THE BIGGEST BUREAU.

A GLANCE AT THE UNITED STATES PENSION OFFICE.

Course of a Pension—The Claim Traced From Its First Entrance Into the Office Until Its Allowance or Rejection.

There is a great deal in the newspapers about this time about pensions and pensioners, but who that reads all that is written knows anything about the pension office? According to the estimates of the Secretary of the Treasury for the service of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1892, pensions and the pension bureau will require an appropriation of over $140,000,000, that is a sum of money that is almost incomprehensible to ordinary people. It is over $2 for every person in the United States. The machinery that will make the disbursements will require $5,000,000 to keep it running. The staff of the pension office consists of nearly 6,000 people. There are the United States examining surgeons, who are scattered all over the United States and whose duties consist in making physical examinations of applicants for pension. There are the pension agents, who pay out the money to the pensioners. There are special examiners, who travel about and investigate cases of unusual complication or in which fraud is suspected.

The pension office proper, the huge building of red brick that Gen. Meigs put up in Judiciary Square, contains the bulk of the men who give out pensions or refuse to give them out, as the case may be. It is larger than several of the departments and is to a great extent a department by itself. There are fifteen divisions in it and each one of them does an amount of business that is quite astonishing, for there is no loafing there. No matter how hard the clerks work it is almost impossible for them to keep abreast of the increasing tide of applications for pensions that come pouring in. These applications are for every conceivable ailment. Before the enactment of the dependent pension law every claimant who made what is known as an "original invalid" claim—that is, a claim on his own account for a disability that he had incurred in the war—had to prove a number of very difficult things. He had to make it clear that he was himself first. Always the government requires proof of identity, and yet some clever scoundrels have imposed on the pension office in this matter. Another form of imposition is that practiced by the gentler sex. According to the pension laws the pension of a widow ceases as soon as she gets married. Of course this is a hardship to a great extent, because at that time, if she marries a poor man, she needs money more than ever before; but Uncle Sam doesn't look at it in that light and thinks that her new husband ought to support his wife. The consequence of this is easily foreseen. Some of the ladies, wishing a husband and a pension at the same time, get married and never give the pension office a chance to congratulate them, but continue to lead a dual existence, posing as poor forlorn widows before the government and leading pleasant married lives at home.

The dependent pension law has made many claims easy to prove. After the claimant has established his identity it must be proved that he served ninety days in the army or navy and was honorably discharged, and that he is suffering from "mental or physical disability of a permanent character, not the result of 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." But any claimant who prefers to claim under the old law may do so, and in this case he has to prove that he served in the war, that he got disabled while in service and in line of duty, and that his disability, if a disease, has existed to a pensionable degree each and every year since the close of the war up to the present time.

The question of line of duty has produced many singular cases and has puzzled the pension office sorely. Was a man who bought a pie from a huckster in a certain southern city where his regiment was quartered and was poisoned by it in the line of duty, and having died from the effects of the pie, is his widow entitled to a pension? He had his regular rations; the government never ordered him to eat a pie; is it responsible for his death? On the other hand is there any probability that he would have eaten the poisonous pie if he had stayed at home? Isn't the government responsible for having put him in a situation where he would be exposed to temptation of eating bad pies? Then there is the question of bathing in creeks or rivers during a march. Sometimes the soldiers were ordered to go in and if anything happened then of course it was the government's fault, but often the soldiers used to like to take a swim without authority for doing so, and when anything befell them under such circumstances it was their own fault. Should the government be liable under these circumstances? Following the usual custom in such cases they are passed upon individually and the decision of the pension office is dependent largely upon the particular circumstances, but the tendency in late years has been toward liberal rather than strict decisions.

