

# PIPPA PASSES

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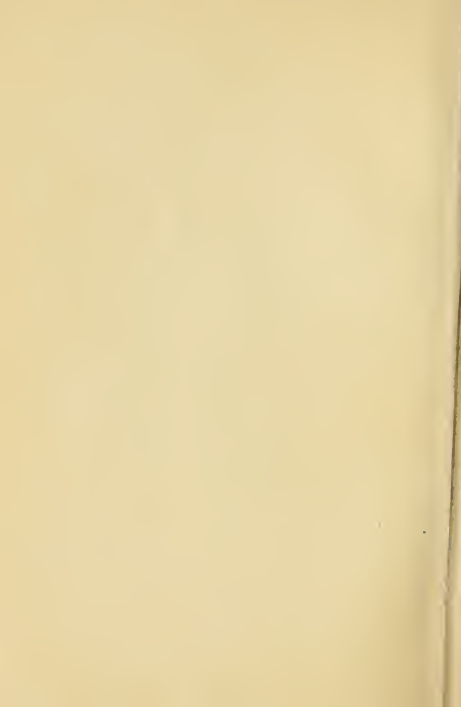
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# PIPPA PASSES

A DRAMA







P.P.

Page 123.

““ Why, man, do I not know the old story ?””



PIPPA PASSES  
ROBERT  
BROWNING



GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD

LONDON & GLASGOW  
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RBR

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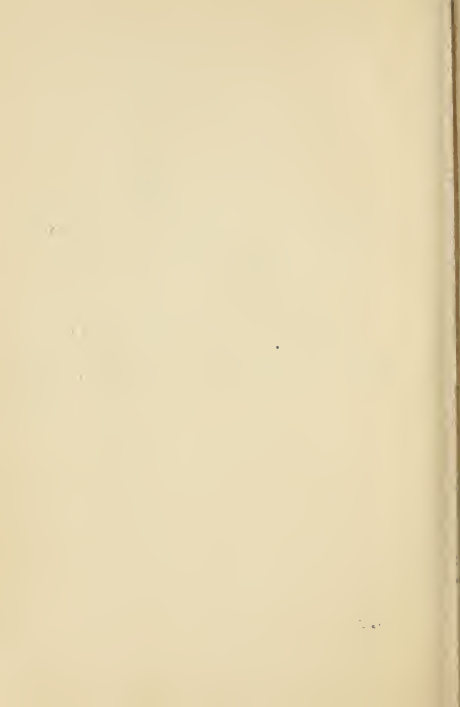
I DEDICATE

MY BEST INTENTIONS, IN THIS POEM,  
MOST ADMIRINGLY TO THE  
AUTHOR OF "ION,"—

MOST AFFECTIONATELY TO

MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD.

R. B.



## PIPPA PASSES.

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE  
TREVISAN.—*A large, mean, airy  
chamber. A girl, PIPPA, from the  
silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY !

Faster and more fast,

O'er night's brim, day boils at  
last ;

Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's  
brim

Where spurting and supprest it lay—  
For not a froth-flake touched the  
rim

Of yonder gap in the solid gray  
Of the eastern cloud, an hour  
away ;

But forth one wavelet, then another,  
curled,

Till the whole sunrise, not to be  
supprest,

Rose, reddened, and its seething  
breast

Flickered in bounds, grew gold,  
then overflowed the world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of  
thee,

A mite of my twelve-hours' treasure,  
The least of thy gazes or glances,  
(Be they grants thou art bound to,  
or gifts above measure)

One of thy choices, or one of thy  
chances,

(Be they tasks God imposed thee,  
or freaks at thy pleasure)

—My Day, if I squander such labour  
or leisure,

Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief  
on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely  
flowing,

Whence earth, we feel, gets steady  
help and good—

Thy fitful sunshine minutes, coming,  
going,  
In which, earth turns from work in  
gamesome mood—  
All shall be mine! But thou must  
treat me not  
As the prosperous are treated, those  
who live  
At hand here, and enjoy the higher  
lot,  
In readiness to take what thou wilt  
give,  
And free to let alone what thou re-  
fusest ;  
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-  
usest  
Me, who am only Pippa—old-year's  
sorrow,  
Cast off last night, will come again  
to-morrow—  
Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I  
shall borrow  
Sufficient strength of thee for new-  
year's sorrow.

All other men and women that this  
earth  
Belongs to, who all days alike  
possess,  
Make general plenty cure particular  
dearth,  
Get more joy, one way, if another,  
less :  
Thou art my single day, God lends  
to leaven  
What were all earth else, with a feel  
of heaven ;  
Sole light that helps me through the  
year, thy sun's !  
Try, now ! Take Asolo's Four  
Happiest Ones—  
And let thy morning rain on that  
superb  
Great haughty Ottima ; can rain  
disturb  
Her Sebald's homage ? All the  
while thy rain  
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house  
window-pane,



He will but press the closer, breathe  
more warm  
Against her cheek ; how should she  
mind the storm ?  
And, morning past, if mid-day shed  
a gloom  
O'er Jules and Phene,—what care  
bride and groom  
Save for their dear selves ? 'Tis  
their marriage-day ;  
And while they leave church, and go  
home their way  
Hand clasping hand,—within each  
breast would be  
Sunbeams and pleasant weather  
spite of thee !  
Then, for another trial, obscure thy  
eve  
With mist, — will Luigi and his  
mother grieve—  
The Lady and her child, unmatched,  
forsooth,  
She in her age, as Luigi in his  
youth,

For true content? The cheerful  
town, warm, close,  
And safe, the sooner that thou art  
morose  
Receives them! And yet once again,  
outbreak  
In storm at night on Monsignor,  
they make  
Such stir about,—whom they expect  
from Rome  
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,  
And say here masses proper to release  
A soul from pain,—what storm dares  
hurt his peace?  
Calm would he pray, with his own  
thoughts to ward  
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels'  
guard!  
But Pippa—just one such mischance  
would spoil  
Her day that lightens the next  
twelve-month's toil  
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on  
coil!

And here I let time slip for nought !  
Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam—caught  
With a single splash from my ewer !  
You that would mock the best  
pursuer

Was my basin over-deep ?  
One splash of water ruins you asleep,  
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits  
Wheeling and counterwheeling,  
Reeling, broken beyond healing—  
Now grow together on the ceiling !  
That will task your wits !

Whoever quenched fire first, hoped  
to see

Morsel after morsel flee  
As merrily, as giddily . . .

Meantime, what lights my sunbeam  
on,

Where settles by degrees the radiant  
cripple ?

Oh, is it surely blown, my marta-  
gon ?

New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes'  
nipple,

Plump as the flesh-bunch on some  
Turk bird's poll!

Be sure if corals, branching 'neath  
the ripple

Of ocean, bud there,—fairies watch  
unroll

Such turban-flowers; I say, such  
lamps disperse

Thick red flame through that dusk  
green universe!

I am queen of thee, floweret;

And each fleshy blossom

Preserve I not—(safer

Than leaves that embower it,

Or shells that embosom)

—From weevil and chafer?

Laugh through my pane, then;  
solicit the bee;

Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst  
of thy glee,

Love thy queen, worship me!

—Worship whom else? For am I  
not, this day,

Whate'er I please? What shall I  
please to-day?

My morning, noon, eve, night—how  
spend my day?

To-morrow I must be Pippa who  
winds silk,

The whole year round, to earn just  
bread and milk :

But, this one day, I have leave to go,  
And play out my fancy's fullest  
games ;

I may fancy all day—and it shall  
be so—

That I taste of the pleasures, am  
called by the names

Of the Happiest Four in our  
Asolo !

See ! Up the Hillside yonder,  
through the morning,

Some one shall love me, as the  
world calls love :

I am no less than Ottima, take  
warning !

The gardens, and the great stone  
house above,  
And other house for shrubs, all  
glass in front,  
Are mine ; where Sebald steals, as  
he is wont,  
To court me, while old Luca yet  
reposes ;  
And therefore, till the shrub-house  
door uncloses,  
I . . . what, now?—give abundant  
cause for prate  
About me—Ottima, I mean—of late,  
Too bold, too confident she'll still  
face down  
The spitefullest of talkers in our  
town—  
How we talk in the little town below!  
But love, love, love—there's better  
love, I know !  
This foolish love was only day's  
first offer ;  
I choose my next love to defy the  
scoffer :

For do not our Bride and Bride-  
groom sally

Out of Possagno church at noon?

Their house looks over Orcana  
valley—

Why should I not be the bride as  
soon

As Ottima? For I saw, beside,  
Arrive last night that little bride—

Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash  
Of the pale, snow-pure cheek and  
black bright tresses,

Blacker than all except the black  
eyelash ;

I wonder she contrives those lids no  
dresses !

—So strict was she, the veil

Should cover close her pale

Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and  
scarce touch,

Scarce touch, remember, Jules !—  
for are not such

Used to be tended, flower-like, every  
feature,

As if one's breath would fray the lily  
of a creature?

A soft and easy life these ladies lead!  
Whiteness in us were wonderful  
indeed—

Oh, save that brow its virgin  
dimness,

Keep that foot its lady primness,

Let those ankles never swerve

From their exquisite reserve,

Yet have to trip along the streets  
like me,

All but naked to the knee!

