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PIPPA PASSES



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TORONTO

Pippa Passes

A Drama

By

Robert Browning

Edited by

Edward A. Parker, M.A., Ph.D.

Elphinstone College, Bombay

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION - - - - -	vii
PERSONS - - - - -	xiv
PIPPA PASSES ·	
Introduction - - - - -	1
Part I Morning - - - - -	9
Part II. · Noon - - - - -	26
Part III · Evening - - - - -	41
Part IV. Night - - - - -	53
NOTES - - - - -	65
BOOKS ON BROWNING FOR FURTHER STUDY - -	75
AFTERTHOUGHTS - - - - -	76

INTRODUCTION

WALKING in Dulwich Wood some time in 1839, Robert Browning, then a young and unknown poet of twenty-seven, was meditating the re-shaping of a long poem he had nearly finished on an early medieval Italian poet Sordello, which should show the growth of his soul, when 'the image flashed upon him of one walking thus alone through life, one apparently too obscure to leave a trace of his or her passage, yet exercising a lasting though unconscious influence at every step of it, and the image shaped itself into the little silk-winder of Asolo, Felippa or Pippa'

This is the account by a friend of Browning's, Mrs Sutherland Orr, of the origin of *Pippa Passes*, and large parts of the poem were composed under the trees of Dulwich Wood. There is a feeling of the open air whenever Pippa appears, and her song that closes the fourth scene and awakens Monsignor's conscience describes just such a scene as the poet might have written it in and the intense feeling for the life of nature which he is known to have had.

Italy as the background for the poem was suggested by a journey—his first to the country—which Browning had made in 1838 for the special purpose of completing *Sordello* 'among the scenes which it describes'

Reaching Venice by sea at the end of May, he had walked westward through Castelfranco to Bassano and then stopped four days in 'sparkling Asolo' near by, before passing on to Possagno. There is a passage at the end of *Sordello* describing

‘ a child barefoot and rosy ’ climbing a hill in Asolo in the early morning—

‘ Up and up goes he, singing all the while
Some unintelligible words to beat
The lark, God’s poet, swooning at his feet ’

The passage was written after *Pippa Passes*, in all probability, and seems related with her—though the ‘ barefoot child ’ is a boy—because of the early morning setting and the lark, which we recognise as Pippa’s also, and it pleases the fancy at least to suppose that the Sordello picture may point back to some child thus seen by the poet in Asolo, and that this child was endowed with character and purpose later, during a mood of poetic conception in Dulwich Wood, to make Pippa.

The idea of *Pippa*, then, is of an obscure and apparently insignificant human being becoming, unconsciously, the instrument of a power no less than Divine to affect others’ lives for good. It is a strongly humanitarian idea, found in this almost doctrinaire form only in the poet’s earlier work, though the figure of Pompilia in *The Ring and the Book* of twenty-five years later suffices to show how convincingly Browning always believed in the power of innocent goodness and loved to illustrate his faith artistically. His ‘ stress,’ as he wrote in the foreword to *Sordello*, lay then and in all the poetic work of his life ‘ on the incidents in the development of a soul · little else ’ being ‘ worth study ’ But both *Sordello* and *Pippa* manifest a passion, not elsewhere found in Browning’s work, for the betterment of mankind—in the general in *Sordello*, in particular persons in *Pippa*—which is traceable to the influence of Shelley’s fiery enthusiasm in the same cause.

Pippa, therefore, holds a somewhat peculiar place in Browning’s poetry for its tendency ; a second peculiarity is its form. Its author calls it a ‘ drama ’ on its title-page, and a ‘ poem ’ in the dedication. Browning had, in fact, not yet discovered where his poetic strength lay, viz. in the dramatic monologue, which is a poem and a drama at once. He had, just

previously, written a play, *Strafford*, that had been acted with only moderate success, and *Pippa* was the first of a series of plays more suited to reading than acting, and therefore printed and not produced. This series he called *Bells and Pomegranates*, meaning a combination of music and intellectual matter—the metaphor being taken from the Jewish high-priest's dress as described in Exodus xxviii 33 and 34—and publication was in parts, in the style which Dickens had just before employed very successfully for *Pickwick Papers*. The second part was a play, already written for the stage but not put on the boards, but Part III. was a volume significantly called *Dramatic Lyrics*.

The poet was, indeed, feeling his way towards a form intermediate between the two well-understood kinds of drama and lyric, a form that should allow play for his intense consciousness of dramatic change in human character and yet be free of the, to him, hampering conditions of stage representation. In earlier ages, while poetic art depended on the actual human voice, whether of the epic rhapsodist or the dramatic actor or lyric singer, for its dissemination, the three great poetic forms of epic, drama and lyric might remain fairly distinguishable, but with the replacement of little communities like Athens or Elizabethan London by audiences beyond the bounds of a single city, and with the superseding of speech by printing, hybrid forms were certain to appear, suitable to be read at home and to be broadcast by the press.

Each of the four 'parts' of *Pippa* reveals that Browning's interest lay in a particular one of the 'incidents in the development of a soul,' namely, in the crisis when a soul, perhaps once in a lifetime, decides between two possible courses of action, one that saves or the other that destroys. The poet's method is to present the human soul in a crisis, ready for the supreme act of decision, it is made clear what forces are at work for evil or for good and what the soul's state of tension is between them. A touch, a hint, from without, or a slight motion of the will from within, may decide the issue. This is the

'dramatic' state in Browning, and, so far, his work is dramatic in intention.

But, from the first poems he ever published, he used one method only of presentation of the dramatic, that of making the chief personage—the protagonist of the situation—describe what is going on within him, the complexity of emotions or arguments he is stirred by, so that the situation elucidated itself and was also sometimes solved by this exposition. This method of exposition is the lyrical, just as the situation, on the other hand, was dramatic. Hence, Browning invented the title *Dramatic Lyrics* for the first work which he recognised to be hybrid

Pippa came before that recognition, and is, therefore, called in one place a 'drama,' although never meant to be acted, and in another a 'poem,' though it is instinct with drama

Fundamentally, it is a drama, being divided into scenes and having various actors and speakers in each scene. But the scenes are connected by a thread of story extraneous to them—the day's wandering of Pippa, of the course and idea of which all the actors in the four parts are ignorant—and by a person, Pippa herself, who is endowed with a character and pursues a life elevated, exquisite and apart (save for the often censured and never quite satisfying identification of her with Monsignor's niece), and the formal name of Idyll suits best such a person and story. If we are left free, therefore, to classify it, the likeliest name to give its form is that of an 'idyllic drama.'

