

Eulogy
delivered at
Plymouth Church
Brooklyn
April 29th 1894

No. 17.

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No 17 B

Subject
General Henry W. Abner

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Chicago
November 1st
Messrs. Chase
New York
Dear Sirs

W. H. P.
For the purpose of the
first and second
of the

Chicago
Chicago, January 1st

Present to Slocum's set

EULOGY

delivered by Major General O.O. HOWARD, U.S. Army, at the Memorial Exercises in honor of Major General HENRY W. SLOCUM, U. S. V., at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, April 29th 1894.

When solicited by General King, in behalf of G. A. R. men to deliver this address, a double feeling filled my breast. First there was a pulse of joy that I was offered so sacred a duty, and then a sudden depression, because of my want of intimate knowledge of facts that ought to be presented on such an occasion.

Reasonably familiar as a fellow-officer with General Slocum's military career, I have had the privilege of but an occasional glance into the more lengthy and quite as important and incidental civil history. Therefore, with no little hesitancy after reflection, do I undertake the task, entreating you and his loved ones to forgive any apparent lack in this Memorial.

I. EARLY LIFE.

According to the record which is voluminous of the large Slocum connection,

HENRY WARNER SLOCUM

was born at Delphi, N.Y., September 24th 1827. Delphi is a pretty country village in Oneida County, not far from Syracuse. His father Matthew B. Slocum, and his mother who before her marriage was Mary Ostrander of Albany, moved to Delphi from the state capital as

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Matthew B. Slocum, and his mother who before her marriage was Mary
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early as 1817. Here he settled as a merchant in the village. Henry was the sixth child in a family of eleven; the country store did not bring sufficient profit to do more than to defray the absolutely necessary expenses. The boy, however, had a good christian home and the privileges of the public school; very soon foreseeing the strain upon his father to care for so ~~many~~^{many} Henry Warner, resolved to shift for himself. He early developed a thirst for knowledge, and bent his energies to acquire it. As money was necessary for any training beyond that by the public school, he made several successful attempts in earning money. One of them was in using his first gains or savings in purchasing sheep and raising lambs to sell with profit; before he was sixteen, he did what your speaker undertook at the same age. He took charge of a country school. In those days our schools were not systematized, so that the work of every day's instruction was various and prolonged, and the management was by no means easy of accomplishment, yet, there was no better training of the mind and of the character to be found, if it were not pursued too far. As a preparation for Slocum's eventful life, self-control, just dealing, constant patience and unquestioned example - these and other such virtues in the young teacher became a habit; acquired knowledge in fundamental studies became more familiar, permanent and ready for use.

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A little later, always with a fixed purpose of acquiring an education, we find ^{him} at Cazenovia, N.Y., a student in the Seminary of the Oneida Conference, paying his expenses by clerical work done mornings and evenings in the city post -office. These earnings were supplemented by winter-teaching in the district schools. Lately one of his pupils, speaking of him as a teacher, showed a scroll designed and executed by him; it was a prize for the best speller . As he pursued his studies, he attended the Normal School at Albany, and then returned to Cazenovia to teach in the public schools of the city.

II. WEST POINT MILITARY ACADEMY.

Before this period of his life, the young man had cherished a strong desire to obtain an appointment to a cadetship at West ^{Point;} ~~Point~~ with no special influence to aid him , he had hitherto failed to secure the nomination, when at last to his joy the Hon. Daniel F. Gott, Member of Congress from the Syracuse District tendered him the appointment.

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himself up to much solid reading. It is not a little thing that he and his future wife, Miss Clara Rice, daughter of a worthy family of Woodstock, N.Y., were at the same Seminary at Cazenovia; then ~~and~~ there they became attached to each other. The uplifting influence of such a young woman of noble character and personal charm for this young lad ~~of marked character~~ cannot be estimated; it encouraged, it strengthened, it purified every strong purpose, and made that purpose appear worthy of a double self-denial.

