Emerald Uthwart

We smile at epitaphs—at those recent enough to be read easily; smile, for the most part, at what for the most part is an unreal and often vulgar branch of literature; yet a wide one, with its flowers here or there, such as make us regret now and again not to have gathered more carefully in our wanderings a fair average of the like. Their very simplicity, of course, may set one's thoughts in motion to fill up the scanty tale, and those of the young at least are almost always worth while. At Siena, for instance, in the great Dominican church, even with the impassioned work of Sodoma at hand, you may linger in a certain dimly lit chapel to spell out the black-letter memorials of the German students who died here—*ætatis flore!*—at the University, famous early in the last century; young nobles chiefly, far from the Rhine, from Nuremberg, or Leipsic. Note one in particular! Loving parents and elder brother meant to record carefully the very days of the lad's poor life—*annos, menses, dies;* sent the order, doubtless, from the distant old castle in the Fatherland, but not quite explicitly; the spaces for the numbers remain still unfilled; and they never came to see. After two centuries the omission is not to be rectified; and the young man's memorial has perhaps its propriety as it stands, with those unnumbered, or numberless, days. "Full of affections," observed, once upon a time, a great lover of boys and young men, speaking to a large company of them:—"full of affections, full of powers, full of occupation, how naturally might the younger part of us especially (more naturally than the older) receive the tidings that there are things to be loved and things to be done which shall never pass away. We feel strong, we feel active, we feel full of life; and these feelings do not altogether deceive us, for we shall

live for ever. We see a long prospect before us, for which it is worth while to work, even with much labour; for we are as yet young, and the past portion of our lives is but small in comparison of that which probably remains to us. It is most true! The past years of our life are absolutely beyond proportion small in comparison with those which certainly remain to us."

In a very different neighbourhood, here at home, in a remote Sussex churchyard, you may read that Emerald Uthwart was born on such a day, "at Chase Lodge, in this parish; and died there," on a day in the year 18—, aged twenty-six. Think, thereupon, of the years of a very English existence passed without a lost week in that bloomy English place, amid its English lawns and flower-beds, its oldish brick and raftered plaster; you may see it still, not far off, on a clearing of the wooded hill-side sloping gradually to the sea. But you think wrong. Emerald Uthwart, in almost unbroken absence from his home, longed greatly for it, but left it early and came back there only to die, in disgrace, as he conceived; of which it was he died there, finding the sense of the place all around him at last, like blessed oil in one's wounds.

How they shook their musk from them!—those gardens, among which the youngest son, but not the youngest child, grew up, little considered till he returned there in those last years. The rippling note of the birds he distinguished so acutely seemed a part of this tree-less place, open freely to sun and air, such as rose and carnation loved, in the midst of the old disafforested chase. Brothers and sisters, all alike were gardeners, methodically intimate with their flowers. You need words compact rather of perfume than of colour to describe them, in nice annual order; terms for perfume, as immediate and definite as red, purple, and yellow. Flowers there were which seemed to yield their sweetest in the faint sea-salt, when the loosening wind was strong from the south-west; some which found their way slowly towards the neighbourhood of the old oaks and beech-trees. Others consorted most freely with the wall-fruit, or seemed made for *pot-pourri* to sweeten the old black mahogany furniture. The sweet-pea stacks loved the broad path through the kitchen garden; the old-fashioned garden azalea was the making of a nosegay, with its honey which clung to one's finger. There were flowers all the sweeter for a battle with

the rain; a flower like aromatic medicine; another like summer lingering into winter; it ripened as fruit does; and another was like August, his own birthday time, dropped into March.

The very mould here, rich old black gardener's earth, was flower-seed; and beyond, the fields, one after another, through the white gates breaking the well-grown hedge-rows, were hardly less garden-like; little velvety fields, little with the true sweet English littleness of our little island, our land of vignettes. Here all was little; the very church where they went to pray, to sit, the ancient Uthwarts sleeping all around outside under the windows, deposited there as quietly as fallen trees on their native soil, and almost unrecorded, as there had been almost nothing to record; where however, Sunday after Sunday, Emerald Uthwart reads, wondering, the solitary memorial of one soldierly member of his race, who had,—well! who had *not* died here at home, in his bed. How wretched! how fine! how inconceivably great and difficult!—not for him! And yet, amid all its littleness, how large his sense of liberty in the place he, the cadet doomed to leave it—his birth-place, where he is also so early to die—had loved better than any one of them! Enjoying hitherto all the freedom of the almost grown-up brothers, the unrepressed noise, the unchecked hours, the old rooms, all their own way, he is literally without the consciousness of rule. Only, when the long irresponsible day is over, amid the dew, the odours, of summer twilight, they roll their cricket-field against to-morrow's game. So it had always been with the Uthwarts; they never went to school. In the great attic he has chosen for himself Emerald awakes;—it was a rule, sanitary, almost medical, never to rouse the children—rises to play betimes; or, if he choose, with window flung open to the roses, the sea, turns to sleep again, deliberately, deliciously, under the fine old blankets.

A rather sensuous boy! you may suppose, amid the wholesome, natural self-indulgence of a very English home. His days began there: it closed again, after an interval of the larger number of them, indulgently, mercifully, round his end. For awhile he became its centre, old habits changing, the old furniture rearranged about him, for the first time in many generations, though he left it now with something like resentment in his heart, as if thrust

harshly away, sent *ablactatus a matre;* made an effort thereon to snap the last thread which bound him to it. Yet it would come back upon him sometimes, amid so different a scene, as through a suddenly opened door, or a rent in the wall, with softer thoughts of his people,—there, or *not* there,—and a sudden, dutiful effort on his part to rekindle wasting affection.

The youngest of four sons, but not the youngest of the family!—you conceive the sort of negligence that creeps over even the kindest maternities, in such case; unless, perhaps, sickness, or the sort of misfortune, making the last first for the affectionate, that brought Emerald back at length to die contentedly, interferes with the way of nature. Little by little he comes to understand that, while the brothers are indulged with lessons at home, are some of them free even of these and placed already in the world, where, however, there remains no place for him, he is to go to school, chiefly for the convenience of others—they are going to be much away from home!—that now for the first time, as he says to himself, an old-English Uthwart is to pass under the yoke. The tutor in the house, meantime, aware of some fascination in the lad, teaches him, at his own irregularly chosen hours, more carefully than the others; exerts all his gifts for the purpose, winning him on almost insensibly to youthful proficiency in those difficult rudiments. See him as he stands, seemingly rooted in the spot where he has come to flower! He departs, however, a few days before the departure of the rest—some to foreign parts, the brothers, who shut up the old place, to town. For a moment, he makes an effort to figure to himself those coming absences as but exceptional intervals in his life here; he will count the days, going more quickly so; find his pleasure in watching the sands fall, as even the sands of time at school must. In fact, he was scarcely ever to lie at ease here again, till he came to take his final leave of it, lying at his length so. In brief holidays he rejoins his people, anywhere, anyhow, in a sort of hurry and makeshift:—*Flos Parietis!* thus carelessly plucked forth. Emerald Uthwart was born on such a day "at Chase Lodge, in this parish, and died there."

