

THE THIRTY-SIXTH DAY.

“’Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.”

Phoenix and Turtle.

YET ere the stars paled slowly in the east
I could not sleep: and she—how else? What rest
May a man know until his quiet breast
Beats to her tune? I garbed me as a priest
And moved towards my Host—on God I feast!
We lay in naked chastity, caressed
Child-like or dreaming, till the dawn repressed
Our sighs: that nuptial yet hath never ceased.

That was the best: far sundered by the tide
Dolorous, endless as Oceanus,
A serpent-river girdling the large earth,
Still in that pure embrace we bring to birth
A thousand pleasant children born of us,
Sacred and sinless, if unsanctified.