened with the pauperization not of a few of the million unpensioned survivors of the late war but with the degradation of a body of citizens once the most heroic in the land. The old soldier, independent, self-respecting, and ubiquitous, should be a strong moral force in the community, an example and

inspiration to us, to our children, and perhaps to our children's children. But, alas! the prospect is otherwise. Already the decline of his influence has begun. Veterans of the army wonder why they often fail to arouse enthusiasm where once they were received with rapture. In the ordinary community, city or country, their power, which should be enormous, is nothing at all, for they are too often immovable partisans and drones without energy. The reason is surely not because the flight of time has dulled our true gratitude or diminished the luster of glorious service. As yet there is not a respectable community where a man putting forth a fraudulent claim against his fellow-man, and supporting it by false evidence, could hold up his head. This is done, however, every day in the matter of pensions. Prosecutions have been tried, but, as a rule, they fail because the jury will not convict. Now juries are in an important sense the barometer of public morality, and we are forced to confess that the country as a whole tolerates the recipients of fraudulent pensions. The reason is in part cowardice born of political affiliations, in part a general feeling that any one who can get something from the government is a clever fellow and ought to enjoy it. But the general moral sense, though degraded, revenges itself in a diminished respect for the sharpers, and secondarily on the military survivors as a class.

There are crises when the truth must be told. This is one of them. Never was there more elusive duplicity in any movement than in the whole pension agitation since 1879. It is a time which calls for men fixed in principle and conduct, fearless to proclaim the truth when branded as pessimistic and un-American, words which are nearly worn out in the service of wire-pullers and job-masters. As Burke said of the repeal of the stamp act—done "in the teeth of all the old mercenary Swiss of state, in despite of all the speculators and augurs of political events, in defiance of the whole embattled legion of veteran pensioners and practiced instruments of the court, we have powerful enemies but we have faithful and determined friends and a glorious cause. We have a great battle to fight, but we have the means of fighting."

What are these means? Above all, the great Irish leader said: "Agitate, agitate, agitate." The country is not rotten: "tidal" waves or, as the phrase now is, "land-slides," of sterling

honesty and sound sense still occur at regular intervals on the sluggish surface of politics. And the first one to be set in motion must be that of economy. Let us be mean, stingy, if need be, in our federal taxation. After all, the chief functions of government throughout this Union are entrusted to the State members of it. In them taxation is direct and, being so, is promptly felt and carefully regulated. Last year the total of taxes levied by the States was about \$70,000,000, a very reasonable sum for 62,000,000 people. Of course we may not hope under our system for direct federal taxes in the immediate future, but we may so far rouse ourselves as to demand that the sums raised indirectly shall but suffice, and barely suffice, for the expense of government. This is no place to unfold a plan, but there are able men who can and do explain feasible methods, and the necessity cannot be too strongly urged.

But agitation is not sufficient without organization. We want no new parties; constitutional government is not only hampered, it is endangered by the existence of minor political groups. But a well considered and easily understood appeal for a tax-payers' league to watch and expose the conduct of members of Congress who bind burdens of extravagance and folly on the public ought to be tried. There never was a time when free government owed more to a free press in the exposure of shams than now. Let everything be done to uphold the hands of journalists by displaying the public appreciation of fearlessness whenever shown. A group of right-minded men in every city, willing to unite and pay for the services of an active secretary to collect and disseminate abundant, ungarbled, and trustworthy evidence concerning the disability or service pension sham, would very soon correct the socialistic tendencies of pension expenditure, and shatter the false pretence of veneration which masks it. If to that were added the courage of conviction in the action of the same and similar men inside of party and out, our present well-grounded fears would shortly vanish.

And then it seems as if we must make a passionate appeal to the hitherto unheard sane majority in the Grand Army to save their comrades from themselves. So far there have been a few influential and manly protests,¹ but they have been inoperative. We can easily understand that those who make them shrink from

¹ The letter of General Francis C. Barlow printed in the "Evening Post" of August 9, 1890, was seasonable and vigorous. To it and similar articles by soldiers and clergymen which appeared in many journals, I am indebted for important suggestions. "Other things being equal," says General Barlow, "the soldier of our great army will stand higher in public estimation than his neighbors who did not share in the dangers and toils of the war, and in most States he is preferred

to others by the civil service statutes in public employments. This and his own approving conscience is the soldier's surplus reward over and above what the government agreed to pay him. This can be taken from him only by his own act in seeking to barter it for money. This indiscriminate pensioning in my judgment is not only a great wrong to the tax-payers of this country but is fatal to its military spirit and to the manhood of the soldier."

