

THE FORTIETH DAY.

“Away, you rascally Althea’s dream, away!”
2 King Henry IV.

MERE terror struck into our souls, one shaft
Sudden and swift; our punishment was here.
The shapeless form of an avenging fear
Shuddered within her; from the deep rich draught
Of lively labour that her nights had quaffed
Rises a serpent: prescience of next year,
The springtide; may the Minotaur appear,
Prodigious offspring of the fatal graft?

The worst has happened. Time must now discover
What love had hidden from the wittol’s eyes
(What hate may tell him if he read my song,
If he be subtle: not if he be wise).
In our despair came laughter to my lover:
“All’s well as yet. I calculated wrong.”