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MY HOME BESIDE THE SEA.

BY S. C. WENTWORTH.

TELL me no more of prairies green,
With starry blossoms bright,
Of landscapes, shadowless, serene
In Luna's silvery light;
Of forest isles, of storied mound,
Whate'er their beauties be;
Give me the rough old stamping ground
At home beside the sea.

Tell me no more of melting skies,
Of breezes soft and low,
Of Summer clad in gorgeous dyes,
Unchilled of Winter's snow.
For southern shores the northern bird
May take his wings and flee—
I'll make my nest far northerward,
At home beside the sea.

The Southron from his sunny land
May kindly welcome send,
And friends I love a beck'ning hand
O'er western waves extend.
Their prairie homes may open wide
With joyful shouts for me,
While two fond hearts my thoughts divide
At home beside the sea.

Sweet home, where silvery heads repose
In Life's Autumnal frost,
Though rude winds blow, and driving snows
Beat down by tempests tost—
Fond hearts no more my absence shide,
Keep kindly cheer for me,
I'm coming with the Autumn tide,
Old home beside the sea.

DREAM-HAUNTED.

I HAD taken a lease of Gledhills of my friend Mr. Lomond. The latter, before he would consider the business settled, insisted upon my sleeping one night at Gledhills. "Dobson and his wife, who have charge of the house, will find you a tolerable dinner, and make you up a comfortable bed. I will walk over in the morning at ten and see you; and then, if you are still in the same mind that you are in now, I will have the agreement drawn up at once, and you can enter upon your occupancy the following day."

The Autumn day was drawing to a close when I found myself walking up the avenue toward the old mansion at Gledhills. An old man answered my summons at the door. He bowed respectfully at sight of me, and informed me that Mr. Lomond had sent word that I was about to dine and sleep at Gledhills, and that everything was prepared for my reception. As I crossed the threshold the great door closed behind me with a dull, heavy crash, that vibrated through every corner of the house, and awoke a foreboding echo in my heart. Preceded by my ancient guide, whom age and rheumatism had bent almost double, I crossed the desolate-looking entrance-hall, passed up the grand staircase, and so through a pair of folding-doors into the drawing-room, beyond which was a suit of smaller rooms, of which two had now been set apart for my service. How chill and cheerless everything looked in the cold light of the dying day! Now that the glamour of sunshine rested no longer on the place, my fancy refused to invest any of those bare, desolate rooms with the pleasant attributes of home; and already, in my secret mind, I half repented my facile eagerness in being so willing to accept, without further experience, this worm-eaten old mansion, tenanted, doubtless, by the ghosts of a hundred dead-and-gone folks, as a shelter for my household gods, a home for all that I held dear on earth.

The two rooms set aside for me I found to be comfortably furnished, in a neat but inexpensive style; but when I understood from the old man that ever since the death of the last tenant, three years before, they had been furnished and set aside, ready for the reception of any chance visitors, like myself, who, either by their own wish or that of Mr. Lomond, might decide to pass a night at Gledhills, and three or four would-be occupants before me had so slept there a night each, and had gone on their several ways next morning, never to be seen under that roof again, I began to think that there might perhaps be something more in Mr. Lomond's stipulation than was visible on the surface.

Having dined, and done ample justice to Mr. Lomond's claret, and being possessed in some measure by the demon of unrest, I took my cigar and strolled along the corridor, and so came presently into the great empty drawing-room, in which the moonbeams were now playing a ghostly game of hide-and-seek. It was uncarpeted and destitute of furniture, and its oaken floor creaked and groaned beneath my tread, as though it were burdened with some dreadful secret which it would fain reveal, but could not. Outside each of the three long, narrow windows with which the room was lighted was a small balcony, below which stretched a velvety expanse of lawn, set here and there with a gay basket of flowers, the whole being shut in by a clump of sombre firs. I have said that the room was destitute of furniture, but I found after a time that it still contained one relic of its more prosperous days, in the shape of a family portrait, which still hung over the mantle piece as it had hung for half a century or more. When I became aware of this fact I fetched one of the candles out my sitting-room, in order that I might examine the picture more closely. It was a full-length portrait of a man in the military costume that was in vogue toward the end of last century. The face was very handsome, with a proud, resolute beauty of its own, that would have been very attractive but for a vague, repellent something—a hint of something tiger-like and cruel lurking under the surface of that artificial smile, which the artist had caught with rare fidelity, and had fixed on the canvas forever. It must have been something in the better traits of the countenance that taught me to see a likeness to Mr. Lomond; and I could only conclude that the portrait before me was that of some notable ancestor of the present master of Gledhills.