See him then as he stands! counting now the hours that remain, on the eve of that first emigration, and look away next at the other place, which through centuries has been forming to receive

him; from those garden-beds, now at their richest, but where all is so winsomely little, to that place of "great matters," great stones, great memories out of reach. Why! the Uthwarts had scarcely had more memories than their woods, noiselessly deciduous; or their prehistoric, entirely unprogressive, unrecording forefathers, in or before the days of the Druids. Centuries of almost "still" life—of birth, death, and the rest, as merely natural processes—had made them and their home what we find them. Centuries of conscious endeavour, on the other hand, had builded, shaped, and coloured the place, a small cell, which Emerald Uthwart was now to occupy; a place such as our most characteristic English education has rightly tended to "find itself a house" in—a place full, for those who came within its influence, of a will of its own. Here everything, one's very games, have gone by rule onwards from the dim old monastic days, and the Benedictine school for novices with the wholesome severities which have descended to our own time. Like its customs,—there's a book in the cathedral archives with the names, for centuries past, of the "scholars" who have missed church at the proper times for going there—like its customs, well-worn yet well-preserved, time-stained, time-engrained, time-mellowed, the venerable Norman or English stones of this austere, beautifully proportioned place look like marble, to which Emerald's softly nurtured being, his careless wild-growth must now adapt itself, though somewhat painfully recoiling from contact with what seems so hard also, and bright, and cold. From his native world of soft garden touches, carnation and rose (they had been everywhere in those last weeks), where every one did just what he liked, he was passed now to this world of grey stone; and here it was always the decisive word of command. That old warrior Uthwart's record in the church at home, so fine, yet so wretched, so unspeakably great and difficult! seemed written here everywhere around him, as he stood feeling himself fit only to be taught, to be drilled into, his small compartment; in every movement of his companions, with their quaint confining little cloth gowns; in the keen, clear, well-authorised dominancy of some, the instant submission of others. In fact, by one of our wise English compromises, we still teach our so modern boys the Classics; a lesson in attention and patience, at the least. Nay! by a double

compromise, with delightful physiognomic results sometimes, we teach them their pagan Latin and Greek under the shadow of medieval churchtowers, amid the haunts, the traditions, and with something of the discipline, of monasticism; for which, as is noticeable, the English have never wholly lost an early inclination. The French and others have swept their scholastic houses empty of it, with pedantic fidelity to their theories. English pedants may succeed in doing the like. But the result of our older method has had its value so far, at least, say! for the careful æsthetic observer. It is of such diagonal influences, through complication of influence, that expression comes, in life, in our culture, in the very faces of men and boys—of these boys. Nothing could better harmonise present with past than the sight of them just here, as they shout at their games, or recite their lessons, overarched by the work of medieval priors, or pass to church meekly, into the seats occupied by the young monks before them.

If summer comes reluctantly to our English shores, it is also apt to linger with us;—its *flora* of red and gold leaves on the branches wellnigh to Christmas; the hot days that surprise you, and persist, though heralded by white mornings, hinting that it is but the year's indulgence so to deal with us. To the fanciful, such days may seem most at home in the places where England has thus preferred to locate the somewhat pensive education of its more favoured youth. As Uthwart passes through the old ecclesiastical city, upon which any more modern touch, modern door or window, seems a thing out of place through negligence, the diluted sunlight itself seems driven along with a sparing trace of gilded vane or red tile in it, under the wholesome active wind from the East coast. The long, finely weathered, leaden roof, and the great square tower, gravely magnificent, emphatic from the first view of it over the grey down above the hop-gardens, the gently-watered meadows, dwarf now everything beside; have the bigness of nature's work, seated up there so steadily amid the winds, as rain and fog and heat pass by. More and more persistently, as he proceeds, in the "Green Court" at last, they occupy the outlook. He is shown the narrow cubicle in which he is to sleep; and there it still is, with nothing else, in the window-pane, as he lies;—"our tower," the "Angel Steeple," noblest of its kind. Here, from morning to night, everything seems challenged to follow the upward lead of its long, bold, "perpendicular" lines. The very place one is in, its stone-work, its empty spaces, invade you; invade all who belong to them, as Uthwart belongs, yielding wholly from the first; seem to question you masterfully as to your purpose in being here at all, amid the great memories of the past, of this school;—challenge you, so to speak, to make moral philosophy one of your acquirements, if you can, and to systematise your vagrant self; which however will in any case be here systematised for you. In Uthwart, then, is the plain tablet, for the influences of place to inscribe. Say if you will, that he is under the power of an "embodied ideal," somewhat repellent, but which he cannot despise. He sits in the schoolroom—ancient, transformed chapel of the pilgrims; sits in the sober white and brown place, at the heavy old desks, carved this way and that, crowded as an old churchyard with forgotten names, side by side with sympathetic or antipathetic competitors, as it may chance. In a delightful, exactly measured, quarter of an hour's rest, they come about him, seem to wish to be friends at once, good and bad alike, dull and clever; wonder a little at the name, and the owner. A family name—he explains, good-humouredly; tries to tell some story no one could ever remember precisely of the ancestor from whom it came, the one story of the Uthwarts; is spared; nay! petulantly forbidden to proceed. But the name sticks the faster. Nicknames mark, for the most part, popularity. *Emerald!* so every one called Uthwart, but shortened to *Aldy*. They disperse; flock out into the court; acquaint him hastily with the curiosities of the Precincts, the "dark entry," the rich heraldries of the blackened and mouldering cloister, the ruined overgrown spaces where the old monastery stood, the stones of which furnished material for the rambling prebends houses, now "antediluvian" in their turn; are ready also to climb the scaffold-poles always to be found somewhere about the great church, or dive along the odd, secret passages of the old builders, with quite learned explanations (being proud of, and therefore painstaking about, the place) of architectural periods, of Gothic "late" and "early," layer upon layer, down to round-arched "Norman," like the famous staircase of their school.

The reader comprehends that Uthwart was come where the

genius loci was a strong one, with a claim to mould all who enter it to a perfect, uninquiring, willing or unwilling, conformity to itself. On Saturday half-holidays the scholars are taken to church in their surplices, across the court, under the lime-trees; emerge at last up the dark winding passages into the melodious, mellow-lighted space, always three days behind the temperature outside, so thick are the walls;—how warm and nice! how cool and nice! The choir, to which they glide in order to their places below the clergy, seems conspicuously cold and sad. But the empty chapels lying beyond it all about into the distance are a trap on sunny mornings for the clouds of yellow effulgence. The Angel Steeple is a lantern within, and sheds down a flood of the like just beyond the gates. You can peep up into it where you sit, if you dare to gaze about you. If at home there had been nothing great, here, to boyish sense, one seems diminished to nothing at all, amid the grand waves, wave upon wave, of patiently-wrought stone; the daring height, the daring severity, of the innumerable, long, upward, ruled lines, rigidly bent just at last, in due place, into the reserved grace of the perfect Gothic arch; the peculiar daylight which seemed to come from further than the light outside. Next morning they are here again. In contrast to those irregularly broken hours at home, the passive length of things impresses Uthwart now. It develops patience—that tale of hours, the long chanted English service; our English manner of education is a development of patience, of decorous and mannerly patience. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth: he putteth his mouth in the dust, he keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him."—They have this for an anthem; sung however to wonderfully cheerful and sprightly music, as if one liked the thought.