The whole is made up of an introduction, four scenes called 'parts' by the poet, three 'talks by the way' which we have called 'interludes' as being 'actions between the scenes' and numbered for convenience of reference, and a concluding scene parallel to the introduction which we have therefore called 'epilogue' for the like convenience

The development of the main action in the 'idyllic drama'—the decisive influence exerted by the unconscious good of Pippa upon four groups of people in turn—needs no fuller exposition than Browning himself gives it. Of the four

parts, admittedly far the most powerful, and most profoundly studied in its knowledge of the human soul, is the first. The crisis in the lives of Ottima and Sebald is presented with a force and frequency not far below Shakespeare's, there is an Elizabethan quality in the situation, and Ottima recalls strongly the type of tragic heroine preferred by Webster and rendered magnificent in *Lady Macbeth*. The study of Jules and Phene, concentrated upon the former character, has, on the other hand, much of the stillness of Art in contrast with the Nature of Ottima and Sebald, and the memorable passages in it are those descriptive of art objects and the characteristics of marble in the sculptor's hands. Part III reveals Browning's nascent interest in the Italian struggle for liberty, which Mrs Browning and he were to watch through its great period from ten to twenty years later. Part IV—in prose, to show the contrast of its matter-of-fact substance with the passions and idealism of the other three parts—depends for its place along with the others on the startling final revelation of the duplicity of the Intendant who allows Monsignor to have the best of the exchanges till the very end and then, in the act of pretending to confess the mass of his crimes to the bishop, entraps his confessor-judge into abetting his escape at the price of the obscure Pippa—would have entrapped him, that is, but that Pippa, singing of innocence at that moment, broke a way of escape for Monsignor which he took.

The outstanding popularity of *Pippa Passes* among all Browning's works depends on Pippa herself, to whom other characters and their doings are entirely subordinate

‘ God's puppets, best and worst,
 Are we, there is no last nor first,’

she sings, and it is the poet's purpose to make us feel that her cheerful subordination of self to Divine purposes which she cannot fathom endows her with a miraculous power over human lives apparently far more commanding and important than her own.

Of the optimism of

‘ God’s in his heaven—
All’s right with the world ! ’

which is so regularly transferred from Pippa to the poet who created her, it is not necessary to say more than that such a transference is as uncritical as the attribution to Shakespeare himself of Hamlet’s opinion, ‘ Frailty, thy name is woman ! ’ By the unthinking a dramatist is steadily confused with one or other of his leading creations, and their views and opinions are fathered upon him in his private capacity. The most tempting is the identification here between Pippa and Browning because the poet is generally known as a thoroughgoing optimist, this pair of lines, therefore, offers itself as a convenient summary of his faith. Nothing, however, could be more careless and false than this identification. Pippa has her faith, and Browning has his, and the distinctions between the two become plainer and more numerous as progress is made in the absorption and understanding of Browning’s other work.

It is not Pippa’s philosophy, however, that wins us, but herself. Since it is in dramatic action that we see her, parallels to her character and influence spring naturally to the mind from Shakespeare, and particularly from his last plays. Her maidenliness is like that of Miranda, her innocence quells lust as does Marina’s in *Pericles*; she has been abandoned to fate like Perdita, and like her is queen of the spring-time and all its flowers and living creatures, and finally, though she can be but fourteen or fifteen like Shakespeare’s heroines, she combines subtly that purity which defies all corruption and that kind of fore-knowledge of the world’s black ways and that healthy contempt of them which endear Imogen to our hearts.

Strong critical objection has been raised to the identification of Pippa with Monsignor’s niece on the ground that the whole beauty of Pippa’s part is that she exists quite apart from the worlds of the characters whom she influences. Mr. Chesterton

calls it a 'whiff from an Adelphi melodrama,' excellent in its place but totally un-witted here.

It must be recognised, first of all, that the identification is entirely unnecessary from the dramatic point of view. Maffeo could still have held the threat of a living niece over Monsignor without that niece being Pippa, and Monsignor still have been dragged from the depths of temptation by Pippa's song without her being his niece. Further, the necessity now imposed on Browning of exposing Pippa to Maffeo's plot brings into the play a personage who is surely unnecessary, Bluphocks, for whose unconcealed ugliness the poet must even give a kind of scriptural defence.

Nevertheless, and in spite of all these telling objections, there is one thing to be said for the identification. Pippa's altruistic love, though of the kind that expects and desires no reward, is just of that kind that most securely binds the whole world together, irrespective of natural bonds of any description. That is to say, men naturally love their intimates, their blood-brethren, their countrymen, those of like mind with themselves, these are natural bonds, and such love brings its own reward in tightened bonds and mutual benefactions as well as in the exercise of the love itself. That is only human, one might say. So, likewise, it seems that the poet designs that in such a love as Pippa's, regardless of all human necessity, the Divine shall play a part and, just as returns come to a natural human love which that love never calculated on nor aimed at, so God shall play His part, an entirely incalculable one as Browning always represents it to be (*e.g.* in *Instans Tyrannus*), in response to Pippa's love. The strongly humanitarian cast over this poem and the preceding one, *Sordello*, has been already mentioned, and it is not strange, therefore, if Browning, to demonstrate signally his early faith that the Divine plays at once a powerful and inscrutable part in human affairs, should have made the identity of Pippa the grand proof of this Divine humanitarianism, even at the cost of the dramatic satisfactoriness of the poem.

PERSONS

PIPPA.

OTTIMA

SEBALD

Foreign Students.

GOTTLIEB.

SCHRAMM.

JULES.

PHENE.

Austrian Police.

BLUPHOCKS

LUIGI *and his* Mother

Poor Girls

MONSIGNOR *and his Attendants.*

PIPPA PASSES

1841

INTRODUCTION

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN.

SCENE.—*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 suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid grey
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away ,
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed, 10
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 ! 20

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,
 Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good—
 Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, going,
 As if earth turned from work in gamesome mood—
 All shall be mine ! But thou must treat me not
 As prosperous ones 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 refuseth ,
 For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest 30
 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,— 40
 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 naughty 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 50
 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, 60
 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 brother's 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 twelvemonth's toil 70
 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 : 80
 Now grow together on the ceiling !
 That will task your wits
 Whoever it was 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 martagon ?
 New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,
 Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll ! 90
 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 ? 100
 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 morn, noon, eve and 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 , 110
 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 hill-side 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 120
 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 Bridegroom sally 130
 Out of Possagno church at noon ?
 Their house looks over Orcana valley .
 Why should not I 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 140

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 150
 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 ? 160
 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— 170
 (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 180
 Myself as, in the palace by the Dome,
 Monsignor ?—who to-night will bless the home
 Of his dead brother, and God 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 · 190
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 that 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 200
Power shall fall short in or exceed !