unpopularity with comrades whose virtues all men admire. But blindness to fault and feebleness in action sometimes become criminal. Let us have, if necessary, reform from without. I can conceive of no more helpful institution to the country than a compact association of the soldiers who are self-respecting, modest, God-fearing citizens—and there are tens of thousands of them—pledged to redeem the good fame of our military service by opposition to both disability and service pensions, by demanding that the case of any deserving applicant shall be adjudicated by local officials, judges, or State officers, without regard to technicalities of evidence, and by securing, where disability not caused by service must be relieved, the necessary legislation in State legislatures to establish proper homes or retreats for the very exceptional cases of those soldiers who, through no vicious habits, but by misfortune or sickness have become unable to earn a living.

And yet we ought solemnly to consider that no public movement is possible, based on a principle of ethics either much higher or far lower than the average moral standard of the citizen. Such is the intricacy of society that not only is it difficult to trace chains of cause and effect, but even the single link is often inscrutable. The lack of high principle in individuals undoubtedly lies at the foundation of immoral public action, but on the other hand popular movements powerfully influence private judgment. Hence remedies for both evils are essential, and with every suggestion for the organization of agitations there must be an appeal to the pure standard of personal morality which John Bright hoped might be the measure of state action. Here, therefore, is the great opportunity of the church. For one, I believe in political preaching, not to advocate partisan measures but to bring to every listener the most difficult lesson that emotional, intellectual, and practical morality are one and the same thing. The counting house, the polling booth, and the church have not different morals nor different theories. The history of progress has been a history of the separation of organs. The early king was legislative, judiciary, and executive all in one. Now we have a hundred thousand men to carry on all the nice divisions and subdivisions into which each of these functions is cut up. So also with the occupations of men. A single pioneer builds a whole house, is architect, carpenter, mason, plasterer, and what-not. In high civilization each man of the forty trades called into requisition by house-building can do but one small thing, and his capacities in every other direction suffer atrophy. And so in the intricacy of our modern lives we are often scrupulously moral on one side, but find it, alas! most difficult to be moral all around; in our relations to the State as well as in our relations to persons like ourselves; in the fervor of religious emotion and in the reaction of commonplace trade or profession; in the quiet of well regulated private life and in the mad tumult of public business. Morality without the sanction of religion is, I believe, of doubtful possibility, but too often the charge is brought that what passes for religion is common enough without morality. If this reproach were taken home by the church, and the remedy found, the pension grab would find its place under the rubric of the moral law where it belongs. We would hear less said about law-abiding citizens like pensioners under a disability or service statute, and more about good men; less of legality and more of duty, less of economic socialism and more of personal exertion for ourselves and others.

Nothing which has been said above is intended to destroy the sentiment of gratitude for the soldier, or the moral obligation of any individual in this great nation, expressed in the immortal words of Lincoln's second inaugural.

With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; *to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan*, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

But the words are: "who shall have borne the battle." The honor of such is magnified in the receipt of the country's ungrudged gifts, the honest pensioner is the stimulus to patriotism of the generations which grow up about his knees. Reverence and love are his due, for his example calls for imitation; and the assurance of ease in his declining years is the guarantee of similar self-sacrifice when danger again appears. Heroism and patience mark the loftiest type of character. Let those whose welfare has been secured by his suffering praise him in the gate and shower their benefactions upon him as far as may be consistent with his manhood. The nation has nothing but the tenderest interest in such as these. It is for the sake of his honor, to preserve unfading his hard-earned laurels that we protest against the shame of legislation which in his name depletes our purse in the interest of pension brokers, and against the indiscriminating lavishness which draws no distinction between suffering heroes and those who should be content with the honor, which pales before no other, of having saved their country in the hour of her greatest need.

ballots, and there was a general demand for its repeal. It had been put into the law to satisfy the demands of opponents of the Australian system, and had been yielded reluctantly by the advocates of that system, who had grave doubts of its usefulness.

Instead of repealing this provision, the legislature passed a series of amendments, raising the number of signatures required for independent nominations, repealing a provision of the law which allowed an independent candidate to have his name printed upon the ballots of the regular parties as well as upon a separate ballot of his own, and substituting a provision which forbids him to have it printed upon more than one ballot. Another amendment permits any regular candidate to file a caveat forbidding the printing of an independent nomination upon his ballot. The combined effect of these changes is to make an aggregate of 10,000 signatures necessary for the nomination of a complete independent state ticket, and to make the nomination of independent candidates for separate offices in various parts of the State practically impossible, for such nominations will have to stand by themselves upon an incomplete ticket, which no voter ought to be asked to deposit.