The aim of a veritable community, says Plato, is not that this or that member of it should be disproportionately at ease, but that the whole should flourish; though indeed such general welfare might come round again to the loyal unit therein, and rest with him, as a privilege of his individual being after all. The social type he preferred, as we know, was conservative Sparta and its youth; whose unsparing discipline had doubtless something to do with the fact that it was the handsomest and best-formed in all Greece. A school is not made for one. It would misrepresent Uthwart's wholly unconscious humility to say that he felt the

beauty of the ἄσκησις (we need that Greek word) to which he not merely finds himself subject, but as under a fascination submissively yields himself, although another might have been aware of the charm of it, half ethic, half physical, as visibly effective in him. Its peculiarity would have lain in the expression of a stress upon him and his customary daily existence, beyond what any definitely proposed issue of it, at least for the moment, explained. Something of that is involved in the very idea of a classical education, at least for such as he; in its seeming indirectness or lack of purpose, amid so much difficulty, as contrasted with forms of education more obviously useful or practical. He found himself in a system of fixed rules, amid which, it might be, some of his own tendencies and inclinations would die out of him though disuse. The confident word of command, the instantaneous obedience expected, the enforced silence, the very games that go by rule, a sort of hardness natural to wholesome English youths when they come together, but here *de rigueur* as a point of good manners;—he accepts all these without hesitation; the early hours also, naturally distasteful to him, which gave to actual morning, to all that had passed in it, when in more self-conscious mood he looked back on the morning of life, a preponderance, a disproportionate place there, adding greatly to the effect of its dreamy distance from him at this later time;—an *ideal* quality, he might have said, had he ever used such words as that.

Uthwart duly passes his examination; and, in their own chapel in the transept of the choir, lighted up late for evening prayer after the long day of trial, is received to the full privileges of a Scholar with the accustomed Latin words:—*Introitum tuum et exitum tuum custodiat Dominus!* He takes them, not to heart, but rather to mind, as few, if they so much as heard them, were wont to do; ponders them for a while. They seem scarcely meant for him—words like those! increase however his sense of responsibility to the place, of which he is now more exclusively than before a part—that he belongs to it, its great memories, great dim purposes; deepen the consciousness he had on first coming hither of a demand in the world about him, whereof the very stones are emphatic, to which no average human creature could be sufficient; of reproof, reproaches, of this or that in himself.

It was reported, there was a funny belief, at school, that Aldy

Uthwart had no feeling and was incapable of tears. They never came to him certainly, when, at nights for the most part, the very touch of home, so soft, yet so indifferent to him, reached him, with a sudden opulent rush of garden perfumes; came at the rattling of the window-pane in the wind, with anything that expressed distance from the bare white walls around him here. He thrust it from him brusquely, being of a practical turn, and, though somewhat sensuous, wholly without sentimentality. There is something however in the lad's soldier-like, impassible self-command, in his sustained expression of a certain indifference to things, which awakes suddenly all the sentiment, the poetry, latent hitherto in another—James Stokes, the prefect, his immediate superior; awakes for the first time into ample flower something of genius in a seemingly plodding scholar, and therewith also something of the waywardness popularly thought to belong to genius. *Preceptores, condiscipuli*, alike, marvel at a sort of delicacy coming into the habits, the person, of that tall, bashful, broad-shouldered, very Kentish, lad; so unaffectedly nevertheless, that it is understood after all to be but the smartness properly significant of change to early manhood, like the down on his lip. Wistful anticipations of manhood are in fact aroused in him, thoughts of the future; his ambition takes effective outline. The well-worn, perhaps conventional, beauties of their "dead" Greek and Latin books, associated directly now with the living companion beside him, really shine for him at last with their pristine freshness; seem more than to fulfil their claim upon the patience, the attention, of modern youth. He notices as never before minute points of meaning in Homer, in Virgil; points out thus, for instance, to his junior, one day in the sunshine, how the Greeks had a special word for the Fate which accompanied one who would come to a violent end. The common Destinies of men, Μοῖραι, *Mæræ*—they accompanied all men indifferently. But Κήρ, the extraordinary Destiny, one's Doom, had a scent for distant bloodshedding; and, to be in at a sanguinary death, one of their number came forth to the very cradle, followed persistently all the way, over the waves, through powder and shot, through the rose-gardens;—where not? Looking back, one might trace the red footsteps all along, side by side. (Emerald Uthwart, you remember, was to "die there," of lingering sickness, in disgrace, as he fancied, while the word glory came to be softly whispered of them and of their end.) Classic felicities, the choice expressions, with which James Stokes has so patiently stored his memory, furnish now a dainty embroidery upon every act, every change in time or place, of their daily life in common. He finds the Greek or the Latin model of their antique friendship or tries to find it, in the books they read together. None fits exactly. It is of military glory they are really thinking, amid those ecclesiastical surroundings, where however surplices and uniforms are often mingled together; how they will lie, in costly glory, costly to them, side by side, (as they work and walk and play now, side by side) in the cathedral aisle, with a tattered flag perhaps above them, and under a single epitaph, like that of those two older scholars, Ensigns, *Signiferi*, in their respective regiments, *in hac ecclesiâ pueri instituti*, with the sapphic stanza in imitation of the Horace they had learned here, written by their old master.