And more of it, and more of it !—oh yes—
 I wil^l pass each, and see their happiness,
 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 grey with dew,
 Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,
 Where the swallow never flew
 Nor yet cicala dared carouse—
 No, dared carouse !

210

[She enters the street.]

PART I'

MORNING

SCENE — *Up the Hill-side, inside the Shrub-house* LUCA'S
wife, OTTIMA, and her paramour, the German SEBALD

Sebald [sings]

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

Ottima Night ? Such may be your Rhineland nights
perhaps ,
But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink
—We call such light, the morning 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 10
The slide-bolt catches Well, are you content,
Or must I find you something else to spoil ?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald ! Is't full morning ?
Oh, don't speak then !

Sebald Ay, thus it used to be
E'er your house was, I remember, shut
Till mid-day ; I observed that, as I strolled
On mornings through the vale here , country girls ,

Were noisy, washing garments in the brook,
 Hindc drove the slow white oxen up the hills
 But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye 20
 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

Ottima. Ah, the clear morning ! I can see St Mark’s ;
 That black streak is the belfry Stop Vicenza
 Should he . there’s Padua, plain enough, that
 blue ! 30

Look o’er my shoulder, follow my finger !

Sebald Morning ?

It seems to me a night with a sun added
 Where’s dew, where’s freshness ? That bruised plant,
 I bruised

In getting through the lattice yestereve,
 Droops as it did See, here’s my elbow’s mark
 I’ the dust o’ the sill

Ottima Oh, shut the lattice, pray !

Sebald 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 40
 This mask · how do you bear yourself ? Let’s out
 With all of it

Ottima. Best never speak of it

Sebald. 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'

Ottima Assuredly if I repented
 The deed—

Sebald Repent? Who should repent, or why?
 What puts that in your head? Did I once say
 That I repented?

Ottima. No, I said the deed . 50

Sebald '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 .

Ottima Here's the wine;
 I brought it when we left the house above,
 And glasses too—wine of both sorts Black? White
 then?

Sebald But am not I his cut-throat? What are you?

Ottima There trudges on his business from the Duomo
 Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
 And bare feet, always in one place at church, 60
 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?

Sebald No, the white wine—the white wine!
 Well, *Ottima*, I promised no new year

Should rise on us the ancient shameful way , 70
 Nor does it rise. Pour on ! To your black eyes !
 Do you remember last damned New Year's day ?

Ottima. 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

Sebald. 'Faith, he is not alive

To fondle you before my face

Ottima Do you

Fondle me then ! Who means to take your life
 For that, my Sebald ?

Sebald. Hark you, *Ottima* ! 83

One thing 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 supposed
 Proof upon proof were 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 90
 We still could lose each other, were not tied
 By this conceive you ?

Ottima Love !

Sebald Not tied so sure.

Because though I was wrought upon, have struck
 His insolence back into him—am I
 So surely yours ?—therefore forever yours ?

Ottima 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 100
Suddenly

Sebald. ‘ A thing ’—there again—‘ a thing ! ’

Ottima 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 110
His two dead hands, and say, ‘ I hate you worse,
‘ Luca, than . ’

Sebald Off, off—take your hands off mine,
’Tis the hot evening—off ! oh, morning is it ?

Ottima 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

Sebald 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 120

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

Sebald. 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 return at eve to sup,
 When all the morning I was loitering here— 130
 Bid me despatch my business and begone
 I would . . .

Ottima. See !

Sebald. 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 140
 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 !

Ottima My poor lost friend !

Sebald 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 sat by us at table quietly
 Why must you lean across till our cheeks touched ? 150
 Could he do less than make pretence to strike ?

'Tis not the crime's sake—I'd commit ten crimes
Greater, to have th's crime wiped out, undone !
And you—O how feel you ? Feel you for me ?

Ottima. 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,
F&'ls off our crime, this naked crime of ours 160
May not now be looked over look it down !
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 stopped,
And where he hid you only could surmise
By some campanula chalice set a-swing 170
Who stammered—' Yes, I love you ' ?

Sebald 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 !

Ottima And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings—

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

Ottima. Ah—my sign was, the sun

Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree 180

Nipped by the first frost

Sebald You would always laugh

At my wet boots I had to stride thro' grass

Over my ankles

Ottima Then our crowning night !

Sebald The July night ?

Ottima. The day of it too, Sebald !

When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,

Its black-blue canopy suffered 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

Sebald How it came !

Ottima Buried in woods we lay, you recollect , 189

Swift ran the searching tempest overhead ,

And ever and anon some bright white shaft

Burned thro' the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,

As if God's messenger thro' the close wood scree

Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,

Feeling for guilty thee and me then broke

The thunder like a whole sea overhead—

Sebald Yes !

Ottima —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— 200

You, Sebald, the same you !

Sebald Slower, Ottima !

Ottima And as we lay—

Sebald. Less vehemently ! Love me !

Forgive me ! Take not words, mere words, to heart !

Sebald God's in his heaven ! Do you hear that ?

Who spoke ?

You, you spoke !

Ottima. Oh—that little ragged girl ! 230

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 belong to you.

She stoops to pick my double heartsease . Sh !

She does not hear call you out louder !

Sebald. Leave me !

Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders !

Ottima. Sebald ?

Sebald Wipe off that paint ! I hate you.

Ottima. Miserable !

Sebald My God, and she is emptied of it now !

Outright now !—how miraculously gone 240

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 !

Ottima Speak to me—not of me !

Sebald —That round great full-orbed face, where not
an angle

Broke the delicious indolence—all broken !

Ottima To me—not of me ! Ungrateful, perjured
cheat ! 250

A coward too but ingrate's worse than all.

Be-gar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie !

Leave me ! Betray me ! I can see your drift !
A lie that walks and eats and drinks !

Sebald

My God !

Those morbid olive faultless shoulder-blades—
I should have known there was no blood beneath !

Ottima You hate me then ? *You hate me then ?

Sebald

To think

She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
And fascinate by sinning, show herself
Superior—guilt from its excess superior 260
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 hat^e, hate—curse you ! God's in his heaven !

