

which is quite long, and the memorials, each bear conclusive evidence on their face that they are not the spontaneous expressions of the officers who assume them as theirs.

The line of thought, the character of expression, the nature of the arguments, are all familiar and as easily recognized as the Washington Monument. There are many phrases in it repeated so often and so drearly in every report, letter, argument, and evidence given by the Commissioner for four years past, that the paternity is apparent. "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." The signatures are the act of the officers, the ideas are those of Bentley.

Whether he wrote the order himself or not—it is certain that he inspired it, and inspired it so thoroughly that nearly every sentence has his earmark, and the unmistakable odor of the Pension Office permeates the whole transaction, and for all the purposes involved in the document itself it is John A. Bentley who usurps the function of commander-in-chief and adjutant-general of the G. A. R., and does it for his own private purposes and to forward his own schemes. So too the newspapers take up the matter under similar inspiration, and announced, before the ink on the order was fairly dry, that the Grand Army of the Republic was wheeling into line in support of Bentley's measure, and this before any Post had acted at all on the matter.

Again, in a few days the same papers, under the same inspiration, announces that the Committee on Appropriations in the House propose to put Senate bill No. 496 as a rider on the Pension Appropriation bill. Yet everybody knows that that committee never did so propose, and that such action would be a direct violation of the rules of the House, and could only be done by unanimous consent.

All and each of these are steps in Mr. Bentley's method of creating, or, properly, manufacturing public opinion by indirect and unfair methods.

He is known to have stated in Philadelphia that the examiners provided for in his bill would have to be in permanent session in that city, and it is safe to say that there were many other matters stated by him quite as significant that are not known.

But the evidence of a deliberate and carefully arranged plot, prepared by Mr. Bentley, are just as clear from the negative side as from the affirmative.

In this General Order No. 11, so unmistakably the creature of the Commissioner, there is a demand made upon the Posts to approve this new measure—the bill of the Senate Committee—and yet the bill itself is not furnished for their consideration.

Only the first two sections of the bill are given, out of the nine sections, and those omitted are the very sections which give vitality to the whole, which prescribe the manner of carrying the bill into effect, and which are most open to serious and fatal objection.

They do not give section 7, which authorizes the Commissioner on his own caprice or pure whim to investigate any and every case over again "after a pension has been allowed."

They thus deliberately deprive the very tribunal they are addressing—the Posts of the G. A. R.—of the opportunity of examination of the whole scheme as reported, and practically ask a blind and inconsiderate indorsement of unknown machinery, because the headquarters have been "satisfied" by Mr. Bentley, and have become his unconscious agents to procure this indorsement.

If the Grand Army of the Republic desire to have any weight or influence on this great question they ought to know what they are passing upon, and speak from such knowledge, and not as passive and obedient instruments to turn out ready-made opinions to order.

They ought to know the existing evils; they ought to know what are said to be the causes; they ought to hear both sides; they ought to be sure that they understand the operation and effect of the measure they are called upon to indorse.

In the debate on the bill in the Senate in the winter of 1879, which was thorough, it was ignominiously defeated. What did Gen. James Shields, Senator from Missouri, a hero of the Mexican war and of the war of the rebellion, say, "I should like know who is the author of such a bill. He deserves a leather medal and I call upon the pensioners of America to give him one." What did Hon. A. G. Thurman, Senator from Ohio, say of it, "It will carry terror to the hearts of two hundred thousand pensioners." Hon. G. F. Edmunds, of Vermont, strenuously opposed the bill as well as did Senators

Blaine, Voorhees, Conkling, Kernan, and other great lights of both political parties. We shall endeavor in another article to show as clearly as we can what this bill No. 496 does in fact mean, and what may be naturally expected from its provisions if it becomes a law. But our purpose now is only to expose the underhand methods taken by a high public officer to bolster up by a manufactured public opinion, a measure utterly bad in itself, and which will cause still greater delay, hindrance, and suffering to the army of claimants who are waiting for the justice of the Nation, and whose claims are blockaded in the Pension Office.

Four Millions of Dollars Annually Paid Out for Fraudulent Pensions.

In the House of Representatives, on the 16th day of December, 1880, the Hon. Jay A. Hubbell, of Michigan, used these words:

The Commissioner of Pensions informs me, and the press of the country has published it, that he is satisfied that, under the present system of paying out pensions, over \$4,000,000 (and he does not know how much more) has been paid out fraudulently out of every fifty millions disbursed.

This, then, is not Mr. Hubbell's declaration, for he is careful to give his authority.

This is Commissioner Bentley's declaration—this is his charge; this is what he assumes to know; for observe he says he is satisfied as to that much, but does not know how much more.

This charge means that nearly 15 per cent. of the Pensions are fraudulent.

We challenge Mr. Bentley to the proof. We challenge him to show by any sort of reasoning, by any possible state of facts, by any decent show of argument, that this, or anything like the case made in this monstrous charge, does in fact exist.

The truth is that Mr. Bentley has slandered by wholesale a large body of people whom he of all men is bound to protect. He has done it without evidence, and he knows it. He has done it as a means to an end, and that end not the best for the Government or the people.