Some of the claims that the pension office has on its files are curious indeed. The writer once heard of a claim for the effects of the bite of a snake. The claimant alleged that he went to sleep in his tent one day; that he was awakened by being stung; that he was sure it was a snake; that his health had been bad since. There was a man once who claimed pension for leprosy. When the examining surgeon examined him, he found white spots upon his skin caused by the loss of coloring matter in certain places, a harmless affection known in medicine as "veal skin." The claimant observing that he was spotted, as leopards are, naturally supposed that he had leprosy. It is a pity that there should be so many applications on file for pension from diseases that cannot be taken seriously, because the claims interfere with the speedy adjudication of worthy claims.

Let us briefly watch the course of a claim through the different divisions of the pension office. John Smith, let us suppose, claims pension for rheumatism contracted when he was serving in the swamps of Virginia. The declaration, or affidavit in which he sets forth the facts, is received by the mail division and stamped there. Then it is sent to the record division, where there are hundreds of enormous books in which the names of all applicants are transcribed, and where a number is given to the claim and where it is put up in a neat, tough paper jacket. From the record division it goes to one of the adjoining divisions. If it comes from a Pennsylvanian or a Michigan man it goes to the Middle division; if from a New Yorker, to the Eastern division or to the Southern or Western division, as the case may be. When it reaches the files of one of the divisions it may be considered as having been launched on its career. An examiner is given charge of it, and it is his duty to call for all the evidence necessary to establish it as a good or bad claim. John Smith's rheumatism is investigated from every point of view, and the correctness of his testimony is tested as well as it can be on a purely ex parte system. In the hands of the examiner the claim stays until it is completed. Sometimes it takes a few months only to reach a stage of completion, and sometimes, too often in fact, it takes years. There are plenty of claims still pending in the pension office that are ten years old, there are more that are five years old, and there are even some that are a quarter of a century old. When the examiner has brought the claim to a complete state he briefs the papers in it and submits it to the Board of Review for admission or rejection, as the case may be. The Board of Review, if it thinks the claim requires more evidence, returns it to the division from whence it came, where it undergoes more treatment from the Examiner, but if, on the other hand, the Board of Review approves the findings of the Examiner and allows the claim it goes to the certificate division, where a pension certificate is issued. If the claim is rejected it is sent to the rejected files of the adjudicating division from whence it emanated.—[Washington Star.

OLDEST CHAIR IN AMERICA.

Carved Out of One Block of Wood and Came from the Bahamas.

The oldest chair in America is carved out of a single block of wood, and in full size is about thirty inches long. The front is cut out in the shape of the "man-turtle;" the legs stand for the clumsy limbs of the animal, and you sit on his back.

The oldest piece of parlor furniture in America came from the Bahama Islands, the spot where Columbus first landed, and the natives did not have high-backed chairs as we have. They rested and slept in hammocks, hamacas they called them, and we borrowed both the form and the name.

You sit on this chair just as you lie in a hammock, for which it is in truth a wooden and elegant substitute. Your feet rest on the ground by the side of the turtle's forefeet, and your whole body lies along on the hammock-chair, your head resting on the extreme end.

I cannot tell you how happy I was the first time I reclined on this curious couch gazing up into the sky and thinking of the time when the voyagers of 1492 landed at Guanahani and saw the dusky savages sleeping in hammocks, says a writer.

But I must tell you how I came to be so certain about the antiquity of my treasure. Well, I suppose there is no doubt that Columbus landed first on the Bahamas. This very chair was found in a cave on the islands by an acquaintance of mine who was exploring for bats. He also recovered stone implements and other relics of Carib occupation, but these do not concern us now.

But how do I know that such things were used by the Columbus Indians? Might not this chair have been made hundreds of years afterward? The great discoverer and his followers destroyed and removed all the savages of this region and substituted negro slaves: the African s are good carvers and we often see pictures of chiefs sitting on stools carved from a single block of wood.

