

LAST OF THE KAHUNAS: BY ALICE RIX

HONOLULU, Sept. 3, 1898.—I stood before the door of Kahaleauki, the Kahuna.

On his porch the morning-glory hangs her matted curtain, starred with blossoms blue and innocent as babies' eyes. Over his low coral walls the scarlet hibiscus twines and the Ponciana regia flames upward to the sky. But in his garden grows only the ti-tree beloved of all Hawaiian gods—and used by the Kahunas in all their mystic rites.

The Kahuna is the witch doctor of the old Hawaiian faith. His gifts are manifold and his number few. He practices his strange powers of sorcery now against the Christian and the civil law. He is still respected, feared, implicitly believed in, jealously hidden by some Hawaiian educated to broader faith and even these will smile and tell you quietly that Kahunaism is dead. The hack driver who brings you a trustful stranger from the steamer and offers himself as guide, philosopher and friend will promise to take you to see a Kahuna or bring one to see you.

Is there anything that the hack driver of Honolulu will not offer and charge you for?

But neither he nor you can pass the wall of sacred superstition and the very earthly fear of punishment which the native builds about this doctor, seer, sage, witch and prophet of his race; and the dinky, respectable and clothed Kanaka who comes to mutter over a bowl of water and read your future in two leaves at the bottom of it is no more Kahuna than Christian—and perhaps not quite so much.

I am come here with a little bundle of the awa root in my hands to know why I pass sleepless nights. Kahaleauki will tell me. He knows all the secrets of heaven and earth. He walks with the gods in dreams. All time belongs to him—then, the now, the afterward. Looking in the awa cup he reads the cause of every human ill. He can inspire and discover treachery and foretells death. He can strike the death fire from the sandal wood, and brew its antidote from sandal bark. He can change coldest hearts to flame, divorce the passions from the reason—supplanting they are ever wise. He can inspire and cure love, jealousy, infidelity and disease. He can recall the absent, change the heart, lay on the curse of madness and pray human life away.

Besides my little bundle of awa root I have brought a live chicken, tied neatly by the neck to a piece of fowl, saved from the butcher and the festal board to be prayed to death by Kahaleauki and served up on the altar of my education.

I beat softly on Kahaleauki's door. I know it will be opened to me for I brought a passport signed by a hand that opens all Hawaiian doors. I heard a soft musical jabber within. I said, as I had been told to say:

"Aloha! I am the foreign woman. I have brought the letter to Kahaleauki."

There was no answer, only a stirring sound close by the door. While I waited with my hand against it a tall, young Hawaiian came toward me round the corner of the porch. She was about fourteen, a slender, gracious, supple shape. She walked with the undulating, passionate grace of the Hawaiian woman's youth; she had the beauty dammed out diable which belongs to the youth of woman in every land. Her eyes and legs were bare and the hair she wore on their smooth surface as on polished copper bronze. Her loose saque fell away from her full brown throat and her sweet virginal breast; her hair hung a single, splendid ivory braid nearly to her knees, and her eyes were lovely, liquid, calm, asleep in deep, sweet, stupid peace.

She put out a supple brown hand to receive the letter and went, silent and smiling adorably, as she came. Presently another door opened on the porch and another brown hand, older but as supple, beckoned me through.

The room was very long, very low, darkened by drawn blinds, lighted by the sunlight streaming into the laua beyond. The laua is the wide porch, either enclosed or open, where the Hawaiian sits, eats, sleeps, and has his being while at home. I see, in passing, the nervous shadow of tall Kahili, shaken by the draught from the door, upon the wall; the gleam of polished calabashes hanging from the palm-sets and the glow of yellow leis made from the priceless single yellow feather that grows beneath the dark wing of the Oo; strange shapeless forms in wood and stone, huge gourds, barbaric spears and ancient drums, weapons and ornaments of shark's teeth and human bones, leis braided from human hair, great polished surf boards shaped like coffin lids, on which the fathers of Kahaleauki traveled, secure as in a ship, from isle to isle over smooth or troubled seas, to charm, to prophesy, to heal and to inspire.

