THE PENSION VETOES.

The President Fiercely Arraigned for His Action.

Nothing has ever so stirred up the friends of the soldiers in Congress as the numerous vetoes of private pension bills by the President—nearly 100 up to date. Some of these cases are particularly meritorious ones, and the vetoing of them does great hardship and injustice. The Republicans have been trying to bring some of these bills to a vote, to pass them, if possible, over the President's head, which requires a two-thirds majority. The Democrats in the House, however, voted solidly to refer them back to the Pension Committee, and all of them were for the time so disposed of.

Probably all the vetoed pension bills which originated in the Senate, with one exception, will be reported from the Committee on Pensions, with recommendations that they do pass, the President's veto notwithstanding. The one exception will be covered by a new bill, the vetoed one being defective in consequence of a clerical error.

In the case of Harriet Welch the President said: "Though this widow admits that prior to her marriage with the deceased soldier she had married another man whom she could only say she believed to be dead." The Senate Committee says in its report: "No question is raised," in the evidence, "as to the legality of the marriage which seems to have resulted in long cohabitation and the birth of seven children. The claimant was married to the soldier June 7, 1868. There is nothing in the evidence to justify the slur which the President casts upon the chastity of this widow and the legitimacy of her seven fatherless children. Pensions have heretofore frequently been granted in cases similar to this. Human nature cries out aloud for the allowance of pensions in such a case, and if this woman, with her seven small children, is to be deprived of it, your committee are at least glad that the responsibility rests elsewhere."

In reporting upon the case of David W. Hamilton, the committee reprints its original report, in which it says: "This farce of rejecting claims for pensions of men who have rendered years of active service, because they were unable to discharge the duties of a soldier, so long indulged in, is also a crime, and it is time that the dictates of common sense should be adopted instead of some of the rules so long in force in the Pension Office. There is imperative need of reform in this respect, and has been for many years."

Alfred Denny is the man who claimed to have been injured by contact with the horn of his saddle, and in respect to whose case the President incidentally remarked that "Those saddles were very dangerous contrivances."

The Pension Committee says: "The sneer in the veto at the wounds received by so many of our gallant cavalry during their long rides and furious charges in the war indicates a state of mind that incapacitates, at least temporarily, an official from considering impartially a pension claim. It would be well if the horns of public indignation could be so applied that our soldiers could get simple justice in these times of peace."

We give extracts from some of the numerous speeches in the House on this subject.

Mr. Jackson (Pa.):

Mr. Speaker, I am in favor of referring this bill to the Committee on Invalid Pensions with instructions to report it back at an early day. I have more than one reason for this. I do not propose to discuss specially the merits of this particular bill; but, Mr. Speaker, it is apparent to me, as I think it must be to all who have given the subject attention and consideration, that so far as the present Congress is concerned the question of pension legislation must be met and decided as a general proposition. I infer from the action of the majority who control this House that they have determined that there shall not be at this session any further general legislation on the subject of pensions; that they do not intend that any private bills shall be passed over the President's veto, and that but few private bills shall be considered at all.

I want both sides of this question heard. I want the country to know that there is a contest here between the President and at least a majority of his party who agree with him on one side, and those who favor just pensions on the other side. I have no expectation that this difference can be reconciled, and I am willing that it shall be submitted to the people of the United States to decide after a full hearing.

For these reasons I do not think it is necessary to specially consider on this motion the merits of this particular bill. I want some course taken that will divide the whole question. I do not think, judging from his action in the cases that have been sent to him, that it makes any great difference whether a bill is a good one or a bad one to receive a veto at the hands of the present Executive. I think it must be conceded by all who are familiar with these cases that he has approved some of the very weakest and least meritorious, while a large majority of the bills which he has vetoed are deserving, worthy, and just. But I do not think he wants it understood that he intends to make any particular difference between cases. He simply proposes to veto a large number of the bills that are sent to him. His reason is based on opposition to all bills of this character.

He is in sympathy with those who are at heart opposed to pensioning Union soldiers, and he intends to limit and restrict the number of those that shall hereafter be pensioned as far as it reasonably can be done, and if the position is taken in the early part of his administration, what may we not expect in the near future in the way of repeal of the legislation of the last 20 years should his party be retained in power? I oppose the proposition to refer the message without instructions to the Committee on Invalid Pensions. I give it credit for great industry and fairness, as well as for its conscientious discharge of the duties assigned it. But the President has a majority of his party friends on that committee. I can hardly expect them to be very decided in their opposition to his action, and I would not be surprised if they are not disposed to add very indiscriminately to bringing forward these bills. They have, it seems to me—perhaps unintentionally—by allowing attacks on their action on these bills to go unanswered, permitted a record to be made up at this session of Congress that does injustice to the committee and every member of this House that favors just pension legislation.

