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Having outlined the elements of the ideal teacher in the last issue of the MONTHLY, let us now consider the ideal to which we would have our pupils conform. While it is true that every teacher has some ideal for himself, it is equally true that he has his ideal pupil. That ideal may be no higher than the aim of passing pupils successfully through examinations. Teachers are largely to blame for the false standard of modern education and there are few teachers who do not suffer severely for this deception. Is it not true that the ideal teacher popularly so called is the one who passes the largest number of pupils through examinations? The writer is acquainted with one High School principal in Ontario, who openly asserts that his business is not to educate but to pass pupils through examinations. Christ revealed the fact that character is not tested by written examinations. The unscrupulous teacher too often sows seed which produce a sad, sad harvest.

Yet the ideal teacher cannot completely neglect the prejudice of the past century for *head* knowledge. If he does he destroys his usefulness. He is too radical. Hence he must be the missionary as well as the teacher. He must hold firmly to his principles and convictions and give them prominence as far as possible. At the same time he must educate both parents and children to a truer conception of "education" as revealed by Christ Himself. For fear of being misunder-

stood, the writer emphasizes the fact that Christ did not ignore purely intellectual knowledge but merely used this knowledge so far and only as far as was necessary to His higher purpose. Christ used intellectual knowledge as a means to an end. To-day, it is too often the beginning and the end. Are we surprised that home and society and church are so often not quite ideal?

The teacher may have many ideals for his pupils, all more or less ignoble. The true and highest ideal is found in the words of Christ to his own pupils, "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." This includes the three-fold complete development of heart, mind and body. Thus we discover that Christ not only understood thoroughly the process of education, but He also comprehended the goal or end of education. All teachers will no doubt admit that this is the correct ideal but most will at once say that this ideal is impracticable.

(1) Many people do not accept the ideal. Their judgment has been perverted. In Ontario democracy must be respected. Nevertheless the good seed may be sown. There will ultimately be "the full corn in the ear." Christ had much prejudice and falsity to contend with, yet He accomplished a great work. Christ had an ideal pupil constantly before His mind. Did His disciples ultimately attain that ideal? *Would Christ's disciples have had a different development if Christ's*

*ideal of Himself and His pupil had been different?*

(2) The next objection is that modern teachers have a too extensive and intensive curriculum. The ideal pupil cannot assimilate the mental food fast enough. The higher and spiritual is too often as a consequence suppressed. Yet the personality, life and words of the teacher are after all the important moulding factors. It was so with Christ. On the last great day the modern teacher cannot take refuge behind the argument that conditions and environments forced him along a debasing line of professional practice.

In conclusion let us note a few aids to the attainment of this high ideal for our pupils.

(1) The teacher must be himself ideal. He must be like Christ. Character is more than knowledge, still a certain amount of the latter is necessary to the teacher.

(2) The sentiment of the community should be ideal. If it is not, be a missionary. Preach when an opportunity is afforded. Teach a Bible Class. Be active in private conversations. Despite your best efforts everyone will not accept the truth, but your hands will be greatly strengthened. The doctrine of this paragraph is justified by the life of Christ.

(3) As the teacher must have a motive so must each pupil. It is contrary to human nature to expect any pupil to be active in any direction without a motive. Christ recognized this element of human nature. He has supplied motives for all His disciples. Here are a few illustrations:

(a) "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or wife,

or children, or land for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold and shall inherit everlasting life."

(b) "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

(c) "He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life."

(d) "I am the way, the truth and life."

(e) "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

The many invitations of Christ appeal to every class and condition of men. They supply a motive for conduct and effort. If the invitations were properly understood, this motive would be the highest possible. Very few, if any, of Christ's disciples at first understood the full meaning of His words. Almost invariably the words were given a materialistic interpretation. Some came for bread, some to be healed, others to be rulers in Christ's Kingdom. The lower motive developed in many cases under the influence of Christ's love and example into the higher motive of self-sacrifice and service. Many who came to be healed and fed became devoted followers of Christ.

Motive then is an absolute necessity because of the way we are constituted. With children the motive in nine cases out of ten will resemble that of most of Christ's early disciples. The motive will point to bread or fame. It is the teacher's privilege to transform that motive to a higher level and this will

be accomplished solely by his personality. If the child can once be interested, it is quite possible for the true teacher to sow seeds which will ripen into the motive of Christ Himself, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to seek and save the lost. From another point of view we see the iniquity of emphasizing examinations. Would Christ's disciples ever have become saints if their motive had never risen above bread or fame?

Motives then like ideals are ever changing with reference to the individual. Under normal treatment they should become more and more perfect as in Christ Jesus.

The itinerant practices of Christ and His disciples made ample provision for physical development.

How wide is the gulf between the artistic, Christ-like teacher and the mechanical teacher! How different the results and the rewards! Can we be too anxious about motives and ideals? Surely the true teacher has opportunities which the angels in heaven might well covet!