In the Pennsylvania law the discrimination is brought about in a different but scarcely less effective manner. The signatures of three per cent. of the voters of the portion of the State over which the office to be filled extends

are required for any independent nomination, and all independent nominations must be filed so far in advance of election (49 days) as to be practically prohibitive. Then, as a still further obstacle, all independent and third-party nominations must be arranged together in alphabetical order at the end of the blanket ballot, while the regular party nominations are arranged in groups with the party title at the top. As the voter can indicate his choice for a party ticket by simply placing a mark opposite the title, but must check every name in the list of independent candidates in case he wishes to vote for them, it is obvious that the regular parties have all the advantages. The California law makes the number of signatures necessary for independent nominations five per cent. of all the voters, and requires all such nominations to be filed thirty days before election. This percentage is of itself tantamount to a prohibitive enactment.

These three laws, in fact, instead of aiding independent nominations, make them nearly or quite impossible, and thus destroy the leading principle of ballot reform, which is the facilitating of such nominations. These laws give the regular party machines a greater power than ever, for while, under the old system, they could make the printing and distributing of independent ballots difficult, under the new, as these laws pervert it, the use of all such ballots at the polls is practically forbidden by law.

OPEN LETTERS.

The Question of Pensions.

I.—A SOLDIER'S VIEW.

HAVING read with great care the article relative to pension matters prepared by Mr. Sloane and others, and published in the June number of your magazine, allow me to submit a few suggestions relative to that important topic as viewed from a pensioner's standpoint.

The article in question seems to be directed mainly against the action had in allowing arrears of pensions, and in passing what is generally known as the Dependent Pension Bill of June 27, 1890, and appears to be intended to convey the impression that our comrades who accepted the moneys granted as arrears, and those who accept the relief granted under the recent act, are unpatriotic. On their behalf I respectfully demur to the indictment.

As respects the first class I shall only ask to be shown why the comrade who waited from the time of his discharge until 1880 before asking for the pension due him at his discharge, and each year thereafter up to the time when he applied for it, and then accepted the amount found to have been due him under the law and the rulings and ratings fixed by the Department, without an allowance of one cent of interest on the amount which was legally due him during each of the several years since his discharge, is any less patriotic than I who applied for my pension promptly after my discharge in 1866, and have drawn it regularly since?

Many a comrade failed to apply from motives of the purest patriotism. He would not ask for a pension so long as he was able to support himself and family by his own exertions, because he knew that the nation was carrying an enormous debt, and its enemies were doing all they could to injure its credit and bring about the repudiation of the obligations issued during the war. After years of toil, by reason of increasing disabilities due to advancing age, he finds himself unable longer to continue the struggle unaided. He then asks for, and receives in a lump payment, the sum which is due him, and which would have been paid quarterly during the several years since his discharge had he seen fit to apply for it within one year after his discharge.

What is there unpatriotic in that case?

Nay, more; I personally know comrades to-day who were disabled during their army service, and who could be placed on the pension-roll at any time by simply filing a claim with proof of service and identity, and appearing before any examining board of surgeons north of Washington, who have never applied for pensions, and probably never will, because they know that the national debt is not yet paid, and they have been, and are, able to care for themselves and dependent ones without aid from any quarter. If the author of your recent article has any extended acquaintance among the survivors of the Union army, he doubtless knows of many such cases.

As regards the merits of the act of June 27, 1890, allow me to submit a few facts relative to the practical

working of that act which appear to have escaped entirely the notice of Mr. Sloane.

We will first note the existing conditions which prompted the action embodied in that bill. The lapse of years, the infirmities incident to age, and casualties of various kinds, had rendered large numbers of our old comrades incapable of self-support. The county poorhouses and other refuges were becoming crowded with such inmates. Their disabilities, being of a nature not directly connected with or chargeable to their army services, or perhaps due to accidental injury received since discharge, left them without the pale of relief afforded by existing pension laws. Hence the burden of their support was falling directly on the surviving comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic and other charitable organizations, and on the taxpayers of the several counties where these disabled ones had been forced to seek shelter in the county-houses.

In this manner the citizens of such counties as had been most patriotic and had furnished the largest quotas of their able-bodied sons for the defense of the nation were now being rewarded (?) by the assessment of extra heavy taxes for the support of their county poor. It was the intent and design of the act of June 27, 1890, to lift that burden from the shoulders of the taxpayers of such counties and place it upon the shoulders of all taxpayers, to the end that those who had made no sacrifice of life, blood, or treasure might contribute at least equally with those who had given of their best and bravest for the maintenance of the national life.