The fatigues of the day and the solitude to which I was condemned drove me to bed at an early hour; but there was something about the novelty of my position that precluded sleep for a long time after I had put out my light, and I remember hearing some clock strike twelve while I was still desperately wide awake; but that is the last thing I do remember, and I suppose that I must have slid off to sleep a few minutes later, while still in the act of asseverating to myself that to sleep there was for me an impossibility. Whether I had slept for hours or for minutes only, when I woke up in the weird land of dreams, is a point on which I can offer no opinion. I awoke to that consciousness which is possessed by dreamers, and which, in many cases, is quite as vivid as the consciousness of real life; but throughout the strange, wild drama that followed I was without any individuality of my own; I had all the consciousness of a spectator without the responsibility of one. I was nothing; I had no existence in my dream; I was merely the witness of certain imaginary occurrences, which took place without any reference to me, and which I was powerless to prevent or influence in the slightest degree.

Before me was the drawing-room at Gledhills—I recognized it at once by the portrait of the soldier over the fireplace. The walls, painted of a delicate sea-green, were hung with numerous pictures and engravings in rich frames. A thick Aubusson carpet covered the floor, and in the huge fireplace a wood fire, that had nearly burned itself down to ashes, was slowly expiring. The furniture was chintz-covered, and curtains of chintz draped the three high narrow windows. Standing in one corner, between the quaintly-carved legs of a mahogany chiffonier, was a tall Mandarin jar, with an open-work lid, from which was exhaled a faint indescribable perfume, as of the bruised sweetness of a hundred flowers; in the opposite corner stood a harp; books richly bound were scattered about the room, which was lighted by a number of wax-candles fixed in lustres over the mantlepiece.

Seated at a little fancy table was a girl, eighteen or twenty years old, making-believe to be busy with her embroidery, but with a mind evidently preoccupied by some more important subject. She had on a short-waisted white dress, after the fashion of those days, from which her long narrow skirts fell away in sedate folds, utterly guiltless of all modern modes of extension of circumference. Her face was beautiful, and she had the air of a person quite conscious of that fact; but underlying this charm of regular features there was something resolute and proud, that carried the mind back, as by an instinct, to the portrait over the fireplace. She had loosened the thick masses of her chestnut hair, and they now fell low down over her shoulders, confined only by a narrow band of blue velvet. Round her neck was a thin chain of gold, from which hung a locket, which she drew every now and then from the bosom of her dress, and pressed with feverish eagerness to her lips. The same impatience was visible in the way in which she would put a few quick stitches into her embroidery, and then pause, with the needle in her fingers, to listen intently, and so lapse into a dreamy, absent mood, out of which she would wake up in a minute or two with a start, and begin to ply her needle again as restlessly as before.

