

THE FORTY-THIRD DAY.

“O theft most base
That we have stolen what we do fear to keep.”
Troilus and Cressida.

IMPOSSIBLE that we shall ever part!
The heart shrinks back from thinking it, the
mind
Hates it, and prays as love is to be blind.
Yet we know well that no magician's art
Can keep our two selves near their single heart.
Self-mocked I urger her “Come and leave behind
All fear and friends and children: we shall find
Love risen sole without a counterpart.”

Even while I begged her, I well knew she must.
We could not, loving to see her children laugh,
Let cowards twit them with their mother's lust.
Even our own purity confirmed the trust.
How long, O lord, how long? Too long by half
Till men read, wondering, wedlock's epitaph.