

was growing stout. When at Waterford he diligently sawed and split wood, carried water from the old well, and exerted himself as much as possible with a view to reducing his flesh. Artemus, who was thin and unutterably lazy, used to sit on the wood-pile and contemplate in a state of pleasurable indolence the exertions of his friend. "Poor Mr. Setchell," said the old lady once, in relating the performance, "he was always afraid he would die of apoplexy, and did the chores to get thin. And to think that, after all, he should have been drowned at sea!" Poor Setchell took passage for Australia on a ship that was never heard from again.

The portrait shows Artemus Ward at twenty. It was taken in Toledo, Ohio, where he went from Tiffin, his first Western stopping-place, and where he began his newspaper work. There is only one copy in existence. The woman in whose house Artemus found his home received it from him when he went to Cleveland, where his career really began. She ascertained that his mother was living, from an article in *THE CENTURY* describing his home and family, and sent the photograph to Mrs. Browne, who had never seen it. It shows the face of the gentle, whimsical country lad as it appeared at the period when he was passing from the crude apprenticeship of a wandering printer to an enduring place in American humorous literature. Indeed, he first taught the citizens of the republic how funny they really were.

The most successful experience in the lecturer's career, except the English experiment, was his journey to the Pacific coast and back

across the continent, — talking jokes to the mining-camps and dodging predatory Indian war-parties. He met with a wonderful welcome everywhere. In Virginia City, Nevada, then an astonishing town with an opera-house, and three daily newspapers, and the Comstock pouring out its wealth, he had some of his most agreeable adventures. Here he met General James William Nye, then territorial governor, and the "Bill Nye" of the "Heathen Chinee." Nye was a living evidence of the kind of humor which Artemus so delightfully depicted, and he did not fail to give gratifying exhibitions of his accomplishments. The lecturer was greeted by great houses during his stay, and was "treated" in true mining-camp style. In a pocket of the old note-book there reposes an official certificate made out on one of the roughly printed territorial blanks, designating Artemus Ward as official "Speaker of Pieces to the People of Nevada Territory." Such a court as Nye kept was rich in securing such a jester even for a few nights only. The miners sent him a great golden chain so long that it could be worn about the neck, but so heavy that it could not be so carried without much discomfort.

Since the death of Mrs. Caroline E. Browne, which occurred in 1884, and by the provisions of her will, a simple but beautiful granite monument marks the plot in the Elm Vale Cemetery at Waterford where all the immediate family lie at rest together. Elm Vale takes its name from a noble farm christened and long owned by Robert Haskins, the uncle of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and under its towering trees the Concord philosopher passed many happy hours.

Don C. Seitz.

[For other articles and illustrations relating to Artemus Ward, see this magazine for October, 1878, November, 1880, and May, 1881.—EDITOR.]

AN INSIDE VIEW OF THE PENSION BUREAU.

BY AN EMPLOYEE OF THE BUREAU.¹



HE pension laws consist of a great many different enactments, passed by different Congresses, and constituting a code which is not in all respects consistent or harmonious. The general pension law, so called, provides for pensions on account of disability from wounds, injury, or disease incurred in, and by reason of, military service; and I assume that all will agree that the theory and purpose of such laws are just and beneficent. Certain other laws provide for pensions

on account of past military service, without proof that the applicant became disabled thereby; and several thousand private pension bills have been enacted within the past few years, granting pensions to certain individuals, by name, who were not entitled to pension under the general pension law. The justice of some of these special enactments is more than doubtful; and I presume it is agreed also that there have been abuses and frauds practised in the administration of these laws, and that a desire prevails among a large class of the best citizens, irre-

¹ In 1881 a clerk in the bureau; after 1882 special examiner and supervising examiner of the Chicago district; since January 1, 1891, acting member of the Board of Pension Appeals.

spective of party, including a great many of the veterans of the late war, to remedy these abuses.