How will she ever grant her Jules  
a bliss

So startling as her real first infant  
kiss?

Oh, no—not envy, this!

—Not envy, sure!—for if you gave  
me

Leave to take or to refuse,

In earnest, do you think I'd choose

That sort of new love to enslave me?



Mine should have lapped me round  
from the beginning  
As little fear of losing it as winning !  
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate  
their wives,  
And only parents' love can last our  
lives :  
At eve the son and mother, gentle  
pair,  
Commune inside our Turret ; what  
prevents  
My being Luigi ? while that mossy lair  
Of lizards through the winter-time,  
is stirred  
With each to each imparting sweet  
intents  
For this new-year, as brooding bird  
to bird—  
(For I observe of late, the evening  
walk  
Of Luigi and his mother, always  
ends  
Inside our ruined turret, where they  
talk,

Calmer than lovers, yet more kind  
than friends)  
Let me be cared about, kept out of  
harm,  
And schemed for, safe in love as  
with a charm ;  
Let me be Luigi ! . . . If I only  
knew  
What was my mother's face—my  
father, too !

Nay, if you come to that, best love  
of all  
Is God's ; then why not have God's  
love befall  
Myself as, in the Palace by the  
Dome,  
Monsignor ?—who to-night will bless  
the home  
Of his dead brother ; and God will  
bless in turn  
That heart which beats, those eyes  
which mildly burn

With love for all men: I, to-night  
at least,  
Would be that holy and beloved  
priest!

Now wait!—even I already seem to  
share  
In God's love: what does New-  
year's hymn declare?  
What other meaning do these verses  
bear?

*All service ranks the same with  
God:*

*If now, as formerly He trod  
Paradise, His presence fills  
Our earth, each only as God wills  
Can work—God's puppets, best and  
worst,*

*Are we; there is no last nor first.  
Say not "a small event!" Why  
"small"?*

*Costs it more pain than this, ye call  
A "great event," should come to  
pass,*

*Than that? Untwine me from the  
 mass  
 Of deeds which make up life, one  
 deed  
 Power shall fall short in, or exceed!*

And more of it, and more of it!—oh,  
 yes—  
 I will pass by, and see their happi-  
 ness,  
 And envy none—being just as great,  
 no doubt,  
 Useful to men, and dear to God, as  
 they!  
 A pretty thing to care about  
 So mightily, this single holiday!  
 But let the sun shine! Wherefore  
 repine?  
 —With thee to lead me, O Day of  
 mine,  
 Down the grass-path gray with  
 dew,  
 Under the pine-wood, blind with  
 boughs,

Where the swallow never flew  
As yet, nor cicale dared carouse—  
Dared carouse!

[*She enters the street.*]

I.—MORNING.

*Up the Hillside, inside the Shrub-  
house. LUCA'S Wife, OTTIMA,  
and her Paramour, the German  
SEBALD.*

*Seb. (sings).*

*Let the watching lids wink!  
Day's a-blaze with eyes, think—  
Deep into the night, drink!*

*Otti.* Night? Such may be your  
Rhine-land nights, perhaps;  
But this blood-red beam through the  
shutter's chink,  
—We call such light, the morning's:  
let us see!  
Mind how you grope your way,  
though! How these tall

Naked geraniums straggle! Push  
the lattice—

Behind that frame!—Nay, do I bid  
you?—Sebald,

It shakes the dust down on me!  
Why, of course

The slide-bolt catches.—Well, are  
you content,

Or must I find you something else  
to spoil?

Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is  
it full morning?

Oh, don't speak then!

*Seb.* Ay, thus it used to be!  
Ever your house was, I remember,  
shut

Till mid-day—I observed that, as I  
strolled

On mornings thro' the vale here:  
country girls

Were noisy, washing garments in  
the brook—

Hinds drove the slow white oxen up  
the hills—

But no, your house was mute, would  
    ope no eye—

And wisely—you were plotting one  
    thing there,

Nature, another outside: I looked  
    up—

Rough white wood shutters, rusty  
    iron bars,

Silent as death, blind in a flood of  
    light;

Oh, I remember!—and the peasants  
    laughed

And said, “The old man sleeps with  
    the young wife!”

This house was his, this chair, this  
    window—his!

*Otti.* Ah, the clear morning! I  
    can see St. Mark's:

That black streak is the belfry.  
    Stop: Vicenza

Should lie . . . There's Padua,  
    plain enough, that blue!

Look o'er my shoulder—follow my  
    finger—

*Seb.* Morning?

It seems to me a night with a sun  
added :

Where's dew? where's freshness?

That bruised plant, I bruised  
In getting thro' the lattice yestereve,  
Droops as it did. See, here's my  
elbow's mark

In the dust on the sill.

*Otti.* Oh shut the lattice, pray!

*Seb.* Let me lean out. I cannot  
scent blood here,

Foul as the morn may be—

There, shut the world out!  
How do you feel now, *Ottima*?

There—curse

The world, and all outside! Let us  
throw off

This mask: how do you bear your-  
self? Let's out

With all of it!

*Otti.* Best never speak of it.

*Seb.* Best speak again and yet  
again of it,



Till words cease to be more than  
words. "His blood,"

For instance—let those two words  
mean "His blood"

And nothing more. Notice—I'll say  
them now,

"His blood."

*Otti.* Assuredly if I repented  
The deed—

*Seb.* Repent? who should repent,  
or why?

What puts that in your head? Did  
I once say

That I repented?

*Otti.* No—I said the deed—

*Seb.* "The deed," and "the  
event"—just now it was

"Our passion's fruit"—the devil  
take such cant!

Say, once and always, Luca was a  
wittol,

I am his cut-throat, you are—

*Otti.* Here is the wine—  
I brought it when we left the house  
above—

And glasses too—wine of both sorts.  
Black? white, then?

*Seb.* But am not I his cut-throat?  
What are you?

*Otti.* There, trudges on his  
business from the Duomo  
Benet the Capuchin, with his brown  
hood  
And bare feet—always in one place  
at church,  
Close under the stone wall by the  
south entry ;  
I used to take him for a brown cold  
piece  
Of the wall's self, as out of it he  
rose  
To let me pass—at first, I say, I  
used—  
Now — so has that dumb figure  
fastened on me—

I rather should account the plastered  
wall

A piece of him, so chilly does it  
strike.

This, Sebald?

*Seb.* No—the white wine—  
the white wine!

Well, Ottima, I promised no new  
year

Should rise on us the ancient shame-  
ful way,

Nor does it rise: pour on! To  
your black eyes!

Do you remember last damned New  
Year's day?

*Otti.* You brought those foreign  
prints. We looked at them

Over the wine and fruit. I had to  
scheme

To get him from the fire. Nothing  
but saying

His own set wants the proof-mark,  
roused him up

To hunt them out.

*Seb.* 'Faith, he is not alive  
To fondle you before my face !

*Otti.* Do you  
Fondle me, then ! who means to take  
your life  
For that, my Sebald ?

*Seb.* Hark you, *Ottima*,  
One thing's to guard against. We'll  
not make much  
One of the other—that is, not make  
more  
Parade of warmth, childish officious  
coil,  
Than yesterday—as if, sweet, I sup-  
posed  
Proof upon proof was needed now,  
now first,  
To show I love you—yes, still love  
you—love you  
In spite of Luca and what's come to  
him  
—Sure sign we had him ever in our  
thoughts,

White sneering old reproachful face  
and all!

We'll even quarrel, love, at times,  
as if

We still could lose each other—were  
not tied

By this—conceive you?

*Otti.*

Love—

*Seb.*

Not tied so sure—

Because tho' I was wrought upon—  
have struck

His insolence back into him—am I  
So surely yours?—therefore, for ever  
yours?

*Otti.* Love, to be wise, (one  
counsel pays another)

Should we have—months ago—when  
first we loved,

For instance that May morning we  
two stole

Under the green ascent of sycamores—

If we had come upon a thing like that  
Suddenly—

*Seb.* "A thing" . . . there again  
— "a thing!"

*Otti.* Then, Venus' body, had we  
come upon  
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered  
corpse  
Within there, at his couch-foot,  
covered close—  
Would you have pored upon it?  
Why persist  
In poring now upon it? For 'tis  
here—  
As much as there in the deserted  
house—  
You cannot rid your eyes of it: for me,  
Now he is dead I hate him worse—  
I hate—  
Dare you stay here? I would go  
back and hold  
His two dead hands, and say, I hate  
you worse  
Luca, than—

*Seb.* Off, off; take your hands  
off mine!

'Tis the hot evening—off! oh, morning, is it?

*Otti.* There's one thing must be done—you know what thing.  
Come in and help to carry. We may sleep

Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.

*Seb.* What would come, think you, if we let him lie just as he is? Let him lie there until The angels take him: he is turned by this Off from his face, beside, as you will see.

*Otti.* This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass.  
Three, four—four gray hairs! Is it so you said  
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?  
No—this way!