The practical working of the act is good. Many a comrade who had been forced to seek shelter in the poorhouse now finds that with the aid of the modest sum allowed under that act, and with what he is still able to do towards his own support, he can once more resume his place as a citizen and become again a worker among his fellows.

As the sums granted under said act cannot exceed \$12 per month, and no veteran is placed on the roll unless he is disabled to the extent of two-thirds of total disability and therefore entitled to a rating of \$6 per month or more, there appears to be but little chance for the undeserving or the malingerers to be successful in an effort to secure pensions thereunder. No pensions of from \$72 to \$100 per month can be paid thereunder to men who are able to earn salaries in positions worth \$4000 per annum, as occasionally happens under other pension acts, special and general.

It is not alone in the benefit conferred upon the disabled comrades included in the terms of this act, and upon the taxpayers resident in the several counties where they reside, that the most beneficent effects of this legislation are found. The widows of this class of comrades — where the death cause is not chargeable to their own vicious habits — are now promptly granted a pension of \$8 per month, and many are thus enabled to keep their children about them and to raise and to care for them as mothers. Otherwise they would be obliged to break up their homes, and see their children sent to charitable institutions or abandoned to the care and custody of strangers.

It is true that the large majority of our old comrades are poor men; as respects the accumulation of wealth, the man who gave from three to five of the best years of his life, generally between the ages of twenty and thirty, on returning to civil life found himself handi-

capped in the race. Where there is one among us with wealth enough to care for him and his, and also to share to aid a destitute comrade, there will be found in any large gathering of old comrades thousands who, like myself, are wholly dependent upon their pensions and their daily earnings for the support of their dear ones. It is dire necessity, not want of patriotism, that has at times prompted the "demands" for equitable pension legislation that are so severely animadverted upon by Mr. Sloane and his coadjutors in your recent article.

With a word as to my right to speak as a representative soldier I will close this already long protest. I served continuously from early in April, 1861, until July, 1866, during the late war; was shot through the lung at Antietam, in September, 1862, and lost a leg at Gettysburg in July, 1863. The first ten years after my return to civil life were spent in the office of the Second Auditor of the Treasury Department adjusting the claims of our comrades, their widows and orphans, for arrears of pay, bounty, etc. The next ten years were spent in the General Land Office adjudicating contests arising between the different claimants under the railroad grants, and the contests between the settlers on the lands within the granted limits and the railroad companies, etc. Numbers of those settlers were soldiers. Since then I have been employed as a special examiner of the Pension Bureau in the investigation of cases requiring special examination. I have worked in many different States both east and west of the Mississippi, and in Florida, Alabama, and Georgia; have always belonged to the G. A. R. since it was established, and have met many thousands of veterans at State encampments and G. A. R. camp-fires, etc. East, West, and South, and in the regular course of my business and duties. I have had ample opportunity to become well acquainted with the feelings and aims of my comrades of the late war, their desires, hopes, and aspirations. Having thus passed thirty years of my life in the service of my country and my comrades, I feel that if I am not, *I ought to be* qualified to speak as an expert on this matter.

I know that while it is true that some comrades will be found at times who are clamorous for the passage of a service pension bill, there are but few who will not listen to reason, and upon receiving an explanation of the probable expense and the increased taxation which would be necessary in such a case, and the fact that such a measure is in conflict with the very genius of our institutions, in that it tends to create a privileged class, etc., and that if we once admit the validity of a claim for pensions for service in the army, no valid objection can be made to a claim for distinguished service in the diplomatic corps or other branches of the Government service, and thus our nation would soon be burdened with a pensioned "civil list," as the British Empire is at present — when these facts are clearly placed before them, even the most thoughtless will promptly admit that it is safer to adhere to the governing rule, as heretofore established, and make disability the basis of all pension legislation. And *all* will admit that they do not want a service pension if it is to endanger the pensions allowed to their disabled comrades, or to the widows and orphans of those who have been mustered out and are now awaiting the final roll-call.

As a survivor of the late war I cannot but feel deeply when I see the motives of my comrades impugned, and

if I have used too strong language in their defense, I hope it may be pardoned. I frankly admit that I do feel proud of my comrades and their record in the war for the Union. The humblest one who volunteered and followed the old flag has thereby earned the right to have his name inscribed upon the roll of honor and to be cherished and remembered through all time and eternity; yea, even until the "heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll," and the universe shall be dissolved in showers of star-dust never again to be gathered.

Frank Bell.