Horace!—he was, had been always, the idol of their school; to know him by heart, to translate him into effective English idiom, have an apt phrase of his instinctively on one's lips for every occasion. That boys should be made to spout him under penalties, would have seemed doubtless to that sensitive, vain, winsome poet, even more than to grim Juvenal, quite the sorriest of fates; might have seemed not so bad however, could he, from the "ashes" so persistently in his thoughts, have peeped on these English boys, row upon row, with black or golden heads, repeating him in the fresh morning, and observed how well for once the thing was done; how well he was understood by English James Stokes, feeling the old "fire" really "quick" still, under the influence which now in truth quickened, enlivened, everything around him. The old heathen's way of looking at things, his melodious expression of it, blends, or contrasts itself oddly with the everyday detail, with the very stones, the Gothic stones, of a world he could hardly have conceived, its medieval surroundings, their half-clerical life here. Yet not so inconsistently after all! The builders of these aisles and cloisters had known and valued as much of him as they could come by in their own un-instructed time; had built up their intellectual edifice more than they were

aware of from fragments of pagan thought, as, quite consciously, they constructed their churches of old Roman bricks and pillars, or frank imitations of them. One's day, then, began with him, for all alike, Sundays of course excepted,—with an Ode, learned over-night by the prudent, who, observing how readily the words which send us to sleep cling to the brain and seem an inherent part of it next morning, kept him under their pillows. Prefects, without a book, heard the repetition of the Juniors, must be able to correct their blunders. Odes and Epodes, thus acquired, were a score of days and weeks; alcaic and sapphic verses like a bead-roll for counting off the time that intervened before the holidays. Time—that tardy servant of youthful appetite—brought them soon enough to the point where they desired in vain "to see one of" those days, erased now so willingly; and sentimental James Stokes has already a sense that this "pause 'twixt cup and lip" of life is really worth pausing over, worth deliberation:—all this poetry, yes! poetry, surely, of their alternate work and play; light and shade, call it! Had it been, after all, a life in itself less commonplace than theirs—that life, the trivial details of which their Horace had touched so daintily, gilded with real gold words?

Regular, submissive, dutiful to play also, Aldy meantime enjoys his triumphs in the Green Court; loves best however to run a paper-chase afar over the marshes, till you come in sight, or within scent, of the sea, in the autumn twilight; and his dutifulness to games at least had its full reward. A wonderful hit of his at cricket was long remembered; right over the lime-trees on to the cathedral roof, was it? or over the roof, and onward into space, circling there independently, minutely, as *Sidus Cantiorum?* A comic poem on it in Latin, and a pretty one in English, were penned by James Stokes, still not so serious but that he forgets time altogether one day, in a manner the converse of exemplary in a prefect, whereupon Uthwart, his companion as usual, manages to take all the blame, and the due penalty next morning. Stokes accepted the sacrifice the more readily, believing—he too—that Aldy was "incapable of pain." What surprised those who were in the secret was that, when it was over, he rose, and facing the headmaster—could it be insolence? or was it the sense of untruthfulness in his friendly action, or sense of the universal pecancy of all boys and men?—said submissively: "And now, sir, that I have taken my punishment, I hope you will forgive my fault."

Submissiveness!—It had the force of genius with Emerald Uthwart. In that very matter he had but yielded to a senior against his own inclination. What he felt in Horace was the sense, original, active, personal, of "things too high for *me!*", the sense, not really unpleasing to him, of an unattainable height here too, in this royal felicity of utterance, this literary art, the minute cares of which had been really designed for the minute carefulness of a disciple such as this—all attention. Well! the sense of authority, of a large intellectual authority over us, impressed anew day after day, of some impenetrable glory round "the masters of those who know," is, of course, one of the effects we look for from a classical education:—that, and a full estimate of the preponderating value of the manner of the doing of it in the thing done; which again, for ingenuous youth, is an encouragement of good manners on its part:—"I behave myself orderly." Just at those points, scholarship attains something of a religious colour. And in that place, religion, religious system, its claim to overpower one, presented itself in a way of which even the least serious by nature could not be unaware. Their great church, its customs and traditions, formed an element in that *espirt de corps* into which the boyish mind throws itself so readily. Afterwards, in very different scenes, the sentiment of that place would come back upon him, as if resentfully, by contrast with the conscious or unconscious profanities of others, crushed out about him straightway, by the shadow of awe, the minatory flash, felt around his unopened lips, in the glance, the changed manner. Not to be "occupied with great matters" recommends in heavenly places, as we know, the souls of some. Yet there were a few to whom it seemed unfortunate that religion whose flag Uthwart would have borne in hands so pure, touched him from first to last, and till his eyes were finally closed on this world, only, again, as a thing immeasurable, surely not meant for the like of him; its high claims, to which no one could be equal; its reproaches. He would scarcely have proposed to "enter into" such matters; was constitutionally shy of them. His submissiveness, you see, *was* a kind of genius; made

him therefore, of course, unlike those around him; was a secret; a thing, you might say, "which no one knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."

Thus repressible, self-restrained, always concurring with the influence, the claim upon him, the rebuke, of others, in the bustle of school life he did not count even with those who knew him best, with those who taught him, for the intellectual capacity he really had. In every generation of schoolboys there are a few who find out, almost for themselves, the beauty and power of good literature, even in the literature they must read perforce; and this, in turn, is but the handsel of a beauty and power still active in the actual world, should they have the good fortune, or rather, acquire the skill, to deal with it properly. It has something of the stir and unction—this intellectual awaking with a leap—of the coming of love. So it was with Uthwart about his seventeenth year. He felt it, felt the intellectual passion, like the pressure outward of wings within him—ἡ πτεροῦ δύναμις, says Plato, in the *Phædrus*; but again, as some do with everyday love, withheld, restrained himself; the status of a freeman in the world of intellect can hardly be for him. The sense of intellectual ambition, ambitious thoughts such as sweeten the toil of some of those about him, coming to him once in a way, he is frankly recommended to put them aside, and acquiesces; puts them from him once for all, as he could do with besetting thoughts and feelings, his preferences, (as he had put aside soft thoughts of home as a disobedience to rule) and with a countenance more good-humoured than ever, an absolute placidity. It is fit he should be treated sparingly in this matter of intellectual enjoyment. He is made to understand that there is at least a score of others as good scholars as he. He will have of course all the pains, but must not expect the prizes, of his work; of his loyal, incessant, cheerful industry.

But only see him as he goes. It is as if he left music, delightfully throbbing music, or flowers, behind him, as he passes, careless of them, unconsciously, through the world, the school, the precincts, the old city. Strangers' eyes, resting on him by chance, are deterred for a while, even among the rich sights of the venerable place, as he walks out and in, in his prim gown and purple-

tasselled cap; goes in, with the stream of sunlight, through the black shadows of the mouldering Gothic gateway, like youth's very self, eternal, immemorial, eternally renewed, about those immemorially ancient stones. "Young Apollo!" people say—people who have pigeon-holes for their impressions, watching the slim, trim figure with the exercise books. His very dress seems touched with Hellenic fitness to the healthy youthful form. "Golden-haired, scholar Apollo!" they repeat, foolishly, ignorantly. He was better; was more like a real portrait of a real young Greek, like *Tryphon, Son of Eutychos*, for instance, (as friends remembered him with regret, as you may see him still on his tombstone in the British Museum) alive among the paler physical and intellectual lights of modern England, under the old monastic stonework of the Middle Age. That theatrical old Greek god never took the expressiveness, the lines of delicate meaning, such as were come into the face of the English lad, the physiognomy of his race; ennobled now, as if by the writing, the signature, there, of a grave intelligence, by grave information and a subdued will, though without a touch of melancholy in this "best of playfellows." A musical composer's notes, we know, are not themselves till the fit executant comes, who can put all they may be into them. The somewhat unmeaningly handsome facial type of the Uthwarts, moulded to a mere animal or physical perfection through wholesome centuries, is breathed on now, informed, by the touches, traces, complex influences from past and present a thousandfold, crossing each other in this late century, and yet at unity in the simple law of the system to which he is now subject. Coming thus upon an otherwise vigorous and healthy nature, an untainted physique, and limited by it, those combining mental influences leave the firm unconscious simplicity of the boyish nature still unperplexed. The sisters, their friends, when he comes rarely upon them in foreign places, are proud of the schoolboy's company—to walk at his side; the brothers, when he sees them for a day, more considerate than of old. Everywhere he leaves behind him an odd regret for his presence, as he in turn wonders sometimes at the deference paid to one so unimportant as himself by those he meets by accident perhaps; at the ease, for example, with which he attains to the social privileges denied to others.