I merely recognize their outlines as I pass. I have seen such matters—priceless relics of the picturesque Hawaiian barbarism in other Hawaiian homes. My eyes are for the laua and Kahaleauki.

He sits at the end of the porch, a figure crossed-legged upon the floor. He wears a malo of white linen—a breech clout, a mere strip of cloth wound about the loins. A square of tapa, dyed dull red, is folded, three-cornered, like a shawl over his left shoulder and knotted at the left breast. On his right a scarlet cloth is folded likewise, but from the other side, with the knot above the right temple and the point falling over the left cheek. His face is fine of feature, full of splendid strength. His eyes are black, brilliant, compelling. His nose, straight and pointed, is a sharp ending in a flattened point with nostrils curving upward to the cheek, looks like an anchor cut on a bronze mask; his lips are full, firm, sensuous, his teeth pure, perfect white of cruel regularity. He wears a beard which is grown very white, but the thick mat of black upon his head is only powdered delicately with white hairs growing few and far between. He must be very old. His face and his hands are wrinkled; but his beautiful, nearly naked body is smooth and brown as a boy's.

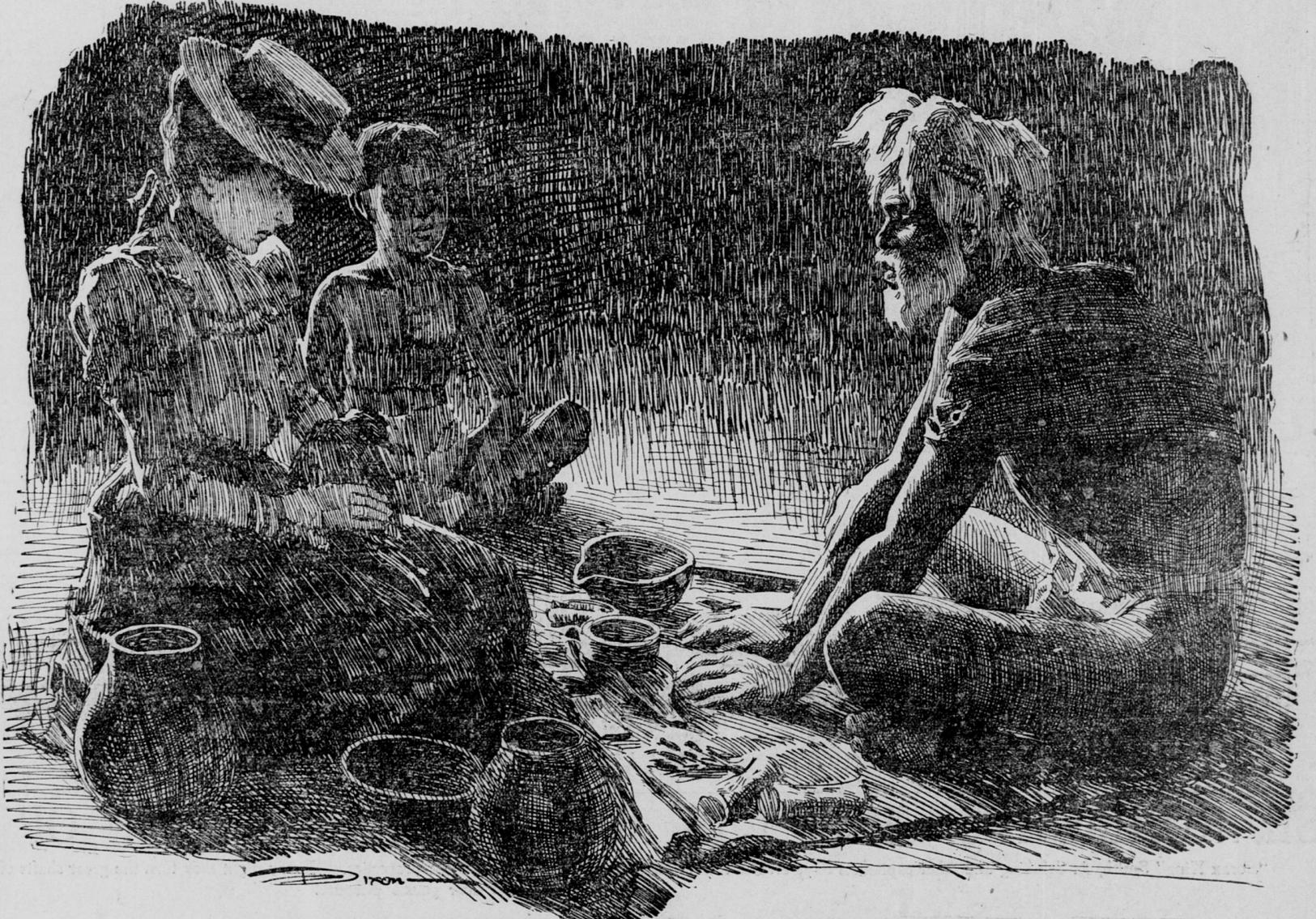
Before him on the floor lay a mat of tapa, folded in squares, set forth with leaves of the ti, bunches of herbs, bits of sugar cane, strips of bark, pieces of sandal wood, knots of awa root and straw, two bowls, one smaller than the other, cut rudely from the cocoon with blunt lips from which to pour a little cup containing spotted seeds, a smooth round, tapered stick as long as a man's arm, of beautifully polished wood that looks like koa, and at one corner of the tapa a small, smooth, round, black stone.