*Seb.* Ottima, I would give your neck,

Each splendid shoulder, both those  
breasts of yours,

That this were undone! Killing?—  
Kill the world

So Luca lives again!—Ay, lives to  
sputter

His fulsome dotage on you—yes,  
and feign

Surprise that I returned at eve to  
sup,

When all the morning I was loiter-  
ing here—

Bid me dispatch my business and  
be gone.

I would—

*Otti.* See!

*Seb.* No, I'll finish! Do  
you think

I fear to speak the bare truth once  
for all?

All we have talked of is, at bottom,  
fine

To suffer—there's a recompense in  
guilt;



One must be venturous and  
fortunate—

What is one young for, else? In  
age we'll sigh

O'er the wild, reckless, wicked days  
flown over;

Still we have lived! The vice was  
in its place.

But to have eaten Luca's bread,  
have worn

His clothes, have felt his money  
swell my purse—

Do lovers in romances sin that way?

Why, I was starving when I used  
to call

And teach you music — starving  
while you plucked me

These flowers to smell!

*Otti.* My poor lost friend!

*Seb.* He gave me

Life—nothing less: what if he did  
reproach

My perfidy, and threaten, and do  
more—

Had he no right? What was to wonder at?

He sate by us at table quietly—

Why must you lean across till our cheeks touch'd?

Could he do less than make pretence to strike me?

'Tis not for the crime's sake—I'd commit ten crimes

Greater, to have this crime wiped out—undone!

And you—O, how feel you? feel you for me?

*Otti.* Well, then — I love you better now than ever—

And best (look at me while I speak to you)—

Best for the crime—nor do I grieve, in truth,

This mask, this simulated ignorance,

This affectation of simplicity,

Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours

May not, now, be looked over—look  
it down, then!

Great? let it be great—but the joys  
it brought,

Pay they or no its price? Come—  
they or it!

Speak not! The past, would you  
give up the past

Such as it is, pleasure and crime  
together?

Give up that noon I owned my love  
for you—

The garden's silence — even the  
single bee

Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopt  
And where he hid you only could  
surmise

By some campanula's chalice set  
a-swing

As he clung there—"Yes, I love  
you!"

*Seb.*

And I drew

Back; put far back your face with  
both my hands

Lest you should grow too full of me  
 —your face  
 So seemed athirst for my whole soul  
 and body !

*Otti.* And when I ventured to  
 receive you here,  
 Made you steal hither in the morn-  
 ings—

*Seb.* When  
 I used to look up 'neath the shrub-  
 house here,  
 Till the red fire on its glazed  
 windows spread  
 To a yellow haze ?

*Otti.* Ah—my sign was, the sun  
 Inflamed the sere side of yon chest-  
 nut-tree  
 Nipt by the first frost.

*Seb.* You would always laugh  
 At my wet boots—I had to stride  
 thro' grass  
 Over my ankles.

*Otti.* Then our crowning night—

*Seb.* The July night ?

*Otti.* The day of it too, Sebald !  
When the heaven's pillars seemed  
o'erbowed with heat,  
Its black-blue canopy seemed let  
descend  
Close on us both, to weigh down  
each to each,  
And smother up all life except our  
life.  
So lay we till the storm came.

*Seb.* How it came !

*Otti.* Buried in woods we lay, you  
recollect ;  
Swift ran the searching tempest  
overhead ;  
And ever and anon some bright  
white shaft  
Burnt thro' the pine-tree roof—here  
burnt and there,  
As if God's messenger thro' the  
close wood screen  
Plunged and replunged his weapon  
at a venture,

Feeling for guilty thee and me :  
then broke

The thunder like a whole sea over-  
head—

*Seb.* Yes !

*Otti.*—While I stretched myself  
upon you, hands

To hands, my mouth to your hot  
mouth, and shook

All my locks loose, and covered you  
with them—

You, Sebald, the same you—

*Seb.* Slower, *Ottima*—

*Otti.* And as we lay—

*Seb.* Less vehemently ! Love  
me—

Forgive me—take not words—mere  
words—to heart—

Your breath is worse than wine !  
Breathe slow, speak slow—

Do not lean on me—

*Otti.* Sebald, as we lay,

Rising and falling only with our  
pants,

Who said, "Let death come now—  
'tis right to die!  
Right to be punished—nought com-  
pletes such bliss  
But woe!" Who said that?

*Seb.* How did we ever rise?  
Was't that we slept? Why did it end?

*Otti.* I felt you,  
Fresh tapering to a point the ruffled  
ends  
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your  
humid lips—  
(My hair is fallen now, knot it  
again!)

*Seb.* I kiss you now, dear *Ottima*,  
now, and now!  
This way? Will you forgive me—  
be once more  
My great queen?

*Otti.* Bind it thrice about my  
brow;  
Crown me your queen, your spirit's  
arbitress,  
Magnificent in sin. Say that!

*Seb.* I crown you  
My great white queen, my spirit's  
arbitress,  
Magnificent—

*(From without is heard the voice of  
PIPPA, singing—*

*The year's at the spring,  
And day's at the morn;  
Morning's at seven;  
The hill-side's dew-pearled:  
The lark's on the wing;  
The snail's on the thorn;  
God's in his heaven—  
All's right with the world!*

*(PIPPA passes.)*

*Seb.* God's in his heaven! Do  
you hear that? Who spoke?  
You, you spoke!

*Otti.* Oh—that little ragged girl!  
She must have rested on the step—  
we give them



But this one holiday the whole year round.

Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside?

There are ten silk-mills now belonging to you.

She stoops to pick my double hearts-ease . . . Sh!

She does not hear—you call out louder!

*Seb.* Leave me!

Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders!

*Otti.* Sebald?

*Seb.* Wipe off that paint. I hate you!

*Otti.* Miserable!

*Seb.* My God! and she is emptied of it now!

Outright now!—how miraculously gone

All of the grace—had she not strange grace once?

Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,

No purpose holds the features up  
 together,  
 Only the cloven brow and puckered  
 chin  
 Stay in their places—and the very  
 hair,  
 That seemed to have a sort of life  
 in it,  
 Drops, a dead web !

*Otti.* Speak to me—  
 speak not of me !

*Seb.* —That round great full-  
 orb'd face, where not an angle  
 Broke the delicious indolence—all  
 broken !

*Otti.* To me—not of me ! un-  
 grateful, perjured cheat—  
 A coward, too—but ingrate's worse  
 than all !  
 Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cring-  
 ing lie !  
 Leave me !—betray me !—I can see  
 your drift—  
 A lie that walks, and eats, and drinks !

*Seb.* My God !  
Those morbid, olive, faultless  
shoulder-blades—

I should have known there was no  
blood beneath !

*Otti.* You hate me, then ? You  
hate me then ?

*Seb.* To think  
She would succeed in her absurd  
attempt,

And fascinate by sinning ; and show  
herself

Superior—Guilt from its excess,  
superior

To Innocence. That little peasant's  
voice

Has righted all again. Though I  
be lost,

I know which is the better, never fear,  
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,

Nature, or trick—I see what I have  
done,

Entirely now ! Oh, I am proud to  
feel

Such torments—let the world take  
credit thence—

I, having done my deed, pay too  
its price !

I hate, hate—curse you ! God's in  
his heaven !

*Otti.* —Me !

Me ! no, no, Sebald—not yourself—  
kill me !

Mine is the whole crime—do but  
kill me—then

Yourself—then — presently — first  
hear me speak—

I always meant to kill myself—  
wait, you !

Lean on my breast—not as a breast ;  
don't love me

The more because you lean on me,  
my own

Heart's Sebald ! There—there—both  
deaths presently !

*Seb.* My brain is drowned now—  
quite drowned : all I feel

Is . . . is at swift-recurring intervals,

A hurrying-down within me, as of  
waters

Loosened to smother up some  
ghastly pit—

There they go—whirls from a black,  
fiery sea !

*Otti.* Not to me, God—to him be  
merciful !

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is  
passing from the Hillside to Orcana.  
Foreign Students of Painting and  
Sculpture, from Venice, assembled  
opposite the House of JULES, a young  
French Statuary.*

*1st. Student.* Attention ! my own  
post is beneath this window, but the  
pomegranate clump yonder will hide  
three or four of you with a little  
squeezing, and Schramm and his  
pipe must lie flat in the balcony.  
Four, five—who's a defaulter. We  
want everybody, for Jules must not

be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest's found out.

*2nd Stud.* All here! Only our poet's away—never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him! The airs of that fellow, that Giovacchino! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it,—when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all—whereto is this prophetic epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me—  
*“Here a mammoth-poem lies,—Fouled to death by butterflies.”* His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly.—*Æsculapius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs: Hebe's*

*plaister—One strip Cools your lip.*  
*Phœbus' emulsion—One bottle Clears*  
*your throttle. Mercury's bolus—One*  
*box Cures . . .*

*3rd. Stud.* Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

*2nd Stud.* Good! — Only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris . . .* and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy—Giovacchino!

*1st Stud.* To the point, now. Where's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh,—listen, Gottlieb, to what has called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and by: I am spokesman—the verses that

are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche—but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came singly from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone again—oh, alone, indubitably!—to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalised, heartless bunglers!—So he was heard to call us all: now, is Schramm brutalised, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

*Gott.* Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off—what do folks style it?—the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter? These love-letters, now, you call his . . . I can't laugh at them.



