

The House of Melancholia.

BY ALFRED ERWIN.

. . . . A brave man faces the foe,
Alone and sees Death grin in his teeth,
But, shutting his lips, fights on to the end
Without speech, without hope.

Songs from Vagabondia.

I.

"Howard, Howard!"

The thin strident voice penetrated through the mazes of slumber, calling him back to the consciousness of his care weighted life. He awoke with a start.

"Howard! Howard!"

The voice, fraught with fear, sent a thrill of answering alarm through him.

"Yes, mother?" he replied; sitting up in bed and gazing into the night-gloom with bewildered eyes.

"Dress, and come down at once, I want you."

He arose and lighted a lamp. The tiny upspring-flame showed a room, small, and carpetless, but lined about with books; its sole other furniture being the low bed, a table, and one chair. A picture or two, also, hung upon the white-washed wall.

He hastily drew on his clothes, wondering with vague anxiety what cause his mother had to cail him from sleep so late as this—for a glance at his watch told him that it was long past midnight—and in this household living by the tenets of a strict rule-bound sect eleven o'clock, even, at night should be an hour given to sleep. Completing his hasty toilet he turned down the wick of the lamp, and left the room. As