That something for which she was so impatiently waiting came at last—a low, clear, peculiar whistle, heard by me so distinctly through the midst of my dream, and remembered so well when I awoke, that I could afterward reproduce it exactly. The young lady started to her feet the moment the signal fell on her ear. Her eyes flashed with a newer radiance; her soft lips pouted into a smile; while from her bosom upward a lovely flush spread swiftly, as though Eros had touched her that instant with his torch, and already the celestial flame were coursing through her veins. A brief minute she stood thus, like a lovely statue of Expectancy; then she hurried to one of the windows, and drawing aside the long chintz curtain, she placed a lighted candle close to the window as an answering signal. Then, having withdrawn the candle and replaced the curtain, so that the window from the outside would seem quite dark again, she left the room, to return presently with a ladder of thin rope, to which were affixed two hooks of steel. Her next proceeding was to lock the three doors which opened into the drawing-room, and having thus secured herself from intrusion, she passed out of sight behind one of the curtains; and then I heard the faint sound of a window being cautiously lifted, and I knew as well as though the whole scene was visible to me that she was fixing the rope-ladder to the balcony by means of its hooks, and that presently her lover would be with her.

And so it fell out. A little while, and the curtain was lifted; the lady came back into the room; and following close upon her steps came a tall stranger, dark and handsome, like a true hero of romance.

"My darling Lenore!"

"My dearest Varrel!"

He took her in his arms, and stooped, and kissed her lovingly; and then he drew her to the light, and gazed down into her eyes, in which nothing but love for him was then visible, and then he stooped again and kissed her not less tenderly than before. His roquelaure and hat had fallen to the ground, and he now stood revealed a man of fashion of the period. As before stated, he was eminently good looking, with languishing black eyes, and a pensive smile such as one usually endows Romeo with in imagination. He wore his hair without parting of any kind, in a profusion of short, black, glossy curls, in which there was no trace of the elaboration of art, and he was clean-shaven, except for a short whisker that terminated half-way down his cheek. He wore a blue coat with gilt buttons, swallow-tailed, short in the waist, and high-collared. His waistcoat was bright yellow as to color, crossed with a small black stripe; a huge seal depended from the fob of his black small clothes; and the Hessian boots in which his lower extremities were encased were polished to a marvellous degree of brilliancy. His cravat, white and unstarched, and tied with a large bow, was made of fine, soft muslin; and the frilled bosom of his shirt had been carefully crimped by conscientious feminine fingers. In this frill he wore a small cluster of brilliants; while a large signet-ring, a genuine antique, decorated the first finger of his right hand.

Such was the appearance of Sir Derwent Varrel; and absurd as a costume like his would now seem on the classic flags of Bond Street or St. James's, it yet became the baronet admirably, while he in return lent it a grace and distinction which made it seem the only attire proper for a gentleman.

"Why did you not come last night?" said Lenore. "Hour after hour I waited for you in vain."

"'Twas not my fault, dearest, that I did not; of that rest well assured," answered Varrel. "Business that brooked not delay kept me from your side. I was hugely chagrined."

"That weary, weary business!" sighed Lenore. "'Tis ever men's excuse. But now that you are here, I will not be melancholy. "Ah, that I could be forever by your side!"

She nestled her head shyly on his bosom. He stroked her chestnut hair softly with his white hand, and looked down on her with a crafty and sinister smile—such a smile as might light up the face of a fowler when he sees the fluttering innocent which he has been doing his best to entice begin to turn longingly toward the snare.

"Little simpleton!" he replied, pulling her ear. "You speak as if what you long for were impossible of attainment; whereas one word from you would make it a blissful certainty, and render two loving hearts happy forever."

"I cannot, Varrel—I cannot say that word. Ah, why does my father dislike you so much?"

"My faith! how should I know? But dislike is not the word, little one. You should ask, why does he hate me so intensely? There are those who gladly calumniate me, and for such he has ever a ready ear; for I am unfortunate enough to have many enemies, and doubtless twice as many faults."

"No, no, I will not hear such language," exclaimed Lenore. "In time my father will relent, and then—"

"Never, girl!" said Varrel fiercely. "Colonel Lomond is not made of melting stuff. His hatred of me he will carry with him to the grave. Never look for change in him. Sweet one," he added, changing his tone in a moment to one low-breathing, imploring tenderness—"sweet one, as I have told thee before, both thy fate and mine are dependent on a single word from those rosy lips. Be mine, in spite of every one! I am rich, and can supply thy every want. We will go abroad; and in some lovely Italian valley, or fair isle of the eastern seas, we will forget our by-gone troubles, and watch the happy days glide softly past, while rounding our lives to that perfect love which alone can bring back Eden to this weary earth. Oh, Lenore, dearest and best-loved, flee with me at once and forever!"