I had been told to look for this stone. When placed thus, at the corner of the mat, it lifts the tabu from the Kahuna's presence and one may enter, speak, move about before him. But woe to him who seeks to lift the spell laid by the gods when the speaking stone is not upon the mat.

"Aloha!" I say, pausing at the door.

Kahaleauki does not speak. He fixes his brilliant eyes on mine and, by my faith, as a sinner and a journalist, they turn me faint and I drop my head. I grasp my companion firmly with a sense of dear, live, human companionship, which is by no manner of means appreciated. I do not know how long I have stood there when, under the spell of those eyes, I creep nearer and nearer to the Kahuna and sink upon the floor before his mat with my poor doated fowl in one hand, my little bundle of the awa root in the other.

Kahaleauki does not speak. He raps on the floor with one hand and a brown boy comes out into the laua and drops the fowl on the floor. He will inquire for me, he explains, smiling in the security of his familiarity with the compelling eyes. He tells me that from the sandal wood upon the tapa mat Kahaleauki strikes death fire that will travel hundreds of miles to kill; and with the two pieces of sandal bark one cut from the right and one from the left side of the tree, he brews a drink and a lotion that if taken and applied within three days will prove an antidote. From the other barks he brews potions to cure or to destroy; from the manu-melu, the striped red and yellow cane, and a few of the little spotted millo seeds he works a love charm; with the pili-mai, the white sugar cane, and a drink brewed from the laukau leaves he brings back wandering love. The smooth and polished stick is the Kauwila, the Kahuna's stick, a wand which is passed upward from his hands toward the gods in the presence of the one he wishes to destroy, rings a curse down upon him when it falls.



KAHALEAUKI SITS A WILD, IMPRESSIVE, SAVAGE FIGURE, CROSS-LEGGED UPON THE FLOOR.

Other curses, that of the death fire of madness, even of death by prayer, may be lifted by other Kahunas; but the curse of the Kauwila is supreme with the gods and only he who casts it out can with the gods' permission call it back. The cocoon bowls were the awa-awa in which the awa root when chewed is steeped in water and strained through the bunches of straw, which, dipped into it and squeezed by the hands, catch all the fiber and leave the liquid pure.

