

5143

THE HISTORY
OF
POPE JOAN.

BY
GIANBATTISTA CASTI.

A Poem

IN THREE CANTOS.

DEDICATED TO THE LADIES.

~~~~~  
TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY  
DEMOCRITUS RIDENS.

*C. L. Mayson*

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

—◆—  
1860.

THE HISTORY

POPE JOAN

GIANNI BATTISTA CASATI

1838

IN THE CITY OF MILAN

PRINTED BY THE EDITOR

1838

## P R E F A C E .

—o—

It is now above a thousand years since disputes have been raised respecting the existence of a Pope Joan, who, it is supposed, succeeded Leon the IV. in the ninth century of the Christian era. Each person, according to his conviction or preconception, has endeavoured to support his opinions with historical or chronological arguments, by the testimony of the most respectable writers, or by authentic chronicles or manuscripts carefully preserved in celebrated archives and libraries. The singularity of the event, which has all the appearance of being fabulous and absurd, and the great multitude of writers whose interest it was to discredit it, from the supposed harm that it did to the Apostolic See, and, finally, the weight which the Roman Catholic religion has obtained through the Christian world, have caused this point of ecclesiastical history to be forgotten, and to be regarded as a calumny introduced by the Reformers to vilify the dignity of the pontifical throne.

I do not pretend to settle the question, and I leave to every one the liberty of believing what he esteems most conformable to reason and sound criticism; but as I have undertaken to turn this subject into poetry, of which it seemed to me susceptible, in order that persons may not think that the story rests on no foundation, or that it is not supported by the authority of the most respectable ecclesiastical writers, beside the notes given in the course of the poem, where they seemed to come in best, and which will be found in their proper place, I have judged it right to prefix some references.

First, to ancient chronicles and authentic manuscripts which make distinct mention of Pope Joan.

Secondly, to some ancient writers of ecclesiastical history, sufficiently known for their learning in similar matter, and for their zeal in the Catholic religion.

Thirdly, to writers more modern indeed, but not less conspicuous and respectable, than the ancient ones, and who have in our times, without passion or prejudice, spoken of her.

I flatter myself that my kind readers will courteously pardon the poetical ornaments with which I have from time to time embellished my narrative, where only I have thought them adapted to the subject.



## INVOCATION \*

—o—

Angelic sex! by Providence created,  
To give a sample of our future bliss,  
When man to Paradise shall be translated,  
And find at last a better world than this;  
To you my feeble strains are dedicated—  
Whether to wife or maiden, dame or miss.  
My theme's a story that concerns the women,  
And, if too long to read, is worth the skimming.

---

\* The invocation and two lines of the first stanza are not in Casti.



# POPE JOAN.

## PART THE FIRST.

### I.

Catullus, Ovid, Byron, Tommy Moore,  
To Cupid's pranks their wicked lyrics dress :  
To-day, fair ladies, we will higher soar,  
And make censorious cavillers confess  
A trifling vein may hide the richest ore.  
And homely verse a lofty theme express.  
So listen, for my rhymes if not seductive,  
At least shall be quite serious and instructive.

### II.

It turns upon a subject of contention,  
Among ecclesiastics controverted,  
Which some allege to be a pure invention ;  
And, as a fact, some boldly have asserted :—  
Without a spark of zeal, 'tis my intention  
(Leaving each man his passions unperverted),  
From chronicles,<sup>(1)</sup> now buried in the night  
Of long oblivion, to extract the light.

### III.

I sing of that distinguished maiden, who,  
By studies grave in cœnobitic cell,  
Could for awhile her nature so subdue,  
And drink so deep of learning's sacred well,  
That versed in all philosophy she grew,  
And grasped, at last, the keys of heaven and hell.  
I mean to celebrate the manly JOAN,  
Who from a cowl attained the papal throne.

### IV.

Authors and ancient chronicles have got  
The facts recorded, or their truth assert—  
Martin, the Pole, and Marian, the Scot,  
Rodolfus, Atho, Godfrey, Sigebert.  
Have Torquemada and have Soto not ?  
Boccaccio, Petrarch, who will controvert ?  
Sabellius and Nauclerus, Rodiginus,  
Platinus, Badia, Stella, Antoninus.

## V.

These names will make my readers understand,  
 Ladies, that whatsoever I expound  
 Is not invention conjur'd up off hand,  
 But in authentic ancient volumes found,  
 Which, on authority, unshaken stand.  
 I'm well aware that nobody is bound  
 To read what all these hard-named authors wrote,  
 And many others I forbear to quote.

## VI.

When Charlemagne, with troops and homilies  
 So merciful, the Saxons fierce pursued ;  
 And in the blood of harmless families,  
 Unnumbered, had his holy hands imbrued,  
 And, with the view of making others wise,  
 Putting to death all those he had subdued.  
 Which sort of chastisement has now-a-days  
 Been termed paternal in the courtly phrase ;

## VII.

The remnants of the Pagan population  
 He gathered under his pacific rule,  
 And, having sav'd them from extermination,  
 He with the sabre sent them all to school.  
 On Tuiton and Armenius heaped damnation,  
 Irmensul's worship turned to ridicule :  
 Then bade them set their father's creeds at naught,  
 And others, past their comprehension, taught.

## VIII.

Charles all these matters little understood ;  
 But bloated monks beset the monarch's throne,  
 Whose cruel bigotry did what it could  
 By laws concise to make his orders known.  
 'Twas death on fasts to eat forbidden food ;  
 'Twas death on meagre days to pick a bone.  
 With sword and rack their converts they kept urging,  
 And showed the way to paradise by scourging. (2)

## IX.

A warrior and a missionary too  
 The Frank was then : for, without analysing  
 Men's modes of faith, a method prompt he knew  
 Of making Christians that was quite surprising.  
 The victors told the vanquish'd " Hellish crew!  
 Believe or die." This hinder'd sermonizing ;  
 The Saxon converts made so little fuss,  
 That each conversion seem'd miraculous.

## X.

But still, as far as faith can doubt dispel,  
 (Since any man that's saddled with baptism,  
 Should have some notion what his tenets tell,  
 Men coin a medley call'd a catechism,  
 Part clear, and part incomprehensible ;  
 A paradox defying criticism.  
 But then the Franks were tyros in theology  
 Compared with us ; and this is their apology.

## XI.

This with the King was matter of vexation,  
 Who little knew the mysteries sublime  
 Of our religion ; and by proclamation  
 Summon'd from ev'ry near and distant clime,  
 Instructors for his new converted nation ;  
 But above all, the English—at that time,  
 Renown'd for having many clever teachers,  
 Such as Alcinus, one of their best preachers.

## XII.

Forthwith appear'd a troop of catechisers,  
 From far and near, from isles and continents ;  
 Great doctors, masters, bachelors, and sizers,  
 Pregnant with themes and holy arguments,  
 Loaded with *Christs*, these holy advertisers,  
 Sold them to deck the peasants' tenements.  
 Among all these the English were the chief,  
 Who flock'd to teach the Germans their Belief. (3)

## XIII.

For, strange to say, about the period when  
 The churchman's vices were a public scene,  
 And prelates, abbots, priests, and clergymen  
 Frequented brothels, and led lives obscene,  
 Such as would shame our modern gentlemen.  
 'Twas then that bigots most enraged were seen  
 In propagating with the holy birch  
 The Christian apostolic Roman church.

## XIV.

And then it was to Germany came over  
 A certain English priest, of skill profound,  
 Who, leaving Britain by the Straits of Dover,  
 As *locum tenens* for a wife had found  
 A blithsome maid ; whose company moreover  
 Might smooth the journey whereon he was bound.  
 But, whilst he thus the road's fatigue beguil'd,  
 It happen'd his companion prov'd with child. (4)



## XV.

If any body asks me who they were,  
 I can't pretend in that to set them right ;  
 Her name was Ildegrand, if I don't err :  
 I learn, moreover, that a cœnobite  
 Had from her friends in Ireland ravish'd her,  
 And that the Englishman felt equal right  
 To steal her from the raptor. So I gather  
 They both were monks, and birds, too, of one feather.

## XVI.

His wife (or call her, if you please, his clum)  
 From place to place through Germany was led ;  
 But scarcely to the town of Metz had come,  
 When she with labour-pains was put to bed.  
 She groaned, and moaned, and squeezed and cried—in sum,  
 At last a little female showed her head.  
 The priest was midwife, and this child became  
 Successor to Pope Leon, fourth by name.<sup>(6)</sup>

## XVII.

Joan, in the year eight hundred and thirteen  
 Was born : soon after full of years expired,  
 Imperial Charlemagne, and from the scene,  
 In odour of true sanctity retired.  
 Whatever persons ill-disposed have been  
 Inclined to say, the clergy all admired  
 His acts, and made him for his merits rare  
 A saint, and put him in the calendar.

## XVIII.

Joan soon increased in beauty and in grace,  
 And talents rare and wonderful displayed.  
 Her father's lessons she imbibed apace, <sup>(6)</sup>  
 And in the arts and sciences she laid,  
 E'en from her tender infancy, a base  
 Of so much learning, that, although a maid,  
 Compared with her, the doctors of the schools  
 Were but a pack of dunces and of fools.

## XIX.

Debates she held on arguments acute,  
 Gave public lectures whilst she yet was young,  
 And could a host of disputants refute  
 In Latin, German, and the English tongue ;  
 And what in other's soils was labour's fruit,  
 In her's without the least exertion sprung.  
 Doctrines she knew, canonical, scholastic,  
 And books profane, and books ecclesiastic.

## XX.

It was, however, natural to guess  
 That one, in whom such wit and beauty reigned,  
 With such fine talents (even were they less)  
 A host of fond admirers quickly gained.  
 And true she had : nor was she slow to bless  
 Those who, to court her, love or felt, or feigned ;  
 But, like a dutiful obedient daughter,  
 She followed the good rules her mother taught her.

## XXI.

But one more favoured lover than the rest  
 Had in her bosom deeper fondness sown—  
 A stripling monk of Fulda, who possessed  
 Talents and beauty equal to her own.  
 They saw, they spoke, and in each other's breast  
 A mutual secret tenderness had grown.  
 Both handsome, learn'd, both springing from one nation,  
 To love was certain in their situation. (7)

## XXII.

'Twas then, whilst ardent thoughts her bosom goad,  
 She formed the lofty nor less daring plan  
 To quit at once her relative's abode  
 A fugitive. So, dressing like a man,  
 To Fulda's monastery she bent her road ; (8)  
 And for her lover's sake this risk she ran.  
 The name of John the Englishman, she took,  
 And her own maiden name of Joan forsook. (9)

## XXIII.

Whether the sight of striplings, who delighted  
 To live inseparable night and day,  
 Suspicions in the brotherhood excited,  
 Or whether a retreat, so little gay,  
 The notions of the youthful monks affrighted,  
 Where curious eyes observed them every way,  
 They scarce a month or two had in it spent,  
 When one fine morning off the couple went.

## XXIV.

Perhaps against Rabanus 'twas a spite,  
 (The abbot of the order), who contended,  
 That Gotiscalus was in error quite.—  
 (He showed that over children there extended,  
 If offered to the church, an ancient right,  
 So that their commerce with the world was ended.  
 Nor from the order could they ever go :  
 The council, held at Metz, decided so). (10)



## XXV.

So, in the dead of night, our youthful pair,  
 In dress befitting travellers attired,  
 Forth from the abbey went they knew not where,  
 A philosophic pilgrimage, inspired  
 With courage every obstacle to dare,  
 But hardly knowing what themselves desired.  
 A vagrant life is now and then, we find,  
 Far the best way of studying mankind.

## XXVI.

The pen of history has ne'er revealed  
 Her gentle lover's real appellation;  
 Or, if 'twas known, 'twas carefully concealed:  
 Nor has the critic's nicest observation  
 Or close research the mystery unsealed.  
 But, from his abbey's known denomination,  
 They called him Fulda, and because a name  
 Is proper, I shall call him by the same.

## XXVII.

Led on by no premeditated scheme,  
 Through new and various provinces they strayed:  
 Their actions wise and exemplary seem,  
 (Who would believe it?) and they both displayed  
 Genius sublime, where learning was the theme.  
 Where'er they went they such sensation made,  
 That when a morning promenade they took,  
 Folks to their windows ran to have a look.

## XXVIII.

When (less from idleness than recreation)  
 They went to theatres or to a rout,  
 The people welcomed them with acclamation:  
 Or when they saw them spend whole days without  
 Remission o'er their books, an exclamation  
 Of "What fine youths! how learned!" would then break out,  
 "Castor and Pollux surely never were  
 "So much united as this loving pair!"

## XXIX.

And having Italy perambulated,  
 And Germany,—their customs and their laws  
 Examined with that appetite unsated,  
 Which nutriment from men and study draws.  
 Prompted by inclinations unabated  
 For love divine, their footsteps never pause.  
 So next their course from Italy to Greece  
 They bend, their stores of knowledge to increase.



## XXX.

Though Greece no longer that renown maintained  
 Which rendered her in early times so great,  
 Yet over other nations long she reigned,  
 And still she saw her arts predominate :  
 Until by slow degrees her splendour waned,  
 When to her present miserable state  
 She fell, of fierce invaders first the prey,  
 And then of tyrants even worse than they.

## XXXI.

Landed in Greece the youthful couple saw  
 The monuments of early Grecian fame,  
 Which still the passenger's attention draw,  
 Sparta severe, and Thebes of impious name ;  
 The city built two seas to overawe,  
 Where crowds of wrestlers and of heroes came.  