She was standing by the little table, smiling, trembling, and yet with tears half starting from her lids, while he, kneeling on one knee, was covering her hand with passionate kisses.

"Oh, Varrel, you try me almost beyond my strength!" she murmured. "But I can not, I you darenot do as wish. You know not my father as well as I do. He would seek me out and kill me—and you too, and you too, Derwent! wherever we might be. His vengeance would be terrible and pitiless."

"Timid little puss!" he said, half scornfully, as he rose and encircled her waist with his arm. "Am I not competent to protect thee against the world? Fear nothing. For this house of bondage; for this stagnation of heart and soul, I will give thee life and light and love. Thou shalt exchange this—"

"Hush!" exclaimed Lenore, suddenly, with a smothered shriek. "I hear my father's footfall on the stairs. To the window, Varrel, or you are lost!"

One hasty kiss, and then Varrel dashed aside the chintz curtain, and sprang to the window, only to fall back next moment into the room like a man stricken in the dark. "A thousand devils! I have been betrayed!" he exclaimed. "The rope-ladder is gone, and I see the figures of men moving about the lawn. Lenore, you must hide me!"

"Too late—too late!" she sobbed.

They both stood for a moment as though changed to stone, while the footsteps came with a heavy tramp along the echoing corridor, and halted outside the door. The eyes of Lenore and Varrel turned instinctively to the door-handle, and they saw it move as it was tried from the other side, but the door was still locked.

"Open, Lenore—it is I!" said a stern voice from without; and the summons was emphasized by a heavy blow on the pannel of the door.

"Oh, Varrel, I dare not disobey!" said Lenore, in an agonized whisper. "Hide yourself behind the curtains; perhaps he may not know of your presence here; and when he shall have gone to his own room we must plan your escape. Hush! not a word. Hide! hide!

"Why this foolery of locked doors?" said he who now came in. "Am I to be barred out of my own rooms by a child like you?"

"The night was so dark, and—and I felt so lonely, and—and—"

"And—and you did not expect your father back so soon?" he said, mimicking her tone with a sneer. "Is it not so, you white-faced jade?"

"Indeed, papa, I—" pleaded the trembling Lenore.

"Don't prevaricate, girl!" he said, with a savage stamp of the foot. "Come, now, you will tell me next that you have had no visitors—eh?"

"Indeed, no, papa," said Lenore, with painful eagerness.

"Been quite alone ever since I left home this afternoon?"

"Quite alone, papa."

A faint dash of color was coming back into her cheeks by this time; she began, perhaps, to hope that after all this questioning his suspicions would be allayed, and he would go to his own room. If such were the case his next words must have undeceived her terribly.

"You lie, girl—you lie!" he said, in a voice whose sternness was not without a tremble in it; and as he spoke he touched Varrel's hat contemptuously with his foot, which up to that moment had lain unheeded on the floor. "Oh, that child of mine should ever live to deceive me thus!" His clasped hands and upturned face seemed to appeal to Heaven against the falsehood that had just been told him; but the next instant the look of anguish died from off his face, and his features settled back into more than their former harshness as he strode across the floor and flung back the curtain, behind whose folds Varrel was concealed. "Behold the proof!" he cried. "Behold the damning proof! Oh, Lenore!"

For a moment the two men stood eyeing each other in silence. Lenore, with a pitiful cry, fell at her father's feet, but he heeded her no more than if she had been a stone.

In the father of Lenore I beheld the original of the picture over the drawing-room mantlepiece; only he seemed older and more grizzled, and his features more deeply marked with the carving of Time's chisel than in his portrait. He had on a sort of military undress suit, with a pair of heavy riding-boots and spurs, and a short heavy whip in his hand.