True, and that is a fair question. This very objection puzzled me a long time until one day I was reading the account of Columbus's voyage by old Herrera, and popped on the following paragraph, which settled the matter finally:

"When the ship was ready to sail the Spaniards returned on the 5th of November with three of the native Indians, saying they had traveled twenty-two leagues and found a village of fifty houses, and that they contained about one thousand persons, because a whole generation lived in a house; and that the prime men came out to meet them, led them by the arms and lodged them in one of the new houses, causing them to sit down on seats made of a solid piece of wood in the shape of a beast with very short legs and the tail held up the head before with eyes and ears of gold."

Now, what have you to say against my chair? I have some doubt about the eyes and ears of gold. They might have been of very brilliant shell, because all our Indians use mother-of-pearl and other tests of mollusks for inlaying.

How Spiders Kill.

Spiders kill their prey by the agency of a poisonous fluid, which is secreted in a gland, and which flows at will to the extremity of one of the fauces or jaws. Some writers have denied the existence of this poisonous substance; but the effects which a spider's bite have been known to have upon a human being prove undoubtedly that it is present. Persons who have been bitten by a very large South American spider, known as the *Mygale fusca*, have felt the effects in the recurrence of severe pains in the portion of the body attacked for as long as twelve or even twenty years after the infliction of the wound. The stories told of the disastrous effects of the bites of the tarantula are, however, quite fabulous. Everybody has heard of the belief, held by the inhabitants of the district around Tarantum, that if one chanced to be bitten by a tarantula, he became subject to a dire disease which could only be cured by musical strains. The disease no doubt existed, and was probably a form of hysteria, in the cure of which music may have proved beneficial, but to saddle an innocent spider with the odium of producing it was distinctly unfair.

The destructive powers of spiders do not stop short at killing insects, for some tropical species habitually catch and eat small birds. The accounts first given of these formidable creatures were for a long time looked upon as mere travelers' tales, but more recent observations have fully confirmed the statements made by those who originally described them. The birds are not caught in snares, for these spiders spin no webs. They conceal themselves in crevices or under leaves and from some such retreat pounce upon the birds they have succeeded in approaching. A great deal of their hunting is done during the dark hours of night, when they are able to steal upon their prey without being perceived. They often rule the nests of humming birds, dragging out the young and devouring them, while the distracted parent birds flutter helplessly around.—[Longman's Magazine.

Prehistoric Ruins in Kentucky.

Quite a curiosity, which has caused considerable talk, has been discovered five miles from Russellville, Ky. On a high, cliffy, miniature mountain, so thickly overgrown with cedars as to render the passage of human beings almost impossible, was accidentally discovered what is supposed to have once been a city. Here and there for several hundred yards in every direction were found the half-buried ruins of what were once the home of a people of whom we know nothing. A quarry close at hand showed evidence of having been worked in the long ago, and from its capacious bosom the material with which the houses had been constructed was taken. The most wonderful thing seen was the one building, which has stood the storms of ages and is still intact and good for centuries more. It is a square building about 30x40 feet, and is built of huge blocks of stone, which are fully ten feet long by five wide in the foundation, and grow smaller higher up, until at the top, thirty-five feet from the ground, the capstones will measure about three feet square. The unanimous opinion of all who have visited the ruins is that this must have been built and used as a fort by the inhabitants of the town in the time of danger.—[Globe-Democrat.

KILLING MEN IN BATTLE.

An Army Officer's Recollections of War Times.

"When a man goes into a battle it is presumably with the intention of doing some killing," said an ex-army officer to a writer for the Washington Star. "And yet I never knew a soldier who liked to feel that he had himself with his own hands actually slain an individual foe. There is an intoxication in the melee of conflict, but no man likes to feel that his own pistol shot or bayonet thrust has taken away the life of a fellow being.

"Perhaps I should except from this general statement the typical sharpshooter, who cultivates an instinct of warfare that approaches the murderous. I have never been able to see how a man could deliberately take up a station in a tree top or rifle pit and mark down for death, one after another, individuals whose lives were solely at the mercy of his scientific aim. Of course, war is always savagery, but there is an element of certainty in the sharpshooting business that, to my notion, approaches very near to murder.