All these things must be done with prayer and chanting over the awa-awa, wherein signs of all sorts also are read. And no Kahuna breathes between the measures of his prayer. This breathless chant comes to him by nature or by heredity, for Kahunas are born not made. And then they are educated in the prayers and chants and charms and their power is twice tested before they are permitted to pray over man. First a hen—just such a hapless fowl as nestles in trustful ignorance on my knees—is brought before the student in the gentle art of praying things to death. If the bird falls beneath the spell the student goes on to a mountain rock and prays away the stones. If the stones crumble before him it is known that the gods are pleased to have him work their will for good or evil on his race.

After having told me all these strange things with the eyes of Kahaleauki upon us both, the brown boy asks me if I am ready to begin.

The truth is, I am not. I have a womanish fear. I fear the potent eyes of Kahaleauki. I fear the strange, cool, sluggish touch they lay upon my blood. I fear the air that broods about this place. The sun is gone. The wind is dead. The sky is overhung with dreadful clouds. It is almost dark in the laua except close by the vine-shrouded windows through which the solitary, passionate hibiscus burns and burns against the coral wall.

The brown boy speaks to the Kahuna, who makes a sign of assent.

"He will pray the love prayer for you before I chew the awa."

Kahaleauki throws his body forward, resting on his outspread hands. His full lips part over his cruel teeth. The prayer begins:

"Eia ka ai aku mauka elono mauka omaa kua ia ahu ula aka pili pili aka hina hina aka helona aka ia kea okolo pua okolo anueneue o ahu okoko alia ouluku oama alahia omoa ole aka po mae hio iko na po aao ae omakani keae ahono ahh ahh ika pili wehe okanwe ma ke kua ake ioha make alo le aha ana ekuko ana elia ana e uluku ana okakala hia ana he mau kane ma nuuhina aka hina ia ake kapu apeloaku!"

It is spoken thus, as I have copied it, from the mystic Kahuna book of prayer on which the eyes of the unannointed have seldom looked. There is no

pause in the breathless flow of soft short syllables, no modulation in the single tone of Kahaleauki's voice. It was like the deep voice of the surf pounding on the shore, like the sullen roar of fire caged, like the voice of Pele burning in her hills. The love that comes in answer to that call must be a strange, unholy thing.

"It means nothing," says the brown boy, "because it was not done over the awa and because there is no woman to eat the sugar cane and the little millo seeds."

"He will pray the love prayer for you before I chew the awa."

"Now," said the brown boy, "give him your awa root."

I put forward the little bundle I had brought. Kahaleauki touched the smooth, black stone and it was swallowed in his hand. The spell of silence was cast. Spreading it wide in his brown fingers, still supple as a child's, the Kahuna Kahaleauki read in the awa root the story of my sleepless nights. He laid it before him on the tapa square and as I looked upon it the smooth black stone was there beside the rest.

I shivered and awoke my hen. It struggled feebly and I stroked it with my Judas hand. Kahaleauki spoke to the brown boy and the brown boy translated him to me.

"Night falls on Hawaii now and she sleeps. Only

the foreign woman lies sleepless. The awa will tell."

The eyes of Kahaleauki held me. I could not close mine and yet they felt strangely heavy, weighted by something that was not sleep.

"Now," said the brown boy, "he says I must chew the awa."

But I had not heard him speak. I saw the stone was gone again from the corner of the tapa mat. Kahaleauki fell forward in the position of Kahuna prayer. His smooth brown legs crossed before him, his smooth brown arms outspread, his wrinkled hands with their supple fingers resting on the floor. His eyes were lowered. The lids were still; the bronze anchor of his nostrils undisturbed by any passing breath. The red of the cloth upon his head took some light from the returning sun and cast a glow over his immobile mask. He sat like a thing of bronze. And the brown boy beside him chewed and chewed the awa root. As he chewed he swallowed the juice, which is the essence of dreams and drunken ecstasies, and cast the pulp from his mouth into the larger awa awa on the mat. And when there was enough he poured water over it and taking a bunch of the straw he rolled it between his hands and dipped it into the cup in which the fluid had gathered the color and consistency of muddy coffee and squeezed it about like a sponge and wrung it out nearly dry with the particles of water over it and taking a bunch of the straw he rolled it between his hands and dipped it into the cup in which the fluid had gathered the color and consistency of muddy coffee and squeezed it about like a sponge and wrung it out nearly dry with the particles of water over it and taking a bunch of the straw he rolled it between his hands and dipped it into the cup in which the fluid had gathered the color and consistency of muddy coffee and squeezed it about like a sponge and wrung it out nearly dry with the particles of water over it and taking a bunch of the straw he rolled it between his hands and dipped it into the cup in which the liquid pure remained in the awa cup.

