

THE MOTHER'S LAMENT.

My son, and only one, was battle And now, throughout the fair and
slain, blessed land,
And he was all the world, and On love-ordained and sweet Me-
more, to me; morial day,
I gave him at my country's sacred We go, a flower-laden, faithful band,
fane, To spread on hero graves the bloom
When Sherman marched his legions of May,
to the sea.

n danger's threat'ning cloud, at coun-
try's call,
He left my side, and parting said to
me:
"If in the battle, mother, I should
fall,
My country and her God will care
for thee."

But for my soldier-boy that solace is
not mine:
Within a southern vale, afar, he
sleeps,
And in my heart is twined the myrtle
vine,
For him, and there rose-mary droops
and weeps.

SCYTHE HIS MEMORIAL

Remains in Tree Where Youth Hung It
When He Went to War

WHEN the territory about Waterloo, in New York state, was sparsely settled the principal industry was the hewing of timber from the forest along the Seneca canal. At a point known as Log Landing, midway between Geneva and Waterloo, the woodchoppers were wont to gather and tell their stories of early Indian fights, and here young Hyman Johnson, a farmer boy, first learned of the impending disaster to the union if the southern states were allowed to withdraw from their early affiliation. It seemed war was imminent and speculation was rife as to the time when the actual hostilities would begin.

One day in 1861 Johnson, who was then 21 years old, was mowing a lot on the farm. A neighbor drove up bearing the tidings that the call to arms had been sounded. Without hesitation the youth walked to the house and placed his scythe in the crotch of a young Balm of Gilead tree. His mother asked him what the matter was, and he said:

"Mother, Lincoln needs men. I am going to war."

"What, Hyman? You, my son, going to enlist?"

"Yes, but do not fear any harm will come to me. The war will be over in a month. The southerners cannot face the troops from the north for more than that time. When I return I will mow the rest of the lot. Leave my scythe in the tree until I return."

His regiment marched to the front to the stirring martial music, and was often in the fighting line. The mother, true to the words of her boy, left the scythe as it had been placed. Johnson came home a year later on a furlough, and laughed at the almost forgotten incident of the implement and its position.

He inspired hope in the hearts of those who thought of nothing else than his safe return by saying: "I will yet be back to mow that lot."

Soon after returning he was captured in a skirmish and became a prisoner in a southern pen, from which escape was impossible. Disease laid hold upon him and he died surrounded by enemies. He was buried in an unknown grave with hundreds of his comrades.

Meanwhile the tree grew apace and the blade became partially imbedded in the trunk of the tree. The handle rotted away, but the steel remained fixed in the wood.

A general proclamation was issued from the White House declaring one day should be set apart as a time for memory of those who had fallen

while defending their country. It was the first Memorial day. Word of the proclamation was carried to Mrs. Johnson, but she had no grave to decorate. She fain would strew a few flowers upon the spot wherein her boy lay, but its location must ever remain a mystery. Kneeling in the garden, she offered a short prayer. Then she plucked a few lilies from the plot she tended daily, and, making a wreath, she bore it to the tree which gave such a grim reminder of her sacrifice to her country. With a caress she reached up and hung the wreath upon the scythe point.

Memorial day has long become an established anniversary. Many years have passed since Mrs. Johnson was laid to rest in the village cemetery. The old home is exactly as it stood in the day of the civil war, but is occupied by another family.

Of the Johnson family a brother's widow and her children are all who are left. Every year, early in the morning of Memorial day, the remnant of the family gathers beneath the scythe and places thereupon a wreath of evergreen and a tiny American flag. Within a few feet modern methods have constructed a trolley line. Hundreds carried by the cars gaze upon the tree, the scythe, the wreath and the flag and ask to be told the story of the brave young soldier.