But we were told that this great and good President, who vetoes pension bills by the score, meant right. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I suppose he does mean right in the sense of attempting to please certain elements of the country; but he does not mean right in the eyes of the generous and loyal people of this land. [Applause on the Republican side.] I desire to say Mr. that the President means exactly what his veto says. His vetoes, by their substance, language, tone, and temper, can have no other construction than that he dislikes all pension legislation, and I do not think that he will thank gentlemen for intimating that he is only trying to save, at best, the poor little pittance of money that is in controversy in granting these pensions.

No, sir; that is not what he means. These vetoes are intended for the approval of a portion of the people of this country, and I desire to say that they unquestionably meet their approval.

But they do not meet my approval. They will not, in my humble judgment, meet the approval of the majority of the people of this country, and especially those who were always loyal to its flag. It is very evident that the only question which we are called on to meet now, and which I assure you will yet be an important one before the people, is whether or not we are to have proper and just legislation on the part of Congress in favor of the deserving soldiers of this country.

MRS. MCCARTY'S CASE.

The Speaker laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States:

To the House of Representatives:

I return herewith without approval House bill No. 5666, entitled "An act granting a pension to Mrs. Catherine McCarty."

The beneficiary is the widow of John McCarty, of the First Missouri Regiment of State Militia Volunteers, who died at Clinton, Mo., April 8, 1864.

The widow filed her claim in 1880, alleging that her husband died while in the service from an overdose of colchicum.

The evidence shows without dispute that on the day previous to the death of the soldier a comrade procured some medicine from the Regimental Surgeon and asked McCarty to smell and taste it; that he did so, and shortly afterward became very sick and died the next morning.

It is quite evident the deceased soldier did more than taste this medicine.

Although it would be pleasant to aid the widow in this case, it is hardly fair to ask the Government to grant a pension for the freak or gross heedlessness and recklessness of this soldier.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, July 6, 1886.

Mr. Matson (Ind.) moved to refer the bill and message to the Committee on Invalid Pensions. Mr. Browne (Ind.) moved to amend by instructing the committee to report the bill back to the House "on or before Monday next."

Mr. Browne (Ind.):

But, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that these discussions on the part of the President have proceeded on a wrong theory altogether. In all these messages, after the President has been duly facetious and has attempted to bring into disrepute these claims, criticized them, and cast, as far as it was possible, contumely on these applications, he has assumed that if the pension was properly rejected by the Pension Bureau under existing law this Congress may not give affirmative favorable legislation. That is a mistake. These private bills are of themselves the law of the particular case. It is not a question in these cases for Congress to determine whether or not under the general law the claimant is entitled to a pension. That is not the question. If he were entitled to relief under the general law the Pension Bureau is the place where he would secure his relief. There may be instances to be sure in which Congress sits as a kind of court of appeal to reverse the action of the Commissioner on the facts. There may be such cases; but in the main this Congress determines that in the particular case a pension ought to be given, not because it is covered by a general law, but because it is not covered by any general statute. It is because it has in itself equities that take it out of the general rule. It is because the facts of the case address themselves to the judgment and sympathy, if you please, of Congress. It is because in view of the circumstances it is the opinion of Congress that in the particular instance a pension ought to be granted.

There is an army of neglected men for whom I entertain the highest possible respect. I may say the highest possible veneration, a class of men, and a very large one, to whom more is due perhaps than to any other class of soldiers who went to face the cannon's mouth on the battlefields of the Republic. These are not known in any pension legislation in this or in any Congress. I mean the men who enlisted early, the men who fell in at the first tap of the drum, the men who began to march under the flag from the early days of 1861, who made the weary marches, who camped by the river sides, who unfolded their tents by the miasmatic swamps, the men who were in every possible battle, the men who were seldom sick, the men who were never in hospital, the men who never skulked, who were never captured. These men who fought it out from the beginning to the end, not being disabled, are not known on the pension-rolls of the country. Would to God that I could give every man of them a pension from this hour on to the last day of his life. [Applause.]

To these men more than to any others is due the honor of suppressing the rebellion and saving our civil institutions for posterity. To them a loyal people owe a debt they can never fully pay.

When I speak of my admiration for these men do not understand me as casting any reproach on the men who were disabled early in the fight. I remember an instance in which a comrade of mine left civil life, the peaceful fireside of his happy home, and a week afterward was shot down by my side on the battlefield, having served his country less than a week. Would any man dispute the fact that his wife and his children were entitled to a pension?

Men may in very short service have incurred disabilities that are pensionable. Thousands of well-authenticated cases of this kind have occurred. I am in favor of taking care of these men, putting them on the pension-roll, and rather than commit a mistake against a soldier I would commit one against the Government he fought to save. [Applause on the Republican side.] To do otherwise would be rank injustice and base ingratitude.

