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ADDRESS

AT THE

FUNERAL OBSEQUIES

OF

SERGEANT HENRY TODD,

BY

REV. JAMES B. MILES.



CHARLESTOWN :
PRINTED BY WILLIAM W. WHEILDON.
1890.

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NOTE.

THE reception home of the Remains of the gallant young Soldier, SERGEANT HENRY TODD, of the Thirty-Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, who fell at the battle of the Wilderness, while bravely bearing his Regimental Colors in front of the enemy, created a melancholy interest in this, his native city ; and the Funeral Services, holden at the First Church, November 5th, 1865, were not only attended by a large number of his personal friends and companions in arms, but by the City Authorities and a large concourse of sympathising citizens.— The services there, so highly interesting and appropriate, especially the address of his pastor, Rev. J. B. MILES, created a desire on the part of his friends, to have them preserved, as a fitting memorial of the worth and noble character of the young hero. To gratify this wish, Mr. MILES has very kindly consented to furnish a synopsis of his remarks, which are printed for private distribution.

ADDRESS.

BELOVED FRIENDS :

We have come up to the sanctuary to perform these funeral obsequies this afternoon, under peculiar circumstances. The contents of this casket, which you now see enveloped in our National Colors, and laden with flowers, are not the mortal remains of one who has been recently with us. A period of more than a year and a half has elapsed since the noble and brave spirit that animated these clods, took its flight into eternity. On the sixth of May, eighteen hundred and sixty-four, in one of the most desperate and sanguinary of that series of battles, designated as the "battles of the Wilderness," at a distance of some fifteen miles from the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia, fell the beloved young hero, to whom, with deep emotion, we pay these funeral honors to-day. We bless God that, at length, the obstructions of war are so far removed

as to permit the recovery of these precious remains, and that this bereaved father, brothers and sisters, and friends, may receive the consolation of this service, and enjoy the satisfaction of placing away in their own family burying-place this loved form.

This occasion allows only a brief allusion to the life and career of the youth whose untimely death we mourn. Indeed, the story of his life may be told in a few words. Born and nurtured under the shadow of the sanctuary in which we are now gathered, he grew up the loving and beloved member of the family to which he belonged, enjoying the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. He was educated in our schools and Sabbath School. He was trained not for war, but for the pursuits of civil life, and his prospects of a business nature were unusually good and promising. — Yet he could not resist the call sent forth by our Chief Magistrate, summoning patriots from all the loyal States, to defend on the battle-field, our imperiled freedom and free institutions. Like a noble host of the patriotic young men of our city, he promptly obeyed his country's call. He cheerfully relinquished the comforts and attractions of home, and accepted the lot of the Soldier, with the hardships and perils incident to it. He was one of the original members of the "Warren Phalanx," a company of our young men, whose deeds of courage have given proof, that the

mantle of the illustrious hero whose name they assumed, had fallen upon them. His company was assigned to the Thirty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers, and he left Boston for the scenes of conflict, as it proved never more to return, on the second day of September, eighteen hundred and sixty-two. In one short week after his departure from us, he received the painful intelligence that the beloved Mother, who had so recently given him her parting blessing, had passed away from earth. Most affecting to him was the thought, that that dear Mother would not again greet him until she should welcome him to the Home above. With a spirit shadowed by this great affliction, he went forth to the stern and perilous duties to which his God and his Country called him. He continued a member of the Phalanx, in connection with the Thirty-sixth Regiment, until the time of his death. In all the experience of that regiment, so eventful and honorable, he participated through the entire Virginia, Kentucky and Mississippi campaigns. The hardships which he and his gallant comrades were compelled to suffer during these campaigns, can be fully known and appreciated only by those who have had a similar experience. It is true that our government provided generously for the soldiers, but such are the exigencies of war, that it is not at all times possible for supplies to reach their destination. At one time two ears of corn daily, per man, were all the rations received. At

another time the daily rations were five spoonfuls of flour for six men.