Ottima

—Me !

Me ! no, no, Sebald, not yourself—kill me ! 270
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 !

Sebald My brain is drowned now—quite drowned :
all I feel

Is . . is, at swift-recurring intervals,
A hurry-down within me, as of waters

Clears your throttle. Mercury's bolus—One box Cures .

3rd Student. 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 Student 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 ! [30

1st Student 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 alone from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and [40 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, brutalized, heartless bunglers !—so he was heard to call us all now, is Schramm brutalized, I should like to know ? Am I heartless ?

Gottlieb 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 't ?—the bloom of his life Is it too late [50 to alter ? These love-letters now, you call his—I can't laugh at them.

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

Gottlieb His discovery of the truth will be frightful

4th Student 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 !

Gottlieb See here ! 'He has been accustomed,' he writes, 'to have Canova's women about him, in stone, [60 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 reality' There you laugh again ! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth

1st Student 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, [70 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 [80 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 Student. 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 resolutely past great works by the dozen with- [90 out 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 [100 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 needs detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble !

5th Student Tell him about the women go on to the women !

1st Student 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 [110 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

Madam Natalia, who helps us to models at three lire an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So [120 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 *Femice*, 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 Malamocco model—we retained her name, too—Phene, which is, by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules [130 finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his mistress—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 Student Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly, speak within yourselves! [140

5th Student 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 Student Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy!—rich, that your face may the better set it off.

6th Student And the bride. Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale! [150

Gottlieb She does not also take it for earnest, I hope ?

1st Student Oh, Natalia's concern, that is ! We settle with Natalia

6th Student 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 ?

Gottlieb How he gazes on her ! Pity—pity !

1st Student They go in now, silence ! You three,—not nearer the window, mind, than that pome- [160
granate just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated !

PART II

NOON

SCENE—*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, 10

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 room ?
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, 20
 My hand transfers its lineaments to stone ?
 Will my mere fancies live near you, their truth—
 The live truth, passing and repassing 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, 30
 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 th's 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— 40
 Read this line no, shame—Homer's be the Greek
 First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl !
 This Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
 With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and pag^e
 To mark great places with due gratitude ,
 ' *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 Almain Kaiser, that, 50
 Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on hip.
 This, rather, turn to ! What, unrecognized ?
 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 60
 “Praise those who slew Hipparchus !” cry the guests,
 “While o’er thy head the singer’s myrtle waves
 As erst above our champion 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 branch’s 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 70
 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 cas’
 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 80
 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 90
 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-scftened 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 100
 More pliable than jelly—as it were
 Some clear primordial creature dug from lepths
 In the earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,
 And whence all baser substance may be worked ,
 Refine it off to air, you may,—condense it
 Down to the diamond,—is not metal there,
 When o'er the sudden speck my chisel trips ?
 —Not flesh, as flake off flake I scale, approach,
 Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep ?
 Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised 110

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. 120
 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 that
 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, 130
 As now you let me,—I believe, all sin,
 All memory of wrong done, suffering 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 me 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 140
Are altering—altered ! Stay—‘ I love you, love ’ . . .
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 yourself filled up
Natalia threatened me that harm should follow
Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,
But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you 150
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 me 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 the world
And make of God a tame confederate, 160
Purveyor to their appetites . you know !
But still Natalia said they were your friends,
And they assented though 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 until, at innermost : 170
 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 '
 No—is not that, or like that, part of words
 Yourself began by speaking ? Strange to lose
 What cost such pains to learn ! Is this more right ? 180

*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 lore began
 Through the Valley of Love I went,
 In the lovingest spot to abide,
 And just on the verge where I pitched my tent, 190
 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 the hatefullest nook to dwell ,
 But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love
 Where the shadow threefold fell
 (The meaning—those black bride's-eyes above,
 Not a painter's lips should tell !)*

' And here,' said he, ' Jules probably will ask, 200
 " You have black eyes, Love,—you are, sure enough,
 My peerless bride,—then do you tell indeed
 What needs some explanation ! What means this ? " '
 —And I am to go on, without a word—

*So, I grew wise in Love and Hate,
 From simple that I was of late.
 Once, when I loved, I would enlase
 Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form and face
 Of her I loved, in one embrace—
 As if by mere love I could love immensely ! 210
 Once, 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, hate more
 Than ever man loved, ever hated before—
 And seek in the Valley of Love,
 The nest, or the nook in Hate's Grove, 220
 Where my soul may surely reach
 The essence, nought less, of each,
 The Hate of all Hates, the Love
 Of all Loves, in the Valley or Grove,—
 I find them the very warders
 Each of the other's borders '
 When I love most, 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, 230*

*Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask,—
 And how, having hated thee,
 I sought long and painfully
 To reach thy heart, nor prick
 The skin but pierce to the quick—
 Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight
 By thy bride—how the painter Lutwyche 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 . 240
 If I dreamed, saying this would wake me

Keep

What's here, the 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 250
 At Venice, roo' 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 ?*

(*'Hust !'*—said *Kate the Queen* ,
But 'Oh !'—cried the marden, *binding her tresses*,
'Tis only a page that carols unseen, 260
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 donor ?
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her !
(*'Nay, list !'*—bade *Kate the Queen* ,
And still cried the marden, binding her tresses,
'Tis only a page that carols unseen,
Fitting your hawks their jesses !') 270

[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 her memory stays,
 And peasants sing how once a certain page
 Pined for the grace of her so far above
 His power of doing good to, 'Kate the Queen—
 She never could be wronged, be poor,' he sighed,
 'Need him to help her !'

Yes, a bitter thing

To see our lady above all need of us ; 280
 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,—fresh upon her lips
Alit, the visionary butterfly, 290
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 ungainly, free
From taint or foul with stain, as outward things
Fastened their image on its passiveness
Now, it will wake, feel, live—or die again !
Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff
Be Art—and further, to evoke a soul
From form be nothing ? This new soul is mine ! 300

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do ?—save
A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death
Without me, from their hooting Oh, to hear
God's voice plain as I heard it first, before
They broke in with their 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 310
That one does like it—which takes pains to know
Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream !
Who, what is Lutwyche, what Nataha'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 Meet Lutwyche, I—
 And save him from my statue meeting him ?
 Some unsuspected isle in the far seas ! 320
 Like a god going through 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.*¹ 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 should
 be, who is a great man beside. *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 [10

¹ 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and
 sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'

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 [2] vowels, you dogs,—follow my stick's end in the mud—*Celarent, Daru, 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-pocussed 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! '*Snackabrack—Boach—somebody or other—Isaach, Re-ceiver, [3] 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 worlds, under and up'er, Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, And never an obolus . . .* (Though thanks to you, or this Intendant through you, or this Bishop through his Intendant—I possess a burning pocketful of *zwanzigers*) . . . *To pay the Stygian Ferry!* [40

1st Policeman. 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 yon'der, this long while, nbt a shutter unclosed since morning !

