THE PENSION OFFICE.

PENSIONERS OF THE REPUBLIC

A Detailed Sketch of the Pension Bureau—Its Organization and History—The Four Principal Branches—Amount of Pensions Paid Since the Beginning of the Government — Seventy-five Thousand Pending Claims—Interesting Statistics About the Smith Family.

The gratitude of the nation has at various times dictated the payment of various sums to those disabled in its defence, and the bestowment of like amounts upon the widows and dependent relatives of those who sacrificed their lives that the country might be saved, recognizing alike when death occurred through the casualties of battle or the disease of camp. Congress also has at different times authorized and directed the payment of various sums to those who rendered service without having suffered beyond the hardships and discomforts of a soldier's or sailor's life. By legislative enactments contingencies were sometimes anticipated and promises of pensions were made to those who complied with the conditions named by enlistment, continued service or marked bravery. Such an act was passed in the next month after the Declaration of Independence, (9th August, 1776,) promising pensions to those who might be disabled in the war, and in the following month (16th September, 1776,) provision was made for grants of land in specified amounts to those who should enter the service and continue to its close, or their heirs if death should overtake them.

The method prescribed by law to ascertain who were entitled to pensions under the earlier enactments was to request the State Legislatures to pay such as they decided were entitled and to report such payments to the General Government for reimbursement. Subsequently the method of procedure was changed by requiring the judges of District and Circuit Courts to perform the duties before assigned to the Legislatures of the various States. Payments, however, were not made upon the lists reported by the judicial officers until after verification and comparison with the rolls on file in the War Department, when they were reported to Congress by the Secretary of War and placed upon the pension lists by a resolution of that body.

This plan was found not to afford means for detecting frauds or for speedily adjusting such as were found to be meritorious; and on the 8th day of February, 1792, an act was passed prescribing rules to be observed by the court in the investigation of claims and providing that the evidence upon which the decision was based should accompany the report, and those regulations, with some modifications, were continued until March 3, 1819, when an act was passed authorizing the Secretary of War to place on the pension rolls without reporting the lists to Congress.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PENSION BUREAU.

This authority was exercised by the Secretary of War until March 2, 1833, when a separate bureau was established for the adjustment of these claims by a section in the bill making an appropriation for the civil and diplomatic expenses of the Government for the year, which says "a commissioner of pensions shall be appointed by the President and the Senate, who shall receive a salary of $2,000, which is hereby appropriated;" and the office was perpetuated for many years thereafter by biennial enactments, the last providing that it should continue until further legislation on the subject.

Since the passage of the first act by the old Congress in 1776, before referred to, 400 distinct acts relating directly or indirectly to pensions for military and naval services, and to bounty land in recognition of like services, have been enacted by Congress, and so vast and comprehensive has the system become that from the preparation of small lists by the courts of the country, to be transmitted through the Secretary of War to Congress for revision and allowance, the adjudication of the thousands of claims presented under the various laws requires the industious application of more than three hundred clerks.

It will prove of interest to our readers, who nearly all have had official communication with the Pension Bureau in the adjustment of the claims of themselves or their friends, to know something of the system necessary in the administration of affairs so vast in their magnitude and so important in their results. The necessities of private business, embraced within the acts of but few, who personally direct its movements and are cognizant of its condition and its wants, afford no guide to the needs and requirements of a business requiring the employment of such a large force, whose energies are directed to secure the enforcement of such a large number of provisions of law and the protection of such diverse private interests. To prepare an office system, with all its ramifications, affording channels for direct and prompt communication through all its parts, and securing that responsibility upon the part of all subordinates so necessary when direct supervision cannot be had, and at the same time to retain that simplicity of detail so essential to a smooth working of the machinery of office, requires executive ability of no low degree.

People unfamiliar with the requirements of such an office jeer at the employment of "red tape," and yet, did they but know it, without that routine that formula of action used in all cases of like nature, so sneeringly denominated by them, everything would be in inextricable confusion and but little accomplished. Far better the delays of "red tape" than the total inability to transact business. And to enable you to form a general idea of the system in use in the Pension Bureau, I will attempt a description of its principal features.

THE SYSTEM

is embraced in four principal branches, viz: first, mail; second, judicial; third, financial; fourth, miscellaneous.

The mail division is charged with the receiving, reading, and distributing to the proper desks of all mail. Every piece of additional evidence, original application, or communications of whatever nature, are stamped with the date of receipt, and, with the exception of letters of inquiry, are entered upon the records, which show from whom received, when received, and to whom delivered.

It requires a careful examination of the papers, a thorough knowledge of the office, and the closest analysis to determine the proper destination of all communications. Many writers are obscure, many mistate their business through ignorance, and others through carelessness, and to quickly comprehend the import of all papers requires a quick eye and ready mind.

Persons communicating with the office should remember this, and to insure a correct distribution of their mail should, in all cases, indorse upon the outside of the envelope the number of the claim referred to, the name of the claimant and the nature of the claim.