The condition of public sentiment in the Northern States is undoubtedly favorable to great liberality in legislating pensions to the soldiers of the late war. The public is not inclined to scrutinize the claims of individuals, nor, in fact, is the public able, if it were inclined, to distinguish always between the just and the fraudulent claim. It is not the business of the public to make these distinctions. It is the business and duty of the Pension Bureau to determine who are, and who are not, justly and legally entitled to pensions. Whether frauds are to be permitted, or winked at, must depend upon the efficiency and honesty with which that bureau is administered.

In considering the methods of the Pension Bureau in the annual disbursement of one hundred and fifty millions of dollars, it should first be remembered that the business of that bureau has been conducted, hitherto, with a view to political results; that is, with a view to show that the party in power is "the friend of the soldier." This purpose underlies the official methods of the bureau. The Commissioner of Pensions seeks to show, in his annual reports, that he has transacted a larger volume of business than his predecessor; that is to say, has issued a larger number of pension certificates. This has been the aim, and it has been the achievement, of each successive commissioner for the past twelve years. Commissioner Dudley, Commissioner Black, Commissioner Tanner, and Commissioner Raum, each, in his turn, surpassed the record which had been made by his predecessor in the number of pension certificates issued per annum.

About the first of July, 1891, the beginning of the fiscal year, the Commissioner of Pensions called together the Chiefs of Division and announced to them his wish (which was construed as in the nature of a request or order) that the bureau should issue a thousand pension certificates per day, for each working day of the next ensuing year. In issuing this order, or request, the commissioner assumed to decide in advance that the claims which were to be adjudicated during the year following were meritorious, and must necessarily be allowed. He did not contemplate that any considerable number could be rejected, nor even that there would be any delay or difficulty about the proof. The Chiefs of Division exerted themselves not to disappoint his expectations, and there were issued during that year 311,589 certificates.

The aim and purpose of the Commissioner of Pensions to issue a large number of pension certificates are necessarily shared by his subordinates, of all grades, who aspire to stand well with their superior officers.

Commissioner Dudley, in 1881, stated to a congressional committee that if Congress would increase the clerical force of the bureau, as recommended by him (which Congress did), he would in three years' time wind up the business of the Pension Bureau by granting pensions to all who deserved them. No doubt Colonel Dudley was sincere in this statement, and expected by expediting the work of the bureau to perform his promise; but that astute and skilled politician was unable to foresee the immense and growing pressure of claims which was to ensue, and the facility with which they would be allowed.

The rejection of a claim is rarely considered a final action. The office never refuses to reopen and reconsider a claim upon the filing of any new and material evidence. Thousands of claims rejected by one commissioner are admitted by his successor. In fact, that a claim was rejected twelve, ten, or eight years ago would be but little reason for supposing that it would be rejected now.

Even the allowance of a claim is seldom a final action, for no sooner is a pension granted, usually, than the pensioner files another claim for increase. In many admitted claims, an application for increase has been filed as often as once a year, on an average, for many years. Claims for increase are frequently appealed to the Secretary of the Interior, and by him allowed. In a majority of such cases the application for increase originates with the attorney, whose object is to make his fee; in many cases the attorney files his appeal with the Secretary of the Interior without the knowledge of the pensioner, and sometimes after he is dead.

The pensioners of the United States may be divided into various classes.

1. They may be classified with reference to the rates of pension which they receive, which vary from \$1 to \$100 per month.

2. They may be classified with reference to the length of time the pensioner was in military service. Service in the late war varied, usually, from three months to four years. It counts nothing in favor of a claimant for pension that he served four years; and nothing against him that he served only three months.

3. They may be classified with reference to the date of filing the application. The date of filing, by the survivors of the late war, has varied from 1862 to the present year. The lateness of filing an application counts nothing against the applicant. Thus A, who served four years and was wounded in battle, filed his application in 1865, and is receiving a pension of \$4 per month for his wound. B, who served three months in 1861, and was never in a battle, filed his claim in 1888, and

is now receiving a pension of \$30 per month for "malarial poisoning."

4. They may also be classified with reference to the diseases, injuries, or wounds on account of which they are pensioned.