 To Argus and Mycæne next they went,  
 And then their course across to Athens bent.

## XXXII.

And by the walls that to the city lead  
 From port Piræus wond'ring they went on :  
 There stood the fane of Theseus, there succeed  
 The proud Acropolis, and Parthenon,  
 There Jove's tall temple! Athens, great indeed  
 Wert thou whilst free ; but now thy freedom's gone,  
 Of all thy former splendour now bereft,  
 Thy fame consists but in thy ruins left.

## XXXIII.

Yet though they saw no crowded porticoes,  
 No academus, and no forum there,  
 No Plato, wisdom's heavenly form to gloze,  
 No Aristotle and no sages rare,  
 Whose lustre o'er their soil paternal throws  
 E'en to this hour a never dying glare,  
 Yet still some not ignoble schools they found,  
 And still the soil they trod was classic ground.

## XXXIV.

So here this pair, by no distraction troubled,  
 With fervour e'en more zealous than before  
 Their efforts and their application doubled ;  
 And now with Pallas over books they pore ;  
 Now Cupid's cauldron in their bosoms bubbled ;  
 (She feeds the mind, he nourishes the core),  
 In serious studies they consume the day,  
 And pass the night in sweet and amorous play.

## XXXV.

This, we may say, was happiness complete ;  
 But living thus in the marital state,  
 Because the parties thought the union meet,  
 And not to let the Church participate,  
 Is rather an unauthorised receipt—  
 A sin the decalogue calls very great,  
 But, setting that aside, I cannot see  
 How two young persons happier could be.

## XXXVI.

And now to sages they addressed themselves—  
 Antiquities unknown now brought to light—  
 Now Archives visited, and dusty shelves—  
 Now set the musty commentator right.  
 Each for a dozen years assiduous delves  
 The Grecian tongue, an earnest proselyte :  
 Divine philosophy they robed anew,  
 And though neglected elsewhere here she grew.

## XXXVII.

Theophilus and Michael (called the Sot)  
 The Grecian Empire at this epoch awed :  
 The Macedonian Basil, to whose lot  
 The sceptre fell, by foul ambition gnawed,  
 His brother killed, and thus the empire got.  
 For every glimpse of knowledge was outlawed ;  
 And the thick veil of ignorance o'erspread  
 The realm, and Reason's only light was dead.

## XXXVIII.

This state of darkness but increased the fame  
 Of John the Englishman and Fulda's life,  
 As well for learning as their virtuous name,  
 And everywhere their history was rife.  
 How thus for study they to Athens came,  
 And how their fellowship was free from strife,  
 In both what great conformity appears,  
 Alike in disposition, sex, and years.

## XXXIX.

Three lustres had expired since love had tied  
 The knot their lives so closely had united ;  
 And whether 'twas that their affection died,  
 Or novelty or jealousy excited,  
 Or whatsoever reason 'twas beside,  
 In search of which the writer is benighted,  
 These two, who were inseparable, fate  
 Or sudden fancy caused to separate.

XL.

But let that rest : the fire of love, we know,  
 Not always burns with one degree of heat ;  
 Little by little sometimes it gets low,  
 And Cupid then is difficult to treat.  
 For change of place and objects he must go,—  
 So both from Athens took a different beat ;  
 And with a friendly parting both content,  
 One eastward sailed, the other westward went.

XLI.

Here we will turn a moment, if you please,  
 And follow Fulda.—For Byzantium bound  
 From Port Piræus, with a favouring breeze,  
 In a Ragusan ship a berth he found.  
 The isles he visits of the Ægean seas,  
 And, where he touches, makes remarks profound.  
 Then sailing next for Alexandria,  
 He sees Rhodes, Crete, and Cyprus in his way.

XLII.

The Pharos, Pompey's Pillar, and the Nile  
 With his seven mouths and with his meadowy scenes,  
 The hippopotamus and crocodile,  
 The tribes of highwaymen, called Bedoweens,  
 The broken pots found in gigantic pile,  
 Memphis, and Thebes that now to ruin leans,  
 He viewed ; and then the Pyramid surveyed,  
 The mightiest mass that man has ever made.

XLIII.

The isthmus which the Red and Syrian sea  
 Divides, a lasting bar to navigation,  
 He traversed, and the proud Phœnicia,  
 Whose precious wares, shipped off to every nation,  
 From Tyre and Sidon, men were wont to see—  
 Nor Palestine escaped his observation,  
 Where the great mystery of our religion  
 Was manifested by a little pigeon.

XLIV.

No European troops on Asia's ground  
 As yet had roused the East with martial stir ;  
 Not yet were pious mobs united found  
 To liberate the Holy Sepulchre ;  
 Not yet had lived those chiefs, whose names resound  
 With fame that Tasso's lasting lays confer,  
 The Tancreds, the Rinaldis, the Circassian ;  
 Nor was crusading yet become the fashion.



XLV.

Nor had the land of Palestine been made  
 By piety an object of invasion ;  
 Nor had celestial messengers conveyed  
 Loretto's chapel to its present station :  
 But, up to then, unmoveable it stayed  
 Just where the masons settled its foundation ;  
 Yet do not think this miracle a lie—  
 It happened afterwards undoubtedly.

XLVI.

And mindful where the Saviour was baptized,  
 Fulda immersed himself in Jordan's stream.  
 He visited the manger, where surprised  
 The Virgin heard the songs of seraphim—  
 The mount, where Jesus, in man's flesh disguised,  
 Died, by his death our errors to redeem ;  
 The church he entered, saw where Christ was laid,  
 And with a heart contrite his vows he paid.

XLVII.

These holy duties ceasing to beguile  
 His time, he passed the stream of Tigris o'er,  
 Where by Almanzor, in the Arab style,  
 Bagdad was built a century before.  
 There he took up his residence awhile.  
 Bagdad the stamp of master workmen bore  
 For the same plan which first Almanzor chose,  
 Was brought by other caliphs to a close.

XLVIII.

The name of Aaron al Rashid in story  
 Survived yet fresh and green, whose high renown,  
 Whose virtuous thoughts, whose deeds not transitory,  
 Have brought his fame to latest ages down.  
 His son, the rival of his father's glory,  
 Mamûn was next successor to the crown,  
 As caliphs, sultans, emperors, and kings,  
 The universe with both their actions rings.

XLIX.

For they themselves were orators and sages,  
 And at their instigation clever men  
 Made useful versions from the Grecian pages,  
 And civilised the unlettered Saracen.  
 In peaceful arts the warrior rude engages,  
 And learning penetrates the shepherd's glen ;  
 And as it happens where the arts arise,  
 They founded schools and universities.

## L.

Motassem next to Mamún in succession

Neither his sire's nor brother's virtues had ;  
From him the throne fell to his son's possession,

Vatek by name, whose reign was short and bad,  
Replete with crimes and ended in oppression.

About the time that Fulda reached Bagdad

His brother Mottawakil called to fill

The throne, though younger, proved more vicious still.

## LI.

He by the hand of an assassin died.

He was a caliph both unjust and base ;

His son, Montassar, turned a parricide,

And strangled him to occupy his place,

A wicked father a worse son outvied.

But these atrocities did not disgrace

The time of which we speak, and that I grant

Renders their mention quite irrelevant.

## LII.

For in the conversation of the wise

On Bagdad's learning Fulda's mind was bent

With Zoroaster's sect to fraternise,

To learn what those Chaldaic ciphers meant,

To study Zoroaster's mysteries ;

And on new acquisitions still intent,

To learn their usages was his diversion ;

He wish'd to speak both Arabic and Persian.

## LIII.

So fixing under Mottawakil's reign

His home in Bagdad, there, from doctrines new,

He adds fresh stores of knowledge to his brain,

And praise upon his signal talents drew.

But now to Joan we must return again,

Who in the interim was busy too ;

If you remember, she was just about

Packing her things, from Athens to set out.

## LIV.

Her first intention was to Rome to go :

Since Rome, though humbled from her ancient station,

If former grandeur made her now seem low,

Was still imposing in her reputation.

The pontiff there held out his holy toe

From Peter's chair for Christian adoration ;

So Joan resolved that theatre to mount,

Where she might turn her talents to account.



## LV.

Another cause our heroine induced  
 In Italy henceforward to remain ;  
 To man's attire from habit long grown used,  
 'Twould cost her much to leave it off again.  
 She still might wear it, where the barber spruced  
 Men's chins, a custom in the Pope's domain ;  
 But to go beardless in the Turk's dominions  
 Was violating all received opinions.

## LVI.

At Corinth Joan embarked, and near those shores  
 That islets crowd, and dangerous shallows fill,  
 The sturdy seamen ply the bending oars,  
 And twixt them steer with never erring skill.  
 On one side Delphi's lofty summit soars,  
 And on the left the Cephalonian hill.  
 With rapid course from Ithaca they run,  
 Where reigned in ancient times Laertes' son.

## LVII.

By the Leucadian precipice they came,  
 The fatal leap, where each despairing lover  
 In the salt water quenched his hopeless flame.  
 A little farther onward they discover  
 The bay of Actium, where the rival game  
 Of a world's empire in one day was over ;  
 And victims numberless laid down their life  
 In the decision of the mortal strife.

## LVIII.

By sea and land lay scattered all around  
 The monuments of those atrocious deeds,  
 Which weak humanity is often found  
 (When men's ferocious appetites it feeds,  
 And foul ambition has no virtuous bound)  
 To nourish guiltily ; when reason pleads  
 In vain against the tyranny of use,  
 And crimes are sanctioned by a long abuse.

## LIX.

They passed the spot where Anthony turned tail  
 To follow her who drags him as she flies ;  
 And wafted by the bland Favonian gale,  
 Which prosperous on their starboard quarter lies,  
 Along the sea, Ionian named, they sail.  
 The bowman, at the North, Corcyra spies ;  
 The barque casts anchor on Calabria's strand,  
 And Joan at last sets foot upon the land.



## LX.

Joan visited Crotona in her road,  
 Tarentum saw with diligent attention—  
 This Milo's, that Archytas's abode;  
 But of the two Crotona claims our mention.  
 For there the philosophic Samian showed  
 Of transmigrating souls his great invention.  
 He taught what powers in stars and numbers reign,  
 And made his pupils from broad beans abstain.

## LXI.

O thou! one time the nurse of all that's great!  
 Country, that gods and men conspired to bless,  
 Is it the wrath of heaven, or cruel fate,  
 Has brought thee to thy present littleness?  
 And shall the yoke, with its ignoble weight,  
 Still on thy neck without a struggle press?  
 Torn, abject, desolated, forced to bow,  
 What Italy once was where is she now?

## LXII.

Already fierce Bellona's satellites,  
 Descending from the North (Hesperia's bane)  
 Had scattered—how the thought my grief excites!—  
 Each work of art, each edifice and fane,  
 Which Greece and Rome had spread on varied sites;  
 And zeal ferocious did as much again.  
 E'en then midst ruins was the ploughshare seen,  
 Where temples once and theatres had been.

## LXIII.

But yet if Joan found only fragments there,  
 Of ancient superstructures still remaining,  
 The shepherds and contented peasants were  
 On verdant downs and sunny hills maintaining  
 Their numerous herds; of fruit, no tree was bare,  
 And yellow stalks were seen rich ears sustaining,  
 With lavish hands in those blest regions then  
 Bacchus and Ceres poured their gifts on men.

## LXIV.

Ye regions fertile, and one time so blest!  
 What tyrant destiny could change you thus?  
 By what exterminating curse opprest?  
 Was it the Greek, the Saracen, or Russ?  
 Was it the brutal Vandal's iron crest  
 That caused such changes and so scandalous?  
 Who thus has rendered nature's favours dead,  
 Who thus has wretchedness and mourning spread?

## LXV.

God curses those by whose infernal plots,  
 The arts and industry of man prove vain,  
 By which the mind in sleep lethargic rots;—  
 Who slothful manners nourish and sustain.  
 To such the page of history allots  
 A place conspicuous; fearless she'll arraign  
 Those who deserve our deepest scorn and hate;  
 And nations shall their memory execrate.

## LXVI.

What fatal sloth. . . . But there! I see you laugh—  
 Yes, I was doting—pardon me, dear ladies—  
 Laugh on, for I too prosing am by half—  
 Yes, laugh—for ah! how useless this tirade is.  
 Begin we then another paragraph,  
 Let us return to Joan, and leave what said is;  
 Which not a man existing sure can hear  
 (If he but has a soul) without a tear.

## LXVII.

If more at length I were to prosecute  
 The narrative, and count the places o'er  
 Of Joan's instructive and amusing route,  
 Perhaps I should be called a tiresome bore.  
 All I shall say that, with a mind acute,  
 Having of observations made a store,  
 She got to Rome delighted and content,  
 And closed her journey without accident.

## LXVIII.

But folks will cry, such journies when one goes,  
 Pray, who the devil furnished the finances?  
 And, let me ask you, who found food and clothes  
 For all knight errants mentioned in romances?  
 Ulysses, Tancred, Hercules, and those  
 Orlandos, whom the poets led such dances?  
 And I will give an answer quite as good  
 As Aristo or as Homer could.

## LXIX.

But to the close of her perambulation,  
 Since Joan has come at last with little labour,  
 And both our heroes have attained their station;  
 Though east and west is not quite next-door neighbour,  
 We too will take a little recreation,  
 For when I next my pegasus belabour,  
 You'll hear things stranger still than these, as all  
 I've said thus far is but a protocol.