They tell him, he knows it already, he would "do for the army." "Yes! that would suit you," people observe at once, when he tells them what "he is to be"—undoubtedly suit him, that dainty, military, very English kind of pride, in seeming precisely what one is, neither more nor less. And the first mention of Uthwart's purpose defines also the vague outlooks of James Stokes, who will be a soldier too. Uniforms, their scarlet and white and blue, spruce leather and steel, and gold lace, enlivening the old oak stalls at service time—uniforms and surplices were always close together here, where a military garrison had been established in the suburbs for centuries past, and there were always sons of its officers in the school. If you stole out of an evening, it was like a stage scene—nay! like the Middle Age, itself, with this multitude of soldiers mingling in the crowd which filled the unchanged, gabled streets. A military tradition had been continuous, from the days of crusading knights who lay humbly on their backs in the "Warriors' Chapel" to the time of the civil wars, when a certain heroic youth of eighteen was brought to rest there, onward to Dutch and American wars, and to Harry, and Geoffrey, and another James also, *in hac ecclesiâ pueri instituti*. It was not so long since one of them sat on those very benches in the sixth form; had come back and entered the school, in full uniform, to say goodbye! Then the "colours" of his regiment had been brought, to be deposited by Dean and Canons in the cathedral; and a few weeks later they had passed, scholars and the rest in long procession, to deposit Ensign ——himself there under his flag, or what remained of it, a sorry, tattered fringe, along the staff he had borne out of the battle at the cost of his life, as a little tablet explained. There were others in similar terms. Alas! for that extraordinary, peculiarly-named, Destiny, or Doom, appointed to walk side by side with one or another, aware from the first, but never warning him, till the random or well-considered shot comes.

Meantime however, the University, with work in preparation thereto, fills up the thoughts, the hours, of these would-be soldiers, of James Stokes, and therefore of Emerald Uthwart, through the long summer-time, till the Green Court is fragrant with lime-blossom, and speech-day comes, on which, after their flower-service and sermon from an old comrade, Emerald surprises masters and companions by the fine quality of a recitation; still more when "Scholar Stokes" and he are found bracketed together as "Victors" of the school, who will proceed together to Oxford. His speech in the Chapter-house was from that place in Homer, where the soul of the lad Elpenor, killed by accident, entreats Ulysses for due burial rites. "Fix my oar over my grave," he says, "the oar I rowed with when I lived, when I went with my companions." And in effect what surprised, charmed the hearers was the scruple with which those naturally graceful lips dealt with every word, every syllable, put upon them. He seemed to be thinking only of his author, except for just so much of self-consciousness as was involved in the fact that he seemed also to be speaking a little against his will; like a monk, it might be said, who sings in choir with a really fine voice, but at the bidding of his superior, and counting the notes all the while till his task be done, because his whole nature revolts from so much as the bare opportunity for personal display. It was his duty to speak on the occasion. They had always been great in speech-making, in theatricals, from before the days when the Puritans destroyed the Dean's "Great Hall" because "the King's Scholars had profaned it by acting plays there"; and that peculiar note or accent, as being conspicuously free from the egotism which vulgarises most of us, seemed to befit the person of Emerald, impressing weary listeners pleasantly as a novelty in that kind. Singular!—The words, because seemingly forced from him, had been worth hearing. The cheers, the "Kentish Fire," of their companions might have broken down the crumbling black arches of the old cloister, or roused the dead under foot, as the "Victors" came out of the Chapter-house side by side; side by side also out of that delightful period of their life at school, to proceed in due course to the University.

They left it precipitately, after brief residence there, taking advantage of a sudden outbreak of war to join the army at once, regretted—James Stokes for his high academic promise, Uthwart for a quality, or group of qualities, not strictly to be defined. He seemed, in short, to harmonise by their combination in himself all the various qualities proper to a large and varied community of youths of nineteen or twenty, to which, when actually present there, he was felt from hour to hour to be indispensable. In fact

school habits and standards had survived in a world not so different from that of school for those who are faithful to its type. When he looked back upon it a little later, college seemed to him, seemed indeed at the time, had he ventured to admit it, a strange prolongation of boyhood, in its provisional character, the narrow limitation of its duties and responsibility, the very divisions of one's day, the routine of play and work, its formal, perhaps pedantic rules. The veritable plunge from youth into manhood came when one passed finally through those old Gothic gates, from a somewhat dreamy or problematic preparation for it, into the world of peremptory facts. A college, like a school, is not made for one; and as Uthwart sat there, still but a scholar, still reading with care the books prescribed for him by others—Greek and Latin books—the contrast between his own position and that of the majority of his coevals already at the business of life impressed itself sometimes with an odd sense of unreality in the place around him. Yet the schoolboy's sensitive awe for the great things of the intellectual world had but matured itself, and was at its height here amid this larger competition, which left him more than ever to find in doing his best submissively the sole reward of so doing. He needs now in fact less repression than encouragement not to be a "passman," as he may if he likes, acquiescing in a lowly measure of culture which certainly will not manufacture Miltons, nor turn serge into silk, broom-blossom into verbenas, but only, perhaps not so faultily, leave Emerald Uthwart and the like of him essentially what they are. "He holds his book in a peculiar way," notes in manuscript one of his tutors; "holds on to it with both hands; clings as if from below, just as his tough little mind clings to the sense of the Greek words he can English so closely, precisely." Again, as at school, he had put his neck under the yoke; though he has now also much reading quite at his own choice; by preference, when he can come by such, about the place where he finds himself, about the earlier youthful occupants, if it might be, of his own quaint rooms on the second floor just below the roof; of what he can see from his windows in the old black front eastwards, with its inestimable *patina* of ancient smoke and weather and natural decay (when you look close the very stone is a composite of minute dead bodies) relieving heads like his so

