

A FRAGMENT

MAN

Hero

MAID

Heroine

HER MOTHER

COUNT B

He. Draw nigh, sweet maiden, violets blush at birth,
Pale lilies tinge with crimson, as the snow
At dawn's approach, the pansy's darksome dye
Deepens when tender winds blow over it
And give its beauties to the summer's gaze:
So blush at being mine, yet gently come
And place a dainty hand within my hold
Too delicate to crush it into warmth,
Save that blood mantling to thy cheek shall flow
Back to the fingers, though I press them not.

And so I will not hesitate to put
A ring upon thy hand, sweet mystery
Of Love's device, to shadow in our hearts
Th' Eternity of an immortal self
That is, and shall be while the stars endure,
Or while a God of Love is pitiful
Of all men's sorrows, and most happy in

Their joys—

She. Ah! joys are fleeting!—

He. But our love

Is anchored in the portals of the dawn
Where heaven begins.

She. And heaven begins with us
This day. Behold the flowers, whose kindly gaze
Of modest love is on us as we stand,
And clasp fond hands before high Heaven to swear
Truth an eternal bond, no parchment scroll
Of perishable matter ill devised
And scored upon with perishable ink,
But in our pulses' quick delight to live
From day to day renewed, as if a fount
Of God's mysterious stream, that here a man
May wet his ankle, and again immerse
Unto his knees, and yet again assay
To cross its silver depth and find himself
Swimming in crystal coldness on a sea
Broad as God's mercy and as deep as Love.

He. And whose strong tide shall bear our spirit out
Into the ocean of all happiness
Whose bounds are Heaven.

She. See! the scythe of Time
Sweeps on to cut the new-born flowers in twain
That symbolizes the reluctant hour

In which we met—and now the flower is dead
And we must part.

He. Fond hearts, chaste souls, as one
Whose unity is sacred, still shall dwell
Together—Not the cold embrace
Of ‘We shall meet again’, but let us say
The ritual of a lover, being this
‘God be with you!’

She. O heart too dear to me,
Too much beloved for lover’s tongue to tell,
God be with you! Farewell, sweet heart!

He. Farewell.

(EXEUNT).

DESUNT CETERA.