Now, I want to call the attention of the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. Bragg] to the fact that while he has spoken so disrespectfully and sarcastically of this class of short-service men who went into the army late in the war, the gentleman himself, if I am not mistaken, has more than once in this House recorded his vote in favor of pensioning the soldiers of the Mexican war. The gentleman shakes his head. If he means that he did not, let me congratulate him; but all the gentlemen who sit about him upon that side of the House and vote with him, all of them except, perhaps, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Warner], voted to put on the pension rolls of the Republic men who never heard the sound of a hostile gun, men who never left the camps for rendezvous, men who never saw a Mexican, living or dead. [Laughter.]

Yet the gentlemen who voted for that pension bill voted for it without reluctance, voted for it eagerly. Those gentlemen, when some unfortunate man has fallen in a war that amounts to something, in a real controversy, a war of four weary years, in which half a million of men on the Union side alone perished, a war that took hundreds of millions from the hard earnings of the people, a war that created a pension roll that is to last for generations, a war that is still exacting millions every year from the men who work in the field and in the shop—when a man who tried to take his part in that war in an humble way, and who happened to be injured or killed accidentally, rather than in the strict line of military duty—when such a man comes here for a pension they take another view. They not only deny him a pension, but ridicule him for having applied for one. Take, for example, the case of the unfortunate soldier in this particular case who took medicine that turned out to be poison, and died, leaving a widowed wife and orphan children; when we propose to grant a pension in that case the Executive says: "No; I will sign your bill paying out tens of millions of the people's money to those soldiers of the Mexican war who were not wounded, who were not disabled, who never fought, but I will not sign this bill." And you gentlemen on the other side vociferously shout amen!

This unfortunate woman's husband died, it is true, in the service; she laid him, broken and bleeding, a willing sacrifice upon the altar of his country; she and her children have lost their protector; but, says the President, I cannot allow the Congress of the United States to give that poor woman and her children a pension, because the soldier did not meet his death strictly in the line of military duty." May God have mercy upon a man who has a heart like that! ["Amen" on the Republican side.] I think if such a heart belonged to an ordinary man it would be so withered and hardened that the people could, in imagination at least, hear it rattle against its owner's ribs as he walks along the streets. That is all there is in this case. I admit that upon a strict construction of the law this man did not die in the line of military duty; but suppose a comrade had accidentally discharged a musket and killed him, that would not have been any more in the line of military duty; yet who would deny the widow a pension?

Hundreds of instances of the kind have gone through the Pension Office, as they have gone through the Congress of the United States. What difference is there in being shot by accident and poisoned by accident? It is hard to draw the exact line of military duty in all cases. I appeal to gentlemen who have been in the military service if this be not true; and I regret exceedingly that I am here raising a question of military law with that distinguished soldier, the President, who is Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States. [Laughter on the Republican side.] He has probably, by reason of his position, seen longer service and better service than I have. I judge so from the manner in which he treats his comrades who suffered with him.

I know of no such demand coming up here from the men who pay their hard earnings into the Treasury. I know many men who did not serve in the army. I have a large constituency, embracing some who did not like the war very well; but I know none of them who begrudges the pittance that the Congress of the United States has been giving to these men in the shape of these private pension bills.

The President has already vetoed 98 of these bills. If he should happen to veto 11 more he will have vetoed in the short period of 60 days more acts of the American Congress than all his predecessors have vetoed; and he will go down to posterity as the great American objector, and will rob one of my colleagues [Mr. Holman] of the laurels he has been so long and arduously laboring to earn.

Mr. Conger (Iowa.):

Mr. Speaker, the only question at issue in this case seems to arise upon the position taken by the President that the widow of no soldier should receive a pension unless he was killed in battle or died in the service as a direct result of injuries received technically in the line of his duty.

Here is the case of a man who enlisted less than a year after the commencement of the war and served two full years. One day when he and his comrades were sitting in a tent, another comrade came in with a bottle of medicine, and without a suggestion from this soldier, asked him to smell and taste it. He did smell and taste it then and there; and before the next morning he was dead. He left a widow with four children. This widow comes to this Government and says that her husband gave two full years of active and valiant service in defense of his country and its flag; that by a simple accident which might have happened perhaps to any curious gentleman, even to gentlemen on this floor, her husband lost his life while in the service of his country, and in consequence she has for years been asking from the Government the pittance of $8 or $12 per month.

Mr. Speaker, whence comes the opposition to this pension legislation? It comes from the other side of this House. It has always come from that side. Go back a comparatively few years to the commencement of this pension legislation and see who voted against the original arrears act? Sixty-six Democrats, and not one Republican. Who voted against the modified arrears act? Sixty-one Democrats, and but one single Republican. Who, in the beginning of this session, voted against the addition of $4 a month to the widows' pensions? Sixty-six Democrates and not one solitary Republican. Who is it that obstructs legislation at our Friday night sessions? Who is it that calls for a quorum and defeats the consideration of these meritorious bills? Democrats always, and never, think God, a Republican. [Applause on the Republican side.] Who is it, Mr. Speaker, that vetoes these meritorious pension bills? A Democratic President; for never has a Republican President sent to Congress a message vetoing a bill of this character. Mr. Speaker, I want this House to understand, and I want the country to understand, that the Republicans are responsible for this pension legislation, and every one of them here is willing to shoulder his full share of that responsibility.