In this division claims are also prepared for the files by having a heavy paper jacket placed around them, upon which is indorsed the act under which it is filed, the description of the party claiming and their address, together with the name and address of the attorney, if one appears in the claim.

JUDICIAL

is termed, as those employed therein are charged with an application of the law to the evidence, and the determining of the right of the applicant to a pension. No various are the provisions of law applicable to some cases, so numerous are the rulings of the office, the decision of the heads of Departments and of the bureau, and the opinions of the Attorney General, all bearing upon these claims, and to be recognized by the examiner in forming his decision, that it requires the nicest discrimination, careful examination and a clear and mature mind to reach correct conclusions. Nor is his decision thus formed final, as will hereafter appear. The judicial branch of the office is divided into two divisions—invalid and widows; the first embracing all claims preferred by surviving soldiers, the latter all those claims based upon the service and death of soldiers, sailors, &c.—that is of widows, survivors, mothers, fathers and minor brothers and sisters.

IN THESE DIVISIONS

are filed all pending claims, and by this is meant those awaiting completion or a final decision.

These files are arranged with reference to the initial letter of the soldier's surname, and are divided into sections proportioned to the magnitude of the letter of the alphabet.

Upon receipt of jacketed claims from the mail division the next step is to ascertain if the party making the application has ever before filed a claim, and this is done by an examination of the "original records."

These records for the act of July 14, 1862, and amendments (to which reference is made in this description) comprise thirty ponderous volumes, in which are recorded the 238,000 applications that have been filed under that act. All entries are made therein with reference to the first three letters of the soldier's surname, and only by this subdivision of names, affording 9,900 combinations, can convenient reference to any given claim be had; and even when so divided the examination of the greater combination requires considerable labor—for instance, in 30,000 entries under W. I. C. there will be 3,250 entries, and under S. M. I. you will find 2,750 Smith's. If the result of this examination affords no evidence of a prior application by the same person, after noting all other applications based upon the service of the same soldier, the claims are numbered in numerical order and placed upon the record, which includes a full description thereof, and the recorded claim is then placed in the files to await examination in the order of their receipt.

When this reached, the examiner's duties begin, and his efforts are directed first to such record evidence as can be found in any of the Departments of the Government, and having obtained reports therefrom, he notes the omission and the points unsupported, and then calls upon the claimant, or his attorney, for evidence corroborative of the allegations made in the declaration. He is guided in his requirements by the hundreds of rulings applicable to the smallest details of the various kinds of claims, and evidence furnished in response must substantially comply therewith; the law of evidence as applied in courts, and the express requirements of the laws under which the pension is claimed are all brought to bear in the consideration of the points to be met, and the testimony offered in proof. And here is the great difficulty with which the office has to contend—a want of knowledge of the provisions of the law under which they claim, on the part of many, and the willful knavery of others. To clearly describe what testimony will secure the admission of the claim would be affording undue advantage to those who prepare their evidence to suit their case, regardless of the facts as they exist.

On the other hand, to require in general terms such proof as is needed affords but an imperfect guide to those who are unfamiliar with the business or ignorant of the forms of law.

Again, so wide-spread and general is the practice of

ATTEMPTING AND PERPETRATING FRAUDS

in claims for pensions; so ample is the evidence of men systematically and habitually presenting fraudulent claims, and so numerous have been the convictions for such offences, that the most careful scrutiny must be exercised and a thorough review made of all evidence offered to prevent, in some degree, the allowance of unlawful claims. The result of all this is, that a large percentage of the evidence offered is imperfectly prepared, deficient in substance or suspected for fraud, and the correspondence had in stating objections, in requiring further proof and in elucidating doubtful points, amounts to hundreds of letters per day. It would astonish some persons who are always ready to charge the office with the responsibility of delay in the settlement of many claims if they could have personal knowledge of these facts; and yet neither the office nor the parties appearing before it are in fault. The defect is in the system; no more evidence is the criminal. Were means afforded for a cross-examination of all applicants and witnesses these difficulties and delays would disappear; and right here I assert that one half of the amount now taken from the pockets of the pensioners to compensate agents for procuring their pensions would pay the entire cost of such a system, to say nothing of the thousands of dollars paid from the Treasury upon fraudulent claims that would be saved. But to return to the examiners. After his labors are completed, and in his opinion the claim is one for admission or rejection, he prepares a brief of the evidence upon blank forms supplied for the purpose, and closing with a statement of his decision showing from what date and at what rate admitted; or, if rejected, the cause therefor, and signs his name as examiner.

