

years after the war, under even the present most liberal laws, a million pensioners worthy of a pension. The Union army at its greatest strength never exceeded at any one time a million men, and according to the best estimates the total number of individuals who enlisted during the whole war, including the short term men and all soldiers, whether they went to the front or not, did not much exceed 2,000,000.

During the past six years an average of over 40,000 pensioners have yearly been dropped from the rolls, "by reason of death, re-marriage of widows, minors reaching the age of 16, and for other causes," and for the thirty-six years the number of pensions thus terminated must aggregate a half million. These, with the million borne on the rolls and the 400,000 cases still pending, though many of the pending cases are for re-rating and the like, will include the very great majority of all the soldiers who entered the war. There is no service pension law, but the prodigality of the existing laws and the liberality with which they are administered practically amount to a service pension law. It is, therefore, folly to raise the cry that justice is not being done to the old soldiers by the present Pension Commissioner; but, on the other hand, it is clear that thousands, or even hundreds of thousands, of names are borne upon the rolls which should not be there. Under existing laws there appears to be no way to prevent fraud. In the August number of the Forum Mr. Francis E. Leupp closely examines the system, and notes startling instances of gross frauds in medical examinations, which are undoubtedly wide-spread. He says:

"The Medical Division of the Bureau recently found that out of thirty-two examinations made by one Board in one week, all the claimants were described as having organic heart disease—twenty-six of them had a systolic murmur of the heart and six a diastolic murmur. This coincidence seemed so improbable that twelve of the claimants were ordered to a second examination, but before a medical board in the next county. The medical referee, an ex-Union soldier and medal of honor man, went on from Washington to witness this test. The second board was not advised as to what disabilities the first had found, but was instructed simply to make a thorough examination and ascertain the exact condition of each claimant. Heart disease was not found to exist in a single instance. For further assurance, the referee, who, besides his other experience, had served seventeen years as a medical examiner himself, made a separate examination of each of the twelve cases, and confirmed the report of the board that heart disease was not present in one."

Officers in the Pension Bureau favor a

change in the laws providing for a permanent examining board of trustworthy surgeons, who shall go from place to place, but Congress could scarcely be got to take action in remedying pension abuses which have grown to their present strength through the apathy, demagoguery and cowardice of Congress. Fraudulent pensioners, in many instances crowding out meritorious claimants, will remain a burden for generations upon the treasury, and that the fraud will be of long continuance may be seen from the simple calculation which the practice of young women marrying aged pensioners inspired a Grand Army man to make:

"A soldier 20 years old at the end of the Civil War becomes a pensioner and dies at the age of 80, in 1925. Just before his death he marries a girl of 16 in order to leave her a pension. She lives to be 91, and her pension does not expire until the year 2000, or 135 years after the war."

There are already filed in the Pension Bureau 33,532 Spanish war claims, in addition to those already on the rolls,

The management of pension business by the government is among the strongest arguments in favor of peace. The payment of liberal pensions to honorable soldiers, who rendered valiant service to their country, is a duty cheerfully and gladly performed by every good citizen. The money wasted on unworthy soldiers is the smallest of the evils of a dishonest pension roll, but the fraud, perjury, deceit, injustice and dishonesty which surrounds a gigantic, rotten, pension roll is a menace to the strongest nation.—Philadelphia Record.

DON'T WAKE THE MULE!

A tug lay hard by, and the captain added his bit to my sociological nocturne, says Rollin Lynde Hartt in the September *Atlantic*, as I sat in the pilot house and peered out on the water, where red lights and green lights, with many of yellow and white, dripped zigzag fashion down from the wharves and ships, "Where do you sleep?" questioned I. "Why, here," he replied, "in this very pilot house, on that nice fluffy bunk you're a-settin' on; an' sometimes I sleep at that wheel, a-steerin' this boat, sir. Can't be helped, sir. The hours we work would stave in a trained nurse, an' send a sentinel to be shot. Why, man, I've seed the time when I've stuck by that wheel twenty grim hours at a stretch; once it was forty-two hours. And when you read in the paper about towin' a big propeller clean through a dock, or jammin' her into her next-door neighbor fer keeps, don't you say us tug folks are Johnnie Raws. Just say we're worked and worked 'till we sleep at the wheel. For that's God's truth, sir." Transportation, then, is that golden hinge upon which hangs the nation's wealth.

The hinge must be ever ready. Even canal boats run day and night, the night mule working while the day mule sleeps. Board such a boat, and no doubt the skipper will lift a warning forefinger, saying, "S-s-sh! You'll wake the mule!"

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

EDITOR CONSERVATIVE:

In the discussion about prayer that has been going on in your columns, it seems to me the true nature of prayer is over-looked.

We believe that God is a real person, our loving Father—our best and dearest friend. Prayer is converse with Him. It may be spoken or not. But if we need anything, or are in any difficulty it is as natural to express our feelings to God as it is for a child to go with the story of his little troubles to an earthly father. He is infinitely wiser than we, and we are glad to have Him decide what is for the best.

Now as to the ship question propounded in your last. A man who has the thought of God I have thus expressed is far more likely to be calm and steadfast in the midst of danger, and to do his duty then and always than the reckless and profane. At any rate that is my experience. So far from relaxing the sinews of effort this trust in God and prayerful converse with Him strengthen them, and often give steadfastness and courage even to those who are naturally weak and timid.

EVERETT P. WHEELER.

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THE YOUNG MAN'S CHANCES.

BY W. S. MCCARTNEY.

The thoughtful reader will be interested in the able articles published in a late issue of THE CONSERVATIVE in answer to the important question in regard to the chances for the young man at the present time. The consensus of opinion is that the chances were never better than now.

But there are very important industries that are not spoken of where the chances for the young man of energy and brains is equal, if not superior, to professional or semi-professional careers. I allude to agriculture, horticulture, stock raising and kindred profitable industries, which offer inducements to the bright, honest, industrious young man. The time has passed when the rural population is looked upon as ignorant and their occupation a degrading one. Indeed, it is one of the noblest callings, and the writer can recall many who started as hired man, and who by faithfulness and industry, have risen to be the owners of palatial homes and were able to set up their children in homes. The place of the hired man on the farm is preferable to the briefless lawyer or the physician without a patient.—Syracuse (Neb.) Journal.