The campaign in Mississippi, in the summer of eighteen hundred and sixty-three, was especially severe. On the fourth day of July, with the forces under command of our illustrious Lieutenant General, he participated in the glorious action which wrested Vicksburg from the enemy, and virtually sealed the fate of the Rebellion in the West. On the next day, the Division to which he belonged started in pursuit of Johnston, and on that terrible march, made with scanty rations, under a broiling southern sun, many of the soldiers dropped dead in the ranks, and larger numbers fell out exhausted. Sergeant Todd, possessed of a vigorous constitution, was one of the small number that held out until his regiment reached Kentucky, in October, eighteen hundred and sixty-three. But so completely exhausted was he then, that he was obliged to be taken to the hospital, and was unable to accompany his regiment on the campaign in Tennessee.

In the spring of eighteen hundred and sixty-four, he was so far restored as to be able to do military duty. Well knowing that fearful battles impended, he promptly resumed his place in his company. He did not shrink from the responsible duties and peculiar trials of the position of color-Sergeant. Bearing the white State Flag, he went forth bravely leading his comrades to the encounter with the armed hosts of treason. —

Early in the fearful charge upon the enemy's ranks, on the sixth of May, he received a severe wound, and with good reason he might then have withdrawn from the conflict. He was urged to do so. But no. Suffering and bleeding as he was, he bore aloft in sight of his gallant companions, the inspiring emblem of his loved and honored State — thus making himself a conspicuous mark for the enemy. Not long were they in discovering that mark, for soon pierced through the temple by a rifle-ball he fell ; and the flag he had so heroically borne into the thickest of the fight, as it dropped from his grasp, enveloped his body and was stained with his warm blood. What more appropriate winding sheet could he have had !

After the storm of battle had ceased, his surviving companions tenderly and with many tears, committed his body to the ground. They made his grave soft with the boughs of the trees, and “Slowly and sadly they laid him down, from the field of his fame fresh and gory.” They carved his name upon the trunk of a tree which served as his head-stone, and which extended its protecting branches over his new-made grave.

“No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Nor in sheet, nor in shroud they wound him ;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.”

And now from that temporary sepulchre, the hands of affection have brought to this place these precious remains, that they may be laid side by side with those of beloved Sister and Mother, who before him crossed into the eternal world.

Such, in few words, were the prominent events in the career of this young man. After recounting these, I need say no more. With what fortitude and cheerfulness he bore his trials, with what fidelity he discharged his duties, these facts testify. Would you know with what heroism he braved danger and met death, let that flag which he carried, that precious relic riddled with bullets and stained with his blood, tell you. Ah! with what pathos and eloquence that sacred relic speaks! Let that tell us how high-minded and generous-hearted he was; how fearless he was in the discharge of his duty; what a patriot and hero he was.— Looking upon that flag and listening to the language it speaks to us, we do not need to have you, my honored friends, his gallant companions in arms, say to us, as you do say to us, that Sergeant Todd was a great favorite among his associates; that he was ever actuated by a high sense of honor; that in circumstances of great temptation, in emergencies peculiarly trying he preserved his integrity untarnished, and his honor uncorrupted; that in all his intercourse with you, he secured your esteem and love. Looking upon that stained and tattered flag, we can well understand why

one, who sits in sorrow before me, his stricken Father, should say, as soon as the intelligence reached him that his son had been in the battle, even before the arrival of definite information in regard to the casualties of the battle, "I know Henry is killed!" He who knew Henry so well, did not need to be told that he would not shrink from any peril to which his position might expose him, and he anticipated with too much correctness, the tidings that were soon to come. Our departed friend nobly performed his duty and gratefully shall his name be cherished.

And now may we all receive the salutary impressions which this occasion is fitted to impart. To you, my young friends, the associates in arms of the deceased, how touchingly this occasion appeals! At this hour, how must your hearts swell with gratitude to your Heavenly Father, who has preserved you, when so many have fallen upon your right hand and left, and has brought you back to the embrace of those you love. With how much feeling can you say, It is of the Lord's mercies that we have not been consumed.

And may you, my dear friends, whose hearts by this event, have been made so to agonize and bleed, be sustained and comforted by the impartation of Heaven's richest and sweetest consolations. You have indeed, placed a costly sacrifice upon the altar of your country.

But not in vain have you given up this precious son and brother. He has died nobly in a noble cause; and the cause for which he died has triumphed. Let me most affectionately entreat you to receive into your souls the abundant, all-sufficient solace which he bestows, who, in compassion reveals himself to us, in all our seasons of sorrow, as the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.



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