He took his place as a cadet of the Military Academy, July 1st 1848. It was my good fortune my second year, during Cadet Slocum's first class-year, to room on the floor just below him. Of course there was class-separation, and I was three years his junior, but he treated me with kindness and attention; his individuality especially impressed ^{itself} ~~himself~~ upon me. He expressed himself openly when it cost so much to do so, as an opponent to human slavery. The proslavery sentiment ~~at~~ ^{was} at West Point ~~was~~ so great at that time that it derogated from one's popularity to express, or even to be suspected of abolition sentiments. In spite of the opposition thus awakened and his known attitude against prevailing opinions, Cadet Slocum was nevertheless ^{highly} esteemed by all thoughtful fellow-cadets, resulting in a lasting respect which was only deepened by his subsequent life. Sheridan in his Memoirs, gives this choice test=

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III. HIS ARMY SERVICE AS LIEUTENANT.

He graduated seventh in a class of forty-three. This grade is itself an evidence of intense application and good conduct combined; for, in his class as is usual at the Academy there were many young men with previous college training and others who had received a special course with the view to the competition there. He received in June 1852, his commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the First Artillery, finishing out that year and nearly all the next (1853) in Florida amid the chronic hostilities of the Seminoles; for the last fighting men of that troublesome tribe were not sent west of the Mississippi ^{till 1857} ~~until 1857~~. He then went as did Sherman years before to Fort Moultrie, S. C. ^{JP} Having a brief furlough, ~~He~~ and Miss Rice never veering from their plighted faith, were married at Woodstock N.Y., February 9th 1854; he took his bride to his new station, Ft. Moultrie, near Charleston, and there they had the unusual term of nearly three years. The gay society of the city and the opportunities for boating, hunting and fishing, together with an abundant

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routine of post exercises usually took up all the time of young officers stationed there. And certainly the climate did not invite an overplus of labor. But all these did not absorb Slocum's time. Study was his pleasure and recreation. In addition to his garrison work he was reading law; during those three years he was under the direction of the Hon. B. C. Presley, who was afterward on the Supreme Bench of South Carolina. Considering Lieutenant Slocum's habits of study and his unremitted diligence, we are not surprised to find him in the fall of 1856, ready to be admitted to the Bar.

IV. LEAVING THE ARMY AND CIVIL LIFE BEFORE THE WAR.

Some providential things occurred at this time. The 1st Artillery was suddenly ordered to Florida, and his child became very ill; besides, Mrs. Slocum herself was breaking down under the long heats. Florida ~~the~~ would make matters worse. Under this pressure, though already having been promoted to a 1st lieutenantcy, Slocum decided to take a step that had long been under consideration. He resigned, moved to Syracuse, and began the practice of law. The frugality of this young officer was astonishing. From great care of his clothing and expenditures, even while a cadet, he had been able to save money and to help his heavily burdened father; from his subsequent savings in the four years of his lieutenantcy he

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gathered enough to secure for himself a home in Syracuse and a strip of city lots that he improved, along what is now called "Slocum Avenue". Hither, his father having died in 1853, he brought his devoted mother, and built her a house near his own; here for over four years he studied and toiled, but found time meanwhile to be a representative at Albany in 1859, and an instructor of the militia, with the rank of colonel, from 1859 to 1861.

V. HIS ANSWER TO MR. LINCOLN'S CALL & SUBSEQUENT WORK.

When Sumter fell, Colonel Slocum said to his tearful wife:-
" Clara, I was educated at the expense of my country, and it is my duty to go!" He immediately tendered his services and was given, the 21st of May following, the colonelcy of the 27th New York Volunteers. His regiment was mainly recruited and officered from a College at Lyman; it was composed of excellent men to whom he became greatly attached. With this regiment he went to Washington and to Virginia. Bull Run was his first battle; he formed part of Hunter's division, Porter's brigade, which led the attack the 21st of July 1861. His commander's recorded words are:-" Colonel Slocum was wounded while leading his gallant 27th to the charge". It was a severe wound through the thigh, but detained him from the field fifty days only. Meanwhile, August 9th, he was promoted to Brigadier General of Volunteers, and took a brigade in Franklin's Division; when Franklin passed to the command of the corps, Slocum

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received the division; and on the peninsula he was often tried under fire. His work appeared at Yorktown, - West Point, - ^e Gainsville, Glendale and Malvern Hill; in every trial we find commendation. One correspondent says: - "At Charles City Road he held the right of the main line, and though attacked by superior numbers, firmly maintained his ground." Here by the James River, the 4th of July ¹⁸⁶² he received notice of his commission of Major General of Volunteers. The hopelessness and horrors of that peninsular campaign cannot be measured; after each success at great cost, it was "Fall back ! Fall back !!". It was a veritable progression through the valley of death ! Here our friend was earnestly loyal to his commander; to his duty night and day; and to his country. With us all, in the fever of anxiety between hope and fear, he submitted to the will of God, accepting ^{the} defeat.