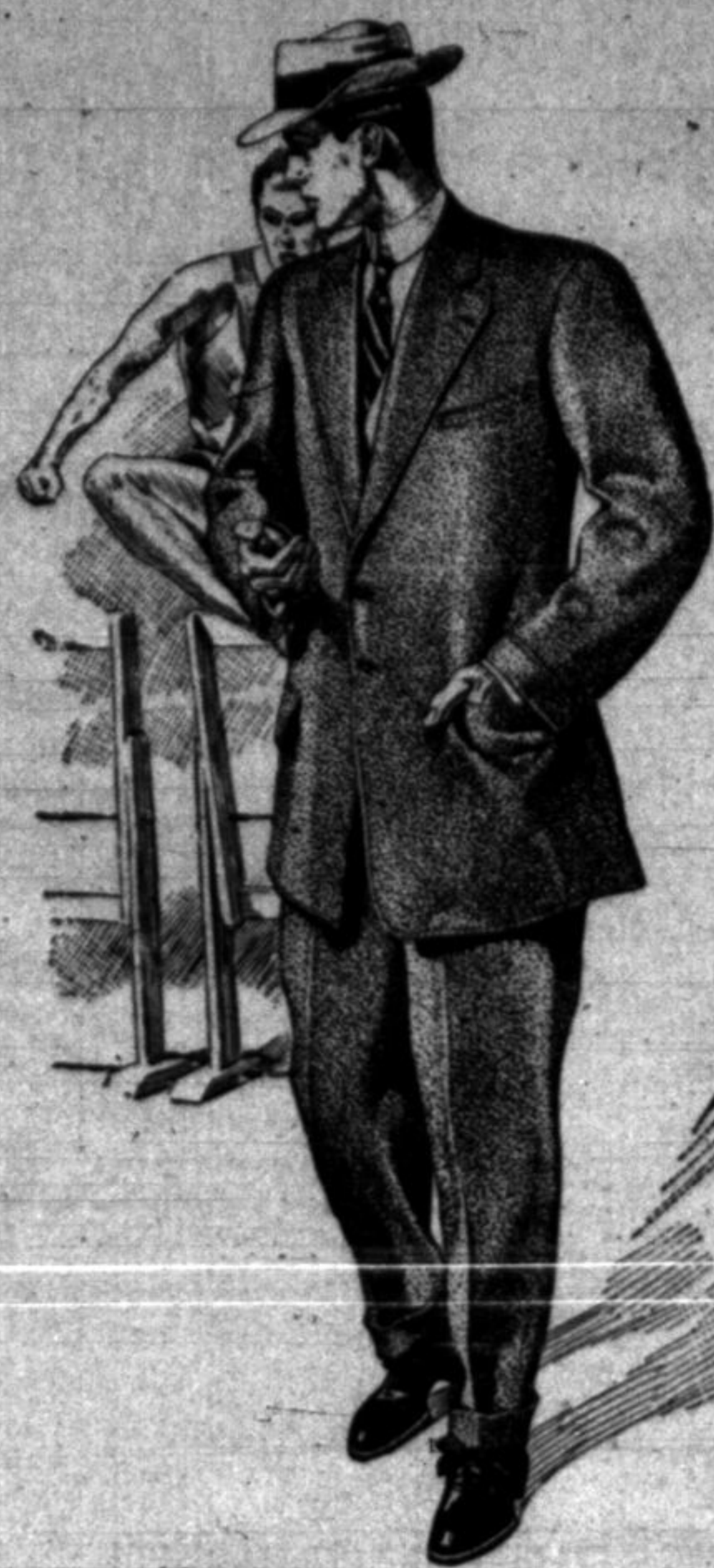
IN MEMORIAM.



A laurel wreath for each good gray head,
Honor for each of the scars they bear;
Tears for the blood that they had to shed,
Sighs for the ills that they had to share;
Love for their hope when hope had fled
From the weak who cowered in pale despair.

Fame, but not for the shame of those
Who fell for a cause that was better
lost;
Cheers for their love of the gallant foes
Whose bayonets by their own were
crossed;
Love for the grace that the hero shows
To the vanquished foe who has paid the
cost.

A laurel wreath for each good gray head,
Cheers for the heroes marching by;
Tears for the blood that they had to shed,
For each of the ills that they bore a
sigh;
Love for their faith when the streams ran
red
And despair was written across the sky.
—S. E. Kiser.



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