This action is entered in a record showing a disposal of all claims, and the case is then taken from out the pending files and passes into the hands of a clerk, who is styled a receiver, and selected for his superior judgment and familiarity with the law and the rules of the office. It is his duty to carefully go over the action of the examiner, to review the evidence and if satisfied to approve or disapprove of the examiner's action. If the former, the case passes on to the chief of division, under whom all the business of that division is conducted, for his approval, which, except in cases involving unusual questions, is *pro forma*, and from his desk the case goes to the certificate section for issue, from whence, after the certificate is prepared, it, with the approved brief, goes to the Commissioner's desk for his review and signature, and thence to the Secretary of the Interior for his signature and the seal of the Department. If the claim is a rejected one, upon the approval of the rejection the receiver is to sign the letter of rejection. All rejections are subject to appeal to the Secretary, or to be reopened upon the presentation of new and material evidence. After the issue of the certificate the claim is supplied with a new wrapper, upon which a certificate number and its history is indorsed, is entered upon the admitted records, and after being reported to the pension agent, finance division, to the Third Auditor of the Treasury, and to the Second Comptroller, it is placed in the admitted files. Upon the files of these two divisions are found

75,000 PENDING CLAIMS,

which are being slowly reduced in number, the receipt of new claims nearly equaling the disposal of old ones. The adjustment of claims filed under the act of February 14, 1871, granting pensions to survivors of the war of 1812 who served sixty days, and to their widows, is not embraced in this statement, they having been organized into a separate division, in which a force of fifty clerks has been constantly employed since the organization thereof, in May, 1871, it having been delayed until that date by the failure of Congress to provide the necessary clerical force. Under this act, to this date 38,500 claims have been filed, of which 28,000 have been admitted and 8,220 rejected. Unusual efforts have been made to reach an early decision in these cases, the extreme age of the applicants rendering it necessary that prompt action should be had. It is also known as the "sixty day division," the claims are carried through the entire process from receipt of the application to placing the name of the pensioner upon the rolls.

THE BOUNTY LAND DIVISION

also forms a part of the judicial branch. Therein all claims for bounty land filed under the act of March 3, 1855, which is the latest general provisions in that behalf, are adjusted.

The formula of action resembles in its general features that just described, though the very extensive files and records of this division renders their examination very laborious. No provision having been made allowing bounty land to soldiers and others who served in the late war, the warrant for claims for bounty land now passed for not very great, and the inclination of the office is to scrutinize very closely such as are presented. So many years have elapsed since they became entitled that the suspicion is justified. The earlier acts allowing bounty land for services in the Revolutionary war granted to a major general 1,000 acres, to a brigadier general 850, to a colonel 500 acres, and in reduced amounts down to one hundred to non-commissioned officers and privates, who received 100 acres.

Under the act of 1855, before cited, all persons who served fourteen days, either in the army or navy, are entitled to 160 acres, and those who were actually engaged in battle, though their service was less than fourteen days, are likewise entitled.

Under the various laws governing these land grants, warrants representing 73,922,451 acres have been issued, which, estimated at $1.25 per acre, amounts to $92,415,563.75, which, added to $70,476,127 that has been paid since 1871 for pensions, affording a conception of the magnitude of the operations of the Government as pension makes a total expenditure of $275,085,976.52 in behalf of the defenders of the nation. This enormous sum is bestowed in gratitude to admit a refutation of the charge that republics are ungrateful.

FINANCIAL

The duties of the finance division of this office begin when the decision of the judicial branches is reached and the certificate of pension issues. The rolls reported by those divisions are entered in the agency registers, which are arranged to show payments for several years, and the agents' quarterly accounts of disbursements are compared with these registers and errors noted. When you consider that there are now upon the rolls the names of 238,729 pensioners who are paid quarterly through 57 pension agents, and that the accounts reported by all these agents are adjusted in the short space of three months, or between payments, you will readily perceive the extent of the labor involved.

In addition to this, the finance division is charged with all correspondence with the pension agents, to suspend and resume payments, to drop from the rolls, (in which case the auditor and comptroller must also be notified,) the payment of accrued pension to heirs and legal representatives; restorations, under the act of July 27, 1868, where a pension has been unclaimed for three years; the transfer of payments from one agency to another; the issue of duplicate certificates, in lieu of those lost or destroyed. All these, and many, many other things are required at the hands of the gentlemen employed therein. The act of June 8, 1872, granted increase to pensioners on the list, second and third grades, and this division, after the passage of the act and before the quarterly payment of September 4, following, received, examined and issued 9,847 certificates granting the increase. Of the agencies disbursing pension money there are ten whose payments exceed $1,000,000 per annum, and of these Boston is the largest, paying out more than $1,800,000. The smallest amount paid by any agency is that at Vancouver, Washington Territory, which disburses less than $2,000 per annum.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Under this head, if space would permit, might be described the duties of a dozen features of the office, but I will content myself by referring to those most prominent and of the greatest importance; and chief of these is the special service division, which is charged with the investigation of all claims in which fraud is suspected, and of the criminal prosecution of all persons whose guilt is apparent, and where proof sufficient to convict can be had. To aid the office in its efforts to lessen the fraudulent and unlawful practices of those transacting business with the Government annually appropriates a sum liberal enough to pay the expenses of these investigations.