Mr. Bayne (Pa.):

Mr. Speaker, if I am correctly informed all the Presidents of the United States before the one we now have vetoed but one pension bill. No man among them all in the whole previous history of this country had the courage to deny to the widows, or the orphan children, or to the crippled soldiers or dependent parents of such soldiers pension until we got our present President. He stands out in the history of our country a conspicuous example of a disposition, a taste, a temerity, a partisanship which is unexampled.

Much interest was felt in the case of Sally Ann Bradley.

Mr. Grosvenor (Ohio):

Mr. Speaker, I take it the question whether or not the message of the Executive should be referred to the Committee on Invalid Pensions turns very much on the question which was originally involved in the application of Mrs. Bradley for a pension; and so, Mr. Speaker, I cannot conceive of an argument against a reference of this bill that does not consider the merits of the bill itself.

In the limited time which I have to address the House I desire to go directly at that question and not with words of crimination or condemnation against the President of the United States for the action which he has seen fit to take in this case. That is to say, I desire to stand upon better and stronger grounds than an assault upon the motives of the Executive in this veto. I think the veto of the President has been caused by a total misapprehension of his relation to the administration of the Government of this country. I have read with a great deal of care all the vetoes that have emanated from this prolific source of vetoes, and I think the trouble lies in the fact that the President of the United States understands it to be his duty to examine carefully every act of Congress; and if he himself as a Member of Congress would not vote for the bill, he gives no sort of weight or character or consideration to the fact that both branches of the legislative department of the Government have acted affirmatively on the measure, and so putting up his own opinion against that of Congress vetoes the bill.

We sometimes hear something said about consolidation of power and centralization of Government. I know of no such exhibition heretofore of a bad tendency toward consolidation as the spectacle of the President of the United States refusing to permit Congress to pension the starving soldiers of the Union. In other words, he adopts and carries into force the idea that in this country of ours the Executive of the Government has the right and duty to decide absolutely upon every question of legislation. In that respect I think he is wrong, but here and now I do not intend to follow out the discussion of that idea.

The next feature which I notice is an assumption which seems to have been lodged in the mind of the Executive that no private pension bill ought to be approved by him unless the applicant is entitled by law to a pension; for constantly, all along the line of his vetoes, he has taken occasion to say that there is no law authorizing such a pension as is proposed to be given in the bill submitted to him. He appears wholly oblivious to the fact that Congress is the law-making power, and has the right to confer a pension upon anybody. There was no prior law authorizing the granting of a pension of $5,000 a year to Mrs. Grant; yet the Executive saw fit to approve the bill granting that pension. There was no law authorizing a pension of $2,000 a year to the widow of Gen. Hancock; yet the President approved that bill. Why? Because the legislative department of the Government, acting within the scope of its jurisdiction, and doing an act which the Constitution conferred upon it the power to do, passed the bill, thereby submitting to the Executive the question whether he would approve that act. He did approve it. Yet he now comes to us, and all along the line of these little pensions—these destitute widows' pensions, these poor men's pensions—he stands behind a proposition which has no merit in it, and is not justified by any construction of the Constitution or the practices of the Government. What sentiment, think you, operated to produce these results?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I come to consider briefly the present case, and I undertake to say that if there was ever a case in which Congress ought to grant a pension by special act this is one. It is a case which could not be covered by a general law. I call the attention of gentlemen, upon which ever side of the House they may be, to the fact that you can make no general law which will cover such cases as this. I agree that the presence in Congress of this vast number of private bills indicates that our general legislation upon the subject of pensions is totally defective, as I had occasion to say in the early part of the session; and I might, if it were profitable, go out of my way and say that there has not been manifested that zeal there should have been upon the part of Congress to correct these manifest defects. The presence of these private bills grows out of the fact that the general legislation of Congress on this subject has, by lapse of time, become worn out and imperfect, and ought necessarily to be amended and improved.

But there could not be any general law which would cover the case of Sarah Ann Bradley; and therefore there never can be a case in which Congress could more appropriately act than in this. Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, I undertake to say that when you have examined this case, there are not many men in this House who will be willing to uphold the veto of the President. There are not many men who will be willing to put themselves on record as refusing the wounded a pension, in the light of the record which you have made upon other claims for pension which have been acted upon favorably in this House.