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### *Poet Browning.*

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PROFESSOR ALEXANDER'S FIRST FOUR LECTURES  
AT THE NORMAL COLLEGE.

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A large number assembled at the Normal College on Saturday afternoon Feb. 1st, to hear the first of a series of eight lectures on Browning and his poetry. The professor was introduced to the audience in a few well chosen words by Mr. Macpherson, of the Collegiate staff.

Prof. Alexander, in rising, said that some people agreed with Carlyle, who stated that in a short time books would entirely supersede and supplant

professors. It was natural that an author like Carlyle should hold such views. Books had their place, but the living voice, the living teacher could never be dispensed with, especially in the realm of literature. An intimate introduction to any great artist could never be attained by mere books, biographies or notes. The object of the speaker was to bring each member of his audience into intimate contact with Browning. The characteristics of Browning may be found in books, but intimate intercourse with the artist could not be thus obtained.

Poetry was primarily song, the expression of feeling, pure and simple. The shouts of the savage would be an example. Then poetry was sung and recited, and later printed, for the convenience of the people.

The speaker referred to several peculiarities which were characteristic of Browning. (1) It was necessary for the reader to have the printed page before him and to read Browning's poetry aloud. This indicates that Browning trusts much to the printed page. In other poetry the ear, as a rule, will grasp the meaning with sufficient clearness. (2) Browning is up-to-date, or extremely modern. This is not necessarily either a good or a bad feature of the poet. Browning was original and an inventor. He followed novel paths, new methods, new subjects and invented much. Just because he followed his own methods and cuts himself so clear of the past, he is hard to understand and to appreciate. The passion for art and literature is developed in the cultured by study of the past. An original writer like Browning is likely to lack appreciation from those (the cultured) who should love him most. The cultured are often too conservative to be the best judges of an original poet.

It is necessary to remember that Browning is, as a rule, hard to follow. The fact that Browning is so original makes it difficult for him to find an

appreciative audience. Tennyson was appreciated by the public very much more quickly than was Browning. The latter was a man of very strong will. Criticism had the effect of making him more stubborn in following his own methods. A man of weaker will would listen to criticism and be more or less benefited thereby. When a man feels that he is great, he has no respect for the opinions of others. This was the attitude of Browning. The speaker neither commended nor condemned this characteristic of the poet.

(3) That peculiarity which gives Browning his most conspicuous attribute and distinctive position among his contemporaries, especially as compared with Tennyson, is his force and animation. The speaker contrasted Browning and Tennyson in several respects, because the latter is well known and because the contrast is interesting. We should be able to appreciate both poets, as each has his excellencies.

Tennyson often lacked force. When he degenerates, his weakness is tame. When Browning degenerates, he gives vent to emotions that surpass good taste.

Generalisations in literature are often misleading. For example, Tennyson does not always lack force, nor is Browning always animated.

The striking attributes of Browning's genius and character may be shown in many ways. Compare Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," with Browning's "Prospice." The situation and sentiment in each are the same. Both are looking forward to the approach of death and how they will meet the same. On the whole, Tennyson's metre is smooth, sweet and dignified and occasionally animated. Browning's metre is full of force, animation and dash, and is sometimes smooth and dignified. Browning's "Cavalier Tunes" illustrate the poet's spirit of dash and animation very well.

The art impulse in every artist has two phases. (1) The internal, and

(2) the external. The internal impulse is seen in the desire of every artist to give expression to his thoughts and emotions. If he is deeply moved in some direction, he cannot help expressing himself. This is the fundamental basis of all art.

The external impulse is seen in the poet's desire for recognition and appreciation. The artist desires others to feel and think as he does.

The impulse to expression is stronger in some than the desire of recognition. The internal impulse with Browning predominates to an extraordinary degree. He wishes to represent with utmost exactness and truth the feeling within.

The external impulse is not in harmony with the internal. In order to secure recognition and sympathy the artist may not represent the feelings and thoughts just as he conceives them. The artist brings his work under the restraint of external impulse. A poet without very strong inner feeling is ready to adapt himself to the external influence. He will be conservative and will conform to what is established in art and literature. He can readily lend himself to this external influence. Tennyson is an example of this. His work was largely under the influence of the past, and hence obtained ready recognition. Browning thought very little of bringing his ideas into conformity with existing models or to making them easily understood. A man may have great ideas, but be unable to express them. He will be a great man, but not a great artist.

(4) There is a contrast in the personal appearance of Tennyson and Browning. Browning would never be taken for a poet or an artist. In manner and dress he was merely a shrewd man of the world. Tennyson bore the stamp of an artist in his features and manners. Browning was above all a great man who had great ideas to express, though these ideas were not always expressed so as to be readily understood.