His division, August 29th 1862, bore its part in the Second Bull Run, and ^{there} prevented greater disaster, - and ^{at Champion Hills or} South Mountain, ^{his gallantry} September 14th 1862, brought him still more into the public notice. General Franklin's official report says: - "The advance of General Slocum was made with admirable steadiness through a well directed fire from batteries on the mountain * * * . The line of battle formed, an immediate charge was ordered, and most gallantly executed. The men swept forward with a cheer over the stone wall, dislodging

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(Gen'l. Slocum)

He led Franklin's advance when with fresh troops he reached our bloody field of Antietam, and enabled us to recover and firmly hold much ground that Confederates had taken from us in the first ^{losing} struggle.

VI. THE 12th Corps, CHANCELLORSVILLE & GETTYSBURG.

General Slocum's manifest ability, ~~was~~ in the middle of October 1862, gave him an army corps, The Twelfth, with which his name is so closely and grandly identified that even in the records to say: "the 12th Corps", is to say:—"General Slocum".

In the Chancellorsville campaign, General Hooker gave him for awhile a large command with which he made that preliminary march far around Lee's left, and planted himself firmly upon Lee's flank. Hedley very justly says of him there "Throughout the fight and ^{the} treat he showed himself to be a cool, self-poised and prompt commander

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It would require the entire history of Gettysburg to fairly portray Slocum's part there. After securing the Cemetery, he and I slept side by side that first weary night at the Cemetery Gate. Together we ^{there} met Meade, about 3 o'clock in the morning of the 2nd, when he passed through the gateway. With thousands already killed and wounded, the battle-sky did not yet clear, and our solitudes were intense, still we encouraged our Commander, and showed him ^{what} ~~the~~ we had laid out, and the strength of our lines. My assurance to Meade that the position itself was a good one, and Sickles' ringing words: "it is a good place, General, to fight from, ^{received} ~~with~~ ~~Slocum's~~ Slocum's endorsement, ^{and} brought General Meade's reply substantially: " I am glad to hear you say so gentlemen, for it is now too late to go elsewhere".

The most impressive incident of that great battle to me was General Slocum's ^{own} battle ! I was awakened from my cemetery bed the morning of the 3rd of July 1863 at five A. M. by the startling roar of Slocum's guns. For five anxious hours, with A.S. Williams manoeuvring his 12th Corps, Slocum having also some of the 6th Corps and many batteries, commanded the field. That dreadful struggle to our right went on - till Ewell, with Early's and Edward Johnson's large divisions, was forced to give up and abandon

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his prize of the night before. That prize was our intrenched line within a stone's throw of the Baltimore pike, and included the trains for our immediate supply. Slocum's resolute insistence, on the 2nd day of July, upon leaving General Greene and his brigade, as just a little precaution when General Meade ^{of Meade} asked for the whole 12th Corps ^{be sent to} his left, then fast going to ^{pieces} ~~pieces~~; ^{be sent to} its rescue two miles way - this insistence followed by Greene's marvellous night-battle, and more still Slocum's organized work and engagement of the ^{ensuing} early morning, in my judgment, prevented Mead's losing the battle of Gettysburg. It was a grand Judgment and ^{of Slocum} action - a step all important and essential to victory.

General Slocum's Gettysburg letter to General Meade, in the interest of his corps commander, General A. S. Williams, a letter demanding the correction of Meade's first report, is about the best literary production of the War. The whole letter is a key to General Slocum's character, - strong, clear, incisive and absolutely truthful. That letter has become the history of Gettysburg from Culp's Hill to McAllister's Mill; to appreciate it fully one must know that rocky, rough, woody region which will ever be a rival of the jagged Round Tops and ^{the} death-dealing Devil's Den. But for Slocum the waters of the Rebellion would have passed around the heights, and the "High-water mark" would not have been found on that Cemetery crest.

