



National Tribune

WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 1900.

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ESTABLISHED 1877—NEW SERIES.

THE 34th NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT, G.A.R.

Address of Commander-in-Chief Shaw.

AN ABLE REVIEW OF THE YEAR.

Strength and Unity of the Order—Notable Events—Pensions—The Court of Pension Appeals—Patriotic Teaching—Memorial Day.

Allied Associations—The Outlook.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ORDER 276,662.

Comrades: The honor conferred by my unanimous election as your Commander-in-Chief one year ago placed me at the head of the greatest patriotic organization in the world, and it has been my ambition to discharge the manifold duties of this great office. To this end I have devoted all my time to the demands of the position in the endeavor to make good my promise made on entering upon the work that I would try and make "a busy year among comrades." I appear before you to render an account of my stewardship, and to make such recommendations as seem desirable at the close of the year of service.

COMRADESHIP.
My first official act was to send out a fraternal circular letter to the comrades of the Nation, calling upon them to unite in an earnest effort to build up our membership through prudent and wise consideration of the claims of comradeship. Special reference was made to the "dropped" and "suspended" members, and the need of Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty, in the largest sense, in the line of securing the aid and comfort of all veterans of the Great War.

The result of this appeal has been most gratifying as a whole. Department Commanders, Aids-de-Camp, and faithful comrades have done much to strengthen our noble Order, through personal efforts in behalf of this great organization. While the Grand Army of the Republic is a fraternal and reminiscent Order, and one that has no equal in its unique objects and membership, the fact is, that constant effort is necessary to insure its highest usefulness. We are all growing old, and with increasing infirmities there is urgent need of a closer touch and larger sympathy with and for each other. "Kind words are more than coronets," and the comradely cheer that knows no shadow of turning, this side of the grave, should be the unfailing basis of our relations to the Grand Army. It is a source of peculiar gratification to your Commander-in-Chief to know that during the past year a remarkable record of concord has followed this policy of fraternity in all departments.

THE "DEWEY DAY" PARADE.
The question of submitting to a re-assignment for the aged comrades of the Grand Army in the Civil Pageantry of patriotism in the Dewey Parade in New York led to a somewhat earnest protest, and the final refusal to march at all. This action was based upon the belief that the heroes who saved the Nation to full union and unchallenged liberty, and so made it possible for the great Admiral Dewey to win the honors of Manila Bay, entitled them to march in glory and in joy at the head of the line, in his honor. The loyalty of comrades in refusing to march—under the protest of that splendid courage and Department Commander, Joseph W. Kay, was as prudent and timely as it was commendable. Some phases of that unparliamentary occurrence would have been severely dealt with had it not been for a fraternity which overlooked the good-natured weakness of several comrades whose lack of the plainest knowledge and observance of Grand Army regulations and obligations was almost amusingly displayed.

Your Commander-in-Chief fully indorsed the right action of Department Commander Kay, and desires to thank the comrades for their object lesson of loyalty to the Grand Army, and to the dignity and honor of the saviors of the Republic. Unless survivors of the Great War march at the front in all such pageantaries, they should not consent to appear in line. No sophistry as to troops "carrying arms" can have force, in the light of the glorious services of the veterans of the Union, so far as a place in the line is concerned.

REPORTS OF NATIONAL OFFICERS.
I respectfully refer you to the able reports of National officers of the Grand Army for a detailed review of the various branches under their supervision. These will prove how zealously and worthily the work committed to their care has been done, and are evidences of rare fitness for the trusts committed to their keeping. Entire harmony and faithful services have marked the relations of these officials, and my best thanks are due them for the most efficient manner in which they have discharged their respective duties.

Increases, reratings, etc.:
Act of 1890..... 34,152
General laws..... 25,238
Old wars..... 803
Total certificates issued..... 105,591
Total certificates issued 1899..... 80,654

July 1, 1890:
No. pensioners on the rolls..... 591,519
No. original grants..... 49,645
No. names restored..... 4,529
Total..... 1,036,803
Dropped by deaths..... 35,809
Dropped by remarriages..... 369
Dropped by all other causes..... 6,576
Total..... 43,354
July 1, 1900:
Pensioners on rolls..... 695,529
Increase for year of..... 20,010

Number of claims of all kinds—original, increases, reratings, etc.—pending:
July 1, 1890..... 578,699
July 1, 1898..... 635,959
July 1, 1899..... 477,259
July 1, 1900..... 437,191

COMPARATIVE.
Allowances and rejections of original claims for fiscal years ending June 30, 1894, and 1898:
1894..... 41,219 18,651
1898..... 8,901 14,490
Claims, net 1890..... 24,836 65,301
1898..... 43,747 23,924

1894, first year McKinley's Administration:
Claims allowed (31 1/2 per cent.)..... 29,085
Claims rejected (68 1/2 per cent.)..... 81,592
Claims adjudicated..... 123,677
1898, first year McKinley's Administration:
Claims allowed (52 per cent.)..... 52,648
Claims rejected (48 per cent.)..... 84,114
Claims adjudicated..... 100,762