effectively on summer mornings. On summer nights the scent of the hay, the wild-flowers, comes across the narrow fringe of town to right and left; seems to come from beyond the Oxford meadows, with sensitive, half-repellent thoughts from the gardens at home. He looks down upon the green square with the slim, quaint, black, young figures that cross it on the way to chapel on yellow Sunday mornings, or upwards to the dome, the spire; can watch them closely in freakish moonlight, or flickering softly by an occasional bonfire in the quadrangle behind him. Yet how hard, how forbidding sometimes, under a late stormy sky, the scheme of black, white, and grey, to which the group of ancient buildings could attune itself. And what he reads most readily is of the military life that intruded itself so oddly, during the Civil War, into these half-monastic places, till the timid old academic world scarcely knew itself. He treasures then every incident which connects a soldier's coat with any still recognisable object, wall, or tree, or garden-walk; that walk, for instance, under Merton garden where young Colonel Windebank was shot for a traitor. His body lies in Saint Mary Magdalen's courtyard. Unassociated to such incident, the mere beauties of the place counted at the moment for less than in retrospect. It was almost retrospect even now, with an anticipation of regret, in rare moments of solitude perhaps, when the oars splashed far up the narrow streamlets through the fields on May evenings among the fritillaries—does the reader know them? that strange remnant just here of a richer extinct flora—dry flowers, though with a drop of dubious honey in each. Snakes' heads, the rude call them, for their shape, scale-marked too, and in colour like rusted blood, as if they grew from some forgotten battle-field, the bodies, the rotten armour—yet delicate, beautiful, waving proudly. In truth the memory of Oxford made almost everything he saw after it seem vulgar. But he feels also nevertheless, characteristically, that such local pride (*fastus* he terms it) is proper only for those whose occupations are wholly congruous with it; for the gifted, the freemen who can enter into the genius, who possess the liberty, of the place; that it has a reproach in it for the outsider, which comes home to him.

Here again then as he passes through the world, so delightfully to others, they tell him, as if weighing him, his very self, against

his merely scholastic capacity and effects, that he would "do for the army"; which he is now wholly glad to hear, for from first to last, through all his successes there, the army had still been scholar Stokes' choice, and he had no difficulty, as the reader sees, in keeping Uthwart also faithful to first intentions. Their names were already entered for commissions; but the war breaking out afresh, information reaches them suddenly one morning that they may join their regiment forthwith. Bidding good-bye therefore, gladly, hastily, they set out with as little delay as possible for Flanders; and passing the old school by their nearest road thither, stay for an hour, find an excuse for coming into the hall in uniform, with which it must be confessed they seem thoroughly satisfied—Uthwart quite perversely at ease in the stiff make of his scarlet jacket with black facings—and so pass onward on their way to Dover, Dunkirk, they scarcely know whither finally, among the featureless villages, the long monotonous lines of the windmills, the poplars, blurred with cold fogs, but marking the roads through the snow which covers the endless plain, till they come in sight at last of the army in motion, like machines moving—how little it looked on that endless plain!—pass on their rapid way to fame, to unpurchased promotion, as a matter of course to responsibility also, till, their fortune turning upon them, they miscarry in the latter fatally. They joined in fact a distinguished regiment in a gallant army, immediately after a victory in those Flemish regions; shared its encouragement as fully as if they had had a share in its perils; the high character of the young officers consolidating itself easily, pleasantly for them, till the hour of an act of thoughtless bravery, almost the sole irregular or undisciplined act of Uthwart's life, he still following his senior—criminal however to the military conscience, under the actual circumstances, and in an enemy's country. The faulty thing was done, certainly, with a scrupulous, a characteristic completeness on their part; and with their prize actually in hand, an old weather-beaten flag such as hung in the cathedral aisle at school, they bethought them for the first time of its price, with misgivings now in rapid growth, as they return to their posts as nearly as may be, for the division has been ordered forward in their brief absence, to find themselves under arrest, with that

damning proof of heroism, of guilt, in their possession, relinquished however along with the swords they will never handle again—toys, idolised toys of our later youth, we weep at the thought of them as never to be handled again!—as they enter the prison to await summary trial next day on the charge of wantonly deserting their posts while in position of high trust in time of war.

The full details of what had happened could have been told only by one or other of themselves; by Uthwart best, in the somewhat matter-of-fact and prosaic journal he had managed to keep from the first, noting there the incidents of each successive day, as if in anticipation of its possible service by way of *pièce justificative*, should such become necessary, attesting hour by hour their single-hearted devotion to soldierly duty. Had a draughtsman equally truthful or equally "realistic," as we say, accompanied them and made a like use of his pencil, he might have been mistaken at home for an artist aiming at "effect," by skilful "arrangements" to tickle people's interest in the spectacle of war—the sudden ruin of a village street, the heap of bleeding horses in the half-ploughed field, the gaping bridges, hand or face of the dead peeping from a hastily made grave at the roadside, smoke-stained rents in cottage-walls, ignoble ruin everywhere—ignoble but for its frank expression.

But you find in Uthwart's journal, side by side with those ugly patches, very precise and unadorned records of their common gallantry, the more effective indeed for their simplicity; and not of gallantry only, but of the long-sustained patience also, the essential monotony of military life, even on a campaign. Peril, good-luck, promotion, the grotesque hardships which leave them smart as ever, (as if, so others observe, dust and mire wouldn't hold on them, so "spick and span" they were, more especially on days of any exceptional risk or effort) the great confidence reposed in them at last; all is noted, till, with a little quiet pride, he records a gun-shot wound which keeps him a month alone in hospital wearily; and at last, its hasty but seemingly complete healing.

Following, leading, resting, sometimes perforce, amid gun-shots, putrefying wounds, green corpses, they never lacked good spirits, any more than the birds warbling perennially afresh, as they will, over such gangrened places, or the grass which so soon

covers them. And at length fortune, their misfortune, perversely determined that heroism should take the form of patience under the walls of an unimportant frontier town, with old Vauban fortifications seemingly made only for appearance' sake, like the work in the trenches—gardener's work! round about the walls they are called upon to superintend day after day. It was like a calm at sea, delaying one's passage, one's purpose in being on board at all, a dead calm, yet with an awful feeling of tension, intolerable at last for those who were still all athirst for action. How dumb and stupid the place seemed, in its useless defiance of conquerors, anxious, for reasons not indeed apparent, but which they were undoubtedly within their rights in holding to, not to blow it at once into the air—the steeple, the perky weathercock—to James Stokes in particular, always eloquent in action, longing for heroic effort, and ready to pay its price, maddened now by the palpable imposture in front of him morning after morning, as he demonstrates conclusively to Uthwart, seduced at last from the clearer sense of duty and discipline, not by the demonstrated ease, but rather by the apparent difficulty of what Stokes proposes to do. They might have been deterred by recent example. Colonel ——, who, as every one knew, had actually gained a victory by disobeying orders, had not been suffered to remain in the army of which he was an ornament. It was easy in fact for both, though it seemed the heroic thing, to dash through the calm with delightful sense of active powers renewed; to pass into the beleaguered town with a handful of men, and no loss, after a manner the feasibility of which Stokes had explained acutely but in vain at headquarters. He proved it to Uthwart at all events, and a few others. Delightful heroism! delightful self-indulgence! It was delayed for a moment by orders to move forward at last, with hopes checked almost immediately after by a countermand, bringing them right round their stupid dumb enemy to the same wearisome position once again, to the trenches and the rest, but with their thirst for action only stimulated the more. How great the disappointment! encouraging a certain laxity of discipline that had prevailed about them of late. They take advantage however of a vague phrase in their instructions; determine in haste to proceed on their plan as carefully, as sparingly of the lives of others as may be; detach a small company, hazarding thereby an algebraically certain scheme at headquarters of victory or secure retreat, which embraced the entire country in its calculations; detach themselves; finally pass into the place, and out again with their prize, themselves secure. Themselves only could have told the details—the intensely pleasant, the glorious sense of movement renewed once more; of defiance, just for once, of a seemingly stupid control; their dismay at finding their company led forward by others, their own posts deserted, their handful of men—nowhere!

