

THE SEVEN AGES OF MAN

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The seven ages of man by Charles Wells Hillyear

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CHARLES WELLS HILLYEAR

**THE SEVEN
AGES OF MAN**



THE
SEVEN AGES

OF
MAN.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

BY
CHARLES WELLS HILLYEAR.



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WATFORD:
223, ST. ALBAN'S ROAD.

1918.



WHY did I write this? Well, it must be recognized that we live in a world where vices are nurtured, and virtues are tabooed. Is it better to overlook men's vices, and condone them? or to look over them, and condemn them? When it is almost regarded as a sign of lunacy, where a person strives to be as good and true as nature intended him to be, and *expects* him to be, there surely must be a good part to play as Fault-finder. Something is wrong: what is it? Somebody is wrong: is it you? Do you think it is wicked to be good? Are you afraid to be good? or careful to be only sneakingly good? Do you say it is natural to be bad? Then I order you to become *unnaturalized*, and, curiously enough, you will pass as a good citizen, and what holy scripture calls a *new* creature. Is it proper to get angry with the mirror that shows off the rugosities and warts on your character? No, indeed. Give your energies to the removal of such disfigurements. Now then, get busy with yourself. Don't worry about *my* work; it speaks for itself assuredly, and it cares nothing for foot-lights or footlickers.

EXORDIUM.

*"All the world 's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players :
They have their exits, and their entrances ;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages."*

THREE hundred years, or thereabouts, agone,
Will Shakespeare, Stratford's famous bard was born.
He wrote of things in earth, air, sky, and heaven,
And said of man, his Ages were just Seven.
Well, whether seven, or seventy, 't is the rule,
To find in all of them that he 's a fool ;
A downright ass-fool, so I 've heard it said,
By one who has a knowing little head.
And what he Ages calls in his sweet song,
Had he called Rages, he would not be wrong.
If what I say you think will cut no wood,
Just try it on your block ; you 'll feel it good.
But write I nonsense, or good common-sense,
I 'll plead Not Guilty, sit upon the fence.
And you may like or much dislike my rhymes ;
I just set down whatever suits the times.
Thoughts, words, and things, my pen shall never clog,
Or land me in an Erinnyian bog.

Whatever 't is, I catch it as it flies,
And what 's not true, is classed with ugly lies.
I pass those critics through a wide-meshed sieve
Who, 'stead of Shakespeare, cuts of Bacon give ;
And wish to shake said William from his pesch,
While in a brain-storm they make woeful lurch.
Such folk will think this book has ugly looks,
And have no doubt 't was copied from Will Snooks.
Well, I 'm Will Snooks, so then they 'll be quite right,
And gird afresh in Bacon-Shakespeare fight.
Yet in my nature not averse to ruth,
However harsh, I 'm partial aye to truth.
Scant courtesy I show to lies called *white*,
The stock in trade of parsons and polite.
I look them through, around, from front to back,—
They 're all the Devil's colour, inky black.
Well now, my friends, I 'll put it up to you,
That this small book 's quite positively true.
If men loved truth in each and ev'ry stage,
The only Age would be the Golden Age.
Dearly beloved brethren, rogues and fools,
We 'll take you through your seven delightful schools.





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THE INFANT.

*"At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms."*

A Mother's Soliloquy.

○ BEAUTEOUS babe, from heaven so lately come,
Right welcome art thou to this earthly home ;
Long, child, I have wished to feast mine eyes on thee ;
Indeed, thou angel, thou 'rt the world to me.

Thy form is plastic, yet plainly I can see
Thy father's form again revived in thee ;
His mien is graceful, an ever-present charm,
His mind so active, yet so free from harm.

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Sweet love's best effort for thee was set apart,
Heart answered to a sacrificing heart ;
Purest affection for thy behoof was spent,
A chance for earth-appearance fondly lent.

A mystery thou ; no word escapes thy lips ;
Pray hast thou knowledge at thy finger-tips ?
As a musician, thou hast no pride of birth ;
Thou camest with a cry upon this earth.

Cast down from glory, on earth thou vagrant art,
With dull humanity to have thy part ;
Knowledge and wisdom, these are thy crowns to gain,
Though hardly purchased by much toil and pain.

Ere here thou camest, thou and thy kith knew well
That earth was little better than a hell ;
On change determined, thou then thy heaven didst leave,
And planned a house of flesh and blood to weave.

Rash was thy venture ; earth faileth man to please,
Charged with misfortune, endless grief, disease ;
Cares so distressful, so hard to understand,
Woes that embitter life on sea and land.

Thou hast lived ages, and back from farthest time ;
Perhaps in darkness, mayhap light sublime ;
Again thou changest, and this to change so sweet,
With lovely little eyes, arms, hands, and feet.

O babe, my darling, thou here on earth must stay,
For years uncounted, till thou canst away ;