*4th Stud.* Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

*Gott.* His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

*4th Stud.* That's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning: there's no doubt he loves the girl—loves a model he might hire by the hour!

*Gott.* See here! "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, and the world's women beside him, in flesh; these being as much below, as those, above—his soul's aspiration: but now he is to have the real." . . . There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

*1st Stud.* Schramm! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody)—will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

*Schramm.* Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world ; look at a blossom—it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time ; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue ? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favourite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with—as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on ! Has a man done wondering at women ?—There follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men ? — There's God to wonder at : and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time,

old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus . . .

1st Stud. Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There, you see! Well, this — Jules . . . a wretched fribble—oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery—you know: there he marches first resolvedly past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye: all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla* — cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement — “In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich—I see you!” Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose

into—I say, into—the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good-bye, therefore, to poor Canova—whose gallery no longer need detain his successor Jules, the predestined novel thinker in marble!

*5th Stud.* Tell him about the women—go on to the women!

*1st Stud.* Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said) than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least: he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-*

*fanciulla*. Now I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek—girl at Malamocco ; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's " hair like sea-moss " — Schramm knows !—white and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest,—a daughter of Natalia, so she swears — that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So, first, Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydeus at the academy, and my picture was nothing to it—a profound admirer bade him persevere — would make herself known to him ere long—(Paolina, my little friend of the *Fenice*, transcribes divinely). And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms—the pale cheeks, the black hair — whatever, in short, had

struck us in our Malamocca model : we retained her name, too—Phene, which is by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature ! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress : and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and despatch ! I concocted the main of it : relations were in the way—secrecy must be observed—in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united ? St—st—Here they come !

*6th Stud.* Both of them ! Heaven's love, speak softly ! speak within yourselves !

*5th Stud.* Look at the bridegroom ! Half his hair in storm, and half in calm,—patted down over the left temple,—like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it ! and

the same old blouse that he murders the marble in!

*2nd Stud.* Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy!—rich, that your face may the better set it off!

*6th Stud.* And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

*Gott.* She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

*1st Stud.* Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

*6th Stud.* She does not speak—has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

*Gott.* How he gazes on her! Pity—pity!

*1st Stud.* They go in—now,

silence ! You three, — not nearer  
 the window, mind, than that  
 pomegranate—just where the little  
 girl, who a few minutes ago passed  
 us singing, is seated !

## II.—NOON.

*Over Orcana. The House of JULES,  
 who crosses its threshold with  
 PHENE—she is silent, on which  
 JULES begins—*

Do not die, Phene—I am yours now  
 —you  
 Are mine now—let fate reach me  
 how she likes,  
 If you'll not die—so, never die !  
 Sit here—  
 My work-room's single seat : I  
 over-lean  
 This length of hair and lustrous  
 front—they turn



Like an entire flower upward—eyes  
—lips—last

Your chin—no, last your throat  
turns—'tis their scent

Pulls down my face upon you!  
Nay, look ever

This one way till I change, grow  
you—I could

Change into you, beloved!

You by me,  
And I by you—this is your hand in  
mine—

And side by side we sit: all's true.  
Thank God!

I have spoken—speak, you!

—O, my life to come!

My Tydeus must be carved, that's  
there in clay;

Yet how be carved, with you about  
the chamber?

Where must I place you? When I  
think that once

This room-full of rough block-work  
seemed my heaven

Without you ! Shall I ever work  
again—

Get fairly into my old ways  
again—

Bid each conception stand while,  
trait by trait,

My hand transfers its lineaments to  
stone ?

Will my mere fancies live near you,  
my truth—

The live truth — passing and re-  
passing me—

Sitting beside me ?

Now speak !

Only, first,  
See, all your letters ! Was't not  
well contrived ?

Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe ;  
she keeps

Your letters next her skin : which  
drops out foremost ?

Ah,—this that swam down like a  
first moonbeam

Into my world !

Again those eyes complete  
Their melancholy survey, sweet and  
slow,  
Of all my room holds ; to return and  
rest  
On me, with pity, yet some wonder  
too—  
As if God bade some spirit plague a  
world,  
And this were the one moment of  
surprise  
And sorrow while she took her  
station, pausing  
O'er what she sees, finds good, and  
must destroy !  
What gaze you at ? Those ? Books,  
I told you of ;  
Let your first word to me rejoice  
them, too :  
This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red  
Bistre and azure by Bessarion's  
scribe—  
Read this line . . . no, shame—  
Homer's be the Greek

First breathed me from the lips of  
my Greek girl!

My Odyssey in coarse black vivid  
type

With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt  
page and page,

To mark great places with due grati-  
tude;

*“He said, and on Antinous directed  
A bitter shaft”* . . . a flower blots  
out the rest!

Again upon your search? My  
statues, then!

—Ah, do not mind that—better that  
will look

When cast in bronze—an Almaign  
Kaiser, that,

Swart-green and gold, with trun-  
cheon based on hip.

This, rather, turn to! What, un-  
recognised?

I thought you would have seen that  
here you sit

As I imagined you,—Hippolyta,

Naked upon her bright Numidian  
horse!

Recall you this, then? “Carve in  
bold relief”—

So you commanded—“carve, against  
I come,

A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion  
was,

Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-  
free,

Who rises 'neath the lifted myrtle-  
branch:

*‘Praise those who slew Hipparchus,’  
cry the guests,*

*‘While o’er thy head the singer’s  
myrtle waves*

*‘As erst above our champions’:  
stand up, all!’”*

See, I have laboured to express your  
thought!

Quite round, a cluster of mere hands  
and arms,

(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from  
all sides,

Only consenting at the branches' end  
They strain toward) serves for frame  
to a sole face—

The Praiser's—in the centre—who  
with eyes

Sightless, so bend they back to light  
inside

His brain where visionary forms  
throng up,

Sings, minding not that palpitating  
arch

Of hands and arms, nor the quick  
drip of wine

From the drenched leaves o'erhead,  
nor crowns cast off,

Violet and parsley crowns to trample  
on—

Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts  
approve,

Devoutly their unconquerable hymn !  
But you must say a "well" to that  
—say, "well !"

Because you gaze—am I fantastic,  
sweet ?

Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble  
—marbly

Even to the silence! why before I  
found

The real flesh Phene, I inured myself  
To see, throughout all nature, varied  
stuff

For better nature's birth by means  
of art:

With me, each substance tended to  
one form

Of beauty—to the human Archetype—  
On every side occurred suggestive  
germs

Of that—the tree, the flower—or take  
the fruit,—

Some rosy shape, continuing the  
peach,

Curved beewise o'er its bough; as  
rosy limbs,

Depending, nestled in the leaves—  
and just

From a cleft rose-peach the whole  
Dryad sprang!

But of the stuffs one can be master  
of,

How I divined their capabilities !

From the soft-rinded smoothening  
facile chalk

That yields your outline to the air's  
embrace,

Half-softened by a halo's pearly  
gloom ;

Down to the crisp imperious steel,  
so sure

To cut its one confided thought clean  
out

Of all the world : but marble !—  
'neath my tools

More pliable than jelly—as it were  
Some clear primordial creature dug  
from depths

In the Earth's heart, where itself  
breeds itself,

And whence all baser substance may  
be worked ;

Refine it off to air, you may—con-  
dense it



Down to the diamond ;—is not metal  
there,  
When o'er the sudden specks my  
chisel trips ?  
—Not flesh—as flake off flake I  
scale, approach,  
Lay bare those blueish veins of blood  
asleep ?  
Lurks flame in no strange windings  
where, surprised  
By the swift implement sent home  
at once,  
Flushes and glowings radiate and  
hover,  
About its track ?—

Phene ? what—why is this ?  
That whitening cheek, those still-  
dilating eyes !  
Ah, you will die—I knew that you  
would die !

PHENE *begins, on his having long  
remained silent.*

Now the end's coming—to be sure,  
it must

Have ended sometime ! Tush—why  
need I speak

Their foolish speech ? I cannot  
bring to mind

One half of it, besides ; and do not  
care

For old Natalia now, nor any of them.

Oh, you—what are you ?—if I do not  
try

To say the words Natalia made me  
learn,

To please your friends,—it is to keep  
myself

Where your voice lifted me, by  
letting it

Proceed—but can it ? Even you,  
perhaps,

Cannot take up, now you have once  
let fall,

The music's life, and me along with  
that—

No, or you would ! We'll stay,  
then, as we are

—Above the world.

You creature with the eyes !  
If I could look for ever up to them,  
As now you let me,—I believe, all  
    sin,  
All memory of wrong done or suffer-  
    ing borne,  
Would drop down, low and lower,  
    to the earth  
Whence all that's low comes, and  
    there touch and stay  
—Never to overtake the rest of me,  
All that, unspotted, reaches up to  
    you,  
Drawn by those eyes ! What rises  
    is myself,  
Not so the shame and suffering ; but  
    they sink,  
Are left, I rise above them—Keep  
    me so  
Above the world !