Through this means the office is enabled to keep a large number of special agents employed who are charged with the investigation of all suspected frauds perpetrated within their respective districts. This division is an important feature of the bureau, and requires clerks who are thoroughly familiar with all laws which the office is called upon to execute, as well as a general knowledge of the criminal laws and the practice thereunder of each State. Its efforts are directed first to secure the pensioner in all his rights; second, to prosecute all persons where it is thought a conviction can and should be had; and third, to secure a return to the Government of all money unlawfully obtained.

The amount saved in reducing pensions illegally rated, in dropping from the rolls those found not to be entitled, and in sums refunded, largely exceeds the cost of the work, while the effect upon the community at large is very beneficial in deterring others in some degree from such criminal practices. Cases have been found which were allowed upon the clearest proof of dependence upon the part of mothers of soldiers, yet investigation developed the fact that they were possessed of property valued as high as $40,000, and these cases are not confined to the classes usually engaged in unlawful acts.

The medical division acts conjointly with the invalid division in rating the degree of disability of claimants for original and the increase of invalid pensions. In this division competent men, possessed of a professional education, are employed, and form a valuable adjunct in the determination of all medical questions. All invalid claims, after being briefed by the examiner, and before passing into the reviewer's hands, are referred to this division for a rating made from the medical testimony furnished and from the reports of the examining surgeon, who has made personal examination of the applicant, and after being indorsed by the chief of the medical division are returned to the chief of the invalid division for final action.

THE RESTORATION DESK

embraces all claims to be restored to the rolls of parties who have been dropped for cause—principally those who were residents of the States in rebellion at the commencement of the late war. These are only placed upon the rolls upon incontestible proof of loyalty. The appeal desk is charged with the preparation for reference to the Secretary of all cases wherein an appeal from the action of the office is taken. Without describing those of minor jurisdiction, I come at last, though not the least, to the duties of the Commissioner, upon whose shoulders rests all the responsibility imposed in the administration of the affairs of this extensive bureau. His is the eye that must see all things, anticipate all wants and supply all needs, who must decide all questions of importance and make the final review of all conclusions reached by the office, who must sign all papers and approve all proposed undertakings; who must classify and designate his subordinates, and reward the meritorious and rebuke the unworthy. Need I say more? I might truthfully extend this description to an unknown length, so general and interminable are the duties of this officer. Were it not for the intervention of his chief clerk and the chiefs of divisions, who are charged with the responsibility of deciding all questions of minor importance, who are the members of his staff, and who represent him in all matters arising within their appropriate spheres, the days would be too short for the performance of the multiplicity of duties that demand his attention.

As it is, his position is no sinecure. Only a man of prompt decision, clear judgment and business habits can successfully transact the business before him. Only a man of considerable ability, of thorough education and general information, is qualified for the position, and, I may add, but few succeed. Justice to the present incumbent would require an extended eulogy, if attempted. The change from lethargy to industry, from carelessness to care, from neglect to promptness, has been remarked by all.

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BOARD OF HEALTH.

Dr. F. T. Keene Elected Health Officer.

The Board of Health met yesterday evening: Dr. C. C. Cox in the chair, and Dr. D. W. Bliss secretary.

Mr. Marbury, from the committee on finance, submitted bills amounting to $25, which were ordered to be paid. He also reported adversely on increasing the pay of Inspector Luddington.

Mr. Marbury, from the sanitary police committee, made a report recommending that the services of Inspectors Coulsaer and Norton be dispensed with. Adopted.

Dr. Cox, from the committee to whom the resignation of Dr. D. W. Bliss as health officer was referred, made the following report:

The committee to whom was referred the letter and resignation tendered by the health officer of the board report in favor of the acceptance of the same, and in so doing beg to express their regret at the necessity which prompts the resignation of so valuable an officer and their high sense of the energy, skill and efficiency with which he discharged the important and responsible duties of his department.

CHAS. C. COX,
JOHN MARBURY, JR.,
J. M. LANGSTON.

The members of the committee each made short remarks, regretting the necessity of his vacating the position and speaking in the most laudatory terms of his administration as health officer.

Dr. Bliss replied to the remarks, expressing his regrets at being obliged to vacate the position, setting forth that his business engagements prevented him from holding the position. He returned thanks to the members of the board for their assistance while acting as health officer.

The health officer reported the distribution of 200 bushels of slacked lime from June 22 to July 3, in the streets and alleys of Washington and Georgetown.

Dr. Bliss submitted resolution declaring the following premises nuisances and injurious to health, and ordered their abatement: Frame shanties on 6-street alley, between Fourth and Fifth and N and O streets northwest. Adopted.

On motion of Dr. Bliss, Mr. Marbury and Prof. Langston were appointed a committee to wait on Gov. Cooke regarding the payment to the poor class for the clothing destroyed during the prevalence of the smallpox.

The secretary read several communications, complaining of nuisances in the different portions of the District, which were properly referred.

Prof. Langston offered a resolution repealing any regulation, heretofore adopted by the board, forbidding the appointment of any person as health officer other than a member thereof, making the secretary of the board *ex officio* health officer. Adopted.