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VII. RE-INFORCING THE CUMBERLAND ARMY & THE VICKSBURG DISTRICT.

Rosecrans' disaster at Chicamauga took Slocum's corps and mine in September 1863, from the Rappahannock to Tennessee. Soon after arrival there, General Slocum was detached, and sent to command the district of Vicksburg. The General's operations there in successive expeditions to break up bridges and railways and repel raids, so as to effectually obstruct the communications across the Mississippi, were necessary to Sherman's Georgia operations. Once Sherman in his fervor indicated that Slocum was "to expect no military favors from himself or General^{Grant}", unless he succeeded in the tasks assigned him. Slocum had been greatly embarrassed by his junior, Canby, commanding a department contiguous to his district. In reply to Sherman, Slocum's words tell the whole story; he says:-" I have refrained from writing * * * because I felt reluctant to thrust upon you at a time like this any subject calculated in any manner to increase your care or anxiety. I prefer to submit to having my junior in rank take up his headquarters within my district, and issue orders to me * * *. I have just written to General Canby that I cannot send the 2000 men required by him. If I fail to accomplish what you suggest, I am in the language of your dispatch 'to expect no military favors from yourself, or Genl. Grant' ****. Without any particular desire to secure favors from yourself or

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Without any particular desire to secure favors from yourself or 'to expect no military favors from yourself, or Genl. Grant' ****. accomplish what you suggest, I am in the language of your dispatch that I cannot send the 2000 men required by him. If I fail to secure and issue orders to me * * *. I have just written to General Canby, my junior in rank take up his headquarters within my district, manner to increase your care or anxiety. I prefer to submit to have thrust upon you at a time like this any subject calculated in any have refrained from writing * * * because I felt reluctant to ply to Sherman, Slocum's words tell the whole story; he says: "I am recommending a department contiguous to his district. In re-assigning him. Slocum had been greatly embarrassed by his junior, favors from himself or General Grant", unless he succeeded in the tasks man in his fervor indicated that Slocum was "to expect no military aid", were necessary to Sherman's Georgia operations. Once Sherman as to effectually obstruct the communications across the Mississippi expeditions to break up bridges and railways and rebel raids, the district of Vicksburg. The General's operations there in success-arrival there, General Slocum was detached, and sent to command in September 1863, from the Rapahannock to Tennessee. Soon after Rosecrans' disaster at Chickamauga took Slocum's corps and mine

any other person, I shall continue in the faithful discharge of my duty".

This letter brought from the ardent Sherman a quick apology and an avowment that all he, Sherman, desired was to impress upon him the great importance of the work committed to his charge. He then ~~expressed~~ declared his complete confidence in Slocum.

VIII. THE 20th CORPS & ATLANTA.

The death of General McPherson^{of} at Atlanta, the 22nd July 1864, Slocum's Department Commander[^] caused many changes. General Hooker, because not assigned to McPherson's vacancy left the field, and Slocum was brought to Atlanta to replace him in command of the 20th Army Corps. When, a little later we all swung off upon Hood's communications, ^{Slocum was located} south of ^{the} Atlanta-Crossing of the Chattahoochee. As soon as the sound of the final explosions following Hood's departure from the city, reached Slocum's ears, he interpreted them instantly, and pushed forward, the intervening six miles, and took possession of the citadel of Georgia. It was Slocum's dispatch to his wakeful and watchful commander, thirty miles away, which inspired Sherman's brief proclamation that soon rang in the nooks and corners of the world, and gave hope to all lovers of liberty, viz:-

"Atlanta is ours, and fairly won!"

Sherman's strong confidence in Slocum was evinced again when he turned the whole army in pursuit of the raiding Confederate

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Commander, who was already assailing Alttona, capturing posts within sound of Dalton and saucily threatening Chattanooga. Slocum with his 20th Corps was left to defend and keep our great prize, Atlanta, whose winning had cost precious life and treasure in more than a hundred days of hard fighting. Slocum's success, meeting the Army's return, amply justified his selection.