"I vividly recall to mind one experience of my own while with a skirmish party at the second battle of Bull Run. The fight had just begun and a Confederate scout approached without knowing it very close to a clump of trees behind which my little detachment was concealed. Catching sight of us suddenly he wheeled his horse like a flash and was off. On the spur of the moment I fired my pistol right at him and a second later he wheeled in his saddle and fell out of it. The fight swept over in our direction and I saw no more for the time being of my victim; but, though I was in the thick of the fray for most of the time for the next few hours, I could not get out of my mind the horror of the idea that I had killed that man. Not only had I taken away his life, but very likely had I made his wife a widow, and his children fatherless. That night when we went into camp I had this oppressive feeling still on my mind, when, to my great delight, I saw the man that I had killed, evidently a prisoner, sitting on the stump of a tree with his arm in a sling.

"'My dear fellow,' I exclaimed, with much cordiality, approaching him, 'I trust that you are not seriously hurt.'

"'Naw,' replied the Confederate, drylv. 'When you fired at me my horse shied and broke my arm against a tree. Your bullet didn't hit me at all.'

"I do assure you I never was more relieved in all my life.

"But the most painful experience that I met with during the war was at Chancelcrsville. I found one of our men, when the fire was pretty hot, skulking behind a log.

"'This'll never do, man!' I shouted in his ear. 'Get up there and take your place in the line.'

"I took him by the scruff of the neck—for he was seized with a panic—and shoved him forward. As I did so, with my hand on his collar, a chance bullet struck him on the forehead and he fell dead without a cry.

"The shock that incident gave me I have never entirely recovered from. I felt that I had killed that man. The fact that I was in a position of equal danger with himself did not affect my moral impression as to the occurrence. It seemed as if I had deliberately forced him into the path of the bullet, and that I was responsible for his death. Such, in one sense, was true, and yet, of course, I was not in any just way responsible. But I shall never get over the haunting recollection."

A Celebrated Duel.

Many duels have occurred, first and last, upon the field of Bladensburg, near Washington, most of them, perhaps, of later date than the two described, but owing perhaps to the less prominent position of the parties scant record has been preserved. The celebrated encounter between the Hon. Henry Clay and the Hon. John Randolph, in 1826, did not occur here, but took place just across the Potomac on the Virginia shore, a few miles above Georgetown. This grew out of the Presidential election in 1824, in which the candidates were Adams, Crawford, Jackson, and Clay. Jackson had received the highest number of electoral votes, but not having a majority, as required by the Constitution, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives, where, by a combination between the friends of Clay and Adams, the latter was chosen. The supporters of Jackson were highly indignant, and when Clay became the Secretary of State under the new Administration they raised the cry of a "corrupt bargain and sale," though there never was the smallest particle of evidence in support of such charge. Randolph, a Senator in Congress from Virginia, in delivering a speech one day in that body, referred to the affair as "a coalition between Blifil and Black George, the Puritan and the blackleg." The Kentucky statesman immediately challenged the eccentric Virginian, the cartel was promptly accepted, and they met. Clay shot a hole through his antagonist's coat, Randolph fired in the air, and the parties immediately became reconciled and remained warm friends ever afterward.—[Magazine of American History.

A Prize for the Ideal Couple.

The "Dunmow Flitch" was a prize offered by Robert de Fitzwalter, at Dunmow, Essex, England, in the year 1224. It was established on the following conditions: "That whatever married couple will go to the priory, and kneeling on two sharp-pointed stones will swear they have not quarreled nor repented of their marriage within a year and a day after its celebration, shall receive a flitch of bacon." The prize was claimed for the first time two hundred years after it had been instituted, that is to say in 1445. From that date until 1751 only five persons called for it; and after 1751 the flitch was left unclaimed till 1855. The tenth occasion of awarding this prize was in 1876.—[Courier-Journal.