His records do not show any such state of facts. His secret service agents even give him no such data. The record of criminal prosecutions shows no such fearful rate of crime. If it were true, he ought to be kicked out of office for incompetency. Any man who has all the courts, all the law, all the power of the United States behind him, who has absolute authority over the admission or rejection of claims, who has a special detective force of his own, who has large annual appropriations to detect and punish fraud, sinks to the level of confessed imbecility when he makes such a statement. Not a Senator or Representative but would repel with scorn such a charge as applied to his own people; but Mr. Bentley includes and calumniates all, because he distinguishes none.

Four millions of dollars, and perhaps more, lost every year by Commissioner Bentley!!!

Is not this rather a high figure to pay for the doubtful usefulness of this gentleman?

What would the Secretary of the Treasury think of one of his auditors, or the President or a comptroller, who allowed four millions a year to be stolen by fraud? What would Mr. Schurz, of the Interior, say to an Indian commissioner who made such a confession? Nay, more; what would become of any officer who confessed to four hundred thousand, or even forty thousand, lost in his office by fraud on this Government?

Gentlemen, if you believe Mr. Bentley—if you think he told the truth, you would instantly remove him from an office which bore such results, or you would be impeached.

The country can't afford such a luxury as Mr. Bentley at such a price.

Now remember, for four years he has been pressing this cry of fraud.

Is it not time he should give some proof, better than Mr. Hubbell gave, of the Maine swindle by a clerk in the Pension Office, in 1864, and a negro conspiracy in Detroit, detected and punished by the conviction of Richardson.

The whole body of Pensioners who are covered by this slander challenge and require you to point out and punish the guilty, and to leave unharmed the reputation of the innocent.

Prove your case and show yourself incompetent for your office, or admit your extravagance; if not, you libel and show yourself unfit for it from want of judicial mind and judicial impartiality.

The Closing Year.

Another milestone on the road of life has been passed. Each and all of us are one year nearer the hour when the dark curtain will be lifted and we will pass forever into the silent land. Now, we are not proposing to preach a sermon, but to present some philosophic views. The prospect of leaving this world should never cause a shudder or draw a tear. We know that we are physical beings, and that all such must die. In the language of an old English poet—

"Like leaves on trees the race of man is found;
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground.
Thus generations in their turn decay;
So flourish these, when those have passed away."

Each and all of us take life upon certain conditions, and are oft operated upon by circumstances seemingly beyond our control. Those wonderful laws through which we are living, breathing human beings, and not mere crude matter, senseless clods, are wrapt in as much mystery as our condition in the new life. But one deep conviction pervades every intelligent mind—aye, has a lurking place even in that of the rude savage,—that beyond the borders of this life there is another, and there the disembodied spirits of mortals will be in happiness or misery. Whence arises, why exists this universal conviction, unless it be implanted in our natures by the Great, Eternal Spirit? The belief of the savage in this doctrine may be compared to his hut of mud and sticks, while that of the man of learning would resemble the marble palace; but both are houses in which to dwell.

Well, if we are ever to enter the blissful abodes of the future, beyond the river of life, we must while here come into accord with what we feel to be the attributes of superior beings. Leaving out the question as to the relations of Christ to his Father, we know that when he said, "As the tree falls, so it lies," he spoke an indisputable truth. Hence, if our minds are permeated with gentleness, charity, geniality, purity, we not only ennoble ourselves and prepare ourselves for this new life, but we become able to infect others with like traits and dispositions. And now, at the dawn of a new year, may we with cheerful hearts act upon the living conviction that this life is a blessing intended for us (otherwise we should not be here), and that as it is lived, in honor or in shame, we will enter with honor or with shame into our eternal homes.

Bill Four Hundred and Ninety-six.

We refer all our comrades, patrons and readers to the exhaustive review we have heretofore given of Senate Bill No. 496.

We have denounced it and that justly as a contrivance to enlarge the power and patronage of the office, by creating six hundred new officers to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, but nominated, in fact, by the Commissioner of Pensions. We have stated and stated correctly; that it is a slur and an insult upon the large body of examining surgeons, and was intended to be so; that Mr. Bentley bases one of his chief arguments upon an alleged want of professional honor on the part of these surgeons.

We have stated, and state again, that these new examiners have no power of decision, or even of recommendation; that they are not allowed to be judges, in any sense; that they are only commissioners to take the affidavits of any witness who may appear, or be produced before them, and to send on such affidavits to the Pension office. That they have no power to issue subpoenas to compel witnesses to appear or to punish for not answering. That they have no sort of resemblance to a Court; that the United States whom they pretend to represent cannot summon any witness, however necessary, to defend and expose a fraudulent claim. That it is physically impossible for them to do ordinary justice to pension claimants.

That there must be long and tedious delays for many of those who want to be examined, and delays made expensive by being at a distance from their homes, and by the necessity of paying for themselves and their witnesses while thus dancing attendance and waiting their turn.

That in almost every pension claim witnesses reside in different districts, in remote States and territories out of reach of the claimant, except by correspondence through the mails, and thus an examination began in one State, must be sent from one set of commissioners to another until all the links of testimony are complete if ever they can be.