

(5) In Browning's lyrics (see "Cavalier Tunes") the lines are not smooth, but broken up. In this particular selection the substance is more like a man talking. There is a movement of feeling throughout the lyric, such as hilarity, loyalty, etc. This movement of mood is dramatic and more expressive than as if the same mood prevailed.

In a lyric there is commonly no movement. As a rule, the lyrics of great poets are expressions of some dominant feeling. The poet finds a suitable metre. The thought is subordinate to the metre, which is smooth and melodious. Shakespeare's works show that where feeling predominates in his earlier plays, the rhythm of the lines is very noticeable. In his later works the dramatic element predominates and the rhythm of the lines is not so noticeable.

(6) Browning is essentially dramatic. This dramatic quality is well illustrated in his poem, entitled "House."

(7) One peculiar feature of Browning's lyrics is the intricacy, subtlety and complexity of the feelings expressed. See "The Lost Leader."

An imaginary person of advanced and liberal opinions is bribed and won over to the opposite side. His friends deplore the change, but still love the man for what he was and for what they believe he will yet become. Subtle and complex emotions arise in the hearts of his friends. They do not wish him back again, because he can never take his former position in his relation to them. They wish him to struggle even though on the wrong side, but yet he will ultimately be won back again. The speakers admire the splendid character of the man who has been bribed and won.

"The Lost Leader" illustrates Browning's idea of life. Be in earnest. Life is designedly a struggle. It is better to struggle in a good cause, but rather than not struggle at all better be in a bad cause. Failure means no struggle of any kind.

In his second lecture, Prof. Alexander began the study of Browning's dramatic poetry. He pointed out that the transition from the lyric to the dramatic work of the poet was easy, in as much as the former has to a large extent the qualities of the latter. Browning's lyrics are seldom purely lyrical. The ideal of the beautiful is subordinate to the ideal of the characteristic, and hence the personal element is seldom absent even from Browning's lyrics. Grace of expression, sweetness of melody, and smoothness of rhythm are sacrificed for vigor and animation which sometimes verge on the rough and coarse. Browning was a man who was conscious that he had a message to deliver, a message of such importance that it could not wait for a finished and perfectly artistic form of expression. When a man gets a new and deeper vision into the truth of things he has to look about him for a new language with which to express his new ideas; he has in reality to re-create language. And this was Browning's difficulty. He, like Wordsworth, had a new revelation for the world, and like Wordsworth he had to invent a new medium by means of which to give it to the world. His consciousness that he was right, that he saw and felt more deeply and truly than other men, strengthened his determination to go his own way, irrespective of others' praise or blame.

And Browning did go his own way in the choice of subjects, in his manner of treatment, and in the forms he used. He is a philosopher with a theory of God, of the universe, and of human life and their relations to one another. There are few phases of human life which he has not treated in his poetry, and time, or place, or occupation, are no barriers to his insight into the characters of men. We say characters designedly, because it is in these rather than in the actions of men that Browning is interested. Hence his dramatic powers are of a peculiar kind. He has indeed written several popular