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April 19th, 1887.





April 19, 1887.

Commemorative

NATHAN HALE,

Martyr-Spy of the Revolution.

"I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."



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1887.

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HALE STATUE.

T is proposed to erect in this city a statue to Nathan Hale, who, under the impulse of a rare devotion, sacrificed his life to the cause of American liberty in New York in 1776. Judging from the many favorable expressions that appear in print as well as from the attractiveness of the subject itself, few memorials would be received with more general approbation, as few could be more significant or fitting. Preëminently historical ground, New York presents an inadequate showing of historical monuments. An organized effort to increase their number with a statue of heroic Hale, the type of American patriotism, surely will not be permitted to meet with failure.

"His name is as deserving of commemoration as that of André."

Wm. H. Prescott.

"His character is of sterling cast, and his unhappy fate one of the most interesting events of the American Revolution."

Edward Everett.

"An upright, disinterested patriot, who seems to have been guided by a sense of duty, and not by a desire for emolument or even for fame."

George Bancroft.

"It is not to success in battle, it is not to eloquence of speech, it is to prompt self-sacrifice, it is to readiness to die when one's country calls, that the honors of to-day are given."

Edward Everett Hale.

"Thus, while fond Virtue wished in vain to save,
Hale, bright and generous, found a hapless grave."

Pres. Timothy Dwight.



CAPTAIN NATHAN HALE.

THE name of Nathan Hale—unfortunately too little familiar to the present generation—revives the memory of a noble act of self-forgetfulness. That it made its impression in the days of the Revolution, wherever the circumstances became known, we are assured by something besides tradition; and since that time it has never failed to touch the heart or excite the admiration of writers who have had occasion to repeat the story. Jared Sparks, the historian, after describing, in his Life and Treason of Arnold, the unhappy business and fate of André, recalls the youth in the American camp who met a similar death before him, and pays a grateful tribute to his character. "Where," he asks, in closing, "is the memento of the virtues, the patriotic sacrifice, and the early fate of Hale? It is not inscribed in marble; it is hardly recorded in books. Let it be the more deeply cherished in the hearts of his countrymen." Nor less appreciative is the earlier remembrance of President Timothy Dwight, who refers to him as the "bright and generous" Hale, and in the common epic of that period thus describes his tastes and qualities:

"Thus while fond virtue wished in vain to save, HALE, bright and generous, found a hapless grave. With genius' living flame his bosom glowed, And science charmed him to her sweet abode; In worth's fair path his feet adventured far, The pride of peace, the rising grace of war; In duty firm, in danger calm as even, To friends unchanging, and sincere to Heaven. How short his course—the prize, how early won, While weeping friendship mourns her favorite gone."

Although Hale suffered in the year 1776, and from the centennial standpoint it may appear somewhat late to bring him to mind, it is to be noted that the recollection of his fate was very strikingly revived four years after, or just a century ago, by the capture and execution of Major André in connection with the Arnold infamy. Should that event, which, in 1780, profoundly in-

terested both Englishmen and Americans, lead to any expressions of sympathy during the present year, or suggest a historical review or "anniversary" of the episode, the incident of 1776 must necessarily be coupled with it. The misfortune of the British officer was in many aspects affecting, but it did not stand alone. Hardly had he been captured before the nearly forgotten execution of Hale as a spy was recalled by American officers, and André himself remembered it. If their cases differed in certain points, and it was possible for André to enter a plausible justification of his movements, where Hale had none whatever to plead, the two victims, on the other hand, bore this resemblance to each other, that both were young officers, beloved by their companions in arms, favorites with their respective commanders, educated, brave, and each anxious to be of essential service, the one to his sovereign, the other to his cause.

From 1780 their names have thus been closely associated. Their fate was hard but inevitable, and justified by the necessary rigor of military law; and for each and both there always have been, on

either side of the water, many deep sympathies felt.