"This, Sir Derwent Varrel, is an unexpected honor," said Colonel Lomond, in a tone of unconcealed irony, as he made the baronet a sweeping and ceremonious bow. "Pray—pray let me beg of you to emerge from an obscurity so uncongenial to one of your enterprising disposition. That is better, Lenore, child; let us have a little more light on the scene—it is a pleasure to look on the face of an honest man—and we may, perchance, need it all before we have done. More light, girl, do you hear! And now, perhaps, Sir Derwent Varrel will favor us with some explanation—any, the most simple, will, of course, do for me—of how he came to be hidden, like a common thief, behind the curtains of my drawing-room."

Varrel's pale olive cheek flushed deeply at this little speech, and a dangerous light began to glitter in his eyes as he stepped out of his hiding-place, and advanced into the room.

"Colonel Lomond shall have an explanation as simple as he desires," he said. Then he stopped to refresh his nerves with a pinch of snuff.

"You are aware, sir," he resumed, "that I love your daughter; that several months ago I would fain have made her my wife; and that your consent alone was wanting to such a union.

"Precisely so," said Colonel Lomond in the ickiest of tones, as he balanced the handle of his riding-whip between his thumb and finger.

"You might prevent our marriage, sir, but you could not keep us from loving one another," said Sir Derwent proudly.

"In other words, my daughter had still sufficient respect for me to refuse to wed you without my consent; but you had not sufficient respect for her to refrain from using your influence over her weak girl's will to induce her to deceive her father, and consent to nocturnal assignations with a libertine like yourself. Love! The word is sullied by coming from such lips as yours. You and I, Sir Derwent Varrel, had high words together six months ago, and I told you then that I would rather see my daughter lying in her coffin than wedded to such a one as you; and those words I repeat again to-night. Come hither, girl," he added, seizing Lenore roughly by the wrist, "come hither, and choose at once and forever between me and this man, who has taught thee to lie to thy father. What do I say? Nay, there can be no choice between such as this man and me. I tell thee, girl, that thy ignorance cannot fathom the depths of such infamy as his. A gambler so deeply tainted that in no society of gentlemen is he allowed to play; a libertine so vile that to couple a woman's name with his is a passport to dishonor; a sharper and blackleg, who has been twice hooted off the Newmarket course; a bankrupt so desperately involved that only by a wealthy marriage—with such a one, for example, as the heiress of Gledhills—can he hope even partially to retrieve his fortunes. Bah! what can thy country-bred ignorance know of these things?"

"Hard words, Colonel Lomond, very hard words," said Sir Derwent, disdainfully; "but I am happy to think, utterly incapable of proof."

"Hard words! ay, hard enough to have moved an innocent man to righteous anger, but not, as it seems, to flutter thy slow beating pulses ever so faintly; and that because thou knowest them to be true. Proof! Here's one out of a dozen. Who lured sweet Mary Doris from her home in yonder valley, and hid her away in London past the finding of her friends? Who held the simple village beauty lightly for a month or two, and then discarded her to starve or die as she might think best? Who but you, Sir Derwent Varrel, unless this letter also lies—a letter signed with your name, and found in the poor child's pocket when she lay with white staring face and dripping hair in the dead-house by the river. And now it is my daughter thou seekest to entrap!"

As Colonel Lomond drew from his pocket the letter of which he had been speaking, Lenore, with a low cry of anguish, sank fainting to the floor; and the horror-stricken Varrel reeled backward like one suddenly stabbed.

"Reptile! it is time the score between us were settled," said Colonel Lomond, with a venomous ferocity of tone. "Only one of us two must leave this room alive."

"I cannot—I dare not fight with you," murmured Varrel.

