

A WOMAN DESERTER ASKS A PENSION.

Washington Letter to the Philadelphia Record.

A singular story hangs from two bills offered in the House by Representative Cutch-
eon, of Michigan. One provides for the removal
of the charge of desertion from the record of
Franklin Thompson, of such and such a Michi-
gan regiment, and the other grants a pension to
Sarah Emma E. Seelye, alias Franklin Thomp-
son, of the same regiment. At the outbreak of
the war Miss Seelye, as she saw regiment after
regiment hurrying Southward, had a growing
desire to go to the front herself. She wanted to
go as a nurse, but, after thinking it over, came
to the conclusion that it would be better to put
on a man's uniform and to go to the war as a
private in a Detroit regiment. So she did. She
came with the regiment to Washington. She
went into camp with it. She went to Bull Run
with it, carrying her musket and her accoutre-
ments like a man. After the battle of Bull
Run she found herself separated from her
regiment, between the Federal and the
Confederate lines. Through the night she
trudged toward Washington, where she arrived
24 hours behind her command. Reunited to her
fleeing friends, she went with them to Freder-
icksburg, and afterward through the Peninsular
campaign. Everywhere she marched and fought
and lived like a man. It began to tell upon her
health, however, so she had herself transferred
to one of the Western armies. Here, after a
time, she became a mail-carrier, first for the regi-
ment, then for the brigade, and then for the di-
vision. While performing these duties she fell
ill, and was ordered to the hospital. There she
felt sure her sex would be discovered. Accord-
ingly, she determined not to go the hospital.
The only way out was to desert; so she deserted.
Afterward, in her own clothes and under her
own name, she returned to the army as a nurse
and cared for her late comrades to the end of the
war. Now she is married, and lives in Iowa. Of
course, the charge of desertion still stands against
her. She wants it removed, and then she wants a
pension for physical disabilities which she says
she acquired in the army.

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