

**GEORGE
BAKER**

AN OLD MAN'S
PRAYER

George Baker
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Содержание

AN OLD MAN'S PRAYER	5
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	7

George M Baker

An Old Man's Prayer

This simple story will be recognized by many throughout New England to whom the author has had the pleasure of reciting it. Frequent requests that he would place it in shape for preservation have emboldened him to issue it in its present dress. Painfully conscious of its defects as a literary work, he sends it forth in search of old acquaintances, trusting it may receive a share of that kindly favor bestowed upon it as it fell from his lips.

AN OLD MAN'S PRAYER

In the loftiest room, of princely state,
Of a modern palace grand and great, —
Whose marble front is a symbol true
Of the inner splendors hid from view, —
On an autumn night, when wild without
The bold winds held their revel rout,
Rudely assailing the passing throng,
Through churchyards creeping with mournful song,
A group was gathered around a board
Heaped with all that wealth could afford,
Or taste could suggest: dishes costly and rare,
Fruits of all climes and all seasons, were there.
The pendent lights in brilliance danced
On the gleaming plate their rays enhanced;
The massive mirrors thrice displayed
The stately banquet there arrayed.
Furniture carved by an artist hand,
Carpets which only great wealth could command,
Curtains of damask, of lace, and of gold,
Spoke of the splendors wealth could unfold,
And filled with a joy and a pleasure rare
The youthful hearts that were gathered there.
Slender each form, and fair each face,
Of the twelve gay lads which that table grace,

As with genial talk and pleasant jest
They banter each other, and cheer their guest.
For one guest is there, as youthful as they,
With a heart as light, and a voice as gay,
Who laughs at their jests with ready glee,
And whose quick returns speak a spirit free,
An honored guest; for, on the morrow,
They must part with him in pain and sorrow.
The glittering emblems his shoulders bear
Bid him for strife and for peril prepare;
Bid him go forth at his Country's call,
With her banner to triumph, or on it to fall.
A moment's pause, as with ready hand
The waiter hurries, at command,
To clear the table, and, instead
Of the rich, choice viands thickly spread,
Ranges dark bottles and cruses, which show
Marks of long years in damp vaults below.
The richest juices age can display
Are quickly spread in tempting array.
Wines of Bordeaux and Seville are there,
With liquors and cordials sparkling and rare;
And bottles are opened, and glasses are filled.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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