    But you sink, for your eyes  
Are altering—altered ! Stay — “ I  
    love you, love you ” . . .  
I could prevent it if I understood

More of your words to me—was't in  
the tone

Or the words, your power?

Or stay—I will repeat  
Their speech, if that contents you!

Only, change

No more, and I shall find it presently  
—Far back here, in the brain your-  
self filled up.

Natalia threatened me that harm  
would follow

Unless I spoke their lesson to the  
end,

But harm to me, I thought she  
meant, not you.

Your friends,—Natalia said they  
were your friends

And meant you well,—because, I  
doubted it,

Observing (what was very strange  
to see)

On every face, so different in all else,  
The same smile girls like us are used  
to bear,

But never men, men cannot stoop so  
low ;  
Yet your friends, speaking of you,  
used that smile,  
That hateful smirk of boundless self-  
conceit  
Which seems to take possession of  
this world  
And make of God their tame con-  
federate,  
Purveyor to their appetites . . .  
you know !  
But no—Natalia said they were your  
friends,  
And they assented while they smiled  
the more,  
And all came round me,—that thin  
Englishman  
With light, lank hair seemed leader  
of the rest ;  
He held a paper—“ What we want,”  
said he,  
Ending some explanation to his  
friends—

“Is something slow, involved and  
mystical,  
To hold Jules long in doubt, yet  
take his taste  
And lure him on, so that, at inner-  
most  
Where he seeks sweetness’ soul,  
he may find—this !  
—As in the apple’s core, the noisome  
fly ;  
For insects on the rind are seen at  
once,  
And brushed aside as soon, but this  
is found  
Only when on the lips or loathing  
tongue.”  
And so he read what I have got by  
heart—  
I’ll speak it,—“Do not die, love ! I  
am yours” . . .  
Stop—is not that, or like that, part  
of words  
Yourself began by speaking ?  
Strange to lose

What cost much pains to learn ! Is  
this more-right ?

*I am a painter who cannot paint ;  
In my life, a devil rather than  
saint,*

*In my brain, as poor a creature  
too—*

*No end to all I cannot do !*

*Yet do one thing at least I can—*

*Love a man, or hate a man*

*Supremely : thus my love began.*

*Through the Valley of Love I went,*

*In its lovinest spot to abide,*

*And just on the verge where I pitched  
my tent,*

*I found Hate dwelling beside.*

*(Let the Bridegroom ask what the  
painter meant,*

*Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride !)*

*And further, I traversed Hate's  
grove,*

*In its hatefullest nook to dwell ;*

*But lo, where I flung myself prone,  
couched Love*

*Where the deepest shadow fell,  
 (The meaning—those black bride's-  
 eyes above,  
 Not the painter's lip should tell!)*

“And here,” said he, “Jules prob-  
 ably will ask,  
*You have black eyes, love,—you  
 are, sure enough,  
 My peerless bride,—so do you tell,  
 indeed,  
 What needs some explanation—  
 what means this?*”

—And I am to go on, without a  
 word—

*So I grew wiser in Love and Hate,  
 From simple, that I was of late.  
 For once, when I loved, I would  
 enlace  
 Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form  
 and face  
 Of her I loved, in one embrace—  
 As if by mere love I could love  
 immensely!*



*And when I hated, I would plunge  
My sword, and wipe with the first  
lunge*

*My foe's whole life out, like a sponge—  
As if by mere hate I could hate  
intensely!*

*But now I am wiser, know better  
the fashion*

*How passion seeks aid from its  
opposite passion,*

*And if I see cause to love more, or  
hate more*

*That ever man loved, ever hated,  
before—*

*And seek in the Valley of Love,  
The spot, or the spot in Hate's Grove,  
Where my soul may the sureliest  
reach*

*The essence, nought less, of each,  
The Hate of all Hates, or the Love  
Of all Loves, in its Valley or Grove,—  
I find them the very warders*

*Each of the other's borders.*

*I love most, when Love is disguised*

*In Hate ; and when Hate is surprised  
 In Love, then I hate most : ask  
 How Love smiles through Hate's iron  
     casque,  
 Hate grins through Love's rose-  
     braided mask,—  
 And how, having hated thee,  
 I sought long and painfully  
 To wound thee, and not prick  
 The skin, but pierce to the quick,—  
 Ask this, my Jules, and be answered  
     straight  
 By thy bride—how the painter Lut-  
     wyche can hate!*

*JULES interposes.*

Lutwyche—who else? But all of  
 them, no doubt,  
 Hated me : they at Venice—presently  
 Their turn, however! You I shall  
 not meet :  
 If I dreamed, saying this would wake  
 me !

Keep

What's here, this gold—we cannot  
meet again,

Consider—and the money was but  
meant

For two years' travel, which is over  
now,

All chance, or hope, or care, or need  
of it!

This—and what comes from selling  
these, my casts

And books, and medals, except . . .  
let them go

Together, so the produce keeps you  
safe,

Out of Natalia's clutches!—If by  
chance

(For all's chance here) I should  
survive the gang

At Venice, root out all fifteen of  
them,

We might meet somewhere, since  
the world is wide—

*(From without is heard the voice  
of PIPPA, singing—*

*Give her but a least excuse to love  
me!*

*When—where—*

*How—can this arm establish her  
above me,*

*If fortune fixed her as my lady there,  
There already, to eternally reprove  
me?*

*(“Hist”—said Kate the queen;  
But “Oh—” cried the maiden, bind-  
ing her tresses,*

*“’Tis only a page that carols unseen  
“Crumbling your hounds their  
messes?”)*

*Is she wronged?—To the rescue of  
her honour,*

*My heart!*

*Is she poor?—What costs it to be  
styled a donour?*

*Merely an earth’s to cleave, a sea’s to  
part!*

*But that fortune should have thrust  
all this upon her!*

*("Nay, list,"—bade Kate the queen;  
And still cried the maiden, binding  
her tresses,*

*"'Tis only a page that carols unseen  
Fitting your haëks their jesses!")*

*(PIPPA passes.)*

JULES resumes.

What name was that the little girl  
sang forth?

Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless,  
who renounced

The crown of Cyprus to be lady  
here

At Asolo, where still the peasants  
keep

Her memory; and songs tell how  
many a page

Pined for the grace of one so far  
above

His power of doing good to, as a  
queen—

“She never could be wronged, be  
poor,” he sighed,  
“For him to help her!”

Yes, a bitter thing  
To see our lady above all need  
of us ;  
Yet so we look ere we will love ;  
not I,  
But the world looks so. If whoever  
loves  
Must be, in some sort, god or  
worshipper,  
The blessing or the blest one, queen  
or page,  
Why should we always choose the  
page's part ?  
Here is a woman with utter need of  
me,—  
I find myself queen here, it seems !  
How strange !  
Look at the woman here with the  
new soul,  
Like my own Psyche's,—fresh upon  
her lips

Alit, the visionary butterfly,  
Waiting my word to enter and make  
bright,  
Or flutter off and leave all blank as  
first.

This body had no soul before, but  
slept

Or stirred, was beauteous or un-  
gainly, free

From taint or foul with stain, as  
outward things

Fastened their image on its passive-  
ness ;

Now, it will wake, feel, live—or die  
again !

Shall to produce form out of un-  
shaped stuff

Be art—and, further, to evoke a  
soul

From form, be nothing? This new  
soul is mine !

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would  
that do?—save

A wretched dauber, men will hoot  
to death

Without me, from their laughter!—

Oh, to hear

God's voice plain as I heard it first,  
before

They broke in with that laughter!

I heard them

Henceforth, not God!

To Ancona—Greece—some isle!

I wanted silence only—there is  
clay

Everywhere. One may do whate'er  
one likes

In Art—the only thing is, to make  
sure

That one does like it—which takes  
pains to know.

Scatter all this, my Phene—this  
mad dream!

Who—what is Lutwyche—what  
Natalia's friends,

What the whole world except our  
love—my own,



Own Phene? But I told you, did  
I not,  
Ere night we travel for your land—  
some isle  
With the sea's silence on it? Stand  
aside—  
I do but break these paltry models  
up  
To begin art afresh. Shall I meet  
Lutwyche,  
And save him from my statue's  
meeting him?  
Some unsuspected isle in the far  
seas!  
Like a god going thro' his world  
there stands  
One mountain for a moment in the  
dusk,  
Whole brotherhoods of cedars on  
its brow—  
And you are ever by me while I  
gaze  
—Are in my arms as now—as now  
—as now!

Some unsuspected isle in the far  
seas !

Some unsuspected isle in far off  
seas !

