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Old and Young.

"Tho He Slay!"

BY ALBION W. TOURGEE.

"I AM but dust!
Altho He slay,
Yet will I trust
Through all the fray
In Him!"

So boasted one.
~~Breasting a battle just begun.~~

The noontide came.
The soldier faced the sheeted flame,
Defying weariness and wo,
And giving ever blow for blow.
From out the din and dust
Of that world-fray
He shouted still,
In accents shrill:
"Altho He slay,
Yet will I trust!"

The night came down,
Lo, stark and prone
The warrior lay. Above him thronged
The tide of those who smote and wronged.
The fight was o'er; the wrong had won;
The earth no better, now 'twas done!
His blood soaked up the dust;
Valor and strength were vain.
"Altho He slay, yet will I trust!"
And he was slain.

Dews kissed the plain;
Sunshine and rain
Washed clean the blood-soaked dust;
Flowers sprang above the dead,
And mocked the silly soldier's trust;
Wrong flourished, and the world forgot
That he had lived.

But once again
Earth echoed with the strife of men
Above the warrior's crumbling dust.
With shout and curse, with stroke and
thrust,

Two mighty hosts in conflict met;
Above his grave the flag was set
For which he fought; beyond it rose
The banner of his ancient foes;
Clean through the nameless, moldering
crest

The steel-shod banner-pike was prest.

Again the soil ran red with blood;
Again the field with dead was strewed;
Again the shout of victory rose:
Right triumphed now o'er fleeing foes!

Above the level, unmarked grave
Loud peans echo, banners wave;
While, mingled with the roll of drums
A murmur, faint, exulting, comes
From out the 'sanguined dust,
The voice of a forgotten day:

"Not vainly did I trust,
Tho He did slay!"

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