"Oh ho! do not think to escape me thus. You refuse to fight. Then take the punishment of cowards." And with that the heavy thong of Colonel Lomond's riding-whip whistled through the air, and came down on Varrel's neck and shoulders twice, twisting round his face on the second occasion, and leaving a thin livid wheal across his cheek where it had cut into the flesh. Varrel's first impulse was to shrink backward with a mingled cry of rage and pain; but the next instant he closed with the Colonel, and wresting the whip from his hands, flung it to the other end of the room.

"Give me a sword—a pistol—a weapon of any kind!" he cried hoarsely. "This vile treatment absolves me from all consequences. Colonel Lomond, your blood be upon your own head!"

The Colonel smiled sweetly on him. "Well spoken," he said, "only that you express yourself somewhat after the Furioso fashion. Your cry to arms is worthy of all praise, and I hasten to comply with it. In this cabinet, sir, are a couple of as pretty playthings as ever gladdened the eyes of a gentleman. *Voilà!* they are both alike in every particular. The choice is yours.

Varrel's fingers closed the hilt of one of the rapiers thus presented to him; and while he tried its edge and temper, by running his thumb and finger appreciatively along its length, and by bending its points back nearly to the hilt, Colonel Lomond disembarrassed himself of the cumbrous overcoat in which he was enveloped; and next minute the two men fronted each other.

"Gardez-vous, Monsieur" cried Colonel Lomond, as he made the first pass.

It was thoroughly understood by both of them that they were fighting for dear life—that neither of them must look for mercy from the other. Both of them were excellent swordsmen, but Sir Derwent had the advantage of youth and agility on his side, and he pressed the Colonel hardly, who, while keeping up his defence warily, yet felt himself compelled to retreat step by step before the desperate lungs of his antagonist."

The clash of the swords seemed to rouse Lenore from the stupor into which she had fallen. With her hands pressed to her temples, and with glaring eyeballs, that followed every movement of the combatants, she staggered to her feet. Her lips moved, but no sound came from them. Perhaps she was asking herself whether it were not all a hideous nightmare, which the first breath of reality would dissipate forever. With the same mingled look of horror and unbelief on her face she watched the two men coming slowly down the room again, for Colonel Lomond was still slightly overborne by his more youthful antagonist. The rapiers clashed together; bright sparks flew from their polished blue-black surface, as they struck each other, and bent and quivered like things of life in the grasp of the sinewy hands that held them.

The combatants were just opposite the spot where the half-demented Lenore was standing like one incapable of motion, when suddenly, at a movement in tierce, the point of Colonel Lomond's rapier snapped off; an advantage which Varrel instantly followed up with a dextrous stroke, which sent the Colonel's broken weapon flying across the room. Lenore, with the quick instinct of love, divined her father's danger; and the same moment that the rapier was twisted out of his hand she sprang forward with a wild inarticulate cry to shield him with her body from what she knew must follow and the sword of Varrel, aimed at her father's heart with all the strength which hate and the desire of vengeance could lend to such a thrust, passed instead through the body of the hapless girl. Her father's arms caught her as she was falling. "Papa—kiss—forgive," she murmured in his ear; then a stream of blood burst from her lips, she shuddered slightly, and was dead.

Colonel Lomond pressed his quivering lips tenderly on her forehead; then lifting her in his arms, he carried her to a couch. "Lie there a little while, sweet, foolish darling," he said. "Perhaps I may join thee on thy journey before long."

Varrel, who was like a man half-crazed, would have rung for help, but Colonel Lomond, by a gesture, forbade him to do so. "You and I, sir," said the Colonel, "have still our little business to arrange."

"Great Heaven! what would you more?" exclaimed Sir Derwent.

"Revenge my daughter's death!" said Lemond.

"Her death was a pure accident."

"Granted. She died to save my life, and that life I now devote to avenging her memory. What I said before I say again—only one of us two shall quit this room alive. Here are two pistols; one of them is loaded and the other is unloaded. Choose one of them. In three minutes that clock on the chimney-piece will strike the hour. At the first stroke we will fire across this table; and may Heaven have mercy on the soul of one of us!"