A *peculiar* fact with reference to Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is, that, unlike sarsaparillas and other blood medicines, which are said to be good for the blood in March, April and May, the "Discovery" works equally well *all the year round*, and in all cases of blood-taints or humors, no matter what their name or nature.

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Why? Because it's sold on a *peculiar plan*, and you only pay for *the good* you get.

Can you ask more?

"Golden Medical Discovery" is a concentrated vegetable extract, put up in large bottles; contains no alcohol to inebriate, no syrup or sugar to derange digestion; is pleasant to the taste, and equally good for adults or children.

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Children always Enjoy It.

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of pure Cod Liver Oil with Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda is almost as palatable as milk. Children enjoy it rather than otherwise. A MARVELLOUS FLESH PRODUCER it is indeed, and the little lads and lassies who take cold easily, may be fortified against a cough that might prove serious, by taking Scott's Emulsion after their meals during the winter season.

Beware of substitutions and imitations.

English Art of To-day.

In future years, when we walk through the rooms devoted to the English painters in the National Gallery, we shall sum up the history of the art of the century in a few broad sentences, writes Theodore Child in *Harper's Magazine*. We shall find that the mass of the English painters have relied simply upon nature, and persistently consented themselves portraiture, the sentimental drama of daily life, and the patient transcription of the phenomena of sea, sky and lanpscape. At the beginning of the century we shall notice that some painters named Barry, Fueseli, West and Haydon were haunted by poetic ambition, and imagined that it was possible to begi where Raphael and Michaelango had left off, and so continue to interest mankind by the rearrangement of lifeless formulæ and worn out conventions. The productions of these men, remain, however, mere historical curiosities.

Then we shall observe a change in the current ideals of art and the appropriation of new stores of poetry and romance, of National legend and universal myth. But amidst the leading exponents of the new ideals we shall not distinguish common qualities other than evidences of wide literary culture, a tendency to dreaminess, symbolism, and definiteness of sensible imagery, and a parti pris of imitative admiration of the works of the intense and complicated artists of the fifteenth century, like Botticelli, Mantegua and Memling.

Among the artists of this category two will be found to stand out with all the force of their poetical and ultra-refined personalities, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones, the former the more original of the two, and the latter the more assimilative, being content in much of his work with variations upon or studies from the masters of the fifteenth century above mentioned.

Beware of the thing that bad men are in favor of.

Every habit is either a wing or a chain.

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TANNING BY ELECTRICITY.

A Queer Industrial Wrinkle Reported from France.

For some time past reports have been current as to the perfection in France of a method of tanning by electricity, and the matter has excited great curiosity throughout the country. This country is, as America is, one of the largest leather producing countries in the world, and has no fewer than 3,000 or 4,000 tanning establishments. Within the present month the process has actually been experimented with in America, and the results are now exciting no small amount of discussion and controversy in leather circles. The process, which is the invention of Worms & Bale, of Paris, has been under trial abroad since 1887, in a tannery in Paris and another large tannery has been started for the same purpose at Long Jumeau. A third plant has been established in Bermondsey, the great leather district in London. In this method the tanning is expedited in two ways; first, by the agitation of the skins in contact with the tanning liquor, and secondly by the passage of the electric current through the body of the liquid. To attain these two ends a circular drum is employed and as the drum rotates current is passed through it by means of a wire brought to contacts at its side. The skins to undergo this process are prepared in the ordinary way, the hair being taken off by lime, and they are then put into the drum with the tanning solution. The current to which they are subjected averaged about 70 to 100 volts, and the direction of the current is changed every twelve hours, so as to act equally on the skins, which constitute the electrodes. During the operation the liberation of gas is insignificant, so that the hides may be considered to act in the same way as the plates of an accumulator. Goat and sheep skins require forty-eight hours. Cow, steer and horse hides require from seventy-two to ninety-six hours, according to their texture. The leather produced in this way has been examined by experts and is said to be of excellent quality. Nine hundred and nineteen pounds of hide treated in this electrical manner at Newark gave 1,278 pounds of leather in four days, while 1,042 pounds of hides, subjected to the action of the revolving drum, but without the current turned on, gave only 1,210 pounds of poorly tanned hides. Hence there appear to be economies additional to those involved in the saving of time. As far as the electrical process goes, it may be said that it is based upon thoroughly sound theoretical considerations, which have been tested and proved by some of the best known electricians in France and England.