IX. MARCH TO THE SEA & THROUGH THE CAROLINAS.

In the numerous articles concerning General Slocum, published since his decease, I have noticed this statement:-" Gen'l. Slocum is best known by his connection with the March to the Sea".

This may be so, though it was not, according to his judgment, his most important service. However, I would derogate nothing from the fame of that brilliant campaign. General Sherman gave to me, for what was termed the right wing, The Army of the Tennessee, i.e. the two Field Corps of that Army - the 15th & 17th, (33,000.)

He gave to General Slocum for the left wing, The Army of Georgia, consisting of two Corps,- the 14th & 20th (30,000.)

To Kilpatrick he assigned the Cavalry, numbering 5000, making our operating force 65,000 men. Sherman, according to his habit gave us, who were his army commanders, as much independent action as he could. ■ I threatened Macon, and fought the battle of Griswoldville, while Slocum Captured Midlegeville, the capital of

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Georgia. Then I came abreast of Slocum, but we were still ten miles apart. Besides the cavalry, we had habitually five columns simultaneously in motion and substantially parallel, making a swath of from ~~thirty~~ ^{thirty} to forty miles in breadth. After I took Fort McAllister, and by the Ogeechee River connected with Dalghren's fleet, Slocum had been persistently threatening Hardee's only line of retreat. He at last frightened Hardee out, and entered Savannah, in ample time for Sherman to make that city and what it contained a "Christmas present to the Nation".

Again starting northward in January 1865, I took my wing over by water to Beaufort Island, fought my way to Pocotaligo, while with labors beyond description, Slocum crossed the Savannah River at Sister's ferry, when that river was at high-water, and struggled through swamps to Robertsville, South Carolina; now our wings were abreast again. Then, who could describe our fights with ever increasing foes, with the lagoons, the forests, and the almost impassable streams, every mile costing us human life, across the Sal^ha chatchee, the Congaree Creek and its marshes, the Saluda, the Broad and on above and beyond Columbia.

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forced him to retreat. This was on the 16th day of March 1865. In his report Sherman somehow enjoyed showing the ease and quickness with which such a battle was fought and won - and so General Slocum and his command received too little notice ^{at the time} for this marked success.

Again a little later, at Bentonville, almost for the first time Slocum and I were moving by divergent routes. General Joseph E. Johnston, with his quick and almost instinctive apprehension of the case, struck Slocum, separated from me, a heavy blow. But Slocum was too able and too wary for him, and so losing but little ground was able to hold on. I turned my rear division (Hazen's) promptly to his support, and the next day we were again with all hands side by side fighting Joe Johnston, the toughest confederate of them all. My command was already clinging to Johnston's left side, and seizing his communications, while Slocum was pressing his front without stint; when General Sherman called us off. Possibly the Angel of the Covenant whispered to our Commander, as he did afterward to Grant when he wrote: "Let us have peace." Our leader said: "There has been fighting enough!" General Johnston was glad to get away. ~~again~~ Here again, for some policy known only to himself, our beloved ^{Sherman} ~~we~~ made short work of us in his report for this sizeable battle of the great War. General Slocum received Sherman's thanks in these concise terms: - "He, Johnston, attacked

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General Slocum in position from three P.M. on the 19th of March 1865 till dark; but was everywhere repulsed, and lost heavily". ~~MM~~ And my own praise I have not seen. Johnston quickly retreated; then in a few days after that last battle when ~~MM~~ ^{me} had taken Goldsboro and Raleigh, Johnston surrendered.

X. HOMEWARD BOUND.

We then ~~Wessons~~ turned our faces toward Washington. No doubt Slocum was as happy as I was to find the war over, and to be able to join again his much loved family. It was a long, hard war - and we may say without flattery that for the unity of the republic there was a debt due to General Henry W. Slocum that was never paid; but the nearest approach to payment came in the growing recognition of his grand part in the drama during his last days, and I hope he may be cognizant to-night of the tender love which his sorrowing comrades and all worthy citizens bear him.