"It would be murder!" said Varrel, in a low voice, while a cold sweat broke out on his ashen face.

"Call it by what name you will," said Lomond; "but as I have said, so it shall be. Dare to refuse, and by the great Fiend of Darkness, whose true son you are, I will thrash you with yonder whip within an inch of your life, and send you forth into the world branded forever as a coward and a rogue."

Sir Derwent wiped the perspiration off his forehead with his lace-bordered handkerchief, and his dry lips moved in faint protest. His courage was beginning to waver. The slow, patient ferocity of his enemy was not without its effect upon him.

"Choose!" said Colonel Lomond, as he laid a brace of pistols on the table. Varrel hesitated for a moment which to pick, and Lomond smiled grimly. No fresh arrangement of position was necessary, they being already on opposite sides of the table, on which poor Lenore's embroidery was still lying, as she had cast it aside on the first flutter of hearing her lover's signal.

"Colonel Lomond, I must make a last protest against this bloody business," said Varrel.

Again the Colonel smiled. "In ten seconds," he said, "the clock will strike. Be ready."

There was a great contrast between the two men as they stood thus, fronting what for one of them must be inevitable death. Colonel Lomond's bronzed cheek looked even darker than usual, and his eye seemed to burn with intense hate as he stood gazing at his antagonist from under his lowering brows; but his extended arm was as firm as a bar of steel. Varrel was evidently nervous. His lips had faded to a dull bluish white; he pressed one hand to his chest occasionally, as if to still the throbbing heart beneath; while the other, which held the pistol, trembled slightly in spite of him.

Four seconds—three seconds—two seconds. The deathly brooding stillness that prevaded the room was something awful. One second. The silvery bell of the little French clock had not completed its first stroke before the two triggers were pulled. A flash, a report, and a gush of smoke from one of the weapons, and Sir Derwent Varrel, shot through the heart, fell back dead.

"So perishes a thorough scoundrel," said Colonel Lomond, as he gazed into the face of his dead enemy.

Suddenly a door opened and showed a very old lady, with white hair, and clad in a white dressing-robe, standing in the entrance. From the movement of her hands you understood that she was blind, or nearly so.

"Henry! Henry! where are you?" she cried. "Some one fired a pistol just now. Oh, tell me that you are not hurt!" and she advanced a step or two into the room.

A spasm of anguish passed over the face of Colonel Lomond. "I am here and well, mother," he said. "Pray, return to your room. I am sorry to have disturbed you."

"And Lenore," said the old lady, plaintively, "why has not Lenore been to kiss me, and say good-night? Has the child gone to bed?"

"Lenore is asleep, mother," said the Colonel, in a whisper. "We must not disturb her. She shall come to you in the morning."

"Strange—strange," murmured the old lady; "she never forgot me before;" and with that she turned and went slowly away, groping with her hands before her; and the Colonel, falling on his knees, buried his face in the white dress of his dead daughter. At which point the whole machinery of my dream dissolved away, and I awoke.

There was no more sleep for me that night. So lifelike and vivid was my extraordinary dream, so much did it seem like a part of my own personal experience, that the effect left by it on my mind was not lightly to be shaken off. Lenore's wild cry as she flung herself into her father's arms, the voices of Varrel and Domond in angry dispute, seemed still to echo in my brain; and I felt that every minute incident of that terrible tragedy must henceforth be, as it were, a part of my own life. Impelled by some vague feeling which I could not resist, I quitted my bed-room, and went down, half dressed, into the great desolate drawing-room, the scene of all the strange incidents in my dream. The ghostly splendor of the moonlight filled it no longer; it was as cold, dark, and silent as some vast tomb. As I stood in the doorway, longing, and yet afraid to enter, a gust of night-wind sweeping up the valley rattled the windows of the old mansion; and what seemed like a low, responsive sigh came to me out of the gloom, a sigh so unutterably sad that, with a shudder, I stepped backward and shut the door.

