

# **FERISHTAH'S FANCIES**

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Ferishtah's Fancies by Robert Browning

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**ROBERT BROWNING**

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FANCIES**



FERISHTAH'S FANCIES

‘His genius was jocular, but, when disposed, he could be very serious’—Article ‘Shakespear,’ JEREMY COLLIER’S *Historical &c. Dictionary*, 2nd edition, 1701

‘You, Sir, I entertain you for one of my Hundred ; only, I do not like the fashion of your garments : you will say, they are Persian ; but let them be changed’

*King Lear*, Act III. sc. 6

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BY

ROBERT BROWNING

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1884

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*PROLOGUE.*

Pray, Reader, have you eaten ortolans

Ever in Italy?

Recall how cooks there cook them : for my plan 's

To—Lyre with Spit ally.

They pluck the birds,—some dozen luscious lumps,

Or more or fewer,—

Then roast them, heads by heads and rumps by rumps,

Stuck on a skewer.

But first,—and here's the point I fain would press,—

Don't think I'm tattling!—

They interpose, to curb its lusciousness,

—What, 'twixt each fatling?

First comes plain bread, crisp, brown, a toasted square :

Then, a strong sage-leaf :

(So we find books with flowers dried here and there

Lest leaf engage leaf.)

First, food—then, piquancy—and last of all

Follows the thirdling :

Through wholesome hard, sharp soft, your tooth must

bite

Ere reach the birdling.

Now, were there only crust to crunch, you'd wince :

Unpalatable !