

might to a school of disciples gathered together to be taught by his wisdom, not to dispute it. He feared chiefly not a counter creed but the materialising effects of the industrial movement of his own day. Expecting no contradiction, Wordsworth did not care to quit his own standpoint in order that he might see how things appear from the opposing side. He did not argue but let his utterance fall into a half soliloquy spoken in presence of an audience but not always directly addressed to them. Browning's manner of speech was very unlike this. He seems to address it often to unsympathetic hearers of whose presence and gainsaying attitude he could not lose sight. The beliefs for which he pleaded were not in his day, as they had been in Wordsworth's, part of a progressive wave of thought. He occupied the disadvantageous position of a conservative thinker. The later poet of spiritual beliefs had to make his way not with, but against, a great incoming tide of contemporary speculation. Probably on this account Browning's influence as a teacher will extend over a far shorter space of time than that of Wordsworth. For Wordsworth is self-contained, and is complete without reference to the ideas which oppose his own. His work suffices for its own explanation, and will always commend itself to certain readers either as the system of a philosophic thinker or as the dream of a poet. Browning's thought where it is most significant is often more or less enigmatical if taken by itself: its energetic gestures, unless we see what they are directed against, seem aimless beating the air. His thought, as far as it is polemical, will probably cease to interest future readers. New methods of attack will