I was very glad when ten o'clock came, and brought Mr. Lomond, punctual to the minute. "It is only what I expected," he said, when I had given him an outline of my singular dream; and I may now tell you, sir, that precisely the same dream which impressed you so strongly last night is dreamed by every one, no matter who they may be, the first time they sleep at Gledhills, and never afterward; and this curse—for I may truly call it by that name—has hung over the house from the night on which the tragedy, which you witnessed last night only in imagination, was worked out in all its dismal reality within these walls. You will now understand why I requested you to sleep one night at Gledhills before finally deciding that you would take the house; and it remains for you to consider whether your wife, whose health you say is delicate, could undergo such an ordeal as she would assuredly have to pass through the first night of her sojourn under this roof."

I decided that she could not endure the trial, and gave up Gledhills.

NEW PORTRAIT OF VICTORIA.

THE miniature which her Majesty intends for presentation to Mr. Peabody has been entrusted for its execution to Messrs. Dickerson, and the drawing from which the enamel is to be taken is now on view at their rooms, New Bond Street, London. As a portrait this elegant work may be considered small, but the necessities of the art of enamelling may compel its being limited to a size something between the miniature and the ordinary chalk drawings of heads. The Queen is portrayed in her robes, and it is understood that more than usual care was to be taken that the likeness might be truthful. The face bears traces of long-continued grief; the lines are strongly marked round the mouth and under the eyes, but there is with this characteristic a soft and thoughtful expression, which the artist has been particularly happy in giving. The look and the roundness of maturity, with the firmly-set lips, are somewhat in contrast with the portrait of the Queen with which we are familiar. As a work of art this miniature is of the highest class, and well suited for transfer to enamel, in which difficult and effective style Mr. Tilt is about to execute it. Enamel has been selected on account of its imperishable qualities, in accordance with the wishes of Mr. Peabody, whose intention it is to place the portrait in an institution founded by him in his native town, Boston, United States.—*London Observer.*

THE LAUGH OF WOMAN.

A WOMAN has no natural gift more bewitching than a sweet laugh. It is like the sound of flutes on the water. It leaps from her in a clear, sparkling rill; and the heart that hears it feels as if bathed in the cool, exhilirating spring. Have you ever pursued an unseen fugitive through trees, led on by a fairy laugh—now here, now there, now lost, now found? We have; and we are pursuing that wandering voice to this day. Sometimes it comes to us in the midst of care, or sorrow, or irksome business, and then we turn away and listen, and hear it ringing in the room like a silver bell, with power to scare away the evil spirit of mind. How much we owe to that sweet laugh! It turns prose to poetry; it flings flowers of sunshine over the darkness of the wood in which we are travelling; it touches with light even our sleep, which is no more than the image of death, but is consumed with dreams that are the shadows of immortality.

THE PURE HEART.

THE springs of everlasting life are within. There are clear streams gushing up from the depths of the soul, and flowing out to enliven the spheres of outward existence. But like the waters of Siloam, they "go swiftly." You must listen to catch the silvery tones of the little rill as it glides from its mountain home; you may not witness its silent march through the green vale, but its course will be seen in the fresh verdure and the opening flowers; its presence will be known by the forms of life and beauty that gather round it. It is ever thus with the pure. You may not hear the "still, small voice," or heed the silent aspiration, but there is a moral influence and a holy power which you will feel. The wilderness is made to smile, flowers of new life and beauty suring up and flourish, while an invisible presence breathes immortal fragrance through the atmosphere.

NATURE is a bounteous storehouse laden with sweets and pleasures of all kinds. The dewdrops of the morning are her joyous tears; the flowers scattered grassy plains her carpeted playhouse. Thus in pleasant paths she leads us onward and upward in gratitude and love to the Divine Giver and Great Disposer, who has prepared for us a panorama so rich, so cheering [illegible]