# FERISHTAH'S FANCIES

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Ferishtah's Fancies by Robert Browning

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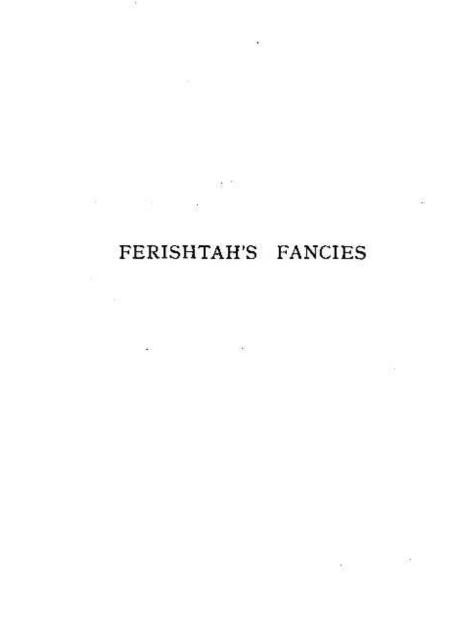
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## **ROBERT BROWNING**

## 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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#### ROBERT BROWNING

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#### CONTENTS.

											PAGE
PROLOGUE .		9		7.0		22		Ö,			1
FERISHTAH'S FAN	CH	ES:									
1. THE EAGLE	20				78				a	11573	5
2. THE MELON-SE	LL	er.				3				(*)	9
3. SHAH ABBAS			į.				5		÷		13
4. THE FAMILY		93	28	30		03		8		30	25
5. THE SUN	ij.	33			ij?				4	Ē	33
6. Mihrab Shah		:#		*:		831		351			46
7. A CAMEL-DRIV	ER		137		£.		ž		×		59
8. Two Camels		20		48		35		*			69
9. CHERRIES	÷		() <b>,</b>		8		٠		30		78
10. PLOT-CULTURE		9				8		•			87
II. A PILLAR AT S	EB	ZEV.	AIL		£.		2		8	198	93
12. A BEAN-STRIP	<b>:</b> :	ALS	0 A	PPL	e-E	ATIN	G				105
EDIT OCUE											

3 9

ar

37 ⊙**\***20

£

#### 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 !