This parallel between Hale and André may be of historical interest, but it fails to have any personal significance. Hale certainly needs no scenic association to lift him into notice. His name shines with its own brightness. From what we know of him—and that is not a little *—his entire life, short as it was, appears to have been a noble development, his early training and surroundings being of the kind which contribute much to the building up of characters like his. The little village of Coventry, Connecticut, twenty miles west of Hartford, was his birthplace—the date of his birth, June 6, 1755. His father, Richard Hale, represented the second or third generation of an old New-England family. We may call him a typical farmer, townsman, and deacon of the former century, who took more interest in his colony than the mother country, and who brought up his sons under the strictest convictions of duty. In time young Nathan and his elder brother, Enoch, were sent to Yale College, where they both entered the class of 1773. The former was but fourteen years of age. Not so surprising, then, that their father, as we find in some of his unpublished let-

^{*} The late Mr. I. W. Stuart, of Hartford, some years ago wrote a biography of Hale, in which he included the results of a long search for authentic information. The little work contains quite a complete history of the subject. Among its contents are a number of Hale's letters, and his military diary. The best account of his fate is given in the Life of General William Hull. Lafayette also refers to him in his Memoirs.

ters still preserved, should address them, even in Sophomore year. perhaps later, as "Dear Children." As such he bade them in the kindest terms to study well, "mind the orders of colledge," and at-

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NATHAN HALE'S CAMP-BOOK.

corrected his judgment. That there were kindred spirits among his classmates would appear from the good proportion of their number who were afterward led by common impulse to engage in the Revolutionary struggle.

Of Hale's class at least half a dozen served long and well. There was Benjamin Tallmadge, of Litchfield, the quite famous major of dragoons, who figures in more than one spirited scene of the Revolution. No one familiar with that From HARPER'S MAGAZINE.

tend to the duties of re-ligion. Here young Hale came in contact with congenial fellow-students, whose acquaintance he kept fresh by correspondence as long as he lived. His intercourse with them no doubt helped to develop his manlier quali-ties, and matured and



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NATHAN HALE'S SADDLE-BAGS.

was. Another, Captain Ezra Selden, of Lyme, one of Wayne's Stony Point heroes; another, Captain James Hillhouse, who so gallantly led a party of volunteers against the British in their raid upon New Haven in 1779; and still another was Major John Palsgrave Wyllys, of Hartford, Hale's early correspondent, who gave fifteen years to the service of the country-eight in the Revolution and seven after-until he fell, with a handful of regulars, in Harmar's Indian defeat on the Miami in 1790. Probably, too, Hale was acquainted, while in college, with such men as Colonel David Humphreys; Colonel John Brown (a noble spirit who, like Wyllys, met his fate in an ambush, but ten years before, at Stone Arabia); Colonels Isaac Sherman and Ebenezer Huntington; Captains Richard Sill, Roger Alden and Joseph Walker, aides to Stirling, Huntington and Parsons; and, among others, Captains Roger Welles, Samuel Barker, James Morris, and the two sons of President Daggett, all light-infantry officers under Washington. These young collegians no doubt conducted themselves with credit and honor, and had Hale been spared for a similar career, we can easily imagine him returning from the war, like them, with well-earned laurels. But he was reserved for something more than service: it fell to him to exhibit devotion to his country of the highest possible order.

Upon graduation Hale taught school, first at Moodus, in the town of East Haddam, and then at New London. A venerable lady at the former place remembered him long after. "Everybody loved him," she said, "he was so sprightly, intelligent and kind, and so handsome." Describing his personal appearance, his biographer gives him a well-proportioned figure, full of suppleness and strength, a broad chest, open face, light blue eyes, light rosy complexion, and hair of a medium brown. At leaping he was with-

out an equal among his companions.

It was while teaching at New London that he took the step which led to the bright fame he has left. Evidently he had been watching the progress of the dispute with Great Britain, and already had his colonial sympathies deeply aroused. As early as November, 1774, he writes, in an unpublished letter, that although as yet the New-Londoners had not erected a liberty-pole, they were all full of spirit. Under such circumstances his own course was not likely to remain long undecided, after the emergency had once arisen. Certainly he showed no hesitation as to his duty when the Lexington alarm startled the country. It seems to be well authenticated that, when the news reached New London, and

a town-meeting was called, Hale not only attended, but made a vigorous speech. "Let us march immediately, and never lay down our arms until we obtain our independence," was one of his re-



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NATHAN HALE'S CAMP-DASKET.