## PART THE SECOND.

---

### I.

The pontiff Sergius, second of the name,  
Ruled o'er the church when Joan arrived at Rome ;  
Head of the world was once that city's claim,  
But when caballing priests had found a home  
Within her walls, and greedy suitors came  
To seek the mitre under Peter's dome,  
Head of the world was now so far from true,  
That by degrees she seemed to be the queue.

### II.

But still she harvested some splendid things.  
Thus, from the Pontiff's hand their diadem  
To take in Rome, came emperors and kings ;  
In lieu of which they gave some precious gem,  
Tributes, and states, and richest offerings ;  
Whilst in exchange his Holiness on them  
Celestial treasures liberally poured,  
And with indulgencies their pockets stored.

### III.

Joan then was four and twenty years of age,  
Blooming in looks and full of animation ;  
And though so young, few persons dared engage  
With her on themes of learned conversation,  
For she had mastered every classic page  
Of Grecian lore, with nicest penetration.  
Her lengthened sojourn in Minerva's city,  
Had made her singularly wise and witty.

### IV.

United with a judgment perspicacious,  
With every learn'd and splendid acquisition,  
Her look was decent, and her manners gracious.  
The mildest suavity of disposition  
Inspired respect with e'en the most audacious,  
Like sculptured deities : and in addition  
Her voice was sweet as honey, and her mien,  
So charming, that she pleased as soon as seen.



## V.

But all these splendid qualities had soon  
 Been lost, or hid in some forgotten place,  
 Had fortune not accompanied her boon,  
 By setting them upon a lofty base,  
 As tapers blazing in a vast saloon,  
 On candelabra fill a larger space.  
 But Joan already felt that she should be  
 No common person in her destiny.

## VI.

I know not, gentle dames, if 'twas the effect  
 Of local habits, or the place's air,  
 That Joan was then first able to detect  
 A certain itching and corroding care  
 That preyed in secret on her intellect,  
 Of which before she never was aware ;  
 And scarcely had she dwelt in Rome an hour,  
 Before her breast ambitious stings devour.

## VII.

There stood that time without the city wall  
 An abbey, to St. Martin dedicated,  
 Where masters, famed for learning classical,  
 In Greek and Latin pupils educated ;  
 And St. Augustin, a professor's stall  
 Held in it once, as chronicles have stated,  
 A first-rate school it was in Rome for knowledge,  
 By authors most times styled the Grecian college.

## VIII.

Before the altar Joan her vows monastic  
 Made to St. Martin, and assumed the dress  
 She then embraced the state ecclesiastic,  
 Was priest ordained, and made a fierce address  
 Against the party called iconoclastic ;  
 Michael the sot, when he the regal vest  
 Assumed, had banished them from his domain,  
 Another Michael called them back again.

## IX.

Not only image worship in those days  
 Excited theological dispute,  
 But doctrines most recondite, and a maze  
 On either side of logic most minute,  
 With controversies clouded in a haze,  
 Abstracted, tropological, acute,  
 Were spread by hordes of authors through the land,  
 Which they themselves could never understand.

## X.

How strange the paths that mad enthusiasm  
 Has opened to the folly of mankind ;  
 The Theologian's trash—the sudden spasm,  
 Convulsing half a world a tomb to find—  
 Distant discoveries—hell's infernal chasm—  
 Monks, converts, heresies of every kind ;  
 In rulers jealousies, and bad intentions,  
 And now-a-days political dissensions.

## XI.

Joan—say we rather John the Englishman,  
 For that seems now the fittest appellation—  
 Took the professor's pulpit, and began  
 A course of lectures, where in combination  
 Theology and Grecian letters ran,  
 And filled the country with his reputation.  
 The monks, her sex who never dreamed of, cried  
 "Behold the church's pillar and its pride."

## XII.

Meanwhile no longer death will Sergius spare.  
 The keys celestial, from his hands ejected,  
 Require another fit their weight to bear.  
 The wisest of the candidates, selected  
 In haste, was chosen to the papal chair—  
 For great calamities were then expected.  
 The Saracens had sallied from their home  
 And threatened to attack the walls of Rome.

## XIII.

The subject fitted for a part so great  
 Was chosen from St. Martin's monastery.  
 The conclave Leon fourth by name create,  
 Whose talents then were thought most necessary.  
 He had, from being his associate,  
 Conceived for John the Englishman, a very  
 Sincere regard, which never was belied,  
 Although their ranks were now diversified.

## XIV.

And if, connected with his lofty station,  
 He gave her some important business  
 Which asked for more than common penetration,  
 She always managed it with great address,  
 Confirming more and more the reputation  
 The public had in her deservedness.  
 And when esteem though undeserved is pleasant,  
 What must it be where merit too is present ?

## XV.

Rome was a chaos. Through the suburbs ran  
 The furious Saracen on plunder bent,  
 And Leon then by John the Englishman  
 Was aided much in this severe event.  
 He proved to Pope and church the artisan  
 Of good, by council, deeds, and management.  
 He boldly sallied forth with sword in hand,  
 And of the Roman people took command.

## XVI.

But not a Saracen his neck could save ;  
 Their host, by Leon excommunicated,  
 Fled in disorder on the stormy wave,  
 Blaspheming, impious, intimidated.  
 For angry Neptune had prepared their grave,  
 And all their fleet was quickly devastated.  
 Thus perish those whose sacrilegious hopes  
 Would plunder temples and go butting popes.

## XVII.

Pope Leon in his thoughts forthwith reflected  
 How he the damages might best repair,  
 Which, by calamities so unexpected,  
 The Saracens had made the city bear.  
 The mart, called Leonina, he erected,  
 And John's assistance helped him everywhere ;  
 For building he had studied ; and his mind  
 The wall and ditch surrounding it designed.

## XVIII.

His Holiness by such distinguished deeds  
 Raised for himself a great immortal name,  
 And from the people of the Christian creeds  
 Obtained applause and universal fame.  
 Thus full of years and virtue life recedes ;  
 And, with a character devoid of blame,  
 The churchman's phrase for once may be applied—  
 "He rested in the Lord"—*id est*, he died.

## XIX.

They called him saint—for saint was in those days  
 A nickname, a prenomer of a trade,  
 And not significant of moral praise,  
 But, just as Don or Signor is a grade,  
 To be a saint was but another phrase  
 For pope or bishop ; and when mitres weighed  
 The temples, or tiaras bound the hair,  
 Whether or not they liked it saints they were.



## XX.

When superstition came to such a pass  
 That all the world in darkness seemed to lie,  
 By how much more corrupted was the mass,  
 By so much more were saints but common fry.  
 But mix not Leon with the vulgar class,  
 His saintship came not by mere courtesy ;  
 And if mankind with one accord bestowed it,  
 'Tis to his own exertions that he owed it.

## XXI.

But in his favour be this testified—  
 Cite, if you can, a mark of greater note  
 Which more could elevate Pope Leon's pride  
 Than what the author of Pulzella wrote ;  
 And who is better fitted to decide ?  
 How much he praises Leon need I quote ?  
 And when a man like him exalts a pope,  
 You will not ask a better proof I hope.

## XXII.

As soon as Leon in his earthly bed  
 Was laid a most tumultuous conclave met,  
 And gold was lavished, even blood was shed  
 By those who wished St. Peter's keys to get.  
 Intrigue and base cabals are ever bred  
 When hearts depraved men's plotting schemes abet,  
 Who for some high ambitious enterprise  
 Will every right and duty sacrifice.

## XXIII.

But since ambition, as it spreads its bane  
 In all ecclesiastical affairs,  
 Assumes the garb of piety to feign,  
 A priest, named Anastagius, with such snares,  
 So well contrived the suffrages to gain  
 Of many deans and bishops, that he dares  
 Invest the robes pontifical, in spite  
 Of forms received and all acknowledged right.<sup>(19)</sup>

## XXIV.

Still having all the canons violated,  
 The adverse party, counting numbers most,  
 Unveiled the tricks by which he was collated,  
 And so compelled him to resign his post,  
 And other suitors were eliminated  
 Because no better title they could boast.  
 Men doubted who should put the mitre on,  
 When all the clergy cast their eyes on John.

## XXV.

Joan from her merits certainly had higher  
 Pretensions to that lofty dignity ;  
 But, whether as a woman or a friar,  
 Those machinations men are wont to try  
 In such like cases, were adopted by her,  
 I can't maintain with any certainty.  
 When female arts are with a monk's connected,  
 A failure surely could not be expected.

## XXVI.

For many nights upon the Vatican  
 Screech-owls were heard, and bats were seen to perch,  
 Before the time that John the Englishman  
 Put on the triple mitre of the church.  
 Pope John the Eighth his sacred title ran—  
 A parallel event defies research—  
 Grave history seems in fairy tales to dwindle  
 When papacy thus falls beneath the spindle.<sup>(20)</sup>

## XXVII.

The wife of Ninus, 'tis but fair to own,  
 The male attire assumed and changed her name,  
 Then mounted on the Babylonian throne.  
 But is dominion temporal the same  
 (Which rests on earthly prejudice alone)  
 With right divine, the Pope's exalted claim ?  
 Which on the soul and body holds a spell  
 In heaven, on earth, and even down to hell.

## XXVIII.

Oh, daring ! oh, inimitable maid !  
 The sensual and voluptuous life you led  
 When in the spring of life your passions strayed,  
 And that vile sin of sharing the same bed  
 With your dear monk, can't certainly be made  
 Example for young ladies chastely bred :  
 And those vagaries of your early youth  
 Are not for imitation—that's the truth.

## XXIX.

Yet folks not over nice (and there are such)  
 All this not only might excuse but praise,  
 But then the character of priests to touch !  
 But then to be ordained ! the host to raise !  
 Deuce take the woman ! that's indeed too much.  
 And when no obstacle the strumpet stays,  
 And when she thinks the papal chair a mooring  
 Fit for her purpose—that is past enduring !<sup>(21)</sup>

## XXX.

And hence an old tradition takes its rise :  
 The dove upon the Vatican, espying  
 The clergy busied in their enterprise,  
 And running headlong in a sin so crying  
 To deck a woman in the pontiff's guise,  
 Her troubled feathers shook and took to flying,  
 And, with a shriek indignant from her breast,  
 She fled away to her celestial nest.

## XXXI.

But by the people, in whose estimation  
 The English John stood high, the choice was deemed  
 Most fit, and met with perfect approbation.  
 For she the fittest and the wisest seemed.  
 And they were right—for in their humble station  
 What they were told was right they right esteemed.  
 Things most absurd, if covered with *eclat*,  
 The people please, and then they cry huzzah.

## XXXII.

If hitherto your sex has been renowned  
 For women learned and valorous and wise,  
 Whose names by fame have been with honour crowned,  
 Shall we be angry, if you brag likewise  
 That e'en a female pope at last was found ?  
 To try the thing again I don't advise—  
 It is not now so easy as before,  
 Though what has once succeeded might once more.

## XXXIII.

Exactly in her two and fortieth year,  
 Anno eight hundred forty-five, did Joan,  
 According to a calculation clear,  
 Her monastery quit to mount a throne.  
 She wished that all her actions should appear  
 To justify the favour men had shown,  
 And (which her noble sentiments evinces)  
 To be renowned among the papal princes.

## XXXIV.

Accordingly, the first of all her cares  
 Was spent in making public regulations—  
 Devising clearer systems for affairs—  
 Opposing all financial speculations.  
 Disorders great had crept in unawares—  
 The Saracens had caused vast tribulations—  
 And in the country's multifarious crosses  
 The public purse had suffered various losses.



## XXXV.

The papal power, of which her hands were full,  
 She turned directly to its proper gist;  
 She launched an excommunicating bull  
 On Anastagius, her antagonist.  
 Iconoclastics, still undutiful,  
 Got the next fillip from the papal fist.  
 Fozio was third, denying in his creed  
 The Holy Ghost could from the Son proceed.

## XXXVI.

Joan's prudent conduct, though I were inclined  
 To dwell upon it, yet 'tis not expected—  
 Or mark that zeal with holy pride combined,  
 Which never failed to make a pope respected.  
 The church's rights she always held in mind,  
 And thus the papal dignity protected.  
 From foreign regions gifts and monarchs came  
 To homage pay and benediction claim.

## XXXVII.

We know that from a distant monarchy  
 The Saxon Ethelwolf, king Egbert's son  
 (The one who overturned the heptarchy),  
 Came on a pilgrimage from Albion  
 With Alfred, who the Danish anarchy  
 Repressed, and proved his country's champion,  
 For all the Catholic high potentates  
 Were used to visit then the Roman States.<sup>(22)</sup>

## XXXVIII.

King Ethelwolf was credulous, devout,  
 Most docile, charitable, not too sage,  
 And therefore with humility set out  
 To Rome upon a holy pilgrimage.  
 A work so meritorious he, no doubt,  
 Thought would indulgences fourfold engage:  
 Besides, he had a sneaking wish to view  
 The pope, who, like himself, was British too.

## XXXIX.

The son, in manners quite a courtly beau,  
 Cherished a liking for a petticoat,  
 And, when he went to kiss the pontiff's toe,  
 He chanced the taper leg and foot to note,  
 And in his breast felt odd ideas flow;  
 And, as he forward bent, the fancy smote  
 His mind, as smacking somewhat of the trade—  
 'Twas like a female foot; but nought he said.

XL.