Thomas J. Bradley entered the army in the Spring of 1861 as a member of the 24th Ohio. He served until the close of 1864, having been meanwhile transferred by consolidation to the 18th Ohio, which I had the honor to command, and then serving out a total enlistment of nearly four years. He received at the battle of Nashville, as I recollect, a wound which was at the time dangerous, but not permanently so. He went home. He suffered more or less from that wound through the whole rest of his life, which terminated in the Fall of 1882. The physicians say that the termination of his life was to a certain extent (hard to be defined) attributable fairly to the wound which he had received nearly 20 years before. He had received a pension for that wound, thus being put in the position of having established his claim. His pension was of trifling amount, and I do not remember how much. It is not pretended that the injury was permanently a serious one; but the Government gave him a pension of, I think, at first $2 a month, and afterward possibly $4. I cannot state accurately.

He had four sons—gallant young men. They all entered the army in 1861. Two were shot dead upon the battlefield; another came home with an arm shot off, and the fourth with an eye shot out, both of these sons being totally disabled from earning a living. They had no property; and Mrs. Bradley to-day, having passed the age of 70, and being without a dollar, comes to Congress and asks that she may be put upon the pension-roll to receive the pittance of a widow's pension. And the President of the United States takes his coat off, gets behind a big desk, and, calling to his aid the Pension Department of the Government, as I am ready to show by the records of that office now in my hands, approves and incorporates with his message the substance of a veto furnished him by the Department that probably rejected the claim of Sarah A. Bradley for want of a strict legal authority to give her a pension under the general law. On the same day that he vetoed this bill, with the very same pen, he approved a bill which put Fitz-John Porter on the pension-list of the Government at nearly $3,500 a year, while Sarah A. Bradley, the mother of four sons—gallant, patriotic sons—two of whom fell upon the battlefield, whose souls went up to God from the smoke of battle and whose lives went out in the crash of arms and the roar of deadly strife, and two of whom are to-day dependent upon the charity of the country, helplessly disabled by the war, goes to the poorhouse. [Tremendous applause on the Republican side.] And this is the Government which undertakes to say that it is liberal to its soldiers. Yes, sir. This is the system that we hear called liberal and generous. This is the system of justice to the private soldier. This is the way this Democratic House discharges its duty on the one hand toward Fitz-John Porter, and toward poor, starving Sally Ann Bradley—the mother of four gallant soldiers, two of whom are on the other side and two are lingering here crippled—on the other hand.

I have not drawn a fancy sketch. I refer to the unanimous report of the Committee on Invalid Pensions of this House, and I want some gentleman who will vote to uphold this veto of the President to tell me what new light he has upon this case. What more do you know about Sally Ann Bradley than you did when you made a unanimous report in favor of granting her the allowance of this miserable little pension?

Mr. Boutelle, of Maine, arraigned the President for what he characterized as his crusade against the veterans of the country. He regarded the policy of the President as an open, clear, unmistakable announcement that the Democratic party was opposed to recognizing the services and sacrifices of men who gave their lives or health in order that the great Nation might be preserved. The time had come when the Democratic party felt itself sufficiently firmly seated in the saddle to utter its defiance and hostility to the men who went to the front to save the Union in its hour of peril. He thought he could see the muse of history looking at the grand procession of the Chief Magistrates, and he could imagine the expression of ineffable disgust which would pass over the features of the Goddess of American Liberty when she should look upon the panel upon which was depicted the present Chief Magistrate sitting in his shirt sleeves, with his collar unbuttoned, perspiring over the vetoes of paltry pension bills of heroes of the war. [Applause.] He then proceeded to read from the *Record* to show that all legislation favorable to the soldier had emanated from the Republican party, and had been passed by Republican votes against the Representatives of the solid South and against the almost solid vote of the Democratic party.

Mr. Brumm, of Pennsylvania, characterized the President as the great representative of absolute power, and said the Democratic party of the House, the party which was opposed to centralization, stood by him, and said to the President, "not my will, but thine be done." He continued to berate the Democrats, which he did in such an energetic manner as to call forth rounds of applause and laughter from both sides of the House. He denounced them as poltroons and cowards, who exonerated their President whenever he chose to slap them in the face and spit upon them.

Mr. Hill, of Ohio, made an argument to show that the Democratic party had the credit for much of the pension legislation of the country.

Mr. Curtin, of Pennsylvania, bespoke for the President decent respect and decent speech. He did not know what the pending bill was about. Its merits had not been presented, but the House had resolved itself into a political meeting.

THE CASE OF JOSEPH ROMISER

is an interesting one. He was a "minute-man," severely wounded in the line of duty before he had been mustered into the service. The President's veto message is as follows:

To the House of Representatives:

I herewith return without approval House bill No. 1059, entitled "An act to grant a pension to Joseph Romiser."

The Pension Bureau reports that the records of the office fail to show that an application has been filed in favor of this claimant, though it is stated in the report of the House committee that such a claim was made and rejected on the ground that the claimant was not at the time of his injury in the service of the United States.

It certainly appears from the report of the committee that the beneficiary named in this bill was not in the service of the Government at such a time, and also that he had not been mustered into the service of any State military organization. It stated that he belonged to Capt. Frank Mason's company of volunteers, of Frostburg, in the State Maryland.