An election of health officer was then entered into, resulting in the choice of Dr. F. T. Keene. Adjourned.

COUNTY SCHOOL TRUSTEES.

Important Business Transacted.

The Board of County School Trustees held a meeting yesterday afternoon, Mr. J. S. Brown in the chair, and Dr. Slick, acting secretary.

Mr. Miller presented the resignation of David C. Woodhull as member of No. 1 school, Sixth district. Laid over.

Dr. Slick presented a petition signed by 25 residents and tax-payers, and patrons of the public schools in Georgetown, No. 1 district, praying action by which schools No. 1 and 2 of this district shall be consolidated be reconsidered. Laid over.

The monthly reports of the teachers were received and placed on file.

Mr. Follott presented the bill of Messrs. Arnold A Campbell for coal furnished schools, amounting to $14.88; which was approved.

An election for president to serve during the ensuing year was entered into, which resulted in the choice of J. S. Brown.

Mr. Follott presented the names of the following teachers for re-election in the Uniontown and Hillsdale schools, in the seventh district: No. 1 school, H. S. Petty principal, S. P. Abell assistant, Rachel J. Siette assistant; No. 2, Sarah A. Shimm principal, Martha Brent assistant; No. 3, Wm. Pumphrey principal, Fanny E. Hall, Mary T. Benjamin, Emma Patterson assistants; No. 4, Cynthia D. Rockwell principal. Re-elected.

Mr. Slick, from the Second district, nominated as teachers in school No. 1 J. E. Chappel and Emma Miller. Elected.

Mr. Burr, from the Fifth district, nominated Mr. Elgar as teacher of school No. 1. Elected.

Mr. Mitchell, from the Fourth district, nominated Miss V. L. Douglass principal, Miss J. Smith and C. Scott, assistants in school No. 1; school No. 2, J. R. Keene, principal, Indie Winneberger, assistant; school No. 2 Sixth district, J. H. Voorhees; school No. 1, Sixth district, Chas. N. Otey. Elected.

Mr. Brown, from the Third district, nominated, school No. 1, Bernard T. Janney, principal, school No. 2, Julia E. York, principal; school No. 3, M. J. Brown principal; school No. 4; Ellen Emery, second assistant. Elected.

Mr. Mitchell, from the committee appointed to investigate the alleged appropriation, by Chas. R. Douglass, secretary and treasurer of the Board of Trustees, of several school maps designed to the county schools to his own use, reported that in their judgment the maps belong to the county schools; as to the views they have not been able to arrive at any conclusion. The first portion of its report was adopted, and the latter recommitted and the investigation ordered to be continued. Adjourned.

I. O. O. F.

Election of Officers.

The following-named persons have been elected officers of the Lodges and Encampments of I. O. O. F. of this District for the ensuing six months:

Central Lodge—J. W. Howard, N. G.; George E. Tucker, V. G.; John G. Stevenson, Jr., F. S.; F. B. Lord, jr., R. S.; Wm. G. Phillips, T.

Washington Lodge—Wm. M. Stanford, N. G.; L. H. Patterson, V. G.; R. W. Reed, F. S.; Joseph Bolway, R. S.; Andrew Jackson, T.

Eastern Lodge—Jas. Wilson, N. G.; Jas. Larkin, V. G.; J. B. Espy, F. S.; J. K. Petty, R. S.; Thomas G. Donaldson, T.

Harmony Lodge—George A. Jones, N. G.; Jno. F. O'Neil, V. G.; Malachi Jones, F. S.; Wm. F. Allan, R. S.; Wm. T. Bright, T.

Columbia Lodge—John Shackelford, N. G.; John B. S. Ogrand, V. G.; James W. Hughes, F. S.; John A. Moulden, R. S.; Samuel Wise, T.

Union Lodge—Geo. W. Phillips, N. G.; Johannes Watson, V. G.; Samuel H. Ellis, F. S.; J. Martin McFarland, R. S.; Richard Emmons, T.

Friendship Lodge—F. W. Brandenburg, N. G.; W. H. Wilkerson, V. G.; Thos. J. Davis, F. S.; F. H. Sweet, R. S.; B. A. Ridder, T.

Covenant Lodge—C. H. Hospital, N. G.; S. Morris Thorn, V. G.; J. T. Shaw, F. S.; F. V. Essex, R. S.; S. C. Palmer, T.

Deacon Lodge—H. Burkhart, N. G.; B. May, V. G.; E. H. Magraw, F. S.; L. B. Allyn, R. S.; N. Mullikin, T.

Metropolis Lodge—John A. Limrick, N. G.; John B. Fried, V. G.; Benjamin E. Dement, F. S.; Edward Haswell, R. S.; Douglass Moseley, T.

Excelsior Lodge—John T. Gurley, N. G.; Martin Avens, V. G.; O. R. Boteler, F. S.; F. G. Dake, R. S.; John C. Snafer, T.

Potomac Lodge—Geo. W. Gardiner, N. G.; J. M. Green, V. G.; J. W. Harry, F. S.; H. G. Devine, R. S.; A. C. Prather, T.

