

A Valentine to a Wife.

By Henry Churston.

The days have passed in ceaseless flow;
Morning and evening, sun and shade,
Till the years have grown to the long age,
Since boyish lover and blushing maid
At the game of hearts together we played
Defiant of Time and Love.

The Boy I grieve to think is dead
Lured in the dusk of the crumbled past,
And only a man is left instead
Busy and burdened and overcast
With a cloud of care as dark and vast
As the winter midnight overhead.

I sometimes think he is still within,
Closely screened from the passing gaze,
Hiding away from the ceaseless din,
The turmoil of manhood's weary days,
The clamor of strife and the coil of sin,
But much I misdoubt if he really stays.

The love of that time has grown to fire
Fervent and fiercer as the flowing west,
The boy's fond hope and his soft desire
The pang which keening began needs

^{old} ^{clamored} ^{for} ^{thee}
The ^{boy} ~~demonstrated~~ ^{thy} ^{love} to bless

The fancied ease of thy valentine
The man and his heart would press
(with willing capture half-divine) as by command of the Divine
Narrow or Crime or Nothingness

If ~~you~~ ^{you} give joy to thine!

To give me moments!

The love of the boy has grown a fire
Fervent and fiercer as glowing west

The love of that ^{hour} ~~time~~ ^{a fire} has grown
Fervent and fiercer as glowing west,
Before whose glare the fond desire
The pang which the boyish bosom needs
The hopes which the youthful heart
Would shrivel like flame-struck grass.

Ah pity me, that Manhood brings

Embittered sweetness to love's pain!

God grant that Memory sometimes rings

Though cumbering cares our lives entwine

And Sorrow sweep the minor strings,

Of him - thy ^{boy-love} boyish valentine!

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013