

## 79 A SOLDIER'S VALENTINE

Just from the sentry's tramp  
    (I must take it again at ten),  
I have laid my musket down,  
    And seized instead my pen;  
For, pacing my lonely round  
    In the chilly twilight gray,  
The thought, dear Mary, came,  
    That this is St. Valentine's Day.

And with the thought there came  
    A glimpse of the happy time  
When a school-boy's first attempt  
    I sent you, in borrowed rhyme,  
On a gilt-edged sheet, embossed  
    With many a quaint design,  
And signed, in a school-boy hand,  
    "Your loving Valentine."

The years have come and gone, --  
    Have flown, I know not where, --  
And the school-boy's merry face  
    Is grave with manhood's care;  
But the heart of the man still beats  
    At the well-remembered name,  
And on this St. Valentine's Day  
    His choice is still the same.

There was a time -- ah, well!  
    Think not that I repine --  
When I dreamed this happy day  
    Would smile on you as mine;  
But I heard my country's call;  
    I knew her need was sore.  
Thank God, no selfish thought  
    Withheld me from the war.

But when the dear old flag  
    Shall float in its ancient pride, --  
When the twain shall be made one,  
    And feuds no more divide, --  
I will lay my musket down,  
    My martial garb resign,  
And turn my joyous fee  
    Toward home and Valentine.

**Sources:**

Boston Transcript, February 14, 1863.

Harper's Weekly, February 14, 1863. (Anonymous)

Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving, 1875.

Alger Street, 1964.

Newsboy, January-February, 1989.