Oriental Lodge—Henry E. Gross, N. G.; Chs. Schneider, V. G.; Peter Verbuchen, F. S.; John Wahl, R. S.; John L. Vogt, T.

ENCAMPMENTS.

Columbia, No. 1—John A. Limrick, C. P.; A. H. Stockman, H. P.; James Hughes, S. W.; John Marbury, J. W.; Jas. W. McLean; S.; John H. Seiffert, T.

Magnesia, No. 4—Wm. M. Steele, C. P.; Johannes Watson, H. P.; John F. O'Neal, S. W.; Jno. B. Wilkerson, J. W.; Wm. F. Allan, S.; John E. Herrell, T.

Ridgely, No. 5—T. B. Towner, C. P.; K. C. Espy, H. P.; J. Carroll, S. W.; W. H. Wormsley, J. W.; B. A. Ridder, S.; Geo. Ehinehart, T.

Mount Nebo, No. 8—R. O. Boteler, C. P.; S. C. Wailes, H. P.; H. C. Simonds, S. W.; Wm. Laporte, J. W.; Thos. W. Fowler, S.; John T. Given, T.

The Smallwood-Fortune Fracas.

On Wednesday night last, about 8 o'clock, a difficulty occurred on Third street, near Washington, between two colored men, named Joseph Smallwood and Wm. A. Fortune, which for a time bid fair to result in a serious termination. It appears from evidence adduced that some stolen goods that they had secured, and Smallwood in the heat of the dispute threw a brickbat at Fortune which he dodged, but which hit a colored girl and knocked her senseless. Fortune then drew a revolver and fired at his antagonist, the ball taking effect in the right side, just below the ribs, after which he ran away. Officer Westphal shortly appeared on the scene, and after directing the injured man where to go for medical assistance, started in pursuit of the shooter, who was finally captured at his home, and attempts to justify his action on the ground of self-defense. The child that was knocked down is not seriously hurt, but Smallwood's wound is considered dangerous. Fortune was taken before Judge Snell yesterday, and was committed for a further hearing.

The Weather Yesterday.

The range of the thermometer yesterday at Hempler's was as follows: 8 a. m., 81; 10 a. m., 86; 12 m., 91; 3 p. m., 96; 4 p. m., 96; 6 p. m., 89; 8 p. m., 84.

So far yesterday was the warmest day of the season. There was a good deal of suffering on account of heat, and many persons were prostrated, and one it is thought fatally so. People just now cannot be too careful of what they eat and drink.

Vincent A. Hubbard.

To the Editor of the National Republican:

SIR: Vincent A. Hubbard, the "missing page," as announced in the evening papers found at Hamilton, Va., among his friends "on a visit," was, as stated by the said friends, "in a deranged state of mind—having no recollection of leaving home, and was completely bewildered at finding himself among them." The information was sent by his friends, and its reception was, without any doubt whatever, the salvation of his mother, who could never have survived another twenty-four hours under the terrible imaginings of what might be or was his condition or end. Respectfully, THE FATHER.

The Heroine of the Stage.

The name and fame of Lydia Thompson is growing dim in the light of a new candidate for the honors of a heroine. Lydia Thompson gained celebrity by whipping Mr. Storey in Chicago, but there she stopped, and rested on her laurels. Not so with the brave and beautiful little Maggie Claire, of the Metropolitan theatre. She promptly whipped an insolent fellow at the theatre the other night, and last evening, while the curtains of one of the upper boxes were ablaze and the cry of "fire" was raising a tremendous excitement in the theatre, she rushed off the stage, up to the box, and, folding the blazing curtains up to her bosom, put it out. The scare was instantly allayed, and she received cheer after cheer.

Cheap Property by the Acre.

A short distance from the head of Connecticut avenue, where the cars now stop, R. M. Hall real estate broker, has subdivided one hundred acres of beautiful property, and offers it for sale on long credits and at low figures. The ground is finely wooded, and commands fine views. There is a bargain in this property, as it is located near the city limits and near street cars, right in the line of progress.

THE MARCH OF IMPROVEMENT.

Recent Work of the Board of Public Works—Improvements in Various Sections of the City.

From the opening of the present working season, which, it will be remembered, was much delayed by a cold and wet spring, the city has been fast emerging from its unpleasant condition in sections where work had been left incomplete last fall, and these localities are now presenting an appearance of uniformity and cleanliness perhaps not exceeded by the more wealthy and central portions of the city.

A noticeable feature of the improvements designed and made by the Board of Public Works is that no partiality as to location has been manifest in them. Those which pass the tenements of the poor and unfashionable portion of our population bear the same impress of care and forethought in their elaborate and skillful finish as those which pass the property of the millionaire, and spread their attractions and facilities before the abodes of luxury and influence.

Since winter closed the northwestern section of our city has been gradually yielding to the united touch of labor and skill, until it has risen from its incomplete and uncouth appearance to be a thing of beauty. Streets impassable during last winter have now become the thoroughfares of travel, and the especial delight of our pleasure-driving citizens.