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from Orcana to the Turret. Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with BLUPHOCKS, an English vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

*Bluphocks.*<sup>1</sup> So, that is your Pippa, the little girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly earned:—now, don't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business—we know he can have nothing to do with such horrors—we know that he is a saint and all that a Bishop

<sup>1</sup> "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

should be, who is a great man besides. *Oh! were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a Christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to, was the Armenian—for I have travelled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there's a sort of bleak hungry sun there), you might remark over a venerable house-porch, a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all; the young and lightsome, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity,—'twas the Grand Rabbi's abode, in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in learning Syriac—(these are vowels, you dogs, —follow my stick's end in the mud

—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*) and one morning presented myself spelling-book in hand, a, b, c,—I picked it out letter by letter, and what was the purport of this miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past you'll say—“*How Moses hocus-pocust Egypt's land with fly and locust,*”—or, “*How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish,*”—or, “*How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam;*”—in no wise! “*Shackabrach — Boach — somebody or other — Isaach, Re-ceiver, Pur-cha-ser and Ex-chan-ger of—Stolen goods!*” So talk to me of the religion of a bishop! I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—mean to live so—and die—*As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon's wherry—With food for both world's under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, and never an*

*obolus* . . . (Though thanks to you, or this Intendant thro' you, or this Bishop through his Intendant—I possess a burning pocket-full of *zwanzigers*) . . . *To pay the Stygian ferry!*

*1st. Pol.* There is the girl, then; go and deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us Signor Luigi and his mother. (*To the rest*) I have been noticing a house yonder, this long while—not a shutter unclosed since morning!

*2nd Pol.* Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here: he dozes by the hour—wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts: never molest such a household, they mean well.

*Blup.* Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa, I

must have to do with?—one could make something of that name. Pippa—that is, short for Felippa—rhyming to—*Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believ'st thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

*2nd Pol.* Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *swan-ziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out—the afternoon's over or nearly so.

*3rd Pol.* Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? what's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool's busy watching.)

*2nd Pol.* Flourish all round—“put all possible obstacles in his way;” oblong dot at the end—“Detain him till further advices reach you;” scratch at bottom—

“ send him back on pretence of some informality in the above ; ” ink-spirt on right-hand side, (which is the case here)—“ Arrest him at once,” why and wherefore, I don’t concern myself, but my instructions amount to this : if Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for Vienna, well and good—the passport deposited with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well ; but let him stay over to-night—there has been the pretence we suspect—the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct—we arrest him at once—to-morrow comes Venice—and presently, Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal sure enough ! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

## III.—EVENING.

*Inside the Turret. LUIGI and  
his Mother entering.*

*Mother.* If there blew wind, you'd  
hear a long sigh, easing  
The utmost heaviness of music's  
heart.

*Luigi.* Here in the archway?

*Mother.* Oh no, no—in farther,  
Where the echo is made—on the  
ridge.

*Luigi.* Here surely, then.  
How plain the tap of my heel as I  
leaped up!

Hark—"Lucius Junius!" The very  
ghost of a voice,

Whose body is caught and kept by  
. . . what are those?

Mere withered wall-flowers, waving  
overhead?

They seem an elvish group with  
thin bleached hair



Who lean out of their topmost  
fortress—looking  
And listening, mountain men, to  
what we say,  
Hands under chin of each grave  
earthy face :  
Up and show faces all of you !—  
“ *All of you !* ”

That’s the king’s dwarf with the  
scarlet comb : now hark—  
Come down and meet your fate !  
Hark—“ *Meet your fate !* ”

*Mother.* Let him not meet it, my  
Luigi—do not  
Go to his City ! putting crime aside,  
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned—  
Your Pellicos and writers for effect,  
Write for effect.

*Luigi.* Hush ! say A. writes,  
and B.

*Mother.* These A’s and B’s write  
for effect, I say.  
Then, evil is in its nature loud,  
while good

Is silent — you hear each petty  
injury—

None of his daily virtues ; he is old,  
Quiet, and kind, and densely stupid  
—why

Do A. and B. not kill him them-  
selves?

*Luigi.* They teach  
Others to kill him—me—and, if I  
fail,

Others to succeed ; now, if A. tried  
and failed

I could not teach that : mine's the  
lesser task.

Mother, they visit night by night . . .

*Mother.* —You, Luigi?

Ah, will you let me tell you what  
you are?

*Luigi.* Why not? Oh, the one  
thing you fear to hint,

You may assure yourself I say and  
say

Ever to myself : at times—nay, even  
as now

We sit, I think my mind is touched  
—suspect

All is not sound : but is not knowing  
that,

What constitutes one sane or other-  
wise?

I know I am thus—so all is right  
again!

I laugh at myself as through the  
town I walk,

And see men merry as if no  
Italy

Were suffering ; then I ponder—“ I  
am rich,

Young, healthy ; why should this  
fact trouble me,

More than it troubles these ? ”  
But it does trouble me !

No—trouble’s a bad word—for as I  
walk

There’s springing and melody and  
giddiness,

And old quaint turns and passages  
of my youth—

Dreams long forgotten, little in  
themselves—

Return to me—whatever may amuse  
me,

And earth seems in a truce with me,  
and heaven

Accords with me, all things suspend  
their strife,

The very cicalas laugh “There goes  
he, and there!

Feast him, the time is short—he  
is on his way

For the world’s sake—feast him  
this once, our friend!”

And in return for all this, I can trip  
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps: I

go

This evening, mother!

*Mother.*

But mistrust

yourself—

Mistrust the judgment you pro-  
nounce on him.

*Luigi.* Oh, there I feel—am sure  
that I am right!

*Mother.* Mistrust your judgment,  
then, of the mere means  
Of this wild enterprise : say you are  
right,—  
How should one in your state e'er  
bring to pass  
What would require a cool head, a  
cold heart,  
And a calm hand? You never will  
escape.

*Luigi.* Escape—to even wish that,  
would spoil all !  
The dying is best part of it. Too  
much  
Have I enjoyed these fifteen years  
of mine,  
To leave myself excuse for longer  
life—  
Was not life pressed down, running  
o'er with joy,  
That I might finish with it ere my  
fellows  
Who, sparelier feasted, make a  
longer stay?

I was put at the board-head, helped  
to all

At first; I rise up happy and  
content.

God must be glad one loves his  
world so much—

I can give news of earth to all the  
dead

Who ask me:—last year's sunsets,  
and great stars

That had a right to come first and  
see ebb

The crimson wave that drifts the  
sun away—

Those crescent moons with notched  
and burning rims

That strengthened into sharp fire,  
and there stood,

Impatient of the azure—and that  
day

In March, a double rainbow stopped  
the storm—

May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit  
summer nights—

Gone are they, but I have them in  
my soul!

*Mother.* (He will not go!)

*Luigi.* You smile at  
me! 'Tis true.—

Voluptuousness, grotesqueness,  
ghastliness,

Environ my devotedness as quaintly  
As round about some antique altar  
wreath

The rose festoons, goats' horns, and  
oxen's skulls.

*Mother.* See now: you reach the  
city—you must cross

His threshold—how?

*Luigi.* Oh, that's if we  
conspired!

Then would come pains in plenty, as  
you guess—

But guess not how the qualities re-  
quired

For such an office—qualities I have—  
Would little stead me otherwise em-  
ployed,

Yet prove of rarest merit here—here  
only.

Every one knows for what his excel-  
lence

Will serve, but no one ever will con-  
sider

For what his worst defect might  
serve; and yet

Have you not seen me range our  
coppice yonder

In search of a distorted ash?—it  
happens

The wry spoilt branch's a natural  
perfect bow!

Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-pre-  
cautioned man

Arriving at the palace on my  
errand!

No, no—I have a handsome dress  
packed up—

White satin here, to set off my black  
hair—

In I shall march—for you may watch  
your life out



Behind thick walls—make friends  
there to betray you ;  
More than one man spoils every-  
thing. March straight—  
Only, no clumsy knife to fumble  
for—  
Take the great gate, and walk (not  
saunter) on  
Thro' guards and guards——I have  
rehearsed it all  
Inside the Turret here a hundred  
times—  
Don't ask the way of whom you  
meet, observe,  
But where they cluster thickliest is  
the door  
Of doors ; they'll let you pass—they'll  
never blab  
Each to the other, he knows not the  
favourite,  
Whence he is bound and what's his  
business now—  
Walk in—straight up to him—you  
have no knife—

Be prompt, how should he scream?

Then, out with you!

Italy, Italy, my Italy!

You're free, you're free! Oh mother,  
I could dream

They got about me—Andrea from  
his exile,

Pier from his dungeon, Gaultier from  
his grave!

*Mother.* Well, you shall go. Yet  
seems this patriotism

The easiest virtue for a selfish  
man

To acquire! He loves himself—and  
next, the world—

If he must love beyond,—but nought  
between:

As a short-sighted man sees nought  
midway

His body and the sun above. But you  
Are my adored Luigi—ever obedient  
To my least wish, and running o'er  
with love—

I could not call you cruel or unkind!

Once more, your ground for killing  
him!—then go!

*Luigi.* Now do you ask me, or  
make sport of me?

How first the Austrians got these  
provinces—

(If that is all, I'll satisfy you soon)

. . . Never by conquest but by cunning,  
for

That treaty whereby . . .

*Mother.* Well?

*Luigi.* (Sure  
he's arrived,

The tell-tale cuckoo—spring's his  
confidant,

And he lets out her April purposes!)

Or . . . better go at once to modern  
times—

He has . . . they have . . . in  
fact, I understand

But can't re-state the matter; that's  
my boast;

Others could reason it out to you,  
and prove

Things they have made me feel.

*Mother.*

Why

go to-night?