There is a laxness, growing out of the haste to accomplish results, in the administration of the pension laws, which tends to encourage and invite frauds. This opinion I know prevails extensively amongst the employees of the bureau. I heard the statement made by a supervising examiner in 1888, that thirty per cent. of the claims which were then being admitted were entirely without merit. This statement was probably an exaggeration; but it expressed an opinion which I think was not uncommon among the employees of the bureau.

To illustrate, by an example, the laxity of the present practice in the allowance of claims, I will refer to a certain case where pension was granted on account of partial deafness, notwithstanding that it was officially admitted that the deafness did not develop in a pensionable degree until twenty-nine years after the termination of the claimant's military service. I refer to the case of J— S—, where in a decision was rendered and published under the date of October 29, 1892, by the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, to whom the claim had been appealed. This claimant had filed his application in 1885, alleging that he incurred partial deafness in the service in the year 1862. The Pension Bureau allowed his claim, but, in accordance with what was stated to be its usual practice in such cases, granted the pension to commence in the year 1891, on the ground that, although he had filed his claim in 1885, his deafness had not existed in such a degree as would entitle him to a pension until 1891. The assistant secretary approved the allowance of the claim, and admitted that the action in fixing the date of commencement of pension was "logical" under the practice which had obtained; but he directed that the rules of the bureau should be modified so that Mr. S— should be granted a nominal rate, commencing in 1885. This decision was published by the assistant secretary as a precedent for the guidance of the Pension Bureau in disposing of similar claims in the future, and for the information of the public.

There is a certain class of claims in connection with which I may consider the question, which has sometimes been mooted, whether collusion or venality has been practised by persons high in authority, in the allowance of fraudulent claims. If such frauds have been committed they have not so far been detected, although vigilant efforts have been made, at different times, to discover them. Colonel Dudley's record was vigorously investigated by his succes-

sor, General Black, who failed to discover any trace of venality in the former's administration. General Black himself retired from his office a poorer man than when he entered it. It is probably too soon to announce a confident opinion regarding the administration of the bureau during the past four years. The class of claims to which I refer, as affording opportunities for collusion and fraud in their allowance, are those in which pension is granted on account of the insanity of the applicant, and is paid to his guardian. Such pensions are always large in amount, the arrears frequently amounting to \$5000, and in some cases \$10,000, the rates varying, usually, from \$24 to \$72 per month with arrears. The pensioner is usually confined as an inmate of an insane asylum, in many cases has no near relatives, and derives little or no personal benefit from the pension which is paid to his guardian. The large sum of money paid in such cases serves as an incentive to the filing of claims on behalf of all ex-soldiers who are insane, it being always alleged (whether true or not) that the ex-soldier's insanity is the result of his military service. There are probably few insane ex-soldiers, in or out of the asylums, in whose behalf some guardian has not filed a claim for pension; the guardian procuring an appointment, frequently, with no other purpose than to prosecute such a claim. I venture to state the opinion, based upon some observation, that the files of the bureau would disclose that a large percentage of the admitted claims of this character are entirely without merit; hence, in respect to such claims, it is not surprising that venality is sometimes suspected. The motive of an act is properly judged by its quality. If the act is illegal or wrongful, the motive becomes a proper subject of suspicion.

In the claim of the guardian of G— W—, insane, a decision was rendered and published by the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, July 11, 1889, which has served as a precedent for the settlement of similar claims since. That claim is a fair type of its class, and the decision of the assistant secretary is therefore interesting. Pension in this case was granted in 1885—not on account of insanity, but on account of disease of the bowels and malarial poisoning. (Incidentally it may be remarked that a great many pensions are now granted on account of "malarial poisoning.") At the time this pension was first granted in 1885, it was adjudged that the disability had theretofore been slight, and had in fact ceased to exist prior to 1882. A pension of \$2 per month was granted for the period from 1865 to 1882, and was discontinued from the latter date on the ground that the disability had ceased to exist. It was at that time decided, in accordance with the