SIXTEENTH STREET.

Among these we may instance Sixteenth street. This wide and elegant avenue, which stretches from the Presidential Mansion to the suburban retreats of Kalorama, Meridian Hill and Mount Pleasant, to which latter place a carriageway connection has already been, in part, made, is now one of the finest thoroughfares in our modernized city. Much like Broad street now is in Philadelphia, Sixteenth street is fast becoming the home of the wealthy. Upon this Fourteenth street having yielded its former prestige to pressure of business demands, and become the dusty highway of mercantile life, rather than the quiet, inviting road of pleasure.

Owing to the unfinished state of extensive improvements to be made by the United States Government at the intersection of Massachusetts avenue and Sixteenth street, both of these streets remained impassable at this point during the winter and spring, except to substantial business vehicles, which could risk eighteen inches of mud with a prospect of recovery.

Now at this point elegant carriageways of concrete, with sidewalks of bluestone, and the sidewalks in the vicinage of this office were little less than sheets of flame for hours. The boys were also well supplied with rockets, wheels, and Roman candles, and with these they scarred the sky to their heart's content.

Mr. Widdows, at an early hour, went to bed with his musical corporation full of "Hail to the Chief," "The Battle-cry of Freedom," "Red, White and Blue," and "Old John Brown," but he couldn't sleep. The urchins had commenced the celebration, and he lay awake all night, fanning in the daylight and urging on "swift time" to the hour of twelve to-day, when he will ring in the

NEW NAVAL DAY.

At the same hour the Oldest Inhabitants, the grave and reverend seigniors of the city, those who have seen old thrones rent, dynasties rise and fall, kings and queens "bite the dust," while America has marched to the front rank of nations and holds the right of the line in the great procession of empires, will meet at the City Hall. The venerable and beloved Dr. John B. Blake will preside. The Declaration of Independence will be read by Mr. Jenkin Thomas, and an oration will be delivered by Mr. John Dowling.

THE WHITE LOT,

at 12:30 p. m., will be glorious with the festivities of the day. A triangle will be ridden by the boys, and a sack race will take place. Five dollars will be given to any one who can ride the "Italian horse." The declaration will be read, and Mr. John T. Johnson will deliver an oration.

THE KNIGHTS OF ST. PATRICK,

ever devoted to the principles of civil liberty, will meet at their hall at 9 o'clock this morning, and go out with their families to celebrate the day.

BOSTON SCHUETZEN PARK.

The Washington Schuetzen Verein, the Sengerbund, Arion and Glee Clubs all meet for a joint picnic. They have engaged the Marine band, which will furnish concert and dancing music. Addresses will be made, and while Fatherland will not be forgotten, the spirit land of their adoption will be appropriately cultivated.

AT GREEN SPRING

the "Nameless Association" will hold an extensive and joyful picnic. Great preparations are made for dancing, prize shooting and fireworks. There will be no difficulty in reaching the place, and the festivities will be kept up all day and late into the evening.

MOUNT VERNON.

This sacred place will be visited during the day by great numbers. The Arrow makes two trips—one at 10 a. m. and the other at 3 p. m. The parties visiting Mount Vernon on the 4th are always of that orderly class which makes mixed company agreeable. Families can spend the entire day with them. It is a glorious opportunity to visit the spot.

I. O. O. F.

The celebrated choir of the Odd Fellows will their friends down the river on the steamer Express, and will go sixty miles down the river. This excursion will not only be a select one, but one especially agreeable for the good music and good fare that will be provided.

OTHER PLEASURE RESORTS.

The steamers City of Alexandria and Wawaset will make trips down the Potomac to Glymont on the 4th, from foot of Seventh street, at 8 and 9 a. m. and 3 and 5 p. m. Beginning, leave Glymont at 1, 4, and 9 p. m. Mr. Geo. A. Sheckell has made every arrangement for the enjoyment of the picnickers, and simple police arrangements have also been provided.

The Keyport makes her regular excursion this evening, leaving at 6 and returning at 11 p. m. Hundreds will avail themselves of this opportunity to quietly celebrate the 4th.

BOHEMIA.

A splendid temperance celebration will take place at Totson's camp grounds, six miles from the city. Baltimore and Washington will be largely represented, and there will be much interesting speaking, besides bushels of good things to eat.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

It is a pure religious idea to inculcate a love of country, and our Sunday schools propose to make the most of the day.

East Washington Methodist Episcopal Sunday school spend the day at Samuel's grove, on the Baltimore and Potomac railroad.

East Washington Methodist Episcopal Sunday school will celebrate at Young's woods, near the National race course.

McKendree, Hamline, Grace and Fletcher M. E. Sunday schools will unite in the woods near Glenwood.

The officers and teachers of the M. P. church Sabbath school of Georgetown meet at the church in Congress street at half past seven o'clock this morning, to participate in a picnic, to be held on the estate of the late Dr. Snyder, at the head of High street.