Morn's for adventure. Jupiter is  
now

A morning star. I cannot hear you,  
Luigi!

*Luigi.* "I am the bright and  
morning-star," God saith--

And, "to such an one I give the  
morning-star!"

The gift of the morning-star—have  
I God's gift

Of the morning-star?

*Mother.*

Chiara will love

to see

That Jupiter an evening-star next  
June.

*Luigi.* True, mother. Well for  
those who live through June!

Great noontides, thunder storms, all  
glaring pomps

Which triumph at the heels of  
sovereign June

Leading his glorious revel thro' our  
world.

Yes, Chiara will be here—

*Mother.*

In June

—remember,

Yourself appointed that month for  
her coming—

*Luigi.* Was that low noise the  
echo?

*Mother.*

The night-wind.

She must be grown—with her blue  
eyes upturned

As if life were one long and sweet  
surprise :

In June she comes.

*Luigi.*

We were to see

together

The Titian at Treviso—there, again !

*(From without is heard the voice  
of PIPPA, singing—*

*A king lived long ago,*

*In the morning of the world,*

*When earth was nigher heaven  
than now :*

*And the king's locks curled  
Disparting o'er a forehead full  
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn  
and horn*

*Of some sacrificial bull—  
Only calm as a babe new-born :  
For he was got to a sleepy mood,  
So safe from all decrepitude,  
From age with its bane, so sure  
gone by,*

*(The Gods so loved him while he  
dreamed,)*

*That, having lived thus long, there  
seemed*

*No need the king should ever die.*

*Luigi.* No need that sort of king  
should ever die !

*[From without.] Among the rocks  
his city was :*

*Before his palace, in the sun,*

He sate to see his people pass,      we  
And judge them every one      h  
From its threshold of smooth stone.  
They haled him many a valley-thief  
Caught in the sheep-pens—robber-  
chief,  
Swarthy and shameless—beggard-  
cheat—  
Spy-prowler—or rough pirate found  
On the sea-sand left aground ;  
And sometimes clung about his feet,  
With bleeding lip and burning  
cheek,  
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak  
Of one with sullen thickset brows :  
And sometimes from the prison-house  
The angry priests a pale wretch  
brought,  
Who through some chink had  
pushed and pressed,  
On knees and elbows, belly and  
breast,  
Worm-like into the temple,—caught  
At last there by the very God

*Who ever in the darkness strode  
Backward and forward, keeping watch  
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to  
catch!*

*And these, all and every one,  
The king judged, sitting in the sun.*

*Luigi.* That king should still judge  
sitting in the sun!

[*From without.*] *His councillors, on  
left and right,*

*Looked anxious up,—but no surprise  
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes,  
Where the very blue had turned to  
white.*

*'Tis said, a Python scared one day  
The breathless city, till he came,  
With forked tongue and eyes on flame,  
Where the old king sate to judge  
alway;*

*But when he saw the sweepy hair,  
Girt with a crown of berries rare  
Which the God will hardly give to  
wear*



*To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare  
In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch  
lights,  
At his wondrous forest rites,—  
Beholding this, he did not dare,  
Approach that threshold in the sun,  
Assault the old king smiling there.  
Such grace had kings when the world  
began!*

(PIPPA *passes.*)

*Luigi.* And such grace have they,  
now that the world ends!  
The Python in the city, on the throne,  
And brave men, God would crown  
for slaying him,  
Lurks in bye-corners lest they fall  
his prey.  
Are crowns yet to be won, in this  
late trial,  
Which weakness makes me hesitate  
to reach?  
'Tis God's voice calls, how could I  
stay? Farewell!

*Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from the Turret to the Bishop's brother's House, close to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor Girls sitting on the steps.*

*1st Girl.* There goes a swallow  
to Venice — the stout sea-  
farer !

Seeing those birds fly, makes one  
wish for wings.

Let us all wish ; you, wish first !

*2nd Girl.* I ? This sunset  
To finish.

*3rd Girl.* That old . . . some-  
body I know,  
Gayer and older than my grand-  
father,  
To give me the same treat he gave  
last week—  
Feeding me on his knee with fig-  
peckers,  
Lampreys, and red Breganze-wine,  
and mumbling

The while some folly about how well  
I fare,

To be let eat my supper quietly—  
Since had he not himself been late  
this morning

Detained at—never mind where,—  
had he not . . .

“Eh, baggage, had I not!”—

*2nd Girl.* How she  
can lie!

*3rd Girl.* Look there — by the  
nails—

*2nd Girl.* What makes  
your fingers red?

*3rd Girl.* Dipping them into wine  
to write bad words with,

On the bright table—how he laughed!

*1st Girl.* My turn:

Spring's come and summer's coming:  
I would wear

A long loose gown—down to the  
feet and hands—

With plaits here, close about the  
throat, all day:

And all night lie, the cool long  
nights, in bed—

And have new milk to drink—apples  
to eat,

Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats  
. . . ah, I should say,

This is away in the fields—miles !

*3rd Girl.* Say at once  
You'd be at home—she'd always be  
at home !

Now comes the story of the farm  
among

The cherry orchards, and how April  
snowed

White blossoms on her as she ran ;  
why, fool,

They've rubbed out the chalk-  
mark of how tall you were,

Twisted your starling's neck, broken  
his cage,

Made a dunghill of your garden—

*1st Girl.* They, destroy  
My garden since I left them? well—  
perhaps !

I would have done so—so I hope  
they have !

A fig-tree curled out of our cottage  
wall—

They called it mine, I have forgotten  
why,

It must have been there long ere I  
was born ;

Cric—cric—I think I hear the wasps  
o'erhead

Pricking the papers strung to flutter  
there

And keep off birds in fruit-time—  
coarse long papers,

And the wasps eat them, prick them  
through and through.

*3rd Girl.* How her mouth twitches!  
Where was I?—before

She broke in with her wishes and  
long gowns

And wasps—would I be such a fool !  
—Oh, here !

This is my way—I answer every  
one

Who asks me why I make so much  
of him—

(If you say you love him—straight  
“ he'll not be gulled ”)

“ He that seduced me when I was  
a girl

Thus high—had eyes like yours, or  
hair like yours,

Brown, red, white,”—as the case  
may be—that pleases !

(See how that beetle burnishes in  
the path—

There sparkles he along the dust!  
and, there—

Your journey to that maize-tuft's  
spoilt at least !)

*1st Girl.* When I was young,  
they said if you killed one

Of those sunshiny beetles, that his  
friend

Up there, would shine no more that  
day nor next.

*2nd Girl.* When you were young?  
Nor are you young, that's true !

How your plump arms, that were,  
have dropped away !

Why, I can span them ! Cecco  
beats you still ?

No matter, so you keep your curious  
hair.

I wish they'd find a way to dye our  
hair

Your colour—any lighter tint, indeed,  
Than black—the men say they are  
sick of black,

Black eyes, black hair !

*4th Girl.* Sick of yours, like  
enough !

Do you pretend you ever tasted  
lampreys

And ortolans ? Giovita, of the  
palace,

Engaged (but there's no trusting  
him) to slice me

Polenta with a knife that has cut up  
An ortolan.

*2nd Girl.* Why, there ! is not  
that, Pippa

We are to talk to, under the window,  
—quick,—

Where the lights are?

*1st Girl.* No—or she would sing;  
—For the Intendant said . . .

*3rd Girl.* Oh, you sing first—  
Then, if she listens and comes close  
. . . I'll tell you,

Sing that song the young English  
noble made,

Who took you for the purest of  
the pure,

And meant to leave the world for  
you—what fun!

*2nd Girl.* [*Sings.*]

You'll love me yet!—and I can  
tarry

Your love's protracted grow-  
ing.

June reared that bunch of  
flowers you carry

From seeds of April's sowing.



I plant a heartfull now—some  
seed  
At least is sure to strike  
And yield — what you'll not  
pluck indeed,  
Not love, but, may be, like !

You'll look at least on love's  
remains,  
A grave's one violet :  
Your look ? — that pays a  
thousand pains.  
What's death ?—You'll love me  
yet !

*3rd Girl.* [*To PIPPA who approaches.*] Oh, you may come closer—we shall not eat you ! Why, you seem the very person that the great rich handsome Englishman has fallen so violently in love with ! I'll tell you all about it.

## IV.—NIGHT.

*The Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR, dismissing his Attendants.

*Mon.* Thanks, friends, many thanks. I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a repast prepared? *Benedicto benedicatur . . . ugh . . . ugh!* Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather,—but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here: To be sure, when 'twas full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go,

my friends, but go! [*To the Intendant*]. Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo!

*Inten.* Uguccio—

*Mon.* . . . 'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossombruno;—what I do need instructing about, are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts: take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however: are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

*Inten.* Do you choose this especial night to question me?

*Mon.* This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother—fourteen years and a month, all but three days. On the 3rd of December, I find him . . .

*Inten.* If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back—they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

*Mon.* Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this 3rd of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor, I did my utmost to advance, that the church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvellous change that has happened in his notions of art: here's his letter,—“ He never had a clearly conceived Ideal within his brain till to-day. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel, he has practised expressing other men's Ideals—and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate

failure—his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit: there is but one method of escape—confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics,”—strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

*Inten.* Is Correggio a painter?

