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**Greybeards at Play**

**By**

**G. K. Chesterton**

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**A DEDICATION TO E.C.B.**

He was, through boyhood's storm and shower, My best, my nearest friend;  
We wore one hat, smoked one cigar, One standing at each end.

We were two hearts with single hope, Two faces in one hood; I knew the  
secrets of his youth; I watched his every mood.

The little things that none but I Saw were beyond his wont, The streaming  
hair, the tie behind, The coat tails worn in front.

I marked the absent-minded scream, The little nervous trick Of rolling in the  
grate, with eyes By friendship's light made quick.

But youth's black storms are gone and past, Bare is each aged brow; And,  
since with age we're growing bald, Let us be babies now.

Learning we knew; but still to-day, With spelling-book devotion, Words of  
one syllable we seek In moments of emotion.

Riches we knew; and well dressed dolls-- Dolls living--who expressed No  
filial thoughts, however much You thumped them in the chest.

Old happiness is grey as we, And we may still outstrip her; If we be slipped  
pantaloon, Oh let us hunt the slipper!

The old world glows with colours clear; And if, as saith the saint, The world  
is but a painted show, Oh let us lick the paint!

Far, far behind are morbid hours, And lonely hearts that bleed. Far, far  
behind us are the days, When we were old indeed.

Leave we the child: he is immersed With scientists and mystics: With deep  
prophetic voice he cries Canadian food statistics.

But now I know how few and small, The things we crave need be-- Toys and  
the universe and you-- A little friend to tea.

Behold the simple sum of things, Where, in one splendour spun, The stars  
go round the Mulberry Bush, The Burning Bush, the Sun.

Now we are old and wise and grey,    And shaky at the knees;    Now is the true  
time to delight    In picture books like these.

Hoary and bent I dance one hour:    What though I die at morn?    There is a  
shout among the stars,    "To-night a child is born." CONTENTS

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