Whether this company was organized for the purpose of co-operating at any time with the Union or State forces is not alleged, and it may well have been existing merely for the purpose of neighborhood protection.

Such as it was, the company was ordered in June, 1861, to proceed to Cumberland to repell a threatened attack of Confederate forces. Upon arriving at that place the men were ordered to uncap their muskets. In doing this, and through the negligence of another member of the company whose musket was discharged, the claimant was wounded.

It does not seem to me that the facts in this case, so far as they have been developed, justify the passage of this act.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, July 5, 1886.

Mr. McComas, of Maryland, who originally introduced the bill, made an eloquent speech, assailing the veto with great vigor. He said:

The bill passed both Houses with unanimity. The President declared that, though the Committee on Invalid Pensions had reported that Romiser had filed a claim for pension which had been rejected by the Pension Office, there was no such case in the office. The President said that Romiser had never filed a claim. If this were true, the committee was, indeed, convicted of gross carelessness, and doubtless the President made the statement to illustrate the loose methods of the committee and his own accuracy in examining these private pension bills. If this charge were unfounded, then the President was convicted of still grosser carelessness, because the report of the committee had warned him that there was a case in the office. He [Mr. McComas] held in his hand the very bundle of pension papers in the case of Joseph Romiser. The jacket recorded the proceedings, from the time of the filing of the claim in 1879 until its rejection. The records showed that the Pension Office found that though Romiser was severely wounded by a minie ball passing through his head and face, because he was not mustered in, the office was "constrained" to reject the claim. When the President's veto came to the House declaring that there were no such papers, he had telephoned to the Pension Office, and had had no trouble in getting them. Why had not the President done likewise; why had he reproved the committee for what now proved to be his own carelessness. The committee had been diligent; the President had been negligent; Congress had been just; and the President had failed justice to a citizen whose case he had never considered. Romiser, he said, was justly entitled to a pension because he had been inspired by the spirit of the minute men of Concord and Lexington. There were many precedents for the bill. The very first Congress had passed a bill pensioning the minute men of Concord and Lexington, and George Washington, unlike President Cleveland, had approved it. Thomas Jefferson, the father of the Democratic party, had signed a bill granting a pension to men who had never been mustered into the army, and Andrew Jackson had signed a similar bill. Abraham Lincoln, in a like case, had said that he would not inquire whether a man had been mustered out, but only whether he had done his duty. [Applause.]

If Members of Congress could not rise above party feeling and go with Washington, Jackson, Jefferson and Lincoln, let them go with Cleveland, and send back this poor soldier who had never received a dollar of pay, who had the scars the bullet left, and who had 20 years of neuralgia for serving his country. Every man who thought that the fathers of the Democratic party were instinct with the heroism of Concord and Lexington would vote for the minute man of 1861 who got a bullet in his head when on his way to join "the boys in blue." [Applause.]

Mr. Burrows, of Michigan, also assailed the veto and maintained that there was no reason why the bill should be referred to a committee. There were no facts to be ascertained, and in such cases it was customary to act upon a veto without referring it.

Mr. Warner, of Ohio, believed this to be a meritorious case and to be in the line of all precedents, but he thought it ought to be referred to the committee.

Messrs. Sowden, Springer and Matson continued the discussion, and the bill was referred—yeas 130, nays 118.

WILL HE VETO THIS?

The extraordinary amount of friction in the House in regard to pensions has awakened an interest in the subject never felt before. Whenever it comes up in any form the opposing parties watch one another with keen anxiety. The last hour of Saturday was occupied in consideration of a bill called up by Mr. Townshend, Democrat, of Illinois. It is the case of Mrs. Waters, whose son, employed on a transport, was killed by a cannon ball while passing a hostile battery on Red River in 1864. As he was not enlisted in the military or naval service of the United States the Pension Bureau under the law rejected the claim. The bill came up at the regular Friday night pension bill session a week ago. Mr. Blanchard, of Louisiana, made a factious fight on it, and by calling a quorum prevented action on that and all other bills considered during the session.

Saturday each side was given 10 minutes for debate, and the time was used by Townshend for the bill and Blanchard against it. Great heat was engendered, and members from all parts of the hall crowded around the speakers. On a yea and nay vote the bill was passed by 134 to 55. The Republicans voted solidly "yea," as did about half the Democrats present. With a few exceptions, like Bragg, of Wisconsin, the "noes" came from the South.

BLUE AND GRAY.

Proposed Reunion of the Armies of the Potomac and Northern Virginia at Gettysburg, July 1, 2 and 3, 1887.

At the Reunion of the Third Corps of the Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg on the 2d inst., the gallant Maj.-Gen. Daniel E. Sickles closed his eloquent address as follows:

I trust this may not be our last Reunion on this field. Propositions have been submitted to Gens. Longstreet and McLaws and their surviving comrades who were in our front, to unite with the surviving comrades of the Army of the Potomac in a grand Reunion here next July, and I am happy to state that both of these distinguished soldiers and citizens have signified in the most cordial manner their approval of the suggestion.