opinion of the medical referee of the Pension Bureau, that the soldier's insanity was not a result of the diseases above mentioned, nor of his military service. The assistant secretary, in his decision, concedes it to be a fact that the claimant had fully recovered his physical health prior to the year 1877. But the claim had in the mean time been reconsidered in the Pension Bureau; in 1888, pension had been restored and rerated; the guardian had been granted a rate of \$8 per month from 1865, and \$24 per month from and after 1882, on account of the diseases first mentioned and "resulting insanity,"—a decision by which he obtained additional arrears of pension amounting to nearly \$3000. The guardian, however, was not satisfied with this amount, and appealed to the assistant secretary, who decided that the rate which had been granted him was too low; and, notwithstanding that the pension had once been rerated by the Pension Bureau, the assistant secretary rerated it again for the period from 1877 to 1889, and gave the guardian about \$1500 more, besides increasing the rate for the future to \$50 per month. The ex-soldier, Mr. W——, had spent the ten years from 1867 to 1877 in the Western Territories, and during said period it is conceded that he had fully recovered physical health. Yet his guardian is pensioned for his insanity, at \$50 per month, upon the theory that this malady was caused by the slight previous disease of the bowels, and the inevitable "malarial poisoning"; he was loaded down with pension, first by the commissioner and then by the assistant secretary.

It may or it may not be significant that the guardian of G—— W—— had brought his patient to Washington, and had him confined in the Insane Asylum in that city, while his claim for rerating and increase was being pushed. To be more direct, I do not regard it as improbable that more or less collusion has been practised in the allowance of such claims. A pension of \$3000, \$5000, or \$8000, with a current rate of \$30, \$50, or \$72 per month, paid to the guardian of an insane man who is confined in an asylum, and who probably has no near relatives, is well adapted to being used or pledged for corrupt purposes.

It appears that a good many claims have been filed on behalf of inmates of the Government Insane Asylum in the District of Columbia, a fact to which allusion is made in the report of the Deputy Commissioner of Pensions for 1891. These claims, as a class, are also referred to more fully in the annual report of the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for 1892. The same assistant secretary who, in July, 1889, had increased and rerated the claim of G—— W—— above mentioned, in his annual report dated November, 1892 (near the

end of his term of office), recommends that the law authorizing the allowance of such claims shall be repealed, or radically amended. The trouble, perhaps, is not with the law, but with the manner in which it has been executed.

In a claim of this character which came to my notice recently, I found it stated that the attorney was prosecuting the claims of five insane claimants, through their respective guardians. Undoubtedly this attorney had searched the records of some insane asylum to find clients. The importance of this class of claims arises not from their number, but from the large amount of money paid out on each claim. The 3253 pensioners who receive \$72 per month receive, in the aggregate, \$500,000 per annum more than the 48,000 who receive only \$4 per month. There is little room to suspect collusion in the allowance of a pension of \$4 per month; but it is quite different in respect to a pension of \$50 or \$72 per month, with back pension amounting to \$5000 or \$10,000.

It is easier to recognize the fact that abuses have been practised than to suggest a proper remedy. Public sentiment does not demand and would not sanction radical measures, conceived in any spirit of unfriendliness to the veterans as a class. Reform should be through conservative methods, with scrupulous care to protect all just rights. Furthermore, I believe that great administrative reforms can be accomplished without new legislation, at least without radical changes in existing law.

The most important, practical question is, How can the expenditures for pension be materially reduced by the correction of abuses and without any injustice to any who are rightfully entitled to pension? I believe that this result can be accomplished by the reduction of excessive rates. The rates of pension vary, as I have stated, from \$1 to \$100 per month, depending (in theory) upon the degree of the pensioner's disability caused by the wound, injury, or disease for which he is pensioned. Now those who are receiving the higher rates of pension are frequently those who were the latest to file their claims, who were but a short time in the military service, and whose claims are the most dubious in character, but have been pushed with the most vigor and persistency. A pension of \$2 or \$4 per month, granted a few years ago, has in many cases been increased, through the persistency of the applicant or his attorney, to \$16, \$24, or \$30 per month. In the case above mentioned of the guardian of G—— W——, the rate of \$2 per month, granted in 1885, was increased by the assistant secretary to \$50 per month in 1889.

