

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

GREYBEARDS AT PLAY:
LITERATURE AND ART FOR
OLD GENTLEMEN

Gilbert Chesterton

**Greybeards at Play: Literature
and Art for Old Gentlemen**

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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 slippered pantaloons,
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."

THE ONENESS OF THE PHILOSOPHER WITH NATURE

I love to see the little stars
All dancing to one tune;
I think quite highly of the Sun,
And kindly of the Moon.

The million forests of the Earth
Come trooping in to tea.
The great Niagara waterfall
Is never shy with me.

I am the tiger's confidant,
And never mention names:
The lion drops the formal "Sir,"
And lets me call him James.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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