A picnic for the benefit of St. Ann's Catholic church at Tenallytown will come off at Mr. Green's woods, intersection of Woodley lane and Rockville turnpike.

The Methodists of the District and friends will have a grand excursion to their new camp ground, on the Metropolitan railroad, above Rockville. A special train will leave the depot at 8:30 a. m., and return at 7 p. m. Round-trip tickets 75 cents.

The colored Sunday school union hold their annual celebration at Linden hall, commencing at 11 o'clock, and addresses, singing, &c., will take place.

The North Washington benevolent society, connected with the Immaculate Conception church, celebrate the Fourth at the old Schuetzen park, at the terminus of the Seventh-street railway. There will, undoubtedly, be a large crowd and lots of fun.

SALUTED WITH DEATH.

The Shooting of E. Breseshan.

Last night, about 8 o'clock, as a party of gentlemen named E. Breseshan, James O'Neill, John Pendergrast and Michael Pendergrast were sitting on the steps of Mr. E. Breseshan's, on B street north, between First and Second streets, quietly talking, a man named James Blake, residing in the adjoining house, came to the door with a shot gun in his hand, and remarked to the party, "I'll teach you to say none of you have a gun like this." Without saying anything further he placed the gun to his shoulder and fired into the party, the load taking effect in the left side of Mr. Breseshan between the elbow and shoulder, inflicting a severe wound, which bled profusely. His companions tied up the wound until the arrival of a physician, who ordered his removal to the Providence hospital. Mr. Breseshan is a quiet, inoffensive and orderly man, and has a wife and four children depending upon him for support. Shannan is a laborer at the Capitol, and is considered a very dangerous character. At the time of the occurrence he was under the influence of liquor. After the shooting Shannan ran through his house to the yard, where he jumped over a fence and left. Lieut. Kelley has his men at work searching the city for him, and expects to be able to catch him before he succeeds in leaving the city. The cause of the shooting is stated to have been on account of an old fued that has existed between the two for some time past.

THE BLANK CERTIFICATE BOOKS.

Arrest of Thomas Clark in Philadelphia.

Detective James A. McDevitt and District Attorney Corkhill returned from Philadelphia yesterday morning, where they have been for two days past in search of the man who obtained, by a forged order, from Gibson Brothers, the blank certificate books of the Board of Public Works. The man they were looking for, named Thomas Clark, was found on Wednesday evening, and taken into custody and brought to this city. He has been previously convicted of forgery, and was pardoned by the President. Previous to his arrest he was stopping at the Bingham house, but left there previous to the arrival of Messrs. Cook and McDevitt. On being taken to the detective office in that city, he was requested to write what was called for by him, which order was complied with, and the handwriting proved a *fac simile* of the order delivered to Mr. Gibson. Clark denies all knowledge of the work, although he acknowledges to being in Washington at the time it occurred. He will have a hearing before Judge Snell to-morrow.

KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS.

Installation of Officers.

Last evening the following-named officers of Webster Lodge, No. 7, K. of P., were installed by Geo. E. Strobel, Vice Grand Chancellor: R. E. Crump, P. C.; Richard Harlow, C. C.; J. B. Ruff, V. C.; Wm. Hammersley, P.; J. B. Moconee, M. A.; —— Hopkins, I. G.; Leonard Cox, O. G.

RELIANCE LODGE.

The following officers were installed in Reliance Lodge, No. 16, K. of P., by R. Goodhart, Grand Recording Secretary: Thos. L. Barry, P.; Thos. L. Miller, C. C.; Richard T. Whiting, V. C.; Richard W. Ryan, P.; Richard Evans, M. A.; H. A. Yount, I. G.; L. Beach, O. G.

Blessing the Swords.

A very interesting ceremony will take place this morning at 11 o'clock at St. Aloysius' church—the blessing of the new and beautiful swords just purchased by the Knights of St. Columbkille. The ceremony will be performed by Father Maguire, who will no doubt make some remarks appropriate to the occasion. The swords, some fifty in number, were designed by Mr. Wilson, of New York, and were manufactured at Chicopee, Massachusetts. They are highly ornamented, and are much admired for beauty of style and finish. This afternoon the Knights will receive and entertain their friends at Loeffler's Garden, New York avenue, near First street northeast, where freedom's anniversary will be celebrated with true Irish-American relish.

The Weather.

At Coughlin's drug store, on the corner of Ninth and F streets, the range of the thermometer standing in the shade during the entire day was as follows: By comparison it will be seen that there is quite a difference between the thermometers at the points named at the same hours: 8 a. m., 86; 9 a. m., 90; 10 a. m., 94; 11 a. m., 96; 12 m., 97; 1 p. m., 96; 2 p. m., 97½; 3 p. m., 96; 4 p. m., 96; 5 p. m., 94; 6 p. m., 92; 7 p. m., 88; 8 p. m., 86; 9 p. m., 84.

Metropolitan Theatre.

We are glad to say that Cumm