*Mon.* Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may—probably will, fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way by a poet, now, or a musician (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel), transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional

roads by pure ignorance of them ; eh, Ugo ? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo !

*Inten.* Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours : first, you select the group of which I formed one,—next you thin it gradually,—always retaining me with your smile,—and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls : and now then ? Let this farce, this chatter end now—what is it you want with me ?

*Mon.* Ugo . . .

*Inten.* From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*,—and your nod at the end meant,—what ?

*Mon.* Possibly that I wished for

no loud talk here: if once you set me coughing, Ugo!—

*Inten.* I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

*Mon.* I had better not.—I should rip up old disgraces—let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli (which, I forgot to observe, is your true name), was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena?

*Inten.* No, nor needs be—for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him . . .

*Mon.* Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *podere*, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp! Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century

have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under Heaven : my own father . . . rest his soul!—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest : my dear two dead brothers were, — what you know tolerably well ; I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth, but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source ; or if from this, by contrast only, — for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however ; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stay the consequences of his crime ; and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with ;



what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villainous seize. Because, to pleasure myself, apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw,—am I therefore to let you, the off-scouring of the earth, seduce the poor and ignorant, by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *podores* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No . . . if my cough would but allow me to speak!

*Inten.* What am I to expect? You are going to punish me?

*Mon.* Must punish you, Maffeo I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or

two of life to do it in ! How should I dare to say . . .

*Inten.* “Forgive us our trespasses”—

*Mon.* My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud, perhaps : shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning ?—I ?—who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less, keep others out. No—I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

*Inten.* And suppose the villas are not your brother’s to give, nor yours to take ? Oh, you are hasty enough just now !

*Mon.* 1, 2—No. 3 !—ay, can you read the substance of a letter, No. 3, I have received from Rome ? It

is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of that infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir,

and that heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes, and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come, now!

*Inten.* So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face, or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly—the child is always ready to produce—as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

*Mon.* Liar!

*Inten.* Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity (which happens commonly

thrice a year). If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

*Mon.* I see thro' the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once; all shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

*Inten.* And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal, dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death—let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—know nothing of her or me! I see her every day—saw her this morning: of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three

years, and I can entice her thither—have, indeed, begun operations already. There's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned, English knave I and the Police employ occasionally.—You assent, I perceive—no, that's not it—assent I do not say—but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'Tis but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her! 'Tis as well settled once and for ever: some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for somebody: and once Pippa entangled!—you conceive? Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

*(From without is heard the voice of  
PIPPA, singing—*

*Over-head the tree-tops meet—  
Flowers and grass spring 'neath  
one's feet—  
There was nought above me, and  
nought below,  
My childhood had not learned to  
know!  
For, what are the voices of birds  
—Ay, and of beasts,—but words—  
our words,  
Only so much more sweet?  
The knowledge of that with my life  
begun!  
But I had so near made out the  
sun,  
And counted your stars, the Seven  
and One,  
Like the fingers of my hand:  
Nay, I could all but understand  
Wherefore through heaven the white  
moon ranges;*

*And just when out of her soft fifty  
changes*

*No unfamiliar face might overlook  
me—*

*Suddenly God took me!*

(PIPPA *passes.*)

*Mon.* [*Springing up.*] My people  
—one and all—all—within there!  
Gag this villain—tie him hand and  
foot! He dares—I know not half  
he dares—but remove him quick!  
*Miserere mei, Domine!*—quick, I  
say!

*PIPPA'S Chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,  
The mouse at her dray,  
The grub in its tomb,  
Wile winter away;  
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and  
lob-worm, I pray,  
How fare they?



Ha, ha, best thanks for your counsel,  
my Zanze—

“Feast upon lampreys, quaff the  
Breganze”—

The summer of life’s so easy to  
spend,

And care for to-morrow so soon put  
away!

But winter hastens at summer’s end,  
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm,  
pray,

How fare they?

No bidding me then to . . . what  
did she say?

“Pare your nails pearlwise, get  
your small feet shoes

More like . . . (what said she?)—  
and, less like canoes—”

How pert that girl was!—would I  
be those pert

Impudent staring women! it had  
done me,

However, surely no such mighty  
hurt

To learn his name who passed that  
jest upon me :

No foreigner, that I can recollect,  
Came, as she says, a month since,  
to inspect

Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes  
and thick rings

Of English-coloured hair, at all  
events.

Well—if old Luca keeps his good  
intents,

We shall do better : see what next  
year brings !

I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not  
appear

More destitute than you, [perhaps,  
next year !

Bluph . . . something ! I had  
caught the uncouth name

But for Monsignor's people's sudden  
clatter

Above us—bound to spoil such idle  
chatter

As ours ; it were, indeed, a serious  
matter

If silly talk like ours should put to  
shame

The pious man, the man devoid of  
blame,

The . . . ah, but—ah, but, all the  
same,

No mere mortal has a right

To carry that exalted air ;

Best people are not angels quite—

While—not the worst of people's  
doings scare

The devils ; so there's that proud  
look to spare !

Which is mere counsel to myself,  
mind ! for

I have just been the holy Monsignor !

And I was you too, Luigi's gentle  
mother,

And you too, Luigi !—how that Luigi  
started

Out of the Turret—doubtlessly de-  
parted

On some good errand or another,  
For he past just now in a traveller's  
trim,

And the sullen company that prowled  
About his path, I noticed, scowled  
As if they had lost a prey in  
him.

And I was Jules the sculptor's  
bride,

And I was Ottima beside,  
And now what am I? — tired of  
fooling!

Day for folly, night for schooling!  
New year's day is over and spent,  
Ill or well, I must be content!

Even my lily's asleep, I vow:  
Wake up — here's a friend I've  
pluckt you!

See — call this flower a heart's-ease  
now!

And something rare, let me instruct  
you,

Is this — with petals triply swollen,  
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen.

While the leaves and parts that with  
ness

The old proportions and their fitness  
Here remain, unchanged unmoved  
now—

So call this pampered thing improved  
now !

Suppose there's a king of the  
flowers

And a girl-show held in his bowers—

“Look ye, buds, this growth of  
ours,”

Says he, “Zanze from the Brenta,  
I have made her gorge polenta

Till both cheeks are near as bounc-  
ing

As her . . . name there's no pro-  
nouncing !

See this heightened colour too—

For she swilled Breganze wine

Till her nose turned deep carmine—

'Twas but white when wild she  
grew !

And only by this Zanze's eyes

Of which we could not change the  
size,  
The magnitude of what's achieved  
Otherwise, may be perceived!"

Oh what a drear, dark close to my  
poor day!

How could that red sun drop in that  
black cloud!

Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is moved  
away,

Dispensed with, never more to be  
allowed,

Day's turn is over—now arrives the  
night's—

Oh, Lark, be day's apostle

To mavis, merle and throstle,

Bid them their betters jostle

From day and its delights!

But at night, brother Howlet, far  
over the woods,

Toll the world to thy chantry—

Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods

Full complines with gallantry—

Then, owls and bats, cowls and  
twats,

Monks and nuns, in a cloister's  
moods,

Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry !

*[After she has begun to undress  
herself.]*

Now, one thing I should like really  
to know :

How near I ever might approach all  
these

I only fancied being, this long day—  
—Approach, I mean, so as to touch  
them—so

As to . . . in some way . . . move  
them—if you please,

Do good or evil to them some slight  
way.

For instance, if I wind

Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind

*[Sitting on the bedside.]*

And border Ottima's cloak's hem—

Ah, me and my important part with  
them,

This morning's hymn half promised  
when I rose!

True in some sense or other, I  
suppose,

Though I passed by them all, and  
felt no sign.

*[As she lies down.*

God bless me! I can pray no more  
to-night.

No doubt, some way or other, hymns  
say right.

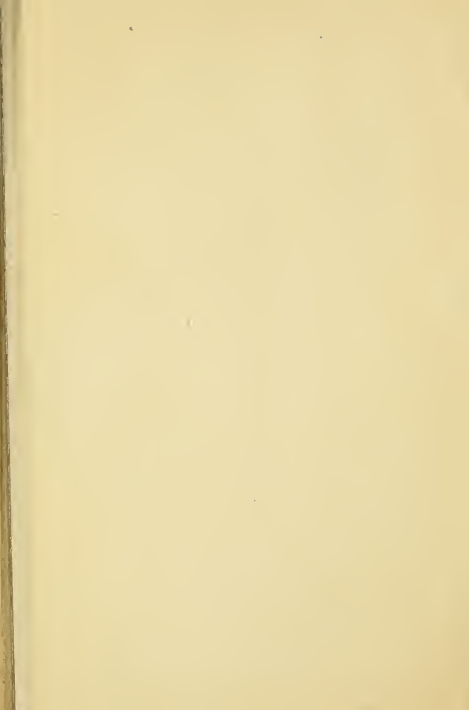
*All service is the same with God—*

*With God, whose puppets, best and  
worst,*

*Are we: there is no last nor first.—*

*[She sleeps.*









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