The remarks quoted reminded the Editor of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE of a letter he had the pleasure of reading at the time of its receipt, which he has obtained for publication, as follows:

HEADQUARTERS R. E. LEE CAMP, No. 1, CONFEDERATE VETERANS,
VETERAN HALL, RICHMOND, Jan. 23, 1886.

Maj. WM. HOWARD MILLS, 1317 S street, Washington, D. C.

COMRADE: Your hearty, soldierly letter of the 8th inst. was read to the Camp last night, and the sentiments expressed therein responded to by unanimous and ample appreciation. It would have done your heart good if you had been present.

We, too, hope that the day is near when the American soldiers who astonished the world from '61 to '65 shall meet at Gettysburg, as you suggest, in one Grand Encampment.

A second reading of your letter was called for and caused considerable discussion, all of it, however, in keeping and spirit with your suggestion. If you will permit me, I will suggest that you continue to lead in the matter you have so praiseworthily originated.

R. E. Lee Camp has nearly 700 members, old soldiers, from Major-Generals down to high privates in the rank, embracing a part of the flower of Lee's army, who will meet you with a thanks and hearty grip in your patriotic effort to bind together as with bands of steel this reunited and happy country.

"The boys in blue and gray," who did the fighting, can do it if they will.

Believe me, my dear Major, I but crudely state the sentiment of this Camp, which desires me to express the hope that it may soon hear from you again.

Very fraternally, yours, ARTHUR A. SPITZER, Captain and Adjutant.

The proposed meeting of former foes, now friends, as well as a common Decoration Day, was first suggested by Maj. Mills in the early part of 1884, and in a letter acknowledging a contribution toward the building of the Confederate Soldiers' Home at Richmond the Secretary of the Committee on the Fair wrote under date of Feb. 11, 1884:

R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, C. V., sends you thanks for your contribution to the fund and honor for the sentiments expressed. We think with you it would be a glorious Reunion if the veterans of both armies could be gotten together upon the historic heights of Gettysburg.

In correspondence about that time and since Maj. Mills found the sentiment of the soldiers of the South rather in advance of that of the soldiers of the North, but he has carefully nursed the matter until he believes the Society of the Army of the Potomac ready to extend a hearty and cordial invitation to the Army of Northern Virginia to meet it in a friendly campaign at Gettysburg, and at the coming Reunion at San Francisco will present the matter for consideration in the form of a resolution.

It is the opinion of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE that the fraternal meeting of the late combatants of Gettysburg on their field of battle would give touching emphasis to the desires of those who wish to see all our people reunited heart and hand under one Flag, one Constitution and one Republic. It was with knowledge of Maj. Mills's purpose that two or three months ago we suggested his designation as orator at the coming Reunion, and we regret that the proper committee did not promptly adopt the suggestion. The orator has not yet been designated.

An English Missionary Taught Her.

Richard Grant White, while dining at an English country house, was asked by the brother of the hostess, with great earnestness, "Is it true that in America women sit on juries?" "Yes," answered Mr. White in the most matter-of-course way; "all of them that are not on duty as sergeants or dragoons." A Yankee lady while visiting England was complimented by a British officer upon her English and asked if she was not peculiar in this respect among her countrywomen. "O, yes," she replied, with nonchalance; "but, then, I have had unusual advantages. There was an English missionary stationed near my tribe."

An Able Man.

[*Chicago Tribune.*]

"Daniel," said the President, "I haven't had any luck fishing since I was married. What do you suppose is the reason?"

"Did you take as much bait along as formerly, your Excellency?"

"Well, no, Daniel—not quite. A—er—a family man, you know, has to be a little er—circumspect, and—you understand, Daniel?"

"That's why you had bad luck. You can't catch fish without bait."

"Daniel," said the President, "you have reflection. I'm glad you got that degree of A. M.—Able Man.

WASHINGTON GOSSIP.

The Week's Doings at the National Capital.

A MERRY JUNKET.

A glance at the bill of particulars rendered for the expenses of entertaining the Congressional Board of Visitors at the Annapolis Naval Academy a year ago conveys some idea of the power of the human stomach, when under pressure, for the absorption of convivial beverages and the assimilation of food in all its varied forms. The amount appropriated for the expenses of the junket for three Congressmen, Prof. Sumner, of Yale, and two naval officers was $1,500. Like the prodigal son in the parable, they "wasted their substance [the appropriation] in riotous living," and when they came to settle up they found that after footing the bill created by their much eating and drinking they had not enough left to pay their own mileage fees, which amounted to $409.44. These are allowed at the liberal rate of 8 cents a mile each way. Of course, it would not do to present to Congress as an item for the deficiency bill an unpaid account for exhilarating drinks, or for soft-shell crabs, mushrooms and toothpicks. So these bills were all carefully paid, and a shortage of $363 and some cents was reported to pay the mileage of the visiting statesmen. Some curious Congressman wanted to know what had become of the $1,500, and called for the items. Here is one of the bills:

No. 3.—Bought of R. Courtney & Co., Baltimore.