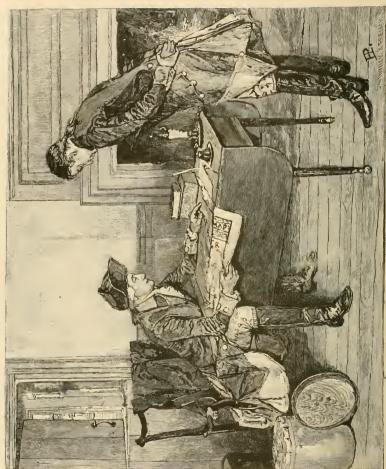
regiment then forming, to be commanded by Colonel Charles Webb, of Stamford. It was a tearful hour, we are told, when he broke up his school forever, separating from patrons and scholars by whom he was respected and loved, and postponing his own and his father's cherished plans of studying for the ministry; but what inner strength of heart and cheerfulnes must have buoyed him up as he went out to do what he felt the times required of him!

ported expressions. So he foresaw what many others were unwilling to admit at that date, that the struggle, once begun, meant final separation from the mother country. Following up this patriotic declaration, the voung school-master closed his school, and enrolled as a volunteer in the general posse that hurried off from all quarters toward Boston. He returned shortly after, but only to remain a few weeks, as he had finally accepted an appointment as lieutenant in a new



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NATHAN HALE'S POWDER-HORN.



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HALE RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON.

Colonel Webb's regiment being ordered to re-enforce Washington. Hale's first military experiences were associated with the siege of Boston. He was stationed, until late in the following January, in General Sullivan's brigade, at Winter Hill, on the left of the line, and on the straight road to the enemy at Bunker Hill. Here he kept a daily journal, and its brief entries show how great an interest he took in camp and field matters, and with what studentlike method and eagerness he set about to perfect himself in his If soldier he must be, he proposed to make himself new duties. a good one, although, so far as active service was concerned, the situation gave him little opportunity to prove his mettle in a brush with the enemy. Now and then there were alarms and skirmishes, and occasionally we meet with some interesting personal coincidence. For instance, in the present case, while Hale went on duty, in camp or on the lines, and noted almost everything that he saw or heard, we read of a young British captain—his fine face suggesting characteristics not unlike Hale's—who was posted opposite on Bunker Hill, and who wrote home descriptions of the siege from his point of view. This was Captain William Glanville Evelyn, the son of a clergyman, and descended from the same stock with John Evelyn, the learned author of Sylva. There were Evelyns born in Kent, the birthplace of Hale's English ancestors.

These young officers seemed equally intent on the passing scenes around Boston, and jotted down matters great and small. Thus Hale, one Tuesday in December, made this entry in his diary: "Went to Cobble Hill. A shell and a shot from Bunker Hill. The shell breaking in the air, one piece fell, and touched a man's hat, but did no harm." Over on Bunker Hill. Evelyn wrote of their ducking at the whistling of a 24-pounder, and of a shot which went through a tent, "and fairly took the crown out of one of the King's Own Grenadier's hats." Luckily, as he adds, "his head was not in it." Both enter more fully into the little affairs of November 9, 1775, at Lechmere's Point, in which certainly one if not both officers were engaged. They were again on opposite sides on Long Island, but destined soon to lie buried in common soil at New York, one falling within a month of the other, and both greatly

missed as soldiers of much promise.

Events at Boston soon culminated in American success, and in the spring of 1776 we find Washington's army transferred to the new base of operations at New York. At the beginning of the year the troops were reorganized; Colonel Webb's regiment became the Nineteenth Continentals, and Hale's name now appears



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HALE MONUMENT AT SOUTH COVENTRY, CONNECTICUT,

on the roll of its captains. A characteristic act is recorded of him while the new enlistments were going on. Men hesitated to enter for long periods, and recruiting was almost alarmingly slow in consequence. Hale was so anxious to keep his company that he finally offered the patriotic inducement which is thus briefly entered in his diary: "Promised the men, if they would tarry another month, they should have my wages for that time."

tarry another month, they should have my wages for that time."
The first collision and disaster at New York foreshadowed the fate of this ingenuous youth. In the long and tedious work of fortifying the new position, Hale and his regiment had their full share. Here, after assignment to MacDougall's brigade, they encamped near Bayard's Hill Fort, on the line of Grand Street, near the Bowery. In one of his last letters, written from this point, August 20, 1776, he tells his brother:

"Our situation has been such this fortnight or more as scarce to admit of writing. We have daily expected an action—by which means, if any one was going, and we had letters written, orders were so strict for our tarrying in camp, that we could rarely get leave to go and deliver them. For about six or eight days the enemy have been expected hourly, whenever the wind and tide least favored. We keep a particular look-out for them this morning. The place and manner of attack, time must determine. The event we leave to Heaven."