Number of cases on appeal from action of Bureau of Pensions to the Department of the Interior showing number of cases affirmed and number of cases reversed for the four years ending June 30, 1900:
Year..... Appeals..... Affirmed..... Reversed.....
1897..... 4,949..... 4,403..... 546
1898..... 12,057..... 11,222..... 835
1899..... 8,845..... 8,491..... 354
1900..... 7,520..... 6,576..... 944
Total..... 33,371..... 30,712..... 2,659

gress when the bill was introduced, and to this interesting data reference is made for an intelligent understanding of this most important proposed legislation. In view of the conceded justice and need of this measure by leading jurists of the country, comrades are urgently requested to do all in their power to secure its early passage by Congress.

The time has come for promptly disposing of all appeal cases in the Pension Office before a judicial tribunal worthy of the veterans who saved this Republic to full freedom in the 60's. From a careful consideration of the whole subject your Commander-in-Chief feels that the early passage of this Pension Court of Appeals Bill would relieve public men from a vast amount of letter writing and secure prompt justice to all applicants for a pension, and place the Pension Department on a basis of legal adjudication of pension cases, at once generally satisfactory and commandingly just to all interests concerned. Generous pension laws are one thing, and their proper and legal execution is quite another matter, as the action of the Pension Office furnishes abundant proof during the past few years.

What is needed, beyond doubt, is a Pension Court of Appeals to provide interpretations of the law in a competent court, with high judicial functions, so that there shall hereafter be no grounds for charging that political considerations of party policy or the personal idiosyncrasies of pension officials pervert the true purpose of the pension laws from being impartially carried out. Your Commander-in-Chief has given this proposed measure his hearty support, and regards it as among the most useful and most desirable pension measures ever introduced into Congress. It should early become a law, and so settle for all time to come the constantly arising irritations and complaints in the line of pension applicants. And this proposed court would be desirable in settling claims for pensions under the Spanish-American war and any future wars.

UNHAPPY IRRITATIONS.
It is a source of great regret that the Pension Department is widely criticized by a large number of worthy applicants for pensions, under the belief that their claims are not treated in a liberal and just way, under the present administration of the pension laws. Such a state of feeling is greatly to be deplored, for it gives rise to irritations of an unfortunate and unhappy sort.

Your Commander-in-Chief has given diligent and painstaking attention to many of these complaints, and loyal efforts have been made to compose the unhappy feeling of dissatisfaction that exists in this connection. The impartial and worthy execution of our pension laws unquestionably calls for great prudence and wisdom on the part of those charged with the duty of their adjudication. The great weakness undoubtedly to be found is the faulty present system in force in the Pension Office. Nothing should be left to individual interpretation. It is not so much the question of officials as it is of a proper judicial system in the execution of our generous pension laws. With the proposed Pension Court of Appeals once duly organized the whole atmosphere of the Pension Office would be quickly changed for the harmonious and popular a branch of the Government as those of the Departments of the Treasury, of the Postoffice and of Justice. For then the law would be effectively under high judicial interpretation.

Your Commander-in-Chief believes that the passage of the proposed Pension Court of Appeals Bill would bring harmony and settle, once for all, the vexing questions and irritations now so pronounced in the Pension Office, through its wise provisions for interpreting the pension laws and ability to speedily clear the appeal cases now burdening the files of the Department of the Interior. And this view, strongly held, leads to the urgent and repeated appeals made in this address for comrades to neglect no opportunity to aid in securing the passage of this most important and righteous measure. With peace and concord secured, without it, no end of heart burnings and irritations will continue.

Dread Days in DIXIE

By SILAS W. CROCKER, Co. I, 6th Pa. Reserves, and Co. E, 191st Pa.

Suffering and Death at Salisbury.

For the first few days after we took lodging in the stockade there was but little sickness and comparatively few deaths, the removal from Belle Island with all its disappointment having revived us for a season, but it was not long before hardly a man in the prison was exempt from one or more of the prevailing diseases, many being afflicted with several at the same time. Diarrhea prevailed to an alarming extent, and was very fatal. Scurvy also was very prevalent, and rheumatism was universal. To these as the weather grew colder was added pneumonia, or, as we



"THROW DOWN THEM EARS OF CORN, YOU THIEVING YANK."

called it, lung fever, in its most virulent form. It will be remembered that the date of capture of all the 10,000 older prisoners was June, July and August, and just after the severe Wilderness campaign, and we in the army had long since learned to carry nothing but what was indispensable, consequently when captured we none of us had much superfluous clothing. It will also be remembered that the blankets, shelter tents, etc., of the older prisoners were confiscated at the start. Our garments, too, had been subjected to unusual wear since being in prison, so by the time Winter had fairly set in most of us who had been at Belle Island were already well-nigh naked, but those brought in later, being warmly clothed, and the fact that they gave up the fight for life and died faster than the old hands, enabled many poor fellows to secure better garments by stripping the bodies of the dead. All sentiment and even sympathy seemed dead, and we had sunk into a sort of stupor and indifference for the time which was simply appalling.