2nd Policeman 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 [50 molest such a household, they mean well.

Bluphocks 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—Belvest thou, King Agrippa* ? Something might be done with that name.

2nd Policeman Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger* ! Leave this fooling, and look out, the afternoon's [60 over o. nearly so

3rd Policeman. 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 Policeman 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 [70 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. [80 Bluphocks makes the signal, sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

PART III

EVENING

SCENE — *Inside the Turret on the Hill above Asolo* 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 wallflowers, waving overhead ?

They seem an elvish group with thin bleached hair

That lean out of their topmost fortress—look 10

And listen, mountain men, to what we say,

Hand under chin of each grave earthy face.

Up and show faces all of you !—' All of you ! '

That's the king dwarf with the scarlet comb ; old Franz,

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 20

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 virtues , he is old beside,
Quiet and kind, and densely stupid Why
Do A and B not kill him themselves ?

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 ? 30
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 otherwise ?
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 40
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
No, trouble's a bad word for as I walk
There's springing and melody and giddiness,
Ald old quaint turns and passages of my youth,

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 80
 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 !)

Lungi. 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 ?

Lungi Oh, that's if we conspired ! 90
 Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess—
 But guess not how the qualities most fit
 For such an office, qualities I have,
 Would little stead me, otherwise employed,
 Yet prove of rarest merit only here
 Every one knows for what his excellence
 Will serve, but no one ever will consider
 For what his worst defect might serve and yet
 Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder
 In search of a distorted ash ?—I find 100

The dry spout branch a natural perfect bow.
 Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned 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

Mother. Well ?

Luigi (Sure, he's arrived,
The tell-tale cuckoo : spring's his confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes !) 140
Or . . . better go at once to modern time,
He has . . . they have . . . in fact, I understand
But can't restate 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,' saith
God—

And, 'to such an one I give the morning-star'
The gift of the morning-star ! Have I God's gift 150
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
That triumph at the heels of June the god
Leading his revel through our leafy 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 160
As if life were one long and sweet surprise .
In June she comes.

Lurqi 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—* 170
*Only calm as a babe new-born ·
For he was got to a sleepy mood,
So safe from all decrepitude,
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*

Lurq' No need that sort of king should ever die !

*Among the rocks his city was ·
Before his palace, in the sun,* 180
*He sat to see his people pass,
And judge them every one
From its threshold of smooth stone
They haled him many a valley-thief
Caught in the sheep-pens, robber-chief
Swarthy and shameless, beggar-cheat,
Spy-prowler, or rough prate found
On the sea-sand left aground ,
And sometimes clung about his feet,
With bleeding lip and burning cheek,* 190
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak

*Of one with sullen thickset brows ·
 And ometimes 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
 He was by the very god,
 Who ever in the darkness strode
 Backward and forward, keeping watch* 200
*O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch !
 These, all and every one,
 The king judged, sitting in the sun*

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

*His counsellors, 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,* 210
*With forky tongue and eyes on flame,
 Where the old king sat 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,—
 Seeing this, he did not dare
 Approach that threshold in the sun,* 220
*Assault the old king smiling there.
 Such grace had kings when the world begun !*

[PIPPA passes

Lungi And such grace have they, now that the world
ends !

The Python at the city, on the throne,
And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,
Lurk in bye-corners lest they fall his prey
Are crowns yet to be won in this late time,
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 Tower
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
seafarer !

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—somebody I know,
Greyer and older than my grandfather,
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,
Let sit and eat my supper quietly 10
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 Grl Dipping them into wine to write bad words
with

On the bright table . how he laughed !

1st Grl. 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 , 20
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 Grl. 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 the chalk-mark out, how tall you were,
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,
Made a dung-hill of your garden !

1st Grl. They, destroy 30
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
Prick ng 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 Grl How her mouth twitches ! Where was I ?—
before 40
She broke in with her wishes and long gowns

And wasps—would I be such a fool !—oh, here !
 This is my way ! 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— 50
 Your journey to that maize-tuft spoiled 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, 60
 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 had cut up
 An ortolan.

2nd Girl. Why, there at that Pippa
 We are to talk to, under the window,—quick,—
 Where the lights are ?

1st Girl That she ? No, or she would sing,
For the Intendant said . .

3rd Girl. Oh, you sing first ! 50
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 growing
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,
From seeds of April's sowing*

I plant a heartful now . some seed

*At least is sure to strike, 86
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 90
about it.

PART IV

NIGHT

SCENE — *Inside the Palace by the Duomo* MONSIGNOR,
dismissing his Attendants

Monsignor 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 [10 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

Intendant Uguccio—

Monsignor . '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 [20 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.

Intendant. Do you choose this especial night to question me ?

Monsignor 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 Third of December, I find him . . .

Intendant. If you have so intimate an acquaintance [30 with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

Monsignor Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing but disappointments here below ! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this Third 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 [40 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 [50 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 ?

Intendant. Is Correggio a painter ?

Monsignor 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 [60 conventional roads by pure ignorance of them, eh, Ugo ? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo !

Intendant 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 ?

Monsignor. Ugo ! [70

Intendant 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 ?

Monsignor Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here If once you set me coughing, Ugo !—

Intendant I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess now ask me what for ! what service I did him—ask me ! [80

Monsignor. I would better not I should pick 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 ?

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

Monsignor. 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 [90 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 [100 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 stop 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 forgo, the villainous seize Because, to pleasure myself apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, [110 my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw,—am I therefore to let you, the offscouring 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 *podere* 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!

Intendant What am I to expect? You are [120 going to punish me?

Monsignor —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 . .

Intendant ‘Forgive us our trespasses’?

Monsignor 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 [130 of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuous 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

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

Monsignor 1, 2—N^o 3!—ay, can you read the substance of a letter, N^o 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the sus- [140 picion 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 younger brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of the 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 [150
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
this 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 !

Intendant So old a story, and tell it no better ? When
did such an instrument ever produce such an effect ? [160
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.