A Fact.

(From an interview, *N. Y. World*).

In an interview with a leading drug-house the *N. Y. World*, Nov. 9, 1890, gives the following comment on the propietors of reliable patent medicines:

"He is a specialist, and should know more of the disease he actually treats than the ordinary physician; for while the latter may come across says fifty cases in a year of the particular disease which this medicine combats, its manufacturer investigates thousands. Don't you suppose his prescription, which you buy ready made up for 50 cents, is likely to do more good than that of the ordinary physician, who charges you anywhere from $2 to $10 for giving it, and leaves you to pay the cost of having it prepared?

"The patent medicine man, too, usually has the good sense to confine himself to ordinary, every-day disease. He leaves to the physician cases in which there is immediate danger to life, such as violent fevers. He does this because, in the treatment of such cases, there are other elements of importance besides medicine, such as proper dieting, good nursing, a knowledge of the patient's strength and so on. Where there is no absolute danger to life, where the disease is one which the patient can diagnose for himself or which some physician has already determined, the patent medicine maker says fearlessly: 'I have a preparation which is better than any other known and which will cure you.' In nine cases out of ten his statement is true."

This is absolutely true as regards the great remedy for pain, St. Jacob's Oil. It can assert without fear of contradiction, that it is a prompt and permanent cure of pain. It can show proofs of cures of chronic cases of 20, 30 and 40 years' standing. In truth it rarely ever fails if used according to direction, and a large proportion of cures is made by half the contents of a single bottle. It is therefore the best.

Miss Mary Garrett, of Baltimore, has a bath in her home lined with Mexican onyx that cost $6,000.

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LUCAS COUNTY.

FRANK J. CHENEY makes oath that he is the senior partner of the firm of F. J. CHENEY & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and State aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of One Hundred Dollars for each and every case of CATARRH that cannot be cured by the use of HALL'S CATARRH CURE.

FRANK J. CHENEY.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D., 1886.

{SEAL} A. W. GLEASON, *Notary Public.*

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Books that do not make you think had better not be read.

The Coldest in Years.

So the weather prophets seem to predict that this winter will be, and by our experience thus far can we doubt but that they must know a thing or two about the matter? Well, be this as it may, all will concede that a winter with clear, cold, bracing atmosphere is certainly more conducive to health than those so mild of the past few years.

Warm clothing is most essential; even that sometimes fails to protect us from the friendly embrace of "Jack Frost," who, no doubt, will be very vigorous in his endeavors to let us know that he has come to stay awhile. Welcome him we must, but let not "auld acquaintance be forgot" should he become too familiar; checkmate him as I always have done. No frost-bites for me if you please; the moment I feel his icy breath upon fingers or toes I nip his little scheme in the bud by bathing freely with some of that grand old pain reliever called Dr. Tobias's Venetian Liniment. You can just try it for yourselves and find out, too, that what I tell you is the truth, and nothing but the truth; something well to remember!

The Failure

Of the kidneys and liver to properly remove the lactic or uric acid from the system results in

RHEUMATISM.

This acid accumulates in the fibrous tissues, particularly in the joints, and causes inflammation and the terrible pains and aches, which are more agonizing every time a movement is made.

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Rheumatism is to purify the blood. And to do this take the best blood purifier, Hood's Sarsaparilla. Hosts of friends testify to cures of rheumatism it has effected. Try it.

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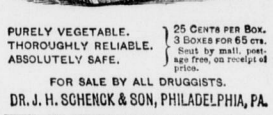

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