King Ethelwolf (for better papists then  
 Than now-a-days were kings, at all events)—  
 Issued an order that all Englishmen  
 (Exempting neither want nor opulence)  
 Should pay the pope a tax, by history's pen  
 Denominated since St. Peter's pence :  
 And tributary thus unto the see  
 Of Rome became the English monarchy.<sup>(23)</sup>

XLI.

Oh ! strange capriciousness of human brains !  
 Time was that popes got kingdoms at a call—  
 Tribute exacted with so little pains !  
 And now they've been obliged to give up all,  
 Little by little go their pious gains.  
 I know the deeds of kings should never fall  
 Under the action of too strong a light—  
 Whether they give or take they're always right.

XLII.

To every parish, all endowed foundations,  
 And to the magistrates who there presided,  
 King Ethelwolf made very rich donations ;  
 Besides three hundred marks to be divided  
 Between the pope and those in higher stations—  
 A sum in those days not to be derided.  
 But such a king for popes is past all praise !  
 I fear there live none like him now-a-days.<sup>(24)</sup>

XLIII.

Our holy faith, so flourishing of old,  
 Now in a state desponding seems to lie.  
 England, where papacy was once so bold,  
 Is now, alas ! brimful of heresy :  
 And, in the pontiff's sacred cause grown cold,  
 Carries her frenzied insolence so high,  
 They hang him like a puppet on a tree,  
 And burn his holiness in effigy.

XLIV.

This year Lothario lays the purple down,  
 And from an emperor turns monk at Prome.  
 Louis, his son, successor to the crown  
 (He who before was styled the Count of Rome,  
 And king of Italy), prefers the town  
 Of Pavia, fixing there his royal home.  
 Unto which place the holy father sends  
 To him his benediction and his friends.<sup>(25)</sup>

## XLV.

Louis, by John to be anointed, made  
 An early visit to the holy see,  
 Escorted by a pompous cavalcade :  
 'Twas then a century's prescription he  
 Both for himself and for the emperors prayed,  
 Who might hereafter rule in Germany.  
 In Gratian you may read it, if you please,  
 Among the pontiffs' councils and decrees.<sup>(26)</sup>

## XLVI.

I know that many authors have profest  
 Much incredulity respecting Joan ;—  
 The Jesuit fathers more than all the rest :  
 And with the acts which should be hers alone,  
 Either the pope preceding they invest,  
 Or have them else as her successor's shown.  
 And Joan is thus by their manœuvres tricked  
 To honour Leon or else Benedict.

## XLVII.

With such as come disposed to contradiction,  
 I shall not take the trouble to dispute  
 Whether the matter's genuine or a fiction :  
 The *fasti* of the church are absolute.  
 The authors I have quoted bring conviction  
 Surely on minds the most irresolute.  
 But that which is not called our creed may still  
 Be not believed, or be believed, at will.<sup>(27)</sup>

## XLVIII.

Thus deeply in dissimulation versed,  
 Joan played her pantomime with wondrous skill ;  
 Before the world the papal show rehearsed,  
 Which, being first, she was unique to fill.  
 No mortal hand the veil of mystery burst—  
 She gained men's approbation and goodwill ;  
 Nor ever had hypocrisy (disguised  
 In truth's fair mantle) such deceit devised.

## XLIX.

But nature, though by force she is comprest,  
 Sooner or later will break out again,  
 And with new strength her bias manifest.  
 So when a gardener would a tree retain,  
 And guide its tender shoots as suits him best,  
 He drives his nails and pegs ; but all in vain.  
 For as it grows restraint it soon defies,  
 And points its branches upwards to the skies.



## L.

By fortune raised to that prodigious height  
 To which her fondest hopes had ne'er aspired,  
 In pomp and luxury she took delight,  
 And to a life of indolence retired,  
 Whose lap would seem a female to invite.  
 Her languid hours soft sentiments inspired,  
 And reminiscences delightful raise,  
 The dreams of happiness of former days.

## LI.

Pleasure became her only occupation—  
 Her former zeal had vanished by degrees:  
 For state affairs she lost all inclination:  
 Since posts of honour and high dignities,  
 That viewed afar inspire our admiration,  
 When once obtained have power no more to please.  
 'Tis only from a distance they allure us;  
 Experience is the remedy to cure us.

## LII.

Ambition gilds the object we pursue,  
 And decks it in the most seducing dress,  
 Lessens the bad, or hides it from our view,  
 Whilst, ardent in the chase, we onward press.  
 But when we reach it, and the veil's seen through,  
 And truth appears in all her nakedness,  
 The promised charm, that round it seemed to play,  
 Just like a phantom vanishes away.

## LIII.

Of studies, troubled by no discontent,  
 Across her mind the recollection darts;  
 The days, when with philosophers she went,  
 Surrounded by the muses and the arts.  
 Then the delicious nights in Athens spent  
 With her young lover!—everything imparts  
 A painful contrast with her present state,  
 Whenever she begins to ruminate.

## LIV.

And whilst she recollects that much-loved spot,  
 That joyful age, it seems as though she were  
 Once happy, once contented with her lot,  
 But now a slave, and overwhelmed with care.  
 And then the sacrilege, by which she got  
 The throne—the usurpation—thus to wear  
 The triple crown—with fears her mind annoy,  
 And change to discontent her former joy.

## LV.

And, in the tempest of her troubled mind,  
 "What boots" (cries she) "to me this outward show?  
 "What worth is all the homage that I find,  
 "If peace within my breast I cannot know?"  
 Thus—by ambition for awhile consigned  
 To slumber—love afresh began to glow,  
 And inwardly she feels her blood ferment,  
 Seeking in pleasure for another vent.

## LVI.

Meanwhile she sees herself on every side,  
 By persons grave hemmed in, in whom she traces,  
 Painted in colours art hath deeply died,  
 Imposture, hypocritical grimaces,  
 Fictitious worth and piety belied.  
 But as she looked upon the prelates' faces,  
 Who came to pay their court with silver tongue,  
 Her most bewitching smiles were for the young.

## LVII.

Among the bishops, who were daily seen  
 About her court, her wistful eyes discover  
 A prelate, whose appearance yet was green,  
 Bearing a likeness to her former lover.  
 And here the dreams of memory intervene,  
 And pictures new of ancient passion hover.  
 The bishop in the struggle gains the day,  
 For he was near, and Fulda was away.

## LVIII.

Writers have little of this prelate said,  
 We only know that he was called Boldello.  
 If in Perugia he was born and bred—  
 Or, as some others say, if in Mugello,  
 Matters but little. Him, in Fulda's stead,  
 As being, like the monk, a handsome fellow,  
 She destined for the honour of her bed;  
 But to no living soul a word she said.

## LIX.

However, from that hour marks honorific  
 Of sovereign favour poured upon him thick,  
 Not empty all, and one the most prolific  
 Was that she raised him to a bishoprick.  
 Next that his service might be more specific,  
 (As love is ever at inventions quick),  
 The usual courtly title was selected,  
 And he was private chamberlain elected.

## LX.

All the petitions he presented to her  
 It might be said were never sent in vain.  
 Unconscious of the motives of the doer,  
 The public found no reason to complain;  
 For his solicitations were no fewer  
 Than afterwards in nepotism's reign,  
 When popes gave coaches, houses, footmen, dresses,  
 And then a blind man sees what that expresses.

## LXI.

And for his dwelling chambers she assigned him  
 Contiguous to her private residence,  
 Ostensibly to guard the briefs consigned him,  
 The circulars, the bulls, the documents.  
 And, in unrobing, she the charge designed him  
 Of the pontifical habiliments.  
 Hoping thereby to stop the courtiers' chat,  
 And lull suspicion as to what she's at.

## LXII.

Whether by accident or by design,  
 One day the bishop, helping off her vest,  
 Saw peeping out a very feminine  
 Appearance of a nipple and a breast.  
 He drew back thunderstruck—a gentle sign  
 She made, and his astonishment repressed.  
 "What makes you stare?" she cried; "why should the sight  
 Of what you now behold a man affright?"

## LXIII.

This observation with a laughing air  
 She dropped, then let Baldello take his leave,  
 From an untimely summons to prepare  
 A neighbouring prince's envoy to receive,  
 Who, suddenly arrived on some affair,  
 Had charged the usher of the court to give  
 Immediate notice to the pope that he  
 Was there on some important embassy.

## LXIV.

Prince Adelgiso, Lord of Benevent,  
 Had from the Saracens met fierce resistance;  
 And, when he found the danger imminent,  
 Despatched an envoy to demand assistance.  
 The messenger, who thus in haste was sent,  
 Completed at that very hour the distance,  
 Just as the pope and prelate were engaged  
 Together, which his holiness enraged.



## LXV.

What the conclusion was of the debate  
 Between the Beneventan messenger  
 And pope, and what they said when tête-à-tête,  
 Ladies, I can't, so help me God, aver.  
 Nothing, I guess; and this from rules of state  
 Laid down by clever writers I infer.  
 But, be it what it might, their interview  
 Has little with our narrative to do.

## LXVI.

Baldello, left alone, in vain essays  
 To drive the scene just acted from his mind:  
 He turns and thinks it o'er a hundred ways,  
 And rubs his eyes. "No, no, I'm not yet blind—  
 Myself I saw it—wonderful!" he cries:  
 And then again to doubt he feels inclined.  
 "His holiness a woman! Fie, fie, fie!  
 The very thought is like insanity.

## LXVII.

"And may not males be born effeminate  
 And have a pair of plump and pouting breasts?  
 And may not God Almighty men create  
 Like women, furnished with projecting chests?  
 Eunuchs, at least, are often in that state.  
 The fact, I know, past refutation rests.  
 A woman-pope! I'm not quite such a bumpkin:  
 My head, thank God! at least is not a pumpkin.

## LXVIII.

"But if as proofs these reasons I propine  
 To show 'tis not a woman, facts agree—  
 The beardless chin, the voice so feminine—  
 To show the pope may yet a eunuch be.  
 If wrong I judge, then be the error mine;  
 But this is what I for the present see;  
 And that which might a part inferior deck,  
 Suits just as well appended to the neck."

## LXIX.

*Just had*  
 Baldello in prodigious wonderment  
 On what he had just seen felt quite dismayed;  
 Nor could the sight have caused astonishment;  
 Much less than Midas on the barber made,  
 Who perfect stupefaction underwent  
 When his long ears the royal ass betrayed.  
 If he's awake, still there the nipples seem,  
 And if he sleeps, the nipple is his dream.

## LXX.

Next night the ringing of a silver bell  
 Baldello to the pontiff's chamber brought,  
 Who, waiting for the sound he knew so well,  
 Had instantly the gentle signal caught.  
 With hurried footsteps on the carpet fell  
 The handsome prelate's tread, who quick besought  
 The pope's commands: but hardly had he broke  
 The silence when his holiness thus spoke :—

## LXXI.

“ Come hither, simpleton, let's see to-day  
 Whether that downcast look again thou shew'st.”  
 The favoured priest assumed an air more gay,  
 And answered promptly, “ Sire, full well thou know'st  
 All things that happen in a sudden way  
 Will at first sight surprise us always most ;  
 But as familiarity increases  
 Little by little our repugnance ceases.”

## LXXII.

“ Bravo !” she said, “ that's spoken like a man.  
 Approach, and learn what others ne'er may know.  
 On this her clothes the papal harridan  
 Further undid her naked breast to show,  
 And stood without disguise no other than  
 A woman, choosing her cicesbeo.  
 The prelate felt astonished at the act,  
 But could no longer doubt the glaring fact.

## LXXIII.

The pope resumed. “ Recover from your dream :  
 No longer let appearances deceive you :  
 Necessity has made me what I seem—  
 As Joan, not John, in future I receive you ;  
 And if the truth you yet uncertain deem,  
 Here place your hand, and let that undeceive you.”  
 And, saying this, his hand she grasped, and pressed  
 Without resistance to her naked breast.

## LXXIV.

Although eight lustres Joan had sometime seen  
 Her flesh was plump and firm, her skin was white.  
 Still pleasant and attractive was her mien ;  
 Her manners still were charming and polite.  
 In fine, she was a lovely evergreen—  
 Such ever and anon still meet our sight.  
 So soft and fine her skin was to the touch,  
 It seemed that age had not impaired it much.

## LXXV.

The prelate, therefore, not at all displeas'd  
 To find his hand in gentle durance held,  
 Still kept it there, and smiled, and harder squeezed.  
 But this lascivious wantonness compelled  
 Still more advances, and since both were pleas'd  
 All farther backwardness was now repell'd,  
 For at the point at which things had proceeded  
 Great risk it was for both to have reced'd.

## LXXVI.

The breast, expos'd without a spark of shame,  
 The wanton look, the handling unrestrain'd,  
 The strong excitements to the sensual flame,  
 The open challenge, on the prelate gain'd  
 So fast a hold, he could no longer tame  
 The passion which he much more felt than feign'd.  
 All further bashfulness had been a sin,  
 And kisses glue his lips upon her skin.

## LXXVII.

Her holiness no longer lets time slip  
 In preludes frivolous and empty wishes,  
 But leans, embraces him, puts lip to lip;  
 And shows she means to taste more solid dishes.  
 Her hands in search of hidden treasures dip,  
 Like one who knows the waters where she fishes,  
 And even makes preliminaries tend  
 To bring her matters to a proper end.

## LXXVIII.

In both their veins lust strongly effervesces,  
 Bubbles, boils over, and disdains delay.  
 The place is opportune, the moment presses;  
 No obstacle retards their amorous play.  
 Cupid at hand the papal cushion dresses;  
 Beneath its gilded canopy they lay.  
