

Pippa Passes

Alexandra Orr

Mr Browning was walking alone in a wood near Dulwich, when the image flashed upon him of some 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.

(Mrs Sutherland Orr), *A Handbook to the Works of Robert Browning*
(London, 1885), p. 54.

Notes

Most of *Pippa Passes* was probably written in the summer of 1839.

Browning, Macready and Forster II: *The Return of the Druses*

William Charles Macready

1840

August 3. Read Browning's play, and with the deepest concern I yield to the belief that he will *never write again* – to any purpose. I fear his intellect is not quite clear. I do not know how to write to Browning.

August 12. Browning called, and walked out with me on my way to the theatre. As he accompanied me he talked of his play and of *Sordello*, and I most honestly told him my opinion on both, expressing myself most anxious, as I am, that he should justify the expectations formed of him, but that he could not do so by placing himself in opposition to the world. He wished me to have his play done for nothing. I explained to him that Mr. Webster¹ would not do it; we talked to the Haymarket, and in parting I promised to read it again.

August 26. Forster came into my room and Browning, who did not stay long. They did not speak to one another – how bad this is! How little wisdom or generosity it shows!