I witnessed many scenes of extreme suffering, but the whole spectacle being one of such a nature and we, I soon became accustomed to such things, and was not much moved by them. I will relate one or two incidents, however, which, hardened as I had become, made a vivid impression on my mind.

TWO OUT OF MANY.
As I was going to the well one day I saw a man whom I had often spoken to, but whose name, if I ever knew, I have forgotten, sitting by a tree weeping bitterly. Thinking to comfort him, I went to him and asked what was the trouble. He held up a daguerreotype of a woman and two bright-looking children, and said he was thinking of them and of his far-off home in Massachusetts. His manner touched my heart, and I could not help weeping with him, but his sorrow was too deep to be assuaged by any sympathy I could offer, so I soon left him. It happened that I passed that way again late in the afternoon, and seeing him still sitting there, went to him again. The poor man was dead! His lifeless hand still held the picture of his wife and little ones. I got some comrades to help me carry his body to the dead-house, where we laid it out the best we could, placing the picture under his crossed hands on his breast, and it was probably buried with him. I do not know this man's regiment, but remember that he wore a clover leaf badge on his cap, indicating that he belonged to the Second Corps.

is nothing after you get used to it." But soon after our arrival at Salisbury he took disease, and although he stood it longer than many others was finally forced to go. During his last days he was raving crazy and talked much about his family. Some of us were near to give him water constantly, and I lay by him the night he died. He had appeared better, and I fell asleep, and when I awoke the form of Halsey Burnham was lying across me, cold and stiff in death.

FACIAL ATTEMPT AT SHELTER.
Late in the Fall our keepers issued two sufficient to hold out faithful to the end is (in my own estimation, at least) the brightest page in my life's history. My feeling and determination in this matter was shared by most of my comrades, and I do not remember of a single native American entering into the rebel army from the stockade at Salisbury. They in thousands of instances literally chose death rather than dishonor, for these officers began soon after our arrival here, and those graves at Salisbury are a mighty monument lasting as our flag itself to the heroic love of country which pervaded the souls of these brave men whose bodies fill them. With only the condition of raising their right hand to heaven and swearing allegiance to the so-called Southern Confederacy, they could summon moral courage and firmness to say no, suffering pangs of hunger and cold which those who have not experienced can never understand, each day adding to their lingering cup of misery, then dying this lingering death, knowing well long beforehand what the end would be. Who but patriotic Americans have made such a record as this?

A QUEER CHARACTER.
There was ample opportunity here to study human nature in all its many phases, for the varieties of men were perhaps all represented. One would hardly expect to find many misers in such a place, but in the squad which I belonged was a well-developed specimen. He was a member of my own company, and if I remember rightly his name was Theodore Kadman. I am not positive as to his name, but he is the man I have spoken of as getting through the search at Libby with a good pair of boots, a silver-cased watch and a fine meerschaum pipe. He was quite an old man, and the privations of the prison bore heavily on him, but he never complained.

Finally he became so sick and weak that he could not eat the prison rations at all, and was urged to dispose of either the pipe or watch, either of which would bring him quite a sum in Confederate money, and on which he might have fared well for weeks; but his answer always was that he could not spare them. He would not even sell the buttons off his coat to procure better food. Of course he grew rapidly worse and soon died, more of starvation than disease, and left his property to be used by others.

When he died the Orderly-Sergeant called together the surviving members of the company and told us that he would take charge of the things, sell them to the best advantage and divide the proceeds among us. This was done, and proved a great blessing to us.

The boots were the means of securing me an interview with Richardson, the New York Tribune correspondent, of whom I have spoken. He, with several others in the citizens' building, had perfected a plan of escape, and only waited to secure boots or shoes that would stand a long tramp. I happened to hear these men making inquiry for shoes soon after Kadman died, and told them I knew of a pair of boots for sale, and Richardson asked me to bring them up, and if of the right size he would pay a good price for them. So I went at once to Serg't Belcher, who accompanied me to the citizens' building. The boots were tried on, pronounced an excellent fit, and Richardson paid \$10 in Confederate money for them. This party made their escape soon after this and made their way to the Union lines near Knoxville, going part of the way by the same route taken by me later in the Winter, but I of course knew nothing of this then.

I come now to the relation of an event in my prison experience which made it possible for me to live to write this story, and also, I am sure, saved the lives of several comrades. I have said that they were given a small quantity of wood each day. At first this wood was brought near the stockade by a detail of negroes, but it was decided by Maj. Gee that the Yankees under his charge were not quite blue-blooded enough to deserve colored waiters, so they must perform their own drudgery.