 What followed . . . busy fancy may supply—  
 The muse is silent out of decency.

## LXXIX.

The guardian angel who had never seen  
 The pope's tiara on a woman's head,  
 No sooner had observed the act obscene  
 Than, as the chamber trembled, off he fled.  
 A crucifix fell piecemeal from chagrin;  
 A painted virgin blushed a crimson red:  
 St. Peter's statue suddenly was blacken'd,  
 And yet his work the prelate never slacken'd.



## LXXX.

Meanwhile a little Love, with wicked haste,  
 On tiptoe steals away St. Peter's keys  
 And tied them round the amorous prelate's waist ;  
 The Queen of Paphos, who the frolick sees  
 (The goddess with celestial beauty graced),  
 Girds on the papal apron o'er her knees ;  
 And thus attired, and joking at the sight,  
 Points at the loving pair and laughs outright.

## LXXXI.

And had the time been day, and weather fair,  
 Horror had veiled the radiance of the sun ;  
 As on the day when God obscured its glare  
 In pity for the sufferings of his Son.  
 But touching such a scandalous affair,  
 The matter must be clear to every one,  
 That, as it was transacted in the night,  
 The moon, and not the sun, eclipsed her light.

## PART THE THIRD.

---

### I.

I could not help observing, lovely creatures  
(As unaccustomed to such naughty names),  
What scorn you manifested in your features  
On hearing that a pope could play such games—  
A pope and true successor of St. Peter's!  
But, trust me, 'tis a tale by halves that shames;  
And, howsoever bad a thing may be,  
'Tis best to tell it with fidelity.

### II.

Some things I would much rather have preferred  
(In order to avoid a bad example),  
Much rather that they never had occurred;  
But, when occurring, as a useful sample,  
Compelled I feel to make them plainly heard.  
Truth under foot in vain we hope to trample.  
If females have been popes we can't conceal it;  
Much more, if popes are big, we must reveal it.

### III.

This was the only instance (if I'm right)  
That ever pope was passive in such cases.  
The bout revives Joan's dormant appetite,  
And liking well her paramour's embraces,  
She felt disposed to try him through the night.  
She told the prelate, who, without wry faces,  
As not a novice at such sports as these,  
Was charmed to take his pleasures at his ease.

### IV.

Next night, when wrapped in silence and repose  
The palace seemed, and everything was still,  
By a back staircase, which the favourite knows,  
Obedient to her holiness's will,  
The private chamberlain on tiptoe goes.  
With Joan in bed he gets, and to their fill  
They share the livelong night without alloy  
Reciprocal reiterated joy.

## V.

And in this state quite unsophisticated  
 They lay in close embraces so compact,  
 And with delight were so intoxicated,  
 That very nearly, in the very act,  
 He was by Joan a cardinal created.  
 Meanwhile no soul was privy to the fact ;  
 Whilst Joan, who took much pleasure in the freak,  
 Resolved to play it over twice a week.

## VI.

At length to business growing disaffected  
 She laid all serious matters on the shelf,  
 And church and state were equally neglected.  
 Her greedy ministers for filthy pelf  
 No longer either trust or charge respected :  
 Whilst, lolling on the sofa, she herself  
 To lewdness and to indolence a prey,  
 Wastes in her lover's arms ~~both~~ night and day.

## VII.

The vulgar, who nor saw nor knew all this,  
 And seldom exercise a judgment sound,  
 Fancy meantime she's making homilies,  
 Or meditating matters most profound,  
 All for the holy faith and church's bliss,  
 And for the benefit of nations round.  
 So things went then, and so continue still,  
 And so I prophesy they ever will.

## VIII.

Thus Joan continuing her wanton play  
 Which with the chosen lover was begun,  
 Met with an interruption in her way  
 That never happened with her former one :  
 Although it wants no conjuror to say  
 Such risks incontinence must always run.<sup>(20)</sup>  
 Now ladies guess a little her complaint—  
 What do you think it was? She proved *enceinte*—

## IX.

Yet, having means so various at command,  
 She thought her secret safe as in a tomb.  
 But when in bed the prelate passed his hand,  
 And found the daily swelling of her womb,  
 "Dear holiness," he said, "I can't command  
 My fears of what will be our future doom ;"  
 And she, who saw how frightened he appeared,  
 Mocked his alarms and at his terrors jeered.



## X.

“Why conjure up,” cried she, “such vain inventions,  
 Embittering both my pleasure and your own?  
 Why am I pope, with sovereign pretensions,  
 If all the mischief that was ever known  
 To vex good Christian souls with apprehensions  
 I cannot hinder, or avert alone,  
 With that commanding universal sway  
 The papal throne bestows? Fear not—be gay.”

## XI.

As they coverising lay in bed one night  
 The prelate broached a very odd conceit.  
 “Tell me, dear holiness, I think we might  
 Hereditary make the papal seat;  
 For then our offspring would succeed by right.”  
 “True,” Joan replies, “the thought’s with sense replete.  
 I grant therein great obstacles arise,  
 But not indeed impossibilities.

## XII.

“And that I’m not a braggadocio,  
 As this idea might make some surmise,  
 The Babylonian caliphs (thou must know)  
 Authority as pontiffs exercise;  
 And, without conclaves, as the fathers go  
 The sons succeed; nor hence does harm arise.  
 But then their prophet gave the caliph scope,  
 More than by Christ was granted to a pope.

## XIII.

“But all comparisons, like this of mine  
 And others that might easily be stated,  
 Would still refer to pontiffs masculine,  
 For whom alone that dignity’s created:  
 But as to popes, whose sex is feminine,  
 Let not that obstacle be underrated;  
 Because the church presumes that no one can  
 Be made a pope unless he be a man.

## XIV.

“All opposition therefore to prevent,  
 On introducing such an innovation,  
 We must some clever miracle invent,  
 Or else some superhuman revelation  
 From heaven expressly for our purpose sent,  
 With angels giving us God’s approbation;  
 For any time when we such juggling use  
 The people never our requests refuse.

## XV.

“ And let me now a thought communicate,  
 Whereon thy sentiments I wish to know.  
 Which of two wonders seems to thee most great,  
 A virgin pregnant or a pope that's so?  
 A virgin's child the Christians venerate,  
 (A thought which we to eastern brahmins owe),  
 And, if the first is fit for worship reckoned  
 By half the world, pray why should not the second?”

## XVI.

“ And, not to mention that one person may  
 At different times be of a different sex,  
 (Since Greece believed Tiresias was one day  
 Changed to a woman)—if the mob expects,  
 Which on our sacerdotal word it may,  
 That heaven in me has worked the like effects.  
 Is that surprising? Pagans have believed,  
 And Christians would too, or I'm much deceived.

## XVII.

“ And then there's marriage, which we all suppose  
 So holy—which a sacrament we style—  
 And without which the law no children knows—  
 'Tis but a church invention all the while,  
 And which the pope, if some good cause arose,  
 Could at his pleasure change. But” (with a smile)  
 “ Enough,” she added, “ more of that to-morrow—  
*Age quod agis*, and adieu to sorrow.”

## XVIII.

Baldello, blest with no great erudition,  
 To all her dictates perfectly resigned,  
 Considered her a wonderful logician—  
 A gifted being—a prophetic mind.  
 And doubting not that she could at volition  
 The articles of faith both loose and bind,  
 Obediently conceives he can't do better  
 Than execute the adage to the letter.

## XIX.

For this and such like conversations were  
 The episodes, in intervals between  
 More serious business, brought in here and there.  
 Because the finest tools that e'er were seen  
 In time will blunt by constant wear and tear,  
 Although the temper's good and edge is keen.  
 And also, ladies, you the proverb know—  
 ‘ Not always bent the archer keeps his bow.’

## XX.

Now let us turn to Fulda, who remained  
 In Bagdad studying a dozen years;  
 And having various information gained,  
 He quits the place and home to Europe steers,  
 Where Joan he hoped to find; as he refrained  
 From writing all this while, she never hears  
 Of his return—all intercourse neglected,  
 He reached the gates of Rome quite unexpected.

## XXI.

The first frequented inn he lights upon,  
 Kept by a smart Comascan, he selected.  
 This host for news had not his paragon,  
 And all the gossip of the town collected.  
 Fulda demanded if one English John,  
 A friar, thereabouts he recollected?  
 "Sir," cries the host, "your question makes me smile;  
 Pray where have you been travelling this long while?"

## XXII.

"Why," Fulda cries, "from Eastern countries I  
 Have entered Rome but half-an-hour ago,  
 And even things of notoriety  
 It is not wonderful that I don't know:  
 I'm quite a stranger," and the host's reply  
 Was "One sees that; you need not tell me so:  
 However, this I say, for getting news,  
 A better source than me you could not choose.

## XXIII.

"But first, whoe'er you are, excuse me, pray,  
 Good sir, your ignorance quite makes me stare;  
 How any one has lived so far away  
 As not to know what's talked of everywhere;  
 But, since you ask me, then I'm bound to say  
 This John the Englishman's a man so rare:  
 Of any other, whether live or dead,  
 There cannot be, what can of him, be said.

## XXIV.

"Twelve years ago, as I remember well,  
 John entered Rome, and, very little known,  
 He turned professor in a convent's cell.  
 There, with pope Leon into favour grown,  
 His talents made him so remarkable,  
 On Leon's death they raised him to the throne.  
 Where now he reigns as John the Eighth—a pope,  
 In whom the clergy put their greatest hope.



## XXV.

“ The early dawn of his administration  
 Was great and glorious, nobody can doubt,  
 And gained the people's love and approbation.  
 It lasted little; now he ne'er goes out—  
 Performs no more the duties of his station,  
 And all the world demands what he's about.  
 'Tis true his courtiers speak of his exertions—  
 But who the devil credits their assertions ?

## XXVI.

“ Meanwhile affairs get daily worse and worse :  
 Each minister consults his private gains :  
 Completely empty is the public purse :  
 Whilst blind to all our ills the pope remains.  
 And if the Saracens should come to curse  
 The soil, though *sous* (where are they ?) for their pains  
 They find not, statues still are no mean prize,  
 And all our women to Saràcinise.

## XXVII.

“ For some time past, as rumours go about,  
 A certain bishop is his favourite—  
 A nephew or a son of his, no doubt.  
 The people's discontent is at its height.  
 He manages concerns indoors and out,  
 And never can a favour, wrong or right,  
 Come from the holy see except through him.  
 In fine, good sir, we're in a pretty trim.

## XXVIII.

“ Yet what has happened<sup>(28)</sup> with his holiness  
 Was just so in his predecessor's case.  
 When first elected we our fortune bless,  
 And say they are a prodigy of grace.  
 But by degrees the good grows less and less,  
 And sometimes bad arises in its place ;  
 Though, for our comfort, other kingdoms are  
 Governed (they tell us) much upon a par.

## XXIX.

“ As to the country, origin, or mother,  
 Of John the Eighth, no two accounts agree :  
 Some say King Ethelwolf's his elder brother,  
 Who came a pilgrimage the pope to see.  
 A cousin of some emperor or other  
 I've heard him called, of Grecian pedigree.  
 Many his genealogy suppose,  
 But who the devil's right there's no one knows.

## XXX.

“Of other English Johns I'm nor aware—  
 No other have I ever seen or known,  
 As sure I should if any such there were.  
 But then I hate your boasters, that I own,  
 And what I know is neither here nor there.  
 I've spoken with you in a friendly tone,  
 Because, good sir, I somehow like your look”—  
 And here a little breath the landlord took.

## XXXI.

The chattering landlord's wordy explanation  
 Astonished Fulda; and although he saw  
 There reigned an air of truth in his narration,  
 He still detected here and there a flaw.  
 He oscillates in doubt and hesitation,  
 And hardly knows what inference to draw:  
 But hoping yet to get some further light,  
 He asks about the pontiff's age and height.

## XXXII.

The host resumes:—“The pope is handsome still;  
 Then fancy what he must have been before  
 Youth quitted him, for now he goes down hill:  
 I think he must be forty-three or four.  
 I may conjecture wrong, and judge him ill.”  
 So Fulda, finding he could learn no more,  
 Thanked his loquacious landlord, took a light,  
 And, to his room retiring, wished good night.

## XXXIII.

There, all that he had heard his host relate,  
 With dates and time, he passes in review;  
 And knowing well how little she would rate  
 The obstacles to what she meant to do—  
 “Dangers for her!” he cried; “where find her mate?  
 She sticks at nothing! If it should be true!  
 But then—by Jove, be pope! that rather poses—  
 But what can't woman do that she proposes?”

## XXXIV.

To find out whether all was false or no,  
 As told him by the Boniface from Como,  
 The following morning he resolves to go  
 And ask an audience through the major-domo.  
 He went, and said, “An Englishman would know  
 (By birth who was a sort of gentiluomo)  
 If he could see his holiness a minute,  
 To speak on what had some importance in it?”

## XXXV.

The audience was no easy thing to get;  
 But, as a Briton and a gentle wight,  
 Dispensing with the usual etiquette,  
 His holiness admitted him that night.  
 As soon as Joan her eyes on Fulda set  
 She knew him instantly; and he, in spite  
 Of ermine robe and mantle that disguised her,  
 Had not looked twice before he recognised her.

## XXXVI.

"Ye powers!" exclaimed he, when his first confusion  
 Subsided. "How! can this be Joan I see?  
 Is this a dream, a phantom, an illusion?  
 Is it thyself in good reality?  
 Have I my senses? Is it no delusion,  
 Upon St. Peter's stool that thou should'st be?  
