

people beneath them. In this respect, our English nobility gains by a comparison with them. In England, there has always been a close bond of union between the upper and lower classes, and the former have mingled socially to a certain extent with the latter, and have always taken a large part with them in the discharge of political duties.

Our Duke of Ferrara was representative of a class common in the Italy of the Renaissance. Browning gives his poem local color by his choice of subject, and in this respect is like Scott, whose characters appear in a Scotch environment, but different from Shakespeare whose characters are universal. The tendency to localize is very common in the literary work of to-day.

A brief summary of work gone over was here given by Prof. Alexander. A lyric is a monologue, but in it there is a dominant poetical emotion, and it takes a more poetical form. In "My Last Duchess," there is the element of rhyme, but in other respects the form is rather dramatic; there is no deep emotion, and the speaker of the monologue presses from one subject to another. The poem is rather speech than song. The speaker is revealing himself to us, and we have to fill in the outward circumstances and incidents for ourselves. In this respect the dramatic monologue differs from the drama proper where action is the main thing.

Browning, as we have seen, is less interested in action than he is in character and he used only so much action as was necessary to reveal the soul. Shakespeare's method was just the reverse of this; in his dramas character is shown by action. There is still another method by which character may be exhibited and that is by analysis. This method, however, is very inartistic and uninteresting and even in the novel it is admissible only as preparatory for future action.

Browning's method is not that of the drama of action nor of analysis but he employs in an original and powerful fashion the monologue. In this the character of the speaker is revealed through what he says and in the way in which he says it. In the use of this method, Browning has given our literature a greater number of original figures than all the other poets since Shakespeare. They have created a few. For instance, Wordsworth has given us Michael and Tennyson, the northern farmer, but the chief work of these poets does not lie in this direction. The same is true of Shelley and Keats and even in Scott's poetry, character is unfolded only so far as is necessary to carry on the story. But Browning's men and women are full-formed and original characters chosen from many times and places and delineated for their own sake.

"Fra Lippo Lippi" is another of Browning's Italian subjects. Browning spent a good part of his life in Italy and made himself thoroughly acquainted with the history and spirit of Italian art. In Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*, he had read the life of Lippo which he makes the painter tell us incidentally in his monologue. But Browning had also seen and studied Lippo's paintings and out of these materials his imagination shaped the history, character, and work of the man, into a reality which he has given us in his poem.

In *Fra Lippo Lippi* we are brought face to face with a kind of problem which did not occur to us in our study of "My Last Duchess." In this latter poem we were interested merely in the unfolding of a character. In "Fra Lippo Lippi" a general problem meets us, the development, namely, of "Realism in Art." Browning was a philosopher as well as a poet. He tried to conceive for himself a complete theory of the universe and of the Power concealed in phenomena. He wished to see the general principle which underlies historical development in all its