

The New York Browning Society, Inc. Newsletter

Founded in 1907

Date Wednesday, March 19th 2025

Time 6:00– 7:30PM

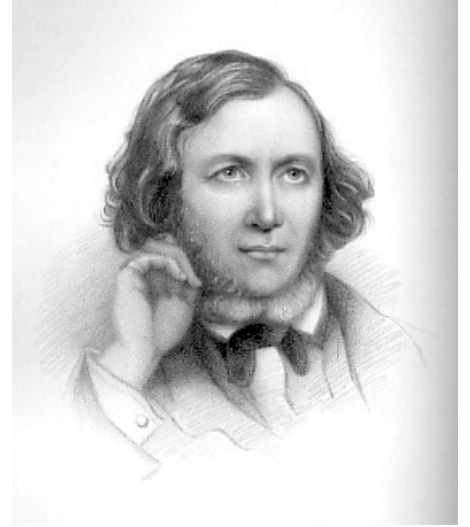
Place Jefferson Market Library

425 Avenue of the Americas

James Browning Kepple, President

A Spring Cold Reading of *Pippa Passes*

a play by Robert Browning



We embark boldly through the sweet songs of melodious birds and the slow melting of ones soul as we approach gingerly and excited a new Spring! Join the New York Browning Society for a cold reading of the play/poem *Pippa Passes*, everyone will have their chance to wear the many deftly crafted hats that Robert imagines in this classic tale. We can bring the words back to life as Pippa descends to the town below through the wandering country road “delicious Asolo” singing along the way. Let your voices be heard this March meeting as we all will have our chance to play a part in a collaborative effort to hear the words of the bard, Robert fresh for a new year.

From William Lyon Phelps “The songs in *Pippa Passes* are all exquisite works of art. All of them are vitally connected with the action of the plot, differing in this respect from the Elizabethan custom of simple interpolation. The song sung in the early morning by the girl in her chamber
JEFFERSON MARKET LIBRARY – 425 AVE. OF THE AMERICAS –3/19/25 6pm!



All service ranks the same with God contains the philosophy of the play--human lives are inextricable intertwined, and all are dependent on the will of God. No individual can separate himself either from other men and women, or can sever the connection between himself and his Father in Heaven.”

**Untwine me from the mass
of deed which make up a life,**

www.nybrowning.org



After-History

From William Clyde Devane
The Browning Handbook

Pippa Passes holds an honorable and significant place in the history of Browning's development as a poet. Here he broke from the rigid form of the acted play and strode towards the free expression of his natural genius. Here he forsook the intellectual analysis of remote historical figures, requiring documentation to be understood, for the close observation of modern life, for the lyrical expressions of emotion. For the first time in *Pippa Passes* Browning's voice rings true, and we recognize the poet known to all for his interest in life, his inventive ingenuity in form and manner, and his robust and optimistic spirit.

In 1841, however, and for many years afterwards, very few recognized Browning's achievement. In 1845 Elizabeth Barrett admitted that she could find it in her heart to covet the authorship of *Pippa Passes*, and Browning, whose judgment upon his own work was not always good, declared that he liked it better than anything he had ever done. From the simplicity and beauty of the poem there was every reason to expect its immediate success, but such was the blight left upon Browning's reputation by *Sordello* that, together with the cheap form of publication, *Pippa Passes* received a very cool welcome from the reviewers. In spite of the adverse opinion of most of the reviewers, Pippa was a step in the recovery of Browning's poetic reputation. The sale was poor, but the poem slowly won its way. It has been since recognized as one of the chief stars in Browning's poetic crown. In recent years only Chesterton's criticism has borne much weight against the poem: that the coincidence of Pippa's singing at the critical moments in the lives of the several groups is stretched too far for conviction, and that it was an artistic mistake to involve the fate of Pippa herself in the last scene. This criticism has some force, but Browning's conception will seem to most to be a legitimate poetic extension of the idea that the casual spoken word may have a tremendous effect upon the lives of men.

Robert Browning on *Pippa Passes*

"Two or three years ago I wrote a Play, about which the chief matter I much care to recollect at present is, that a Pitfull of goodnatured people applauded it:--ever since, I have been desirous of doing something in the same way that should better reward their attention. What follows I mean for the first of a series of Dramatical Pieces, to come out at intervals, and I amuse myself by fancying that the cheap mode in which they appear will for once help me to a sort of Pit-audience again. Of course such a work must go on no longer than it is liked; and to provide against a certain and but too possible contingency, let me hasten to say now--what, if I were sure of success, I would try to say circumstantially enough at the close--that I dedicate my best intentions most admiringly to the Author of "Ion"-most affectionately to Serjeant Talfourd"



NEW BROWNING POETRY CONTEST ANNOUNCED

You Are Invited!

SUBMIT 2 POEMS – SEE RULES –

www.nybrowning.org/browning-poetry-contest/

Deadline April 9th!

Winners and Shortlist will perform April 16th 2025!

Open New York City Wide – All Ages Welcome

Submit your best!

We look forward to reading your work!

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JOIN US THIS

WEDNESDAY

March 19th

Mae West Room

3rd Floor 6pm!

nybrowning.org



“Ah, but a man's reach should
exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?”
— Robert Browning

The New York Browning Society, Inc. Dues and Donation Form

Make checks payable to: New York Browning Society
Mail checks to James Kepple, President
227 West 149th Street, #6F; New York, NY 10039

Enclosed is my check for:	<u>Regular (\$25)</u>	<u>Patron (\$50)</u>
2023-2024 dues	_____	_____
Additional Donation	_____	_____
Total	\$ _____	\$ _____

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Comments and suggestions?