 Zounds! tell me how thou could'st—a woman thou—  
 Usurp the keys celestial—tell me how."

## XXXVII.

This burst of wonder, when gone somewhat by,  
 Was next succeeded by the recollection  
 In youth of their familiarity.  
 To mind he called their juvenile affection  
 With all their early love's intensity.  
 His sentiments assume a new direction:  
 And if to kiss her foot 's enough for others,  
 With kisses quite profane her lips he smothers.

## XXXVIII.

Judge whether such a sudden apparition  
 Must throw poor Joan into a mighty fuss.  
 And then she feared, good ladies, in addition,  
 Lest her dear prelate should surprise them thus.  
 But yet she dared not show her opposition  
 To one of whom she once was amorous.  
 So, to divert his thoughts, "sit down," said she,  
 "And you shall hear my curious history."

## XXXIX.

Still with a boldness that belief defies,  
 Upon the Vicar-General of Christ  
 Fulda proceeds to take gross liberties,  
 But Joan repels them with a look so iced  
 That Fulda wonders. Her unusual size  
 His doubts excited, and his hand enticed  
 To press her belly; when, it proving round  
 And hard, he troubled cried, "What's this I've found?"



## XL.

"It is a common swelling," Joan replies,

"In persons of a sedentary life."

But Fulda noted how her blushes rise,

And said, "a posture with thy words at strife,  
Supine not sedentary I surmise,

Has been thy chosen one." A man and wife  
Could not retort more warmly. "'Tis, 'tis not,"  
Until the altercation grew quite hot.

## XLI.

But Fulda, bent on making her disclose

The truth, and wroth that she disputes a right  
Which former friendship made him presuppose,

Resolves to verify the case by sight.  
So boldly ripping up her sacred clothes  
Her criminality he brought to light.

And though she keeps him off with hands and nails,  
Audacious Fulda finally prevails.

## XLII.

Thus Fulda having ascertained the fact

Which all her efforts vainly would conceal,  
Whether his breast St. Peter's honour racked,  
Or his affronted love had made him feel,  
Or indignation at a shameless act,

But so it was, inflamed with sudden zeal  
Against her holiness, who sat quite dumb,  
He vented thus his foul opprobrium.

## XLIII.

"'Tis therefore, woman, that thy guilty name—

'Tis therefore that thy shameless wickedness,  
Breathing infection wheresoe'er it came,  
Beneath that sacred venerable dress

Thou hidest! Think'st thou o'er thy burning shame

That heaven's just vengeance sleeps in idleness?

No! 'Twas of thee the Revelations bore

Witness, when speaking of the scarlet whore.

## XLIV.

"Thy hand a cup of filthiness debases!

Which, like some foul receptacle, has sent  
Its noisome foetid odours in men's faces:

To thee near half a world the knee has bent—

Thou hast defiled the temples, holy places—

Thou as Christ's vicar dar'st thyself present:

Thou hast misled the pious Christian flock—

Thou of the priesthood art the stumbling block.<sup>(30)</sup>

XLV.

"The beast art thou, so foul and monstrous shaped,  
Whereon the fornicating harlot mounted  
With scarlet robes, on which the wicked gaped,  
As in the Revelations John recounted.  
And from one trunk as seven heads escaped,  
So seven vices are thy sins accounted.  
Ten horns upon the monster's head had grown,  
And thou shalt see the like upon thine own."<sup>(31)</sup>

XLVI.

"The rabid dogs shall all thy flesh devour,  
As erst they tore the impious Jezebel,  
And eat thee up; and thou shalt see the hour  
When rebel crews of spirits damnable  
Shall flames of brimstone on thy body shower,  
And hurl thee with their crooked nails to hell;  
Where, in a pit of everlasting fire,  
Thou shalt consume, but never shalt expire."<sup>(32)</sup>

XLVII.

Whilst thus in tones emphatic Fulda stormed  
Against poor Joan, with that prophetic zeal  
Which erst in Patmos an enthusiast warmed,  
And which we common folks can seldom feel,  
Whose style is not by scripture phrases formed:  
A deadly paleness o'er her seemed to steal.  
Breathless and mute she sits; till, cold as clay,  
Her eyes grow dim, and then she faints away.

LXVIII.

Behold! what cowards conscience can us make.  
Conscience! in woman 'tis no trifling thing.  
And though, in matters of momentous stake  
Joan never showed before a wavering,  
In this predicament we see her shake  
With terror—see her writhe beneath its sting.  
Appalled by fear away go all her wits,  
And in a moment come the fainting fits.

XLIX.

But Fulda thought 'twas time for him to go.  
He guessed how great a bustle there would be  
Among the courtiers, when they came to know  
His holiness had had a syncope.  
Passing the ante-room in whispers low,  
He bade those present help his sanctity,  
Who felt, he said, some slight indisposition,  
And might perhaps have need of a physician.

## L.

Then to his inn with diligence he goes,  
 Calls up the landlord to his room, and there  
 Asks him to bring the bill for what he owes,  
 For he must instantly depart elsewhere.  
 Marks of astonishment the landlord shows,  
 And thinks he's discontented with his fare ;  
 Then tries with news and talk to make him stay—  
 But Fulda's deaf, and pays, and goes away.

## LI.

And in a street remote he takes a floor,  
 And stratagems to hide himself devises :  
 He buys a wig to veil his features o'er ;  
 Changes his dress, and thus himself disguises.  
 Fulda by name he styles himself no more,  
 But Carlo ; and incognito surmises  
 The strange results the pregnancy of Joan  
 Will have upon the world, if ever known.

## LII.

Meanwhile the chamberlains officious pressed  
 To give his holiness assistance due.  
 Baldello, hastening among the rest,  
 Sat by her side until she was come to.  
 She cast a stare around, and then expressed  
 A wish to be alone an hour or two.  
 The courtiers all immediately retire—  
 Baldello only stays at her desire.

## LIII.

But though Baldello various ways essayed  
 To make her cheerful as she was before,  
 To all he did she no attention paid,  
 Her looks the marks of melancholy wore.  
 He saw some secret on her bosom preyed.  
 Silent she sat for many weeks : no more  
 Could cardinal or officer in waiting  
 Admittance gain where she sat ruminating.

## LIV.

The story goes, that during her gestation  
 A hideous fiend approached her bed one night—  
 This hand a cup—the type of her damnation—  
 The other held a fiery torch alight.  
 And, as of old, through God's just indignation,  
 King David was chastised, the hellish sprite  
 Exclaimed, "For your offences I was sent—  
 Two things I offer ; choose your punishment.



LV.

"The lighted torch denotes eternal flame ;  
 The cup portends man's foulest obloquy."  
 Joan, from aversion to the devil's name,  
 Chose (and with such conditions so should I)  
 To leave her memory consigned to shame.  
 So when the author of our psalmody  
 Was told by God to choose, as he liked best,  
 Plague, war, or famine, he preferred the pest.

LVI.

This story may not ready credence gain,  
 And some may choose with fables to confound it ;  
 So mind, I do not swear it, but maintain  
 That I in many classic authors found it,  
 Who could not fabricate it in their brain.  
 Besides, fair dames, though hard the truth may sound, it  
 Is fair to say that kings and popes descry  
 These spectres oftener than you and I.

LVII.

The times were ominous with great portents.  
 The Tiber swelling overflowed its side,  
 And temples swept away and tenements ;  
 And, with its turbid and impetuous tide,  
 Caused waste around and fearful accidents.  
 From its foundations deep the earth untied  
 Tottered, and all these terrors to increase  
 No single element remained in peace.<sup>(35)</sup>

LVIII.

Destructive swarms, that hid the solar ray,  
 Of baneful locuts, hovering in the air,  
 In volumes dense descended every way,  
 And laid the verdant fields and vineyards bare.  
 The toil of months was ravaged in a day.  
 Tradition, from report of persons there,  
 Says that their wings were six ; and 'twas a wonder  
 To see what substances they cut asunder.<sup>(36)</sup>

LIX.

The people all by such a scourge tormented,  
 Producing pestilence and famine too,  
 Against his holiness much discontented,  
 Cried, grumbling, "Will the pontiff' nothing do ?  
 God's power is his, then what has him prevented ?  
 Why with his curse such vermin not pursue ?  
 And these destructive myriads why not see,  
 At his command, fall lifeless in the sea ?

## LX.

"Thinks he God's wrath so light that he may mock it?  
 And all his hours in indolence consume?  
 His sacred hands thrust in his breeches' pocket!"  
 Thus men and women in a constant fume  
 Flocked round the Vatican, and seemed to block it,  
 With angry looks that marked the deepest gloom.  
 When, rushing in the room, Baldello broke  
 Upon the pope's retirement, and thus spoke:—

## LXI.

"Alas! dear holiness, we're all undone!  
 The mob is in a state of insurrection;  
 Backwards and forwards scores of fellows run  
 And hem the palace in in each direction.  
 Shut up within you know not what they've done,  
 Nor their sedition hear, nor disaffection.  
 Their fury knows no bounds, and they conspire  
 Madly to set the Vatican on fire.."

## LXII.

"Why come they here?" cries Joan, "in such a mood?  
 What mean their noisy and rebellious cries?  
 Unmannered populace!" "The people would  
 In person thou should'st anathematize  
 The locusts," said Baldello. Mute she stood  
 Awhile, like those who inwardly devise  
 Some plan profound, or deep reflection cloak,  
 And then with firm, unbending tone she spoke.

## LXIII.

"Knowest thou the form of prayer we name Rogations?  
 Let every church that office celebrate.  
 Let there processions be, with supplications  
 To bless the pulse on earth that vegetate.  
 I, too, one day will in them take my stations  
 Upon my mule—a thing not done of late."<sup>(37)</sup>  
 "True," cried Baldello, "but your size"—"I hope  
 To hide it with my robes," replied the pope.

## LXIV.

And, as such pageants were unusual grown,  
 Through all the streets, in every public place,  
 By bells and sound of trumpets, it was known  
 That in two days Rogations would take place  
 To bless the corn throughout the country sown,  
 And that the pope would this procession grace.  
 His Christian flock, moreover was apprised  
 The locusts would be anathematised.

## LXV.

Though poor Baldello, when the day arrived,  
 His sad forebodings could no how restrain,  
 Courageous Joan to comfort him contrived,  
 And firmness more than papal entertain.  
 And as the warrior, who is newly wived  
 Parts with his spouse when bent on some campaign,  
 The pregnant pope so takes her leave of him,  
 And to the church descends the mass to hymn.<sup>(38)</sup>

## LXVI.

Forth from the Vatican as regulated  
 The heads of all the clergy gravely went—  
 Deacons and priests, bishops and monks bald pated—  
 And to the Lateran their footsteps bent,  
 Professionally robed and decorated.  
 The mob the air with acclamations rent.  
 Beneath the umbrage of a parasol,  
 Upon a mule the pope brought up the whole.

## LXVII.

The mob surrounds her as she moves along.  
 And now the sacred symphonies arise.  
 The humbler choir make chorus to the song.  
 Whores, bigots, vagabonds, with upturned eyes  
 With *oras* and *amens* the peal prolong.  
 The chaunts alternate follow in this guise;  
 'Till at the Lateran, with heat opprest  
 They pause, and in the square awhile take rest.

## XLVIII.

When standing on this spot, the view combines  
 An ample circuit round, as from a height,  
 Over the fields and circumjacent vines.  
 The pope, half fainting, hastens to alight,  
 And on a sumptuous ottoman reclines,  
 Prepared for his repose the former night.  
 Then to the courtiers near some words addresses,  
 And tells them how th' unusual heat oppresses.

## LXIX.

Meanwhile his doctor, who was standing by,  
 To offer any necessary aid,  
 Said to his holiness with gravity—  
 You suffer, Holy Father, I'm afraid.  
 Some small restorative 'twere best to try.  
 The pope, with condescension, answer made.  
 A chamberlain that in attendance stood  
 Brought him a cup of broth, which did him good



## LXX.

Then rising from his ottoman, he takes  
 The lustral water, and midst hymns and psalms  
 A sprinkling west, east, north, and south he makes.  
 A crucifix, which heaven's displeasure calms,  
 And at whose sign a score of locusts quakes,  
 He waves in crosses broad at least four palms,  
 Then mounting on his mule, with pomp the same  
 He seeks the Vatican as when he came.

## LXXI.

In sultry climates at the close of May,  
 The sun, approaching to the hour of noon,  
 Shoots vertically down its ardent ray.  
 And if, in going, though some hours more soon,  
 Joan suffered much, judge when she went away  
 How heat to her was most inopportune.  
 A languor insupportable she feels,  
 But still to nobody her pain reveals.

## LXXII.

The stings of conscience, and her gravid womb,  
 The strange adventures of a life of care,  
 Fulda's reproaches, and her sentenced doom  
 By that false spirit, had from constant wear  
 Reduced her to the border of her tomb.  
 And near the Coliseum (from a rare  
 Colossal Nero named of wondrous size)  
 She's seized with dreadful pains and agonies.

## LXXIII.

No longer can she keep a steady seat ;  
 She totters, and seems tumbling from distress.  
 The prelates haste to place her on her feet—  
 Support her and unlace her tightened dress.  
 Her eyes grow dim, till in a swoon complete  
 She lifeless sinks in total helplessness ;  
 And at that moment from her clothes unbound  
 A new born infant falls upon the ground.

## LXXIV.

The rushing crowd with eagerness draws near  
 As the first rumour from bystanders spread.  
