

# AGE OF MAN.

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**I**N prime of years, when I was young,  
I took delight in youthful toys,  
Not knowing then what did belong  
Unto the pleasures of those days.  
At seven years old I was a child,  
And subject then to be beguil'd.

At two times seven I must needs go learn,  
What discipline was taught at school,  
Then good from evil I could discern,  
And thought myself no more a fool.  
My parents were contriving then  
How I might live when I became a man.

At three times seven I waxed wild,  
And manhood led me to be bold,  
I thought myself no more a child,  
My own conceit it so me told:  
Then did I venture far and near  
To buy delight at price full dear.

At four times seven I must sake a wife,  
And leave off all my wanton ways,  
Thinking thereby perhaps to thrive,  
And save myself from sad disgrace.  
So farewell now my companions all,  
For another business doth me call.

At five times seven I would go prove  
What I could gain by art or skill,  
But still against the stream I strove,  
And bowl'd up stones against the hill;  
The more I labour'd with might and main,  
The more I strove against the stream.

At six times seven all covetousness  
Began to harbour in my breast,  
My mind then still contriving was  
How I might gain this worldly wealth,  
To purchase lands and live on them,  
To make my children mighty men.

At seven times seven all worldly craft  
Began to harbour in my breast,  
Then did I drink a heavy draught  
Of water of experience;  
There was none then so ready as I  
To purchase bargains, sell, or buy.

At eight times seven I waxed old,  
And took myself unto my rest;  
My neighbours then my council crav'd,  
And I was had in great request:  
But age did so abate my strength,  
That I was forc'd to yield at length.

At nine times seven I must take my leave  
Of all my former vain delights,  
And then full sore it did me grieve,  
I fetched many a bitter sigh.  
To rise up early, and to sit up late  
I was no longer fit, my strength did abate.

At ten times seven my glass was run,  
And I, poor silly man, must die;  
I look'd up and saw the sun  
Had overcome the chrystal sky;  
And now I must this world forsake,  
And another man my place must take.

Now you may see, as in a glass,  
The whole estate of mortal men,  
How they from seven to seven do pass,  
Until they are threescore and ten;  
And when their glass is fully run,  
They must leave off where they first begun.