II. — REJOINDER BY PROFESSOR SLOANE.

YOUR readers will doubtless admire, as I do, the repression and good temper of Mr. Bell's letter, but they cannot fail to note exactly the same unmoral pleas to which the article on "Pensions and Socialism" called attention.

1. He admits that right-minded veterans have not drawn the pensions they might legally have secured under the Arrears Act because disability through army service was not such as to prevent their earning a living for themselves and their families; but he can see no difference between these patriots and those who, taking the law as their only standard of right, clutch what they can get, without caring whether their disability was due to military service or to hereditary ailments and the ordinary risks and toils of the times of peace between the close of the war and 1880.

2. He also admits with creditable frankness that soldiers enfeebled by age, or sickness not due to military service, are, under the act of June, 1890, the recipients of alms disguised under the name of pension. But he says nothing of the dismay of the honest pensioner who sees the name prostituted to cover quite another thing, nor of the well-used opportunities for dishonesty which the bill created. I cannot hear of a single rural community where public morality has not suffered by the tolerance in it of men known to be drawing pensions (*sic*) they have not deserved, secured too often, alas! by false swearing.

3. It is not true that the soldier who returned from the war in good health was handicapped in the race. (The preference of veterans in the public service is well illustrated by the case of Mr. Bell himself.) On the contrary, the life of the moral soldier was a wholesome life; the training of the army made him more adaptable for all uses than other men, and it is generally believed that most of the fighting and exposure throughout the war fell on less than one-third of the total number enlisted. The general poverty of the so-called veterans to which Mr. Bell refers, if it exists at all, and its existence is certainly doubtful, is due to causes utterly unconnected with the war.

4. Your readers will also observe the phrases, "due him under the law," "legally due him," at the beginning of Mr. Bell's letter, and the very different ones, "inscribed upon the roll of honor," "cherished and remembered . . . until . . . the universe shall be dissolved in showers of star-dust," etc., which occur at the close. To him there appears to be some connection between them, as if the latter were the climax of the former. My object was to show that in yielding to temptation and taking advantage of public sentimentality and a fallible human law, the claimant so far destroyed his

own claim to either respect or honor, and, more heinous still, dragged in the mire the very name of veteran so cherished by the honest soldiers and the nation at large.

The generation of men now coming into the ranks of public service, while too young in 1861 to enlist, knew well the questions at issue and the horrors of the war. It yields to no older one in devotion to the principles for which the army fought, and cannot endure to endanger or lose those very jewels thirty years later by weakly yielding either to the threats of sturdy beggars or to the unconsidered requests of honest and honorable feebleness, which takes refuge too often with the former class instead of seeking help where alone it can be had without dishonor, among the Christian philanthropists who are abundant in all American communities, and who would gladly pay millions for their country's honor, but refuse one cent for tribute even to their loved veterans. It would be very instructive to print the letters which have been sent me within the last month by soldiers who fought for three years, or more or less, actually demanding the repeal for their sakes of the acts which disgrace their true manhood; but the space at my disposal of course forbids me to do so now.

William M. Sleane.

Weakness and Danger of the Single Tax.¹

FIRST.—The advocates of the single tax on land values, with one accord, emphasize the epithet "single." Their distinguished leader has declared all other taxes to be either stupid or unjust or both. To make room for this exclusive plan all existing ways and means of raising revenue, national, State, and local, must be cleared away. The tariff, the internal-revenue imposts, the liquor licenses of States and cities, any existing taxes on franchises, on railway receipts, on successions—all must be abandoned, and no other projects for raising revenue, such as an income tax, must be entertained. The single tax is nothing if not "single"; it is not one which might be engrafted upon the stock of an existing system, whose elements might gradually give place to its expanding efficiency. It calls for the obliteration of all our traditions and ideas regarding taxation; such as the idea that as all persons are under the protection of the state, so all persons may, if the public needs require, be called upon to contribute not only their services but their wealth to the support of government and its reasonable purposes. The single-tax doctrine is not to touch persons as such, but only as they are receivers of the public in the income and profit of land. There is an idea that as all forms of property are protected by the state, they may all be, of right, subjected to taxation, if the public needs require. The single-tax men know of only one kind of property which may be justly taxed. Again, there is the idea that as all industries and employments are protected by the state, the government may, if public needs demand, collect some fraction of the income and profit of industry. There is no possible room nor justification for an income or succession tax under the single-tax régime.

There is another idea which has played a great part—
¹ The reader is referred to a discussion of "The Single Tax," by Henry George and Edward Atkinson, in *THE CENTURY* for July, 1890.—ED.