 The tumult thickens when the people hear ;  
 Some push, some fly, and on each other tread ;  
 And some to see the incestuous son draw near ;  
 And some their gaze upon the mother fed ;  
 Whilst mad with fury the plebeians cry,  
 "Into the Tiber throw her instantly !"

## LXXV.

The grave divines at length with pain control  
 The mob, and turn them from their bloody aim.  
 But the distress of her afflicted soul,  
 Her premature delivery, and her shame—  
 Her mortal grief which nothing can console,  
 Had overcome her now enfeebled frame ;  
 And, midst the hootings which the view inspires,  
 The thread of life is cut, and she expires.<sup>(40)</sup>

## LXXVI.

Scarce had her soul thrown off its mortal coil  
 When, with a loud and diabolic cheer,  
 Infernal spirits rush to make their spoil.  
 In opposition stood the angels near ;  
 Betwixt them rose a fierce and deadly broil  
 In the wide regions of the atmosphere.  
 The din resounded loud, and in the sky  
 Whirlwinds arose that blew most furiously.

## LXXVII.

Rude was the strife between the adverse bands,  
 When the foul fiend that formerly appeared  
 To Joan, her body grasping in his hands  
 (Though how 'twas done to me was never cleared)  
 Around her form a misty cloud expands,  
 And, whilst the rest were fighting, disappeared.  
 To purge her sins he carried her away,  
 But where he took her nobody can say.

## LXXVIII.

Some plausibly conceive that she was sent  
 To purgatory, there to undergo  
 A wholesome corresponding punishment ;  
 But I, for my part, never have thought so,  
 And have for this a knock-down argument.  
 To purgatory Dante went we know—  
 If he had seen her he would so declare—  
 He said it not, *ergo* she was not there.<sup>(41)</sup>

## LXXIX.

Joan and the little offspring of her womb  
 (By special orders in consistory)  
 Were buried where she met her awful doom ;  
 But as her fate was then no mystery  
 A chapel was erected o'er her tomb,  
 With sculpture, where her woful history  
 Narrated stood for ages, to relate  
 Her execrable wickedness and fate.<sup>(42)</sup>

## LXXX.

And on her grave for many nights were seen  
 (At least 'twas then a fact beyond suspicion)  
 Devils in either sex in dance obscene,  
 And doing acts lascivious in addition.  
 Both Fulda and Baldello left the scene  
 Of their amours, and with sincere contrition,  
 To calm the deep remorse that inward burned,  
 Quitted the world, and both to hermits turned.

## LXXXI.

And well they did, for matters such as these  
 We nowise into ridicule should turn,  
 Since, if the sinner does not God appease/  
 He may be sent in fiery flames to burn. 2/  
 I hope the Lord, who's merciful, will please  
 Poor Fulda's deep contrition not to spurn.  
 I can't of that Baldello say the same,  
 Because his conduct really was a shame.

## LXXXII.

And as to Joan, if I may speak my mind,  
 I hope she got a promise from the fiend,  
 Who seized her, not in hell to be consigned.  
 And after all, it can't be contravened,  
 A promise even may an angel bind.  
 And if she finally the devil queaned,  
 And ranked as pope in paradise, she may  
 Pass muster too on earth perhaps some day.

## LXXXIII.

In what I've said of Joan's two paramours  
 And of herself, good sense will bear me out:  
 And touching what the infant soul endures  
 Of the young papal bastard—past a doubt  
 (As every author that I've read assures),  
 Some one of Gabriel's lackeys on the scout,  
 Bore him, like other infants, through the air,  
 To limbo strait, and left him safely there.

## LXXXIV.

But, to avoid in future, such like scandal,  
 At each election of the pontifex,  
 A chaise was kept, so pierced that one might handle  
 From underneath the tokens of his sex.  
 Thus cardinals were seen each time to dandle  
 The secret signs, and grew ('tis said) adepts.  
 But now-a-days the popes are surer men,  
 And cannot be suspected like popes then.<sup>(43)</sup>



## LXXXV.

But future pontiffs (as might be expected)  
 Resolved to leave no trace of Joan behind,  
 And, as the story much disgrace reflected,  
 Burned all the documents that they could find.  
 Their writers, too, in all their works affected  
 A style obscure, their readers' eyes to blind ;  
 And kept quite silent, or were inexact,  
 Or else they altered or denied the fact.

## LXXXVI.

But I ~~if~~ if Rome thirsts always to abuse  
 Whoever dares to speak but common sense,—  
 Such writing blames—each author must accuse  
 Who differs from her—I make no defence.  
 Nay, ~~to~~ to this tale, if she belief refuse,  
 I pardon her, For stronger evidence ;  
 She has resisted knowingly, and will,  
 Or I'm mistaken, ever do so still.

## LXXXVII.

And, though it follows not that what's depicted  
 In writings must perforce be never true,  
 Yet will it be by priestcraft interdicted,  
 As fatal to the trade which priests pursue.  
 Nature on man this instinct has inflicted,  
 In every case to be to self-love true.  
 Hence, to a cunning priest, truth gives alarm,  
 Because he knows that truth will do him harm.

## LXXXVIII.

But this our story never can a jot  
 Profane the holy apostolic seat,  
 Or our religion wrong, that has no spot,  
 Or make a faith like ours seem incomplete,  
 However foul apparently the blot,  
 However diabolical the feat.<sup>(44)</sup>  
 The faith immutable, which we profess,  
 Stands fast, and man can't make it more or less.

## LXXXIX.

For were it otherwise, pray need we go  
 In search of female pontiffs big with child ?  
 Perhaps in every age we could not show  
 A thousand crimes more scandalous and wild ?  
 Which we to authors quite impartial owe,  
 Never from truth by interest beguiled.  
 Oh ! let—yes, let these bigots cast an eye  
 Upon the annals of church history.

## XC.

Among the Roman pontiffs there they might  
 Behold a John,<sup>(45)</sup> Liberius, or Honorius,  
 Turned Atheist, Arian, or Monothelite :—  
 See Theodore, Marcutius, men inglorious,  
 Make popes and sovereigns of a Catamite ;  
 And, by a sacrilege yet more notorious,  
 One in adultery receive a wound,<sup>(46)</sup>  
 And one in incest with his daughter found.<sup>(47)</sup>

## XCI.

Look at the church into a monster made,  
 Misshapen, horrid, double triple headed.  
 See sacred laws and dogmas disobeyed  
 By anti-popes in heresies imbedded.  
 See popes, still worse if they were fairly weighed,  
 To pride, extravagance, and lewdness wedded.  
 And my authority is from the fount,  
 In Cardinal Baronius's account.

## XCII.

But what of that ? Is then the church less grand ?  
 Less holy is religion ? less respected ?  
 Ah ! no : she's like the sun, whose rays expand  
 O'er pools and bogs, and yet is uninfected.  
 But catechising thus all day to stand  
 Is more than can from mortal be expected.  
 And so the whole affair I now include  
 In one short summary, and then conclude.

## XCIII.

Joan, English John, or John the Englishman,  
 Then John the Eighth, when she the mitre wore,  
 To reign as pope at forty-two began,  
 And two years held the crosier, and seven score  
 And nineteen days, when closed her mortal span.  
 One year she reigned with honour, and then bore  
 A good repute, a chaste and honoured name :  
 Until she changed, and died o'erwhelmed with shame.

## XCIV.

All these events fell out, as we have shown,  
 In age the ninth of Christ's descent from Heaven.  
 Eight hundred fifty-five she reached the throne,  
 And died the year eight hundred fifty-seven.  
 But as to save the church, some men disown  
 These truths, or mingle with them falsehood's leaven,  
 To stop their lying mouths I've thought it right  
 To quote the text of every book I cite.<sup>(49)</sup>

FINIS.



Directions to the Binder.

These notes should be placed at the end, not at the beginning, of the po.

CHRONICLES AND MANUSCRIPTS WHICH ASSERT  
THE EXISTENCE OF A POPE JOAN.

---

(1) An ancient chronicle in MS. in the library of St. Paul at Leipsic, first written by Martin the Pole, and which finishes in the year 1261. *Catal p. 314, No. 47.*

(2) The chronicle of Angelusius, published by Leibnitz. *Scriptores Brenswicensis. Tome. 1, p. 1065, ed. d'Helmstat 1671, in 4to.*

(3) MS. chronicle of Seffrido, a priest of Misnia, from the beginning of the world to the year 1306, in the Leipsic library. *Cat. p. 156, 314.*

(4) Chronicle attributed to Martin the Franciscan in M.S., entitled *Flores temporum*, anno 1292, in the senatorial library at Leipsic.

(5) A MS. chronicle in the king's library at Berlin, which comes down to the year 1313. *G. 9, No. 11.*

(6) A chronicle entitled *Pomarium* by Gerv. Pecubaldo of Ferrara, canon of Ravenna cathedral, and a cardinal. This MS. is in the library of Wolfenbuttel, and comes down to the year 1297.

(7) The chronicle of Sozomeno, a priest of Pistoja, quoted by Ptolomy of Lucca. It finishes in the year 1292, and was seen by Mabillon in Italy, in two large volumes, (*Iin. Ital. p. 173.*) Mention is made in it of the female pope under the year 853.

(8) The chronicle of Ptolomy of Lucca, a Mexican, and confessor of pope John xii, afterwards bishop of Torzelli, about the year 1320. He declares that he read the story of the female pope in Martin the Pole.

(9) Chronicle of the popes written by Amalarico d'Auger, prior of the order of St. Augustin, and dedicated to pope Urban the V. in the year 1362. Pietro Scriverio had a copy of it, from which Vossius extracted many lines; but Leibnitz has particularly preserved what regards the female pope and her pregnancy.

(10) Two copies of the chronicle of Cologne, so called because printed at that place in old German in 1499

(11) The Nuremberg chronicle (so called because it was printed there in the year 1493), written by Hertman Schedel, doctor of the university of Padua. In both these chronicles there is the portrait of the female pope with her child in her arms.

(12) The chronicle of Alsace and Strasburg, cited by Wolf and by Zwingerus, and printed by Scheller at Strasburg, in 1696.

(13) The Constance chronicle in old Swiss, of the year 1400, cited by Wolf and Flaccius. It says that the pope was with child by a cardinal.



in the town of Ingelheim, not far distant from it, and in the palatinate where Charlemagne was born also. In the annals of Augusta, she is called Gilberta: some have named her Agnes, and some Jutta, as in a German chronicle printed at Cologne, in 1499.

(6) Elle avoit l'esprit fort aigre, et elle avoit la grace de bien et promptement parler disputes et lecons publiques, et plusieurs s'erveillèrent grandement de son savoir; un chacun fut tant affectioné envers elle, et gagna si bien le cœur de tous, qu'après la mort de Leon elle fut élue pape. *Du Haillan histoire de France, Paris, 1576, p. 279. Nicole Grille, chroniques et annales de France, an. 852.*

(7) Whilst yet a young woman she went from England to Athens with a very learned man, her paramour. *Filippo da Bergamo, Supplem. Chron. lib. 11, an. 858.* This (person) was a woman, who, whilst she was young, being carried to Athens dressed as a man by her lover, made such a proficiency in her different studies, that she had no equal. Gio. Naucleri *Chronica, Colon. 1579. Gen. 19, p. 713.* She was a woman indeed, but disguised as a man, who followed a very learned man, who kept her, to Athens. Coc, Sabellico, *Enneadi 9, lib. 1. Ed. Ascant. 1517, fo. 207.*

(8) See the Vossian MS.

(9) See du Haillan.

(10) The second council of Mayence, an. 829.

(11) See the *Annali d'Augusta*, Gianbattista Ignazio, a Venetian, in his book entitled *Degli Esempi.*

(12) In the history of the Caliphs of Bagdad, in the *Universal History* or *l'Art de verifier les dates.*

(13) See *Amlaorico d'Auger, Chassaneo, Testor, Du Haillon.*

(14) See *Calcocondila Storia dei Turchi lib. 6.* That men shaved off their beards as well in Italy as through almost all the western kingdoms. See also Valerian, an author of the sixteenth century, in his work *Pro sacerdotum barbibus ad Card. Mediceum fo. 21, an. 1553.*

#### PART II.

(15) Malleola Siffrido, *Compilazion chronologica, Fulgoso, Curio, Platina*, in his life of Pope John the VIII. 106. *By acute and learned public lectures and disputations she (Joan) had procured for herself so much benevolence and credit, that on the death of Leon, (according to Martin,) she was with universal approbation chosen Pontiff. See also Chron. Epp. Verdentium Script. Brunsw. Tome 2. p. 212.* She was well brought up in her youth, excellently grounded in liberal studies, and, bearing the clerical character. she was, from her great reputation in the city, chosen pope. Stella, a Venetian priest, (*Vitæ. 230, Pont. Rom. papa 108, an. 852.*) says *she profited so much in her studies by the masters she had at Athens, that when she came to Rome there were very few equal to her in sacred literature, and there, by giving lectures and dispensations, by teaching and preaching, she acquired the love and good graces of everybody to that degree, that on Leon's death, as many writers affirm, she was chosen by universal consent to succeed him as Pope.* In Gio. Nancelero, *chron. Coloniae 1579. Gen. 19, p. 719,* we read, *coming then to Rome she gave public lectures, and had a great many celebrated men for her*

scholars and hearers. And she obtained such approbation and credit, that on Leon's death she was created Pope in his place by universal consent.

(<sup>16</sup>) Nicknames given to those Greek emperors.