XI. CIVIC CAREER.

As intimated in the outset, other friends are better prepared to set forth General Slocum's civic career. As lawyer, legislator for the state, treasurer for ~~the~~ ^a county before the war, he was able and honest; and as was the case with so many of our successful leaders ~~needed~~ ^{he} needed those five years intercourse with all sorts of men to bring him into complete sympathy with our citizen soldiery. When the war ended, Slocum gave up the army, and took up his

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residence in Brooklyn, and entered again upon the practice of law, and except during his term in Congress, he steadily pursued his ~~own~~ profession till his business enlarged and he engaged with others in specific enterprizes of ^{much} magnitude. In ~~the~~ business, as his associates all aver, he was marked by adherence to the strictest rules of business integrity. And as his son-in-law ^{Capt Kingsbury,} feelingly said after he had left us: "Who can fill these places of trust as he did?"

His public addresses, generally extemporaneous, and his conversations on public or business topics were much alike. He thrilled his hearers, and inspired them with a sense of his sincerity. All pronounced him eloquent.

In his periodical contests, for, whether he desired them or not, they must ^{come} to one of his prominence, his course to lookers on was unusual and often misunderstood. Concerning this course a party-friend wrote:—"He did nothing to stimulate" his ^eselection for office. "He did much to bring effort to naught. He had been a republican before the war. In the war he was politically nothing. At the close of the war, promotion waited on republican soldiers. He coolly became a democrat. *****. "He ~~MM~~ could have had the republican nomination for Secretary of State, but elected to become a democrat for causes that took political pacification and not personal success into account" *****. "He always thereafter remained a democrat, but reserved the often used right to oppose

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unfit candidates, oppressive organizations and their despotic policy within the party" ***** "Twice the governorship-nomination could have been his by stooping to the mud".

Oh, no, Slocum would not do that, not even when the Presidency was the apparent prize !

" He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
" Or Jove for his power to thunder"!

I was in Brooklyn at the house of a strong republican about the time Slocum was running for Congress. This friend talked to me about him, and my friend said " I will vote for him." All parties gave Slocum votes on account of his fearless uprightness. Without regard to his subsequent popularity, in the case of propositions to unduly increase the pension list, he squarely took the conservative side; he believed that thus all the veterans would ^{their self-respect} preserve their high esteem among the people, and that the self-denial and sacrifice, on the part of all who had means, was as essential and patriotic as that of 1861.

XII. HIS HOME, FAMILY & BENEVOLENCE.

One of his sons emphasizes to me the help he always extended to his children. He remarks: "All I have and am I owe to my father" He preferred to be at home evenings, reading or working at his library-desk. He enjoyed games with members of his household. ~~was~~

His help to sustain the Churches, and always keeping for his family

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a church-pew, has various gifts to benevolent societies and Christian Missions; his devoting days and weeks to the care of the old soldiers' Home at Bath, N.Y., without remuneration; and his almost daily opening his purse to needy veterans, all of these things come to light little by little, and demonstrate the unostentatious goodness of Slocum's heart. Once he came to me when I was trying to buy an edifice for the "Camp Memorial Church and Mission of New York", and without my solicitation put into my hands a liberal contribution toward the object. At another time when a friend's religiousness was critized in his presence, he remarked: "He likes to do that Christian work; why should'nt ^{he?} ~~he?~~"

Come now, comrades, whatever be our convictions as to the higher plains and privileges of the Christian soul, let us try to be as truthful, as honest, as modest, as faithful to wife and children and home, as honorable in politics, as charitable in daily life, as useful in citizenship, as straightforward and upright in business, and as devoted to duty and to country, and as prepared when the needs arrive to lay all, even life, ^{itself} on the altar of sacrifice, ~~as our Companion and Comrade,~~ as Our Companion and Comrade,

HENRY WARNER SLOCUM,

whose body with deep sorrow at God's call, we have laid away in yonder cemetery. He himself, dear friends, is with McClellan and

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and Sherman, and our Great Compassionate Saviour, who gave himself for men.

No human merit can purchase salvation. Slocum's sins of omission and commission are between him and his Infinite Judge.

But we know that the All Merciful now has him in his holy keeping.

So farewell, my friend, till we follow thee to the Land
of Promise.

Olin Otis Howard

Major General,

U. S. Army.

Governor's Island, N. Y. City,
April 26th 1894.

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Major General,
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Governor's Island, N. Y. City,
April 28th 1894.