The Kahuna raised his eyes. He took a ti leaf from the tapa and stripped a thin piece from its center and dipped it in the awa cup. Then he laid it, wet, into the smaller cup and poured the awa from the other over it. Then he returned to the posture of prayer and began again that breathless chant.

No, not that—another. This monotone was vibrant with meaning, vitality, force, fire, all that the other, dreamy water over it and taking a bunch of the straw he rolled it between his hands and dipped it into the cup in which the liquid pure remained in the awa cup.

No, not that—another. This monotone was vibrant with meaning, vitality, force, fire, all that the other, dreamy water over it and taking a bunch of the straw he rolled it between his hands and dipped it into the cup in which the liquid pure remained in the awa cup.

"The foreign woman has enemies. A curse is laid on her pillow to keep sleep away. The awa tells."

Kahaleauki stretches out his hands toward the awa cup. His eyes are fixed upon the hen that lies across my knees. The stone is gone. The brown boy sits motionless, his calm, soft glance is on his master's face. It shows neither fear nor expectancy. My own I know is filled with both. The Kahuna sounds his dreadful note. He has fallen forward, praying, on his hands. His baleful eyes glow closer to the bird. His lips curl upward from his teeth. They gleam white upon white against his beard. His head rocks to and fro, his body sways between his rigid arms, his supple fingers beat upon the floor.

Something crawls over me, stopping the beat of my heart, chilling the breath in my nostrils. I feel a weight on my temples, a weight on my breast, a weight on my nerveless hands. I long to cry out and I cannot. I long to rise and I cannot. Then all longing passes away. I think that I am sleeping and I do not care to wake. I think that I am dying and I do not care to live. Sound, sound, sound! It is all that I am conscious of.

And slowly I come to know that this sound has ceased. I hear nothing but I see again. I see the Kahuna sitting cross-legged before his tapa mat, drinking the awa from the bowl. I see the brown boy with his soft, calm glance upon his master's face. I feel the blood returning to my heart, the warmth to my hands. I can rise easily now, I think, and I am mad to be gone. I stir slightly and slip back again. The brown boy gives me his hands and I rise unsteadily to my feet. Something falls from my skirts. I look down and see the hen lying dead upon the floor.

NEW PENSION LIST OF THE WAR.

The First Applications Have Been Filed and They're All Waiting Their Turn. What Applicants Must Do When They Present Their Claims and the Amounts the Government Allows Its Dependent Soldiers.

THE war record of the late Private William H. Hook of Wisconsin forms an exact counterpart to the career of Solomon Grundy, who was born on Monday, christened on Tuesday, married on Wednesday, filled out the remainder of his checkered career and died on the following Sunday.

Private Hook enlisted for the war on Thursday, went into camp on Friday, fell ill on Saturday, died on Sunday, and on the following Wednesday his widow went before a magistrate and executed an application for a pension.

Mr. Hook enlisted on May 12, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On the 13th he went into camp at Camp Harvey, near Milwaukee. On the 15th he died. On the 18th his widow, Lida M. Hook, executed her pension application, and on the 1st of June it was filed in the Pension Office.

She was the first applicant for a pension growing out of the pending war with Spain. The witnesses to her application are Steven Hook and Henry Hinkel. She gives her age as 24, and her address at 275 Ceape street, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Her husband was a member of Company E, Second Wisconsin Infantry. He was born in England and was the son of Richard Hook. At the time of his enlistment he was a mill hand in Oshkosh. Mrs. Hook's father was a Mr. Morrell, and her mother bore the poetical name of Jennie Van Dorne.

