

MEMORIAL DAY


By Helen Leah Reed

No warrior he, a village lad,
needing nor words nor other prod
To point his duty; he was glad
to tread the path his fathers trod.
Week days he worked in wood and field;
with homely joys he decked his life;
The sword of hate he would not wield,
nor take a part in cankering strife.

On Sunday in the little choir
he sang of Peace and brotherly love,
And as his thoughts soared higher and higher,
they reached unmeasured heights above.

A cry for Freedom rent the Land—
“Our Country calls, come, come, ’tis War;
Together let us firmly stand;”
he answered, though his heart beat sore
At leaving home, and kin, and one
in whose fond eyes too late he read
That life for her had but begun
with the farewells he sadly said.

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A half a century has passed—
and more—since all those myriads fell;
For he was one of those who cast
sweet life into a Battle's hell.

The village has become a town,
brick buildings the old graveyard gird;
Of him who fought not for renown,
no one now hears a spoken word,
But on the Monument his name
in gold is lettered with the rest.
Without a sordid thought of fame
he to his Country gave his best.

Strew flowers, then, Memorial Day
for him, for all who for us fought.
With speech and music honors pay;
teach what our brave defenders taught.
And now our sons are setting out;
the call for Right rings to the sky,
"Our Country! Freedom!" hear them shout,
re-echoing their Grandsires' cry.

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