

The Chip On Your Shoulder

You'll learn when you're older, that chip on your shoulder
Which you dare other boys to upset
And stand up and fight for, and struggle and smite for,
Has caused you much pain and regret.
When Time, life's adviser, has made you much wiser,
You won't be so quick with the blow;
You won't be so willing to fight for a shilling,
And change a good friend to a foe.
You won't be a sticker for trifles, and bicker
And quarrel for nothing at all;
You'll grow to be kinder, more thoughtful, and blinder
To faults which are petty and small.
You won't take the trouble your two fists to double
When someone your pride may offend;
When with rage now you bristle you'll smile or you'll whistle,
And keep the good will of a friend.
You'll learn when you're older, that chip on your shoulder
Which proudly you battle to guard,
Has frequently shamed you and often defamed you,
And left you a record that's marred!
When you've grown calm and steady, you won't be so ready
To fight for a difference that's small
For you'll know, when you're older, that chip on your shoulder
Is only a chip after all.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)