Monsignor. Liar !

Intendant. 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 com- [170
monly thrice a year If I remonstrate, he will confess all
to the good bishop—you !

Monsignor I see through the trick, caittiff ! I would
you spoke truth for once All shall be sifted, however—
seven times sifted

Inter. tant. And how my absurd riches encumbered
me ! I could 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 you : [180
brother I frightened to death : let us understand one

nother. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the
 girl—here close at hand, not the stupid obvious kind of
 thing, do not speak—know nothing of her nor of me! I
 see her every day—saw her this morning of course there
 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
 rusty blue-eyed florid-complexioned English knave, I
 and the Police employ occasionally You assent, [190
 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-wind-
 ing 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? [200
 through her singing? Is it a bargain?

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

*Overhead the tree-tops meet,
 Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet,
 There was nought above me, 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,*

[210

*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.]

Monsignor [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— [20
 but remove him—quick ! *Miserere mei, Domine !* Quick,
 I say ! *

SCENE.—PIPPA'S chamber again. *She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,
 The mouse at her dray,
 The grub in his tomb,
 Wile winter away ,
 But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,
 How fare they ?
 Ha, ha, thanks for your counsel, my Zanze !
 ' Feast upon lampreys, quaff Breganze '—
 The summer of life so easy to spend,
 And care for to-morrow so soon put away ! 10
 But winter hastens at summer's end,
 And ure-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,
 How fare they ?
 No bidding me then to what did Zanze 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 : 20
 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 raw-silk-coloured hair, at all events
 Well, if old Luca keep 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 30
 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 p'ous 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 devil , so there's that proud look to spare ! 40
 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 departed
 On some good errand or another,
 For he passed 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. 50
 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 plucked you :
 Call this flower a heart's-ease now !
 Something rare, let me instruct you, 60
 Is this, with petals triply swollen,
 Three times spotted, thrice the pollen ,
 While the leaves and parts that witness
 Old proportions and their fitness,
 Here remain unchanged, unmoved now ,
 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, 70
 I have made her gorge polenta
 Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
 As her . . . name there's no pronouncing !
 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 all achieved
 Otherwise, may be perceived ' 80

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 ' 90
 But at night, brother howlet, over the woods,
 Toll the world to thy chantry ,
 Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
 Full complines with gallantry
 Then, owls and bats,
 Cows 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 to really know
 How near I ever might approach all these 100
 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 1.0

[*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 ranks the same with God—
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we · there is no last nor first*

[*She sleeps.*]

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Trevisan. The district round the town of Treviso.

Line 12 **Flickered in bounds** 'Bounds' = 'leaps'; the light overflowed the cloud in successive quick waves

21 Note the continuous poetic use of steady and spasmodic light in contrast. Pippa, the child of light, is also to be the light-giver.

42 The scheme of the poem outlined—Morning, Noon, Evening, Night. It is possible that Browning meant the non-Italian names—Sebald, Jules and Phene—as well as the Italian to receive their correct foreign pronunciation

59 **The cheerful town . . . receives them**, *i.e.* after their evening walk to the ruined turret

73 ff The sunbeam, caught at the bottom of the basin by the first splash from the ewer, is reflected in rippling waves on the ceiling and passes, either directly or by reflection, to the flower.

83-85 **Whoever it was . . .** A curious fancy of Pippa's, broken off just when its freshness is in danger.

88 **martagon** Romance word meaning a Turk Arabic 'martagan'—a special form of turban adopted by Sultan Mohammed the First, thence applied to this particular red lily

99 **embosom** rhymes badly with **blossom**, an uncommon negligence with Browning. In general, note the great intricacy as well as accuracy of rhymes throughout the Introduction up to this point

104 Pippa takes Browning the dramatist's magic cloak

114 The four experiences of the day express types of love in four degrees—the paramour's, the husband's, the mother's, God's

121 **u closes**, *i.e.* to let Sebald out. Pippa and the town know how Sebald goes in and out, but not yet that there will be no more need for him to use that way

148 ff **save and keep** are 3rd pers imperatives with subjects **brow and foot**, like the construction of l 150

156 **not envy, this** ' i e envy of a husband's love

169. **each to each.** Refers to Luigi and his mother

177 **If I only knew . . .** The mystery indicated which is to round off the fourth part and the whole poem

186 **that holy and beloved priest** The innocent view of Mon-
signor which is to be his salvation

190 ff The New Year's hymn God's love and will and power have combined to make His creatures As once He filled Paradise, so now He fills the earth Each human being is filled with just the **power** for the work which His **love** appoints and His **will** directs Hence **small** and **great** events alike show Him forth, and among His creatures ' there is no last nor first ' In no deed of life is there want or waste of God's power

204 **And envy none** Freedom from envy follows, for Pippa, from her equality in human usefulness according to the hymn. It permeates the poem and magnifies her happy fortune in the end

210, 211 **grey with dew . . . blind with boughs** Note the combined accuracy of eye and compactness of expression

PART I MORNING

Line 1-3. Sebald's opening song is the measure of the sensuality into which he has sunk The **morning** serves three purposes—(1) to contrast in light and freshness with the darkened house and the horror of Luca's murder, (2) to recall several mornings of Sebald and Ottima's secret courtship, (3) to enforce Pippa's morning song and herald the morning of repentance in Sebald

6-14a The twists and leaps of thought and emotion in Ottima's first speech reveal her intense agitation The murder of Luca is to come to light with the letting in of morning Ottima and Sebald make the revelation of their crime in contrasting ways illustrative of the swift and subtle Italian, on the one hand, and of the slow and brooding German, on the other The first ray of the morning recalls blood, the straggling geraniums seem to clutch at the murderers, the dust from the lattice shaken by Sebald brings death to Ottima's mind, the smirching of her beauty by it being a prefiguring of her end, the very reaction when she discovers the prosaic catch in the slide-bolt she revenges on Sebald by the bitter suggestion of ' something else (than Luca)

to spoil' Then immediately she feels remorse for the excited slip, and, as the morning enters, she yearns to find a Lethe in its beams—'Oh, don't speak then!'

14b Till the middle of l 47 a silent struggle is evident in the dialogue. The sunlight forces Sebald's plain nature to face the externals of the crime, Ottima has already passed through the crime in spirit, and, would now hide it away, having nothing further to experience but the fruits of it.

