

as relating the story to some one, it may be himself. He is in an excited frame of mind and so he sings.

The whole is a concrete picture of the situation but it is typical of something. Browning sees no evil spirit, not something special but a feeling of despair which comes over men, over a race sometimes, a feeling that life is unsatisfactory. It is a universal mood and Browning chooses Saul to represent a typical man, who, notwithstanding his splendid attainments, still asks what good is it all. To drive away that spirit comes David, the spirit of poetry, of representative poetry. The poet is to Browning the seer. David is a poet and a seer, a great prophet, a man who has a deeper insight into the ways of the universe than most men and hence is more content to live. Further, the young David, fresh from the country, is the type which Browning most admires.

If you follow the song of David in this poem you see the development from the simple soothing effects of sweet sounds to words of a simple character accompanied by music, on till we have words without music when David at last attains to the highest insight into God incarnate.

Coming to the introduction, Abner is the captain of the King's host. David has been called from the fresh fields to play before Saul. Everything about David suggests freshness and youth; everything about Saul aridity and age. Browning is usually very sparing of physical details but these are extraordinarily effective.

"At first I saw naught but the blackness, but soon I discerned a something more black than darkness."

In V we have the first attempt at poetry, music so simple and sensuous, that it affects even the animals. This is the lower nature that we share with the beasts. Then in VII, the song rises a little higher with simple words. Browning takes the earliest subjects which were no doubt put into poetry namely, feasting, marriage, death and

worship. At the end of this comes the first effect on Saul. Though he was dead in a trance, David has now succeeded in awakening his lower nature.

Stanza IX is not purely music. The first part to line 78 celebrates the pleasure man finds in mere activity. Life is a good thing. Browning believed it. The remainder of the stanza praises the higher activities in words like those of Rabbi Ben Ezra :

Let one more attest,

I have lived, seen God's hand through a life-time, and all was for best."

As by the labors of the throe, gold is brought out of the rock, so love and rage make man more intense.

The poem ended originally with stanza IX and was first published in *Bells and Pomegranates*. Then it appeared in 1855 in its present form in "Men and Women."

In X the "Lord's Army" is probably the heavenly host. There is an extraordinary use of "strains" in the same line referring to the excitement of the host when it passed in Ezekiel. Sari becomes alive but despairs still. Just as the great mountain with its bleak, barren sheet of snow, rises stark and black but still with possibilities of life, so Saul stands taking no interest in life yet not dead.

David stops now to consider what he has accomplished, Saul is alive but filled with despair, David now seeks some positive stimulant. Saul admits life is a good thing yet he does not wish to live. The consolations of life so far, are those which a man would find in himself but there are the higher consolations, of work revealing what he has done and what he may do to help others.

This is the objective poetry of life representing it in all its various aspects. Now David throws himself imaginatively into the lives of others and comes to the poetry of the soul. Fruit does much for others, so Saul has something to confer on all others through his deeds. David says in effect that we have all immortality in our