The following figures will show the number of invalid pensioners (as distinguished from widows and dependent relatives) on the rolls on June 30, 1885, 1887, and 1892, together

with the average monthly rates of pensions paid for those years, respectively. The average rate for those years is stated approximately, in round numbers:

Number of Invalid Pensioners.	Average rate per month.
1885 . . . 240,201	about \$8.95
1887 . . . 297,726	" 9.50
1892 . . . 687,862	" 11.35

Of the 687,862 invalid pensioners on the rolls on June 30, 1892, there were 293,068 who were pensioned under the law of June 27, 1890, sometimes called the Dependent Pension Law, on account of disabilities which, either in whole or in part, were not the result of military service. Notwithstanding this heavy addition to the pension rolls, the average rate of pension has also steadily increased, as shown by the preceding tabulated statement. Since 1887 there have been no important changes in the laws which could warrant any material increase in the average rate of invalid pensions. On the contrary, the act of June 27, 1890, which authorizes rates only from \$6 to \$12 per month, instead of from \$1 to \$100, ought to have resulted, perhaps, in reducing the average. The increase in rates since 1887 is due almost entirely to the exercise of the discretionary power which is lodged in the Commissioner of Pensions. The pension roll in 1887 no doubt included every man who had lost a leg or arm, or had been seriously injured in any battle, or who, from any cause, was likely to be entitled to a high rate of pension. Yet the average rate of pension is higher now than it was in 1887, while the number of pensioners has more than doubled. The difference in the average rate, which amounts to about \$1.85 per month, applied to 687,862 pensioners, amounts in the aggregate to over \$15,000,000 per annum. In other words, if the Government paid the same average rate per month to all of the 687,862 invalid pensioners who are now on the roll, that was paid in 1887 to the 297,726 who were then on the roll, the annual appropriation would be about \$15,000,000 less than is now required.

The following figures will show the percentage of increase in the number of invalid pensioners to whom have been granted some of the higher rates, since 1887:

Number receiving \$14 per month.	
1887 4829	1892 19,176
Increase of this class in five years, nearly 400 per cent.	

Number receiving from \$15 to \$18 per month, inclusive.	
1887 15,521	1892 47,091
Increase in five years, 300 per cent.	

Number receiving \$24 per month.	
1887 12,581	1892 22,028
Increase in five years, 80 per cent.	

Number receiving \$30 per month.	
1887 9739	1892 15,818
Increase in five years, 66 per cent.	

Number receiving \$50 and \$72 per month (consolidated owing to changes in the law).			
1887 \$50 1313	1892 \$50 285		
1887 \$72 1114	1892 \$72 3253		
		2427	3538
Increase, 45 per cent.			

In certain cases, as where the pensioner has lost a limb, the rate of pension is specified in the statute; and for certain other injuries and causes of disability, the rate is prescribed in a schedule adopted by the Commissioner of Pensions. The rates in such cases, therefore, are not subject to be varied. But in a large majority of cases the rate of pension is determined without reference to any fixed or invariable schedule, and is governed mainly by the certificate and recommendation of a local Board of Examining Surgeons. There are in the United States 1237 Examining Boards, of three members each, who during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1892, rendered 431,166 certificates of examination, for which their fees amounted in the aggregate to \$1,733,958. The board at Baltimore received in fees for the year the sum of \$9930. The two boards at Boston received \$9186 and \$8956, respectively. The three Philadelphia boards received \$8992, \$8712, and \$8454, respectively. The three boards at Washington City received \$6227, \$6445, and \$6699, respectively.