14b-27 Sebald feels the central contrast—the live world and the dead house

28-31 Ottima strives vainly to make him feel the morning innocent and natural

31b-36a To Sebald the morning is irremediably stained with the night. The bruised plant and the elbow's mark link yesterday and to-day

36b Ottima recognises that the daylight is against her

37-47a Sebald is oppressed with the physical circumstances of the murder

47b Ottima subtly stings him with the word 'repent'. Sebald blunders along a new track, but, in attempting to give her an ugly name like those he has given Luca and himself, he rouses her from defensive to offensive action

54b The wine introduced to lull Sebald's stirring conscience to sleep and to fire the old passion

58-67 Benet the Capuchin introduced to permit of a long and entirely foreign distraction. Perhaps from his stillness and coldness an additional sedative effect is intended. At least, Sebald's mind is successfully diverted

78b-80a Ottima makes a tactical error in attempting to convert Sebald's last speech into a blandishment. Sebald's following speech suggests a repulsion from physical contact with Ottima. He stumbles vaguely in trying to explain it, having no great intelligence, but at least he feels that Luca dead lies between them as much as Luca alive

96 Ottima attempts to cure Sebald of the obsession of Luca by direct attack

110 In saying 'I would go back and hold His two dead hands,' Ottima evidently, in the white heat of her hatred of Luca, seizes Sebald's hands. Her action horrifies him rather than fires—her second misjudgment

117-120 Sebald begins his great unaided effort to free himself from Ottima's fascination.

122-154. While Ottima twines a coil of hair across her neck and tries by old favourite sensuous devices to drown his mind, Sebald struggles to rouse the last manhood in himself by recounting his debts to Luca, above all that of hospitality.

155*b* Ottima, by a magnificent stroke, appeals to that very manhood of Sebald from an unexpected side—her admiration for his courage in stripping their love of hypocrisy by killing Luca. Seeing her advantage, she demands a still greater proof of courage in him, moral courage to live down the crime. She sets the crime against its fruits, then weights the scale of the latter with an impassioned painting of her first confession of love for him.

164*b*-220*a*. Ottima carries all before her, binding him with chain after chain of passionate reminiscences, winding herself actually about him even as she depicts the consummation of their love on the July night.

207-208 'Tis right to die ' Right to be punished ' A singular answer to Sebald's earlier cry (ll. 134, 135).

220. At the very crisis of the damning oath, Pippa's song breaks the spell.

230*a*. You, you spoke ' A masterstroke of dramatic genius, that the cry of judgment—God's in his heaven—should seem to Sebald to come from his temptress herself.

236*a*. call you out louder ' With mingled bitterness and irony, Ottima ridicules Sebald's reawakened conscience by sneering at his need of a frail girl to help him to be a man.

239 ff Henceforth to the end Sebald speaks of Ottima as of an inanimate object. She is dead to him, and feature after feature of her—first in his mind, and then no doubt in reality—slackens and withers as in real death.

282 Not me—to him, O God, be merciful ' By self-abnegation, even of sensuous influence over Sebald in 'Lean on my breast—not as a breast,' Ottima attains, along with Sebald, spiritual freedom.

INTERLUDE I

20 Bluff Ox's The writer of the doggerel epitaph and catalogue, and villain of Parts III. and IV. The name seems to be a mystification for 'Bluff Ox,' as a description of a 'lusty florid-complected English knave.'

28 et canbus nostris The student is quoting a line of Virgil's third Eclogue, in which the shepherd says that Amyntas was as well known to his dogs as was his wife Delia.

31 **Gottlieb.** The honest, sentimental type, as Schramm is the colder and more philosophising, and Lutwyche (1st Student) the degenerate.

68 ff Schramm's speech keeps the wonder and variety of artistic perception, but divorces it from any corresponding natural passion, a view intensely antipathetic to what may be taken as Browning's own, cf *Any Wife to any Husband*.

88 **Possagno . . . Canova's gallery** Browning had visited this. See Introduction

115 **Malamocco** A little town on an island off Venice

Alciphron. A rhetorician of the second century A D, author of a collection of fictitious letters in purest Attic on Athenian life

122 **Tydeus** A hero of Greek mythology, father of Diomedes, who fought in the Trojan war

125 **Fenice.** The principal theatre of Venice

139 **6th Student** Each of the six unnamed students has his own character; the first a leader in debauchery and villainy, the second satirically fanciful, the third older and stolder, the fourth a mean and bitter copy of the first, the fifth a good hater and loose liver, the sixth a true artist with some dramatic instinct.

145 **Hannibal Scratchy** A pun on the name of Annibale Caracci (1560-1609), one of a group of three Bolognese painters who developed an 'eclectic' school in imitation of the great Italian masters of the early sixteenth century.

PART II.—NOON

Line 33-36 **As if God bade some spirit . . .** Jules's fancy, so very near the purposed fact of the students, makes sharp dramatic irony

39 **Coluthus.** A Greek epic poet of the beginning of the sixth century A.D. His *Rape of Helen* was discovered by Cardinal Bessarion

40. **Bistre.** A brown pigment made from soot.

Bessarion 1395-1472, patriarch of Constantinople and great Greek scholar of the Renaissance.

46-47 **He said . . . a flower blots out the rest.** The lines sound like an epigrammatic summary of the scene being enacted.

60. **Myrtle-bough** A famous banqueting-song in ancient Athens commemorated the assassination of the tyrant Hipparchus, son of Peisistratus, B.C. 514. It began, 'I'll wreath my sword with myrtle-bough, The sword that laid the tyrant low.'

81 ff Jules plunges into his dream of art—All matter is stuff to be perfected by art, up to the human, the archetype of all beauty; the rose-peach hanging in a curve among leaves suggests the Dryad. All kinds of matter—from chalk that gives soft outlines to steel with its one clear-cut thought—yield to marble with its softness, hardness, fire.

124-125 by letting that Proceed, *ie* the voice of Jules

247 except . . . The Psyche, at a guess, from Jules's reference to it in l. 289

272 **Kate? The Cornaro.** Jules identifies Queen Kate with Catherine Cornaro (1454-1510), member of a noble Venetian family, who by her marriage with Jacques de Lusignan became Queen of Cyprus, and ruled the island in her son's name for three years after her husband's death. Compelled to abdicate, she retired to Asolo, where she lived surrounded by a circle of poets and artists.

286 Here is a woman with utter need of me. Through Pippa's song Jules rises from artistry in marble to creation in flesh and blood and soul, and by fulfilling Phene's life converts the ruin designed by his enemies into his life's triumph.