In an ordinary trial at law, the motives, every detail of so irregular an act might have been weighed, changing the colour of it. Their general character would have told in their favour, but actually told against them now; they had but won an exceptional trust to betray it. Martial courts exist not for consideration, but for vivid exemplary effect and prompt punishment. "There is a kind of tribunal incidental to service in the field," writes another diarist, who may tell in his own words what remains to be told. "This court," he says, "may consist of three staff-officers only, but has the power of sentencing to death. On the —st two young officers of the —th regiment, in whom it appears unusual confidence had been placed, were brought before this court, on the charge of desertion and wantonly exposing their company to danger. They were found guilty, and the proper penalty death, to be inflicted next morning before the regiment marches. The delinquents were understood to have appealed to a general court-martial; desperately at last, to 'the judgment of their country'; but were held to have no *locus standi* whatever for an appeal under the actual circumstances. As a civilian I cannot but doubt the justice, whatever may be thought of the expediency, of such a summary process in regard to the capital penalty. The regiment to which the culprits belonged, with some others, was quartered for the night in the *faubourg* of Saint ——, recently under blockade by a portion of our forces. I was awoke at daybreak by the sound of marching. The morning was a particularly clear one, though, as the sun was not yet risen, it looked grey and sad along the empty street, up which a party of grey soldiers were passing with steady pace. I knew for what purpose.

"The whole of the force in garrison here had already marched to

the place of execution, the immense courtyard of a monastery, surrounded irregularly by ancient buildings like those of some cathedral precincts I have seen in England. Here the soldiers then formed three sides of a great square, a grave having been dug on the fourth side. Shortly afterwards the funeral procession came up. First the band of the —th, playing the Dead March; next the firing party, consisting of twelve non-commissioned officers; then the coffins, followed immediately by the unfortunate prisoners, accompanied by a chaplain. Slowly and sadly did the mournful procession approach, when it passed through three sides of the square, the troops having been previously faced inwards, and then halted opposite to the grave. The proceedings of the court-martial were then read; and the elder prisoner having been blindfolded was ordered to kneel down on his coffin, which had been placed close to the grave, the firing party taking up a position exactly opposite at a few yards' distance. The poor fellow's face was deadly pale, but he had marched his last march as steadily as ever I saw a man step, and bore himself throughout most bravely, though an oddly mixed expression passed over his countenance when he was directed to remove himself from the side of his companion, shaking his hand first. At this moment there was hardly a dry eye, and several young soldiers fainted, numberless as must be the scenes of horror whch even they have witnessed during these last months. At length the chaplain, who had remained praying with the prisoner, quietly withdrew, and at a given signal, but without word of command, the muskets were levelled, a volley was fired, and the body of the unfortunate man sprang up, falling again on his back. One shot had purposely been reserved; and as the presiding officer thought he was not quite dead a musket was placed close to his head and fired. All was now over; but the troops having been formed into columns were marched close by the body as it lay on the ground, after which it was placed in one of the coffins and buried.

"I had almost forgotten his companion, the younger and more fortunate prisoner, though I could scarcely tell, as I looked at him, whether his fate was really preferable in leaving his own rough coffin unoccupied behind him there. Lieutenant (I think Edward) Uthwart, as being the younger of the two offenders, 'by

the mercy of the court' had his sentence commuted to dismissal from the army with disgrace. A colour-sergeant then advanced with the former officer's sword, a remarkably fine one, which he thereupon snapped in sunder over the prisoner's head as he knelt. After this the prisoner's regimental coat was handed forward and put upon him, the epaulettes and buttons being then torn off and flung to a distance. This part of such sentences is almost invariably spared; but, I suppose through unavoidable haste, was on the present occasion somewhat rudely carried out. I shall never forget the expression of this man's countenance, though I have seen many sad things in the course of my profession. He had the sort of good looks which always rivet attention, and in most minds friendly interest; and now, amid all his pain and bewilderment, bore a look of humility and submission as he underwent those extraordinary details of his punishment, which touched me very oddly with a sort of desire (I cannot otherwise express it) to share his lot, to be actually in his place for a moment, Yet, alas!—no! say rather Thank Heaven! the nearest approach to that look I have seen has been on the face of those whom I have known from circumstances to be almost incapable at the time of any feeling whatever. I would have offered him pecuniary aid, supposing he needed it, but it was impossible. I went on with the regiment, leaving the poor wretch to shift for himself. Heaven knows how, the state of the country being what it is. He might join the enemy!"

What money Uthwart had about him had in fact passed that morning into the hands of his guards. To tell what followed would be to accompany him on a roundabout and really aimless journey, the details of which he could never afterwards recall. See him lingering for morsels of food at some shattered farmstead, or assisted by others almost as wretched as himself, sometimes without his asking. In his worn military dress he seems a part of the ruin under which he creeps for a night's rest as darkness comes on. He actually came round again to the scene of his disgrace, of the execution; looked in vain for the precise spot where he had knelt; then, almost envying him who lay there, for the unmarked grave; passed over it perhaps unrecognised for some change in that terrible place, or rather in himself; wept then as never before in his life; dragged himself on once more, till suddenly the whole coun-

try seems to move under the rumour, the very thunder, of "the crowning victory," as he is made to understand. Falling in with the tide of its heroes returning to English shores, his vagrant footsteps are at last directed homewards. He finds himself one afternoon at the gate, turning out of the quiet Sussex road, through the fields for whose safety he had fought with so much of undeniable gallantry and approval.