Necessarily the rate of pension depends to a great extent, in many cases, upon the pleasure of the Examining Board; upon their integrity, medical skill, and good judgment, and the extent to which they may be affected by local bias or favoritism toward the applicant. I entertain no doubt that a majority of the boards are efficient and honest; that they discharge their duties faithfully, and endeavor to comply with their instructions and with what they understand to be the wishes and policy of the Commissioner of Pensions by whom they are appointed. But it would hardly be reasonable to suppose that all of these twelve hundred Examining Boards are equally conscientious and disinterested in the discharge of their duties. I was told recently that the secretary of a certain board in a western city had declared that no claimant should ever be turned from their office without a favorable recommendation; and I find that the record of this board confirms the statement of my informant. This board rendered during the year about 900 certificates, 250 of which I examined in consecutive order, without finding one in which they did not describe the claimant as being

entitled to a substantial rate of pension. There is published in the Congressional Record for February 11, 1893, a letter of the medical referee of the Pension Bureau, who strongly recommends a change in the system of conducting these examinations.

The higher rates of pension that are now being paid, in comparison with those paid in former years, are granted in a very large percentage of cases on account of infirmities which are the natural results of advancing years, and are not due to the military service. If the pension laws can justly be construed to warrant the policy of increasing the pensions of those who are on the rolls, from year to year, so as to keep pace with their growing infirmities from age and other natural causes, then, of course, the average rate must continue to increase in the future, with growing rapidity, as it has been increasing during the past five years, without specific amendment of the law to authorize it. But I do not believe that the law fairly admits of this construction. Hence my suggestion, and belief, that the annual appropriation for pensions can be reduced very materially by a discriminating reduction of excessive rates which have heretofore been granted,—a reduction which could be accomplished without necessarily dropping a name from the pension roll. To reduce the pensions of one hundred pensioners who are wrongfully receiving \$50 or \$72 per month, on account of disabilities which are not fairly traceable to the military service, or to cut

off the pensions of one hundred guardians whose wards in the insane asylums derive little or no benefit from the pensions granted, would effect a saving to the Government almost as great as by dropping from the rolls the names of one thousand pensioners who receive only \$4 or \$6 per month.

One great abuse that has grown up in the Pension Bureau, overshadowing other abuses, costing the Government unnecessary millions of dollars every year,—an abuse which has no warrant or foundation in justice, reason, or good policy,—is the practice of granting continual increase of pension from year to year to those who are on the roll: a practice which frequently stimulates the loudest clamor from those who are least entitled to consideration.

I believe there should be one change in the law, establishing a presumption, or rule of evidence,—namely, the enactment of a statute providing that in any case where a claimant served less than six months, where the records of his command in the War Department, if complete, contain no evidence of incurrence of the wound, injury, or disease for which he claims pension, and where it further appears that the claim was not filed within twenty-one years from the date of the claimant's discharge from military service, the pension granted in such case should not exceed \$12 per month. The enactment of such a law would reduce a good many pensions, and would, in my opinion, be warranted by the lessons of experience and justice.

A. B. Casselman.

"WITH THE TREAD OF MARCHING COLUMNS."

I.

WITH the tread of marching columns the forests and hills are stirred,
 With the dust of marching columns the smiling fields are blurred,
 With the swing of marching columns the air is vibrant and warm,
 The listening waters shiver, as if at a coming storm.
 And the bridges that span the rivers bend to oppressive Fate,
 With the burden of marching men, and the cannon's murderous weight.
 The waters shiver, the bridges shudder, and groan, and sigh,
 With the rhythm of marching columns, and horse and foot hurry by.

II.

With the thunder of cannon and shouting the valleys are flooded with sound,
 Till the church-bells are silent with terror, the peals of the organ are drowned:
 Hushed is the life of the village, stricken and palsied with dread;
 Dumb are its dwellers as those of the city named for the dead;
 Closed are the shutters and doors—the village has closed its eyes,
 Like the helpless quarry when sudden and pitiless foes surprise!
 There is none to be seen, there is none to be heard—there is death, while the feet
 Of marching columns resound through the emptied and desolate street.

S. R. Elliot.