INTERLUDE II

11 **Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper** Koenigsberg was perhaps visited by Browning on his Russian journey in 1834.

22. **Celarent, Daru, Ferio** Mnemonics in logic.

29 **Salaam** The rhyme with Balaam is curious.

34. **some Greek dog-sage** A whole school of Greek philosophers were nicknamed Cynics (*ie*, 'dog-gish')

36. **Lupine-seed** Was used by the Greeks as a medicine, by the Romans was chewed to pass the time.

39 **zwanzigers** Twenty kreutzers in old Austrian money = fourpence.

48. **Prince Metternich (1773-1859)**, famous Austrian diplomat, had control of that country's affairs from 1812-1848.

55. **Hertrippa.** A sage in Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* who knew all the sciences but was deceived by his wife. Panurge consulted him on the choice of a wife.

56. **Believest thou, King Agrippa?** Acts xxvi 27 • 'King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest'

79. **Carbonari** Revolutionary Italian society from beginning of nineteenth century to 1831 The name literally means 'charcoal-burners'

80 **Spielberg** Prison at Brunn in the north of old Austria, where Italian patriots were incarcerated

PART III. EVENING

Line 4a **the echo** Acts as third speaker in the scene, suggesting the spirit world which Luigi feels so near him

6 **Lucius Junius**, surnamed Brutus Nephew of Tarquin the Proud Became the hero of Roman republicanism by leading the movement which expelled the Tarquins from Rome

14 **old Franz** Francis II (1st of Austria), 1768-1835.

19 **Pellicos** Silvio Pellico, 1788-1854 Dramatist and inspirer of revolt

65 **The dying is best part of it** The martyr's attitude which exalts the assassination and makes Luigi's decision unalterable

84a (**He will not go!**) Because he loves the earth too much?

92 **But guess not** *i.e.* But (you) guess not The following lines (to l 103) mean that Luigi's 'worst defect'—his rash directness—serves best for the plot, though it would help him little 'otherwise employed'

123 **Pier** May be Pietro Maroncelli, who was in the Spielberg along with Pellico

135 ff Luigi's historical reasons are forgotten because they have played their part in filling his imagination with the sufferings of Italy

138a **That treaty** Vienna, 1815.

138 f (**Sure, he's arrived, The tell-tale cuckoo.**) 'Voluptuousness . . . environs my devotedness'

148 **I am the bright and morning-star** Revelation xxii 16 'I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.'

149 to suc. an one I give the morning-star. Rev u 28 (to the church in 'Ihyatira)—' And I will give him (that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end) the morning star '

159a. that low noise Pippa's voice in the distance

163 The Titian at Treviso Titian (1477-1576) painted an Annunciation in 1519 in the cathedral of Treviso

164 ff Pippa's song of the gracious ancient king is an emanation of her own pure mind, and in Luigi it fortifies another pure mind's faith in ideal kingship—so much the more should a Python on the throne be slain, and God's crown of the morning star claimed '

INTERLUDE III

Poor Girls. These are the set designed to aid Bluphocks in the seduction of Pippa. They are differentiated like the students — 1st Girl is older than the rest, badly married, and therefore lives in her happier childhood and in dreams, 2nd Girl is artistic, a singer, and vain, 3rd Girl, Zanze, is loose and probably dishonest, 4th Girl, greedy.

Line 7. fig-peckers Ital beccafico, a kind of bird.

10 Let sit, *ie* being let sit

19 plats Refers to the gown—pleats (?)

22. Deuzans A kind of apple that keeps two years.

junetings St John's apple

leather-coats Russet apple.

89 the great rich handsome Englishman. Bluphocks translated '

PART IV. NIGHT

9. Assumption Day. August 15, commemorates the Ascension of the Virgin

51. he will turn a painter instead of sculptor An idea peculiar to Browning, further explained a few lines later, and made central to the poem *One Word More*.

53 Correggio 1494-1534. Head of the Parma school of painters A great innovator and one of the first masters of foreshortening.

'4 podere. A farm, manor. or estate.

77 **coughing.** A preconcerted signal with the Bishop's people within

101 **or if from this.** Perhaps the bishopric came by family influence

105 **his crime.** The Bishop is thinking of one crime of one brother. He has to recover for the Church the property for which the younger brother attempted the murder of the elder brother's child

160. **such an instrument** The hired murderer himself

166 **Strike me?** The light blow accompanying the Bishop's 'L. r.' affects a familiarity which immediately rouses Maffeo's subtle vindictiveness

187 **have indeed begun operations already.** Pippa is heiress. She was kept alive and in health during the younger brother's lifetime to plague him and to keep Maffeo from the gallows on a charge of murdering her. Now the Bishop has succeeded, Pippa must still live to plague him by destroying his title. If her character be destroyed, then so much the greater plague to the Bishop to have to fear a courtesan. In some way—Maffeo hopes—the Bishop will compromise himself. At least, Maffeo is safe through the Bishop's very insecurity, and, with the loss of Pippa's character, the last blow is struck at the family which might yet ruin the man who has fed fat on it

202 Pippa's song. In these lines is concentrated the double magic of fresh Nature and of Nature-wise childhood. Pippa's innocence has made her one with planets, beasts, and birds—all that is utterly strange to man's machinations, from which 'suddenly God took me' as the Bishop was penetrated with the truth.

EPILOGUE

Line 2 **dray.** A name used in some parts of England for a squirrel's nest. Here used for the mouse's hiding-place

7 **my Zanze** 3rd Girl has evidently been arch-instructress in seduction, and now receives, for pay, the distinction of being text for Pippa's unflattering fancifulness

25 **if old Luca** . . . Pippa's 'better' has come with her new year, though Luca and his good intents are over

37. **that exalted air** The Bishop will carry it no longer, for Pippa has, unwittingly, twice humiliated him, she has taken precedence of him in the family line, and also caught him up from the midst of sin.

59 **a heart's-ease** There is irony in the flower pampered by an Ottima being used to demolish Zanze and her kind

78 **Zanze's eyes** These, like the leaves of the overfed heart's-ease, alone remain to 'witness Old proportions and their fitness.'

88 **mavis** The song-thrush.

94. **complines** The seventh and last service in the Catholic day, celebrated at 9 p m (Lat *completa hora*)

96 **twats** 'Erroneously used by Browning [perhaps from a poem of 1660, entitled *Vanity of Vanities*], under the impression that it denoted some part of a nun's attire' (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

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