(<sup>17</sup>) See Anastatius in the life of Pope Leon IV. *Annali di San Bertin di Fulda e di Metz, Sigonio da Regno Italiae lib. v.*

(<sup>18</sup>) *Sanctissimus Leo papa obdormivit in Domino.* (Anast.)

(<sup>19</sup>) *Sigonio De Regno Italiae, lib. v.*

(<sup>20</sup>) *Femina, Petre, tuâ quondam ausa sedere cathedrâ, Orbi terrarum jura verenda dedit.* Joh. Pannonius Ep. *Quinqueccles.*

(<sup>21</sup>) Elle conféra les saints ordres, fit prêtres et diacres, ordonna évêques et abbés, chanta messes, consacra temples et autels, administra sacremens, présenta ses pieds pour être baisés, et fit toutes les autres choses que les papes de Rome sont accoutumés de faire, et fut au siège par l'espace de deux ans. *Du Haillan, Hist. de France, edit. Paris, 1576, p. 279.*

(<sup>22</sup>) Sabellico, la cronaca di Sassonia, Bochio all'anno 855, Card. Baronio all'anno 855, num. 28.

(<sup>23</sup>) Mathew of Westminster, Rodolfo di Diceto, Brompton, and Asserius, the author of the life of Alfred, son of Ethelwolf, relate this journey and the tribute paid to St. Peter in the year 854.

(<sup>24</sup>) The chronicle of Nuremberg speaks of this donation, and also St. Antonino. The act of donation was inserted in the collection of councils preserved by Ingulf, Wm. of Malmesbury, and Mathew of Westminster.

(<sup>25</sup>) Du Haillan, Baleo, Centuriatore of Magdeburg, Grim, and others.

(<sup>26</sup>) Lewis II., son of Lothario, succeeded his father as emperor, and was consecrated by our best and greatest pontiff, John. The same year the Pope, in the public street, and in a solemn procession to the cathedral of St. John Lateran, being seized with labour pains, brought forth a child in the open air; she died immediately after, and it was known from this event that she was a woman and had lived disguised as a man. *Geo. Fabricii Chemnicensis, Rer. Mem. an. 856.*

(<sup>27</sup>) Part ii., caus. xvi. 9. iii. cap. Nemo.

(<sup>28</sup>) Mezerai in his *Abrégé Chronologique* p. 216., *Ed. Par.* says the history of Pope Joan has been considered for five hundred years as an undoubted fact.

(<sup>29</sup>) Amalarico, Boccaccio, Filippo da Bergamo, Teodorico di Niem, *De privilegiis et juribus imperii.*

### PART III.

(<sup>30</sup>) The tradition is that this John was a woman, but known to be so by one only of her suite, and that, being pregnant by him, she bore a child during her pontificate. *Sigibert, Chron. ad. an. 854.* But afterwards having been familiar with one of her suite, she concealed her pregnancy for a long time, until, as she was going to the Church of St. John Lateran, she was seized with labour pains between the amphitheatre (called the Coliseum after the colossal statue of Nero) and St. Clement's Church, and gave birth to a child. *Platina,*



*vit. di Giov. viii. pont.* 106. But afterwards having submitted to the embraces of one of her household, she bore a child whilst she was pope. *Stella Sac. Ven. Vit. Pont. Rom. pap.* 108 an. 852 and *Fil. da Bergamo Sup. Chron. lib. ix. an.* 858. But during her pontificate she was impregnated by one of her household, and as she was going from St. Peter's to the Lateran, between St. Clement's and the Coliseum, she was taken in travail in the open streets. *Gio. Naucleri Chron. Colonia* 1579, *Gen.* 19, p. 713.

(<sup>31</sup>) See *Revelations, c. xvii., v. 3.*

(<sup>32</sup>) *Id., c. xvii., v. 3.*

(<sup>33</sup>) *Id., c. xviii., v. 16, and c. xxi., v. 8.*

(<sup>34</sup>) As was fixed on for the remission of her sins, and where she died, there she was buried. *Molleolo* commonly called *Hommerlain De nobilitate et rusticitate*, *Dial. cap. xxxvii., fo.* 99.

(<sup>35</sup>) *Blanc and Liber Indulgentiarum Rom., No. 44, 80, 81,* printed in Rome, an. 1515.

(<sup>36</sup>) *Sigibert, Schedel, Annales Fuldenses.*

(<sup>37</sup>) *Petrarch.*

(<sup>38</sup>) And when on a certain day she had gone with the Roman clergy on the solemn procession of Rogations, as was then usual, being dressed out in the papal insignia and jewels, she produced a son, begotten by one of her chamberlains. *Theoderic de Niem, lib. de privilegiis et juribus imperii.* Rogations correspond with the Roman sacrifices called *Ambarvalia*, which the Arvali brothers, who were priests, made to Ceres and Bacchus to implore a fruitful season, fertile crops, and an abundant harvest. *Pro frugibus rei divinæ causâ hostiam circa arva ducebant.* *Petiscus, lex. ant. Rom. voce Fratres et Ambarvale.*

*Terque novas circum felix eat hostia fruges,  
Omnis quam chorus, et socii comitentur ovantes,  
Et Cererem clamore vocent in tecta; neque ante  
Falcem maturis quisquam supponat aristis  
Quam Cereri, torta redimitus tempora quercu,  
Det motus incompositos, et carmina dicat.*

*Virg. Georg. i. v.* 345.

(<sup>39</sup>) *Femina Joannes triplici procincta corona*

*Pro missa celebrat papa puerperium*

*Moltero, Rom. Pont. vita et mores disticis descripti.*

(<sup>40</sup>) *Papa pater patrum peperit papissa papellum.*

*Scriptor. Brunsw. Tome iii., p.* 265. John, the Englishman, was a female pope, and produced between the Coliseum and St. Clement's church. *Comp. Chron. script. Brunsw. Tome ii., p.* 63. But in the course of time she was impregnated by one of her household, and not knowing precisely how long she had gone with child, and as she was on her way from St. Peter to the Lateran, she bore one with difficulty between the Coliseum and St. Clement's, and there died and was buried. *Chron. Epis. Verdent. Script. Brunsw. v. ii., p.* 212. For having gone from the Vatican to the Basilica of St. John Lateran for the chaunting of Litanies, between the Coliseum and St. Clement's, she was unexpectedly seized with labour pains, and there in the street without obstetrical assistance, she brought forth, and in the same place, whether dead or not, she and her offspring



were miserably interred. *Stella, Sac. Ven. Vit. Pont. Rom. pap.* 108, an. 852. This woman became pregnant from the doings of a cardinal, her chaplain, who, for a long time, had intercourse with her, and as she was going in solemn procession to the Church of St. John Lateran, she produced a child thus conceived in whoredom, between the Coliseum and the church of St. Clement, and died on the spot in childbirth, the year of Our Lord 859. *Du Haillan, Histoire de France. Edit. Paris, 1575, p. 279.* But as God does not always permit that the wicked and evil-doers should long reign without tearing the mask from their faces, it so happened that being big by her valet de chambre, going on a procession, she bore a child in the streets near the Coliseum of Rome, and died on the spot, two years, one month, and four days after her election. *Claude Fauchet, Antiquités Gantoises, liv. ix., an. 854.*

(<sup>41</sup>) Lenfant, *Histoire de la papesse Jeanne fidellement tiré de la dissertation Latine de M. de Spanheim, tome 1 ch. 1.*

(<sup>42</sup>) A poet of the country of Virgil and the superior of the Carmelites represents Joan hanged at the gate of hell with her paramour, so that the damned as they go in may behold them.

*Hic pendeat adhuc sezum mentita virilem*

*Femina, cui triplici phrygiam diademate mitram*

*Suspendebat apex, et pontificalis adulter.*

S. B. Mantuano, *Alphonsus, T. iii., lib. iii., fo. 44, Edit. Franc. 1573.*

(<sup>43</sup>) Filippo da Bergamo *de claris mulieribus*, Blanc, De Niem, S. Antonio, Nauclerus, Meffie, historiographer of Charles V. She died in the second year and fourth day of her pontificate, and was buried on the same spot without any funeral pomp.—*Platina, vit di Giov. viii. pont. 106.* On account of her crime, and from having given birth to a child in the street, she was deprived of all honours customarily paid to popes, and interred without any papal pomp, nor is she placed in the catalogue of popes. *Du Haillan, Hist. de France, Edit. Paris, 1576, p. 279.* Afterwards becoming pregnant by one of her confidential servants, and going from St. Peter's to St. John Lateran's, she was suddenly seized with labour pains, and although she had not gone her full time, she produced in the presence of the crowd between the Coliseum and St. Clement's and died in labour, and was privately buried. *Cronica di Marco Guazzo, Ven. 1553 p. 11.*

(<sup>44</sup>) The horror at the time and the scandal was so great that a female should have intruded herself into the chair of St. Peter, have administered the sacraments, and have celebrated the mass pontifically, that Benedict III., her immediate successor, established the usage and ceremony of a chair of white marble with a hole, placed under the portico of the *basilica* of St. John Lateran's, where the elected pope took possession in seating himself, and in the act of receiving the pastoral crosses and the keys, the last cardinal deacon felt under the pontifical robes to make sure of his sex, and to be on their guard against another female pope. *Et ejusdem vitandi erroris causa, genitulia ab ultimo diacono attractantur. Platina, nelle vita di Giov. viii. pont. 106.* And to avoid the like mistake in future it was decreed that no one hereafter should be placed on the holy chair of St. Peter, before he had

been examined through a hole in the chair he sat in by the last deacon cardinal. *Stella, sac. Venet. Vit. Pont. Rom. papa 108, an. 852. Filippo da Berg. Sup. Chron. lib. ix. an. 858.* The cardinal deacon feels his shameful parts to be sure of his sex. *Claud Faucher, Antiq. Gauloises, lib. ix. an. 854.*

*Post hac Roma diu simili sibi cavit ab astu,  
Pontificum arcanos querere sueta sinus/  
Non poterat quisquam reserantes æthera claves  
Non-exploratis sumere testicolis.*

*Cur igitur nostro mos hic nunc tempore cessat?  
Ante probat quod se quilibet esse marem.*

u/ Joa Pannonius, Epis. Quinq̄ec. Du Plessis Hist de la Papauté, p. 164. They order the pontiff elect to sit on a chair with a hole in it, that a person appointed for the purpose may feel his dangling testicles, by which it may be clear that the pope is a man. . . . . Wherefore, that they may not be taken in again, but may have a clear assurance of the matter, they handle the elected pope, and he who does it exclaims "OUR LORD IS A MALE." *Chalcocondila, de reb. Turc. l. iv., Paris, p. 160.* This custom of feeling the virile parts of the elected pope and of proclaiming with a loud voice WE HAVE A MALE POPE, prevailed until the xiv. century. Urban VI. was installed with the same formalities according to the rites of the Roman church. *Luc d'Acheri, spicil. T. iv. Misc. Ep. p. 306.* Alexander VI. Borgia, although he had children, and among them a daughter, named Lucretia, famous for being at the same time both wife and (sposa e nuora) daughter-in-law (*Lucretia nomine, sed re Thais, Alexandri filia, sponsa, nurus*), was nevertheless, like the other pontiffs, subjected to the same formality and ceremony of the recognition of his virility. The words of Bernardino Corio are, in his *Hist. Mediol. fol. R. iv. et seq.*, where he elegantly describes the solemnities of his taking possession of the papal throne on August 26th, 1492, at the Vatican and St. John Lateran's. *The customary solemnities having finally been complied with, and his testicles having been dimesticamente felt, and the blessing having been given, Alexander VI. returned to his palace, and entered on his pontificate as mild as a bull, to administer it like a lion.* The same allusion was made by the bishop Pannonio to Paul II., a handsome man, who led an indolent life, and who was chosen in the year 1464.

*Pontificis Pauli testes ne Roma requiras.*

The poet Marullo, in a satirical epigram against Innocent VIII., whose family name was Cibo, a pontiff devoted to pleasure, and burthened with spurious children and bastards on whom he heaped riches and titles, said that this pope had no occasion to be exposed to give proofs of his manhood.

*Quid quæris testes, sit mas an femina, Cibo?*

*Respice natorum, pignora certa, gregem.*

tr/ Consult, moreover, on this head *Relazione del maestro di ceremonie di Leone X.* Paris Cassio sulle consecratione di detto papa, Sabellico Enneadi, Tarcagnota *Storia del mondo*, Martino Franco, secretary of Pope Felix V. Cerimoniale Romano, edit. Colonia 1557, made by order of Gregory X. Cardinal Giacobazio in his life of Celestine V., and Cardinal Pandolfo, who speaks of this in the consecration of Honorius II., and Pasquale II.



(<sup>46</sup>) I find in the manner in which this history is related, she does more honour to the Roman See than it deserves. They tell us that this female pope had studied successfully; that she was learned, clever, eloquent; that her fine talents caused her to be admired at Rome. I say that all this does great honour to the See of Rome. In the age in which this female pope is placed, the title of bardache, or of lover to some Roman lady, was the only kind of merit that led to the pontificate. Jurieu, *Hist. du papisme, part iii. ch. 2.*

(<sup>46</sup>) John the XXIII.

(<sup>47</sup>) Alexander VI.

(<sup>48</sup>) John XII.

(<sup>49</sup>) Pope Leo IV. died on the Kalends of August. To him succeeded Joan, a woman, and reigned two years, five months, and four days. *Marianus Scottus lib. III., stat. IV., ad an. 854.* After this Leo came John the Englishman, born at Mayence, and sat on the throne two years, five months, and four days. *Martin Polacco in Chron. ad an. 855.*

*Martinus Polonus*

(<sup>50</sup>) The notes above are understood.