The attack came one week later, on August 27, and we suffered the heavy defeat on Long Island. Webb's regiment, with others, was hurried over the East River early in the morning, but took no part in the engagement. Three days after occurred Washington's skillful retreat to the New York side, and with it began the series of perplexities and reverses which so distressed our army in that critical campaign. The suddenly changed and uncomfortable position of affairs greatly increased the anxiety of the commander-inchief. One thing he felt the need of especially, and that was information respecting the strength and probable movements of the enemy. Later in the war he succeeded in obtaining such information, and could manœuvre intelligently, even with an army which half the time was unfit to take the field for any extended operations; and it is interesting to note that the officer who managed these lines of communication with the opposite camp was Hale's friend and classmate Major Benjamin Tallmadge. But at this date, after the Long Island affair, Washington was totally at a loss for proper intelligence, and suggested every temporary expedient for securing it. Nothing but the East River being now between him and the powerful enemy, it was of the utmost importance that he should be warned in ample time of their advance.



From HARPER'S MAGAZINE.

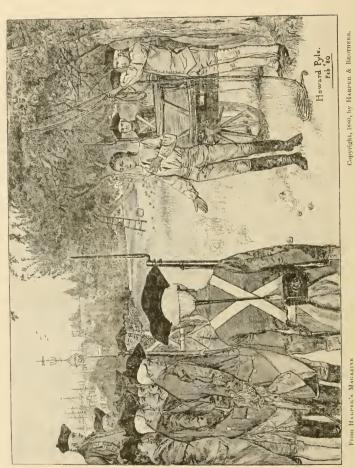
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THE HALE HOMESTEAD, SOUTH COVENTRY, CONNECTICUT.

"As everything," he wrote to Heath, at Kingsbridge, "in a manner depends upon obtaining intelligence of the enemy's motions. I do most earnestly entreat you and General Clinton to exert yourselves to accomplish this most desirable end. Leave no stone unturned, nor do not stick at expense, to bring this to pass, as I never was more uneasy than on account of my want of knowledge on this score. Keep constant look-outs," he adds, "with good glasses on some commanding heights that look well on to the other

shore."

It was in this emergency, when a successful accomplishment of Washington's wishes would have been of the greatest use to the army, that Captain Hale stepped forward to offer his services. It happened that he had recently volunteered to act as one of the officers of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Knowlton's new corps of Rangers organized to scout between the lines, feel the enemy's position, and report directly to the commander-in-chief. Knowlton was a gallant officer, a near townsman of Hale's, and must have known his worth, or he could not have accepted him for the Rangers. Early in September, when Washington's suspense was keenest, the colonel broached the matter of obtaining the desired information to his own officers, in the hope that some one of them might be able to serve the chief. The suggestion appears to have deeply impressed Hale, who, after the interview with Knowlton, went to talk the subject over with his fellow-officer and college friend, Captain William Hull, of Webb's regiment. This we know from Hull himself. The two captains discussed the question of undertaking the rôle of a spy. Hull used every argument to dissuade Hale from the dangerous service, and appealed to him as a soldier not to run the risk of closing his promising career with an ignominious death. Hale, however, although fully sensible of the consequences of capture, could think of nothing but duty. He told Hull that for a year he had been attached to the army, and had rendered no material service; that he wished to be useful; was uninfluenced by the expectation of promotion or pecuniary reward; and so far as the peculiar duty in question was concerned, he felt that "every kind of service necessary to the public good became hon-orable by being necessary." Calmly and firmly deciding the question for himself, Hale soon after reported to Washington his readiness to enter the British lines in disguise. What instructions, what advice, what cautions, he received from the general there are no records to tell us. These facts only we know certainly: that he suddenly disappeared from camp, passed up the Connecticut coast.



