

THE FIFTEENTH DAY.

“Were kisses all the joys in bed,  
One woman would another wed.”

*Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music.*

ANOTHER day rose of unceasing fire :

Kisses made monstrous for their sterile storm  
Maddening with sea-sounds, as of lute or shawm  
Fluting and clashing in extreme desire ;  
The silly “Thus far and no farther,” nigher  
Each hour to break (poor arbitrary form !)  
As each kiss bade our bodies wed and warm  
Give love one chance before its wave retire.

Not so: this trial was the tiniest

Man ever knew, confronted afterward  
With giant fears and passions ;—long to fight  
And last to yield a Maenad-swelling breast  
Unto a furious Dionysian horde  
Drunk not with wine, but with avenging night.