

**DUST AND  
ASHES (CHIEFLY)**

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Dust and ashes (chiefly) by A. C. Stewart

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**A. C. STEWART**

**DUST AND  
ASHES (CHIEFLY)**



DUST AND ASHES  
(Chiefly)



The culmination of his heart's contrition,  
A little lonely grave.

See page 2

# Dust and Ashes

(Chiefly)

By  
A. C. Stewart



Published by the Author

*"Sumptu et meo periculo"*

1910

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## PREFATORY NOTE

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**A** PREFACE is usually either a palliation or an explanation—an attempt to excuse errors either generic or voluntary, or an elucidation of the aims and theories imperfectly propounded in the text—procedures very wearisome to the reader and useless in the end. The author then, in this note, does not try, much less expect, to disarm the critic, conciliate the reader, or calm the ebullitions of the philosophic soul, weary of the crudities, obscurities, and villainous diction of twentieth century rhyme, being thoroughly assured from of old, that whether as a conspirator or a poet, death is the verdict. If guiltless of treason then “kill him for his bad verses”—a process doubtless soothing to the slayers, but seriously objected to by the rhymer, who, however lacking in spirituality, must have at least sufficient substance to feel the pangs of dissolution. For the guidance of those who would slay the soul, the author intimates that he has long been familiar with many forms of mental terrors. *Politicians* without honor, *Physicians* without skill, *Lawyers* without sense, and men and women, too, without virtue. To the killers of the body he may say modestly, that he has faced death often and again by explosion, wreck, and flood, so they may take it for granted that, like Banquo's ghost, he “will not down.”

But leaving the cynicism of arid years aside, I seize this opportunity, in good honest prose, to give my heart-

## PREFACE

felt thanks to the friendly critics of earlier days who predicted for me that which (I hope) they may now see (partially at least) fulfilled.

If I have not followed always the paths they pointed for me, it is my regret more than theirs. If subjects commonly tabooed have occasionally employed an errant pen, I hope that they will find in the last analysis that the poet has nowhere stooped to defend a vice either in nature or art. To my many other (not critical) friends (the solid and incorruptible), who have stood like adamant, unchanging in the seething welter of a commercial age, I in this volume (which is published principally for them) subscribe my deep and enduring love.

To them in many a sombre hour I have turned for hope and assistance, and have never yet found them wanting in the love and virtue which

“Make men and nations great.”

In their sound morality the man has ever found sympathy and the poet hope. To you, then, may this volume be a memento of my fealty, admiration and devotion; then, whether it be “immortal for a few years,” or the “merest moth that flutters,” it will at least have served the end that is the most to be desired by human sanity.

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