2 dozen beer, $1.30; 2 dozen Bass ale, $3.80	$5 10
2 dozen ginger ale, $2.50; 1 bottle St. Croix rum, $1.25	3 75
4 bottles Congress water	60
1 bottle of Angostura	75
2 dozen beer	1 30
1 quart cognac brandy	1 30
1 quart cooking wine	40
2 dozen apollinaris water	3 60
2 dozen ginger ale	2 50
	$19 30

In the anxiety to have enough the providers seem to have rather overshot the mark, as the bill shows a credit of $7.86 for goods returned. They were badly "off" in their judgment as to the appetite for apollinaris water, for of the two dozen supplied 19 bottles were returned. The more plebeian beverage, beer, went better, as only three bottles out of the four dozen were credited back. Ginger ale—an "innocuous" drink, as the President would say—was fairly popular, as they absorbed 29 bottles, returning 19. One dozen of the Bass ale was returned, and three of the four bottles of Congress water. They probably had enough of the latter in Washington. When the following items were read to the House the wonder where the money had gone began to fade:

3 cases XXX C. H. whisky, at $18, $54; 3 cases Chillingsworth sherry, at $30, $90	$144 00
6 bottles old Hennessey, at $2.50; $15; 6 cases R., C. & B. claret, at $6, $36	51 00
1 case apollinaris	7 50
11-12 dozen champagne, at $30	27 50
1 case Pommery sec	30 00
	$260 00

They no doubt tried hard, but they were not able to drink all these. They returned five bottles of the "old Hennessey," five bottles of sherry, one case of the XXX whisky and four bottles of "Pommery sec." The apollinaris water shared the same fate as in the former instance and took no part in the festivities. The whole case was returned.

In the matter of edibles there was a bewildering variety. There was no excuse for anybody not to be suited. The bills, amounting to several hundred dollars, charged to the account of the "Board of Visitors, Naval Academy, 1885," embrace, besides the usual substantials, tomatoes, onions, oranges, lemons, bananas, new potatoes, strawberries, apples, peas, beets, beans eggplant, squash, asparagus, lettuce, turnips, pineapples, raisins, Albert biscuit, cream crackers, pineapple cheese, Edam cheese, Parmesan cheese, almonds, pecans, currant jelly, French mustard, Worcestershire sauce, anchovy sauce, walnut catsup, capers, tomato catsup, queen olives, English pickles, mushrooms, 145 pounds beef, 73 pounds lamb, 16 ducks, 24 Spring chickens, 6 old chickens, 17 pounds boiling-rock, 11 pounds sheepshead, 12 pounds roe shad, 25 pounds white perch, 5 dozen frogs, 31 pounds green turtle, 56 dozen crabs, 167 pounds fresh fish, and so on almost ad infinitum. There are items for cake, plum puddings and confectionery of all kinds. There are gallons upon gallons of milk, cream, sherbet, Roman punch and "Blambier"—whatever that is—enough to float a ship. Cigars were furnished galore, as appears from these items:

300 Pedro Murias Londres, at $13	$39 00
350 Golden Eagle Conchas, at $11	38 50
100 " " "	11 00
50 Carolina Conchas	6 00
	$94 50

There is no evidence that any of the cigars were returned.

The reading of these bills to the House furnished a hilarious entertainment to the Members. After it was finished Mr. Grosvenor, of Ohio, said: "I wish some one would explain the purchase of apollinaris water on that expedition. The rest of it, I think, we can understand."

A GOLDEN INVITATION.

Senator Stanford and other members of the California delegation called at the White House Friday last and presented the President an invitation from the Grand Army of the Republic of California to attend the National Encampment there next month. The invitation is engraved upon a plate of solid gold, decorated with a Grand Army badge and other patriotic emblems. It rested upon an American flag, and was imbedded in a blue velvet case, the case itself inclosed in a sandalwood box.

Mr. Stanford, in a few fitting words, assured the President that all the people of California joined heartily in the invitation. The President returned his thanks in the warmest terms. "Your people are so big-hearted," he said, "that I am sure I would greatly enjoy a visit to the Pacific Coast, but I do not see how I can get away. This superb and beautiful invitation will be none the less prized, however. It don't look now as though I was going to get Congress off my hands in time."

"I guess," replied Mr. Stanford, "enough of us had better go home to leave it without a quorum."

"Perhaps that would be the surest way," said the President.

MRS. CLEVELAND AT THE CAPITOL.

The other day three ladies and a gentleman presented themselves at the door of the House Executive gallery. The members of the party were Mrs. Grover Cleveland, Mrs. Vilas, Mrs. Lamont and Capt. Eads, the jetties man. They entered the gall