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''1 only regret that I have but one life to lose for My Country."

changed his uniform for a school-master's garb, crossed to Huntington, Long Island, and then made his way to the enemy at Brooklyn and New York—never to return. After making satisfactory observations, taking sketches of works, and writing his notes in Latin, he was on the point of returning to the Connecticut shore, when he was seized and held as a spy! A boat was to have met him at Huntington Bay, and; on the morning of the 18th or 19th of September, as he was waiting near the shore, the supposed craft made its appearance; but he approached it only to find that it was a yawl from a British cruiser lying below, and that retreat on his part was impossible. Ordered to surrender, with the guns of the marines leveled at him, he yielded to the situation, was taken to the man-of-war, conveyed to New York, and there delivered to the

military authorities.

At New York, Hale was brought before Sir William Howe, the English commander-in-chief. An American spy at that time was likely to receive but trifling consideration. Hale received none. Four years later, when André was captured, every attention and comfort was accorded him by Washington's officers during his confinement and trial. He himself expressed his grateful appreciation of their tenderness. But André was the adjutant-general of the British army, and mixed up with Arnold and Clinton in a dazzling plot to obtain an American stronghold. He was out on "official business. In addition, in 1780 both sides were treating each other with more military respect than in the first years of the war. In 1776 poor Hale was a wretched Continental—rebel as well as spyand punishment could be neither too swift nor too severe. Possibly in 1776 an English officer, caught in the American camp under Hale's circumstances, would have received like treatment, so far as immediate condemnation was concerned. In Hale's case, certainly, the treatment was summary as well as peculiarly heartless. The only relief in the picture is the noble bearing of the prisoner. Instead of attempting a defense, or explaining the papers found upon his person, he frankly declared his rank in Washington's army, and the object of his visit to the British camp. If tradition and meager records are correct, the scene of his examination and sentence was the little greenhouse in the garden of the old Beekman mansion, on Fifty-second Street, near First Avenue, where Howe had fixed his head-quarters. Upon this confession the British commander—and it is difficult to see how he could have done otherwise—pronounced him a spy, and ordered his execution to take place on the following morning.

The "following morning" was Sunday, the 22d of September, 1776. Where Hale spent that night, whether at the jail (the present Hall of Records), or at some guard house, does not appear. One thing is known, that he was put into the care of a provostmarshal of a most inhuman sort, said to be the noted Cunningham, whose name afterward sent a shudder through every one who chanced to become his prisoner. Assured that his fate was sealed, Hale requested that he might be attended by a clergyman, but this was refused by the marshal; so too was his request for a Bible. On the fatal morning he was led out to the place of his execution, which, upon the best data at hand, appears to have been the Rutgers' orchard, not far above Franklin Square on East Broadway, and there calmly awaited his fate. Pending the preparations, an English officer received permission to have Hale remain in his tent, where the latter found time to write letters to his mother and a comrade in the army.

When André walked to the scaffold in 1780, no sign of faintness escaped him, but, bowing to all around, he said, at the closing moment, "Gentlemen, you will bear witness that I die with the firmness becoming a soldier." Eye-witnesses on the occasion have left the record that his self-possession throughout the trying scene was perfect. This was equally true of Hale, but Hale was far from being a professional soldier, and the thought of sustaining that character to the end seems not to have occurred to him. André could not belie the traditional courage of the British officer. Hale could not belie the cause he had voluntarily espoused, and when summoned from the tent where he had written the letters, to suffer his fate, his heart found spontaneous and unaffected utterance in words not to be forgotten. "I only regret," he said, to the few spectators present, "that I have but one life to lose for my country." Does any page in history furnish the example of a purer patriot than Hale?