On that July afternoon the gardens, the woods, mounted in flawless sweetness all round him as he stood, to meet the circle of a flawless sky. Not a cloud; not a motion on the grass! At the first he had intended to return home no more; and it had been a proof of his great dejection that he sent at last, as best he could, for money. They knew his fate already by report, and were touched naturally when that had followed on the record of his honours. Had it been possible they would have set forth at any risk to meet, to seek him; were waiting now for the weary one to come to the gate, ready with their oil and wine, to speak metaphorically, and from this time forth underwent his charm to the utmost—the charm of an exquisite character, felt in some way to be inseparable from his person, his characteristic movements, touched also now with seemingly irreparable sorrow. For his part, drinking in here the last sweets of the sensible world, it was as if he, the lover of roses, had never before been aware of them at all. The original softness of his temperament, against which the sense of greater things thrust upon him had successfully reacted, asserted itself again now as he lay at ease, the ease well merited by his deeds, his sorrows. That he was going to die moved those about him to humour this mood, to soften all things to his touch; and looking back he might have pronouced those four last years of doom the happiest of his life. The memory of the grave into which he had gazed so steadily on the execution morning, into which, as he feels, one half of himself had then descended, does not lessen his shrinking from the fate before him, yet fortifies him to face it manfully, gives a sort of fraternal familiarity to death; in a few weeks' time this battle too is fought out; it is as if the thing were ended. The delightful summer heat, the freshness it enhances—he contrasts such things no longer with the sort of place to which he is hastening. The possible duration of life for him was indeed

uncertain, the future to some degree indefinite; but as regarded any fairly distant date, anything like a term of years, from the first there had been no doubt at all; he would be no longer here. Meantime it was like a delightful few days' additional holiday from school, with which perforce one must be content at last; or as though he had not been pardoned on that terrible morning, but only reprieved for two or three years. Yet how large a proportion they would have seemed in the whole sum of his years. He would have liked to lie finally in the garden among departed pets, dear dead dogs and horses; faintly proposes it one day; but after a while comprehends the churchyard, with its white spots in the distant flowery view, as filling harmoniously its own proper place there. The weary soul seemed to be settling deeper into the body and the earth it came of, into the condition of the flowers, the grass, proper creatures of the earth to which he is returning. The saintly vicar visits him considerately; is repelled with politeness; goes on his way pondering inwardly what kind of place there might be, in any possible scheme of another world, for so absolutely unspiritual a subject. In fact, as the breath of the infinite world came about him, he clung all the faster to the beloved finite things still in contact with him; he had successfully hidden from his eyes all beside.

His reprieve however lasted long enough, after all, for a certain change of opinion of immense weight to him—a revision or reversal of judgment. It came about in this way. When peace was arranged, with question of rewards, pensions, and the like, certain battle or incidents therein were fought over again, sometimes in the highest places of debate. On such an occasion a certain speaker cites the case of Lieutenant James Stokes and another, as being *"pessimi exempli"*: whereupon a second speaker gets up, prepared with full detail, insists, brings that incidental matter to the front for an hour, tells his unfortunate friend's story so effectively, pathetically, that, as happens with our countrymen, they repent. The matter gets into the newspapers, and, coming thus into sympathetic public view, something like glory wins from Emerald Uthwart his last touch of animation. Just not too late he received the offer of a commission; kept the letter there open within sight. Aldy, who "never shed tears and was incapable of

pain," in his great physical weakness, wept—shall we say for the second time in his life? A less excitement would have been more favourable to any chance there might be of the patient's surviving. In fact the old gun-shot wound, wrongly thought to be cured, which had caused the one illness of his life, is now drawing out what remains of it, as he feels with a kind of odd satisfaction and pride—his old glorious wound! And then, as of old, an absolute submissiveness comes over him, as he gazes round at the place, the relics of his uniform, the letter lying there. It was as if there was nothing more that could be said. Accounts thus settled, he stretched himself in the bed he had occupied as a boy, more completely at his ease than since the day when he had left home for the first time. Respited from death once, he was twice believed to be dead before the date actually registered on his tomb. "What will it matter a hundred years hence?" they used to ask by way of simple comfort in boyish troubles at school, overwhelming at the moment. Was that in truth part of a certain revelation of the inmost truth of things to "babes," such as we have heard of? What did it matter—the gifts, the good-fortune, its terrible withdrawal, the long agony ? Emerald Uthwart would have been all but a centenarian to-day.

Postscript, from the Diary of a Surgeon, August —th, 18—.

I was summoned by letter into the country to perform an operation on the dead body of a young man, formerly an officer in the army. The cause of death is held to have been some kind of distress of mind, concurrent with the effects of an old gun-shot wound, the ball still remaining somewhere in the body. My instructions were to remove this, at the express desire, as I understood, of the deceased, rather than to ascertain the precise cause of death. This however became apparent in the course of my search for the ball, which had enveloped itself in the muscular substance in the region of the heart, and was removed with difficulty. I have known cases of this kind, where anxiety has caused incurable cardiac derangement (the deceased seems to have been actually sentenced to death for some military offence when on service in

Flanders), and such mental strain would of course have been aggravated by the presence of a foreign object in that place. On arriving at my destination, a small village in a remote part of Sussex, I proceeded through the little orderly churchyard, where however the monthly roses were blooming all their own way among the formal white marble monuments of the wealthier people of the neighbourhood. At one of these the masons were at work, picking and chipping in the otherwise absolute stillness of the summer afternoon. They were in fact opening the family burial-place of the people who summoned me hither; and the workmen pointed out their abode, conspicuous on the slope beyond, towards which I bent my steps accordingly. I was conducted to a large upper room or attic, set freely open to sun and air, and found the body lying in a coffin, almost hidden under very rich-scented cut flowers, after a manner I have never seen in this country, except in the case of one or two Catholics laid out for burial. The mother of the deceased was present, and actually assisted my operations, amid such tokens of distress, though perfectly self-controlled, as I fervently hope I may never witness again. Deceased was in his twenty-seventh year, but looked many years younger; had indeed scarcely yet reached the full condition of manhood. The extreme purity of the outlines, both of the face and limbs, was such as is usually found only in quite early youth; the brow especially, under an abundance of fair hair, finely formed, not high, but arched and full, as is said to be the way with those who have the imaginative temper in excess. Sad to think that had he lived reason must have deserted that so worthy abode of it! I was struck by the great beauty of the organic developments, in the strictly anatomic sense; those of the throat and diaphragm in particular might have been modelled for a teacher of normal physiology, or a professor of design. The flesh was still almost as firm as that of a living person; as happens when, as in this case, death comes to all intents and purposes as gradually as in old age. This expression of health and life, under my seemingly merciless doings, together with the mother's distress, touched me to a degree very unusual, I conceive, in persons of my years and profession. Though I believed myself to be acting by his express wish, I felt like a criminal. The ball, a small one, much corroded

with blood, was at length removed; and I was then directed to wrap it in a partly-printed letter, or other document, and place it in the breast-pocket of a faded and much-worn scarlet soldier's coat, put over the shirt which enveloped the body. The flowers were then hastily replaced, the hands and the peak of the handsome nose remaining visible among them; the wind ruffled the fair hair a little; the lips were still red. I shall not forget it. The lid was then placed on the coffin and screwed down in my presence. There was no plate or other inscription upon it.

[1892]