The application, with a number of

others, is in the office of the chief clerk of the Bureau of Pensions, where all await the completion of the records necessary to their adjudication. Up to date about a hundred applications have come in, and for the present all sleep together. All pension applications have to be referred to the War Department for the record of the soldier involved. The muster rolls of the recent volunteer army are not yet in, and the records of the soldiers are very incomplete. Until these records are in better shape, which may be several months, the Pension Office is held at a standstill in the adjudication of applications growing out of the existing war.

The Pension Office has plenty of work to do, however, as Commissioner Evans remarked to me a short while ago, because there are pending in that bureau 635,000 old applications. These include applications for original pensions, increases, accrued and new disabilities.

As soon as the official records will allow a new division will be created to handle the applications growing out of the Spanish-American war, work will be begun upon them and the records of them will be kept separate from the other records of the Pension Bureau.

The creation of a division to handle this class of pensions will not involve any increase in the Pension Office force. That force was fixed by the law which went into effect on July 1. The new division will be made up of clerks detailed from old divisions.

A good number of the new applications now in come from the navy. The

ships represented are the Winslow, the Hugh McCulloch, the Richmond, the St. Paul, the Charleston, the Newark, the Vesuvius, the Yankee, the Marblehead, the Olympia, the Pompeii, the Vermont, the Marion, the Saturn, the Wabash, the Puritan, the Iowa and the Brooklyn. The list is somewhat indicative of the ships that have been engaged in the various mix-ups.

The pension applications indicate that Elijah B. Tunnell, who was killed on board the Winslow in Cardenas harbor, was not only a good sailor, but an important man to his people. His widow, Eliza J. Tunnell, follows Mrs. Hook as second on the list of applicants. A little further down the list comes Sarah Tunnell, who claims a pension as the dependent mother of Elijah B. In the investigation to follow the claim of the widow will be first considered. Frank Randall, the late chief engineer of the Hugh McCulloch, furnishes another instance of double applications. His mother and his minor children have applied for pensions on account of his death.

Two applications have come in from the Richmond, Oscar L. Rose, as an invalid sailor, and Margaret Walker, the widow of Charles W. Walker.

The tragic death of the Brooklyn, the only death to occur in the famous destruction of Cervera's fleet, is already recorded in the Pension Office. It will be remembered that George H. Ellis, while standing within two feet of Commodore Schley during the memorable chase of the Cristobal Colon, had his head taken off by a shell. The instance was mentioned in Commodore Schley's report to Admiral Sampson, except

that the modest commodore did not intimate that but for the accident of a few inches of space the shell might have taken off his own head instead of that of Chief Yeoman Ellis.

Ellis was enrolled on the Brooklyn as chief yeoman on May 3, 1897, in the city of Brooklyn, Kings County, N. Y. The application for a pension was made by his widow, a young woman of 22, before a notary in Brooklyn on July 13 and filed in the Pension Office July 14. It states that her husband "died at Santiago July 3, 1898, struck by a shell."

John G. Switzenich applies for a pension as the dependent father of Ernest Switzenich, who lost his life on the Marblehead.

Among the applicants for invalid pensions are Charles McCarthy of the Vesuvius, Thomas Devine of the Marion, Charles Lowry of the Saturn and James Quinney of the Wabash.

The only high officer of the army in whose name a pension has been asked is Lieutenant Colonel John M. Hamilton of the Ninth United States Cavalry. The application is made by his widow, Isabel Bowie Hamilton, and it states in thrilling phrase that he was killed July 1 at the head of his command while storming a hill at San Juan.

It is noticeable that so far not an application has been received on account of any of Roosevelt's Rough Riders, who experienced the heaviest loss of the war while driving the Spaniards back into Santiago.

While only a hundred pension appli-