(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

dramas, but it is not in this field that he has met with his greatest success. They are too subjective, and the action is too limited. The drama of action is not Browning's sphere, because, in it, character is subordinate to, and exists for, the movement of action, whereas Browning is interested in environment and action only for the sake of character. The product and not the process receives the emphasis from him. His true power is in psychological analysis. He is interested only in the evolution of the conscience and character of men. Life is a discipline, and it is not so much the external events of life which deserve attention, as the attitude of the soul towards these. Hence the dramatic method which Browning used has little of the dramatic element in it at all, only enough to form a basis for the laying bare of the heart of the subject, and the exposure of its inner workings. The poetic form best adapted to effect this result is the dramatic monologue.

Before proceeding with his remarks on "My Last Duchess," Prof. Alexander urged the necessity of each one making an independent attempt to understand for himself any poem set for study. The tendency now-a-days is to rely too much on annotations, and to try to get along with as little thought as possible. Such a course means slow intellectual suicide, and loss of mental grasp and power. One of the merits of Browning's poetry as a subject for study is that it cannot be understood at all without close thought.

"My Last Duchess" is a fairly typical instance of Browning's use of the monologue. We cannot fully understand the beginning, or any part of it until we have read it through. We know nothing about the concrete surroundings, nor the person addressed. We have to gather all this from the words of the speaker, and from the changes in the drift of the thought. This leads to extreme condensation, and sometimes even to obscurity in

the thought. The feeling with which we must approach a poem of Browning's, such as "My Last Duchess," is that it will be necessary to watch every word and phrase, knowing that each fills a large place, and will come in valuable for the understanding of all the rest of the poem, and for the full conception of the characters portrayed. We must know that no touch is superfluous.

These general principles are all instanced in "My Last Duchess." The word "last" in the title must be noted, and the name of the place in which the scene is laid, an item of information which Browning generally leaves to be gotten from the body of the poem! After noticing these points, we pass on abruptly into the monologue, with no idea who the speaker may be. We learn however, from the first few lines, that it is the Duke of Ferrara who is commenting to some visitor or friend on the beauty of the painted picture of his dead wife which hangs before them on the wall, and he had had another wife or wives before this one, because he calls her his last duchess. We do not have to go farther into the poem to get some idea of the cold and unloving character of this man. The language and rhythm of these opening lines reveal it. Neither shows the presence of passion or emotion. The painting is a wonder in color, and that is all he sees in it. The memory of his dead wife stirs no feeling of tenderness.

We gather from the next few lines that an expression of wonder and surprise passes over the stranger's face as he gazes on the picture. He has seen the depth and passion of the earnest glance which the painter had imparted to the pictured countenance of the duchess, and his expression of wonder arises from the suspicion that there may have been improper relations between the painter and the woman. But the duke anticipates this feeling of surprise. He tells his visitor that all others for whom he choose to

unveil the picture, express the same feeling, and hence he says, "Fra Pandolf, by design" that is, he gives the name of a famous artist whose character was above reproach. The fact that the duke keeps his picture veiled and allows no one but himself to put by the curtain, is a further indication of the selfishness of his nature. He has a dog-in-the-manger spirit.

The surprised look in the stranger's face gives Browning the opportunity to begin the delineation of the duchess' character. "It was not my presence only," the duke says, "which called that spot of joy in the duchess' cheek, but some trifling pretty compliments of Fra Pandolf, "—courtesy, she thought, and cause enough for calling up that spot of joy. She had a heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad, too easily impressed." These and a few succeeding lines give us the duchess' character, full-formed. Her nature was sweet, pure, and unselfish, and got its happiness from the common scenes of life about her. She loved dumb animals, and the beauties of nature, and she felt and expressed gratitude and delight for the slightest service done her.

And now in juxtaposition and contrast to the duchess' character, the duke gives his own some additional touches. This indiscriminate scattering of approving looks and words by the duchess did not please her lord. His favor at her breast, the gift of a nine hundred years' old name, should have stood in a higher class than the gifts of others, yet he would not stoop to show her that she should recognize this fact. She might answer him and get the best of the argument, but even if she remained silent it would be a lowering of his pride and dignity to make any explanation of what he thought her duty was.

"O sir! she smiled, no doubt, when e'er I passed her, but who passed without much the same smile? This grew, I gave commands, then all

smiles stopped together. There she stands as if alive."

In these lines we reach the climax of the poem. What a picture of a life's tragedy do these short, abrupt sentences paint for us! Shakespeare in his "Othello" has represented for us the life of Desdemona in the process of being literally crushed out, but the slow breaking of the duchess' heart in Browning's poem is not capable of representation in drama or novel. In the abrupt sentences, however, which we have quoted, the whole story is given to the imagination.

These lines complete the delineation of the duchess' character. Browning now proceeds to give the finishing touches to that of the duke. He, in the same matter-of-fact tone which he had used in discussing his dead wife's picture, now turns to another subject, a subject which the unveiling of the picture had interrupted. The duke is negotiating for another marriage, and the stranger is the representative of a certain wealthy count whose daughter he desires to wed. It is, he assures his visitor, the fair daughter's self which is his object, but still he does not expect that any just claim of his for