Owing to the hurry, vexations and defeats of our army, which overshadowed everything that fall, Hale's execution failed to receive much attention at the time. Very few were aware of his mission to the enemy, and the particulars of his noble sacrifice were probably not generally known until later. That Washington and his staff officers were moved by his fate, and had discussed his case as a military precedent, seems to be made certain by the reference which Colonel Tilghman, one of the chief's aides, makes in a letter to Mr. Duer, of the New York Convention. "General Howe," he writes, "hanged a captain of ours belonging to Knowlton's Rangers

who went into New York to make discoveries. I do not see why we should not make retaliation." Of course retaliation was out of the question, for Hale carried his life in his hands; but if time ever works out poetic revenges of its own, was it possibly avenging Hale's fate four years later, when André suffered? It might be called a singular coincidence that Hale's much-loved classmate, Major Tallmadge, was André's real captor, and that on the way to Washington's camp they talked of Hale. So, also, it may be noticed that Lafayette, late in life, once stated in Paris that André's proven guilt and Captain Hale's case were considerations which led to the former's sentence; and in his *Memoirs*, written long before, the same general says:

"Captain Hale, of Connecticut, a distinguished young man, beloved by his family and friends, had been taken on Long Island under circumstances of the same kind as those that occasioned the death of Major André; but instead of being treated with the like respect, to which Major André himself bore testimony, Captain Hale was insulted to the last moment of his life. 'This is a fine death for a soldier!' said one of the English officers who were surrounding the cart of execution. 'Sir,' replied Hale, lifting up his cap, 'there is no death which would not be rendered noble in such a glorious cause.' He calmly replaced his cap, and, the fatal cart moving on, he died with the most perfect composure."

Here was Hale's memory confronting André at his very arrest and trial.

It only remains to repeat the two well-known facts, that André's memory has been honored with a grave and inscription, in common with England's distinguished dead, in Westminster Abbey, while Hale has passed unnoticed by his countrymen, save in his native town of Coventry, where, some thirty or forty years ago, a plain monument was erected by the patriotic inhabitants, assisted by a small grant from the State. The captain's heroic, unselfish sacrifice merits a less obscure recognition. Where but in New York, where Hale suffered, should some worthy tribute be accorded him?

H. P. JOHNSTON.

In Harper's, May, 1887.

The plates in the above article were kindly loaned by Messrs, Harper & Bro.

The Society of the Sons of the Revolution propose to erect a Statue, in bronze, to the memory of Nathan Hale. The design has been determined upon; the site has been selected. The aid and assistance of each and every member of the Society will be necessary to complete this work.

Incorporated under the laws of the State of New-York, May 3d, 1884.

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1884.	Hawes, Gilbert R 120 Broadway, New-York.
1887.	Hawkes, E. McDougall
1886.	Hawthorne, Julian

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1886.	
1885.	Healey, Warren M 1478 Broadway, New-York.
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1884.	Holcombe, Wm. F., M. D
1885.	Holt, George C Broadway, New-York.
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1885.	Howell, Richard Stockton
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1885.	Huntington, F. J 165 Broadway, New-York.
1887.	Humphreys, A. W
1885.	Hurlburt, Percy Dakin570 Monroe st., Brooklyn
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1884.	Ireland, John B Broadway, New-York.
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1887.	Johnson, William Samuel
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1884.	McDowell, Wm. O
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1885.	Roosa, Daniel B. St. John, M. D 20 E. 30th st., New-York.
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τ887.	Sanford, Jared
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1886.	Satterlee, F. Le Roy, M. D
1886.	Satterlee, Samuel K
1886.	Satterlee, Walter
1886.	Schuyler, Spencer D
1886.	Seeley, H. W 158 W. 45th st. New-York.
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1887,	Short, Edward Lyman 11 E, 29th st., New-York.
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1884.	Shrody, John M. D
1884.	Shrody, William 2046 Madison ave., New-York.
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1884.	Stevens, John Austin
1884.	Stone, Wm243 Broadway, New-York.
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1887.	Storm, Watton
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1886.	Suydam, John R
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1885.	Tapp, Ed. Wm 15 Burling Slip, New-York.
1887.	Taylor, Samuel R
1884	Thompson, Alex. R., Jr

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1886.	Tomlinson, Theo. E., Jr	rk.
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1885.	Wilson, H. A	ork.
1887.	Wood, E. T	ork.
1885.	Wright, W. F., M. D 57 W. 10th st., New-Yo	ork.
1887.	Wyeth, Geo. Edgar 5 E. 27th st., New-Yo	ork.
1887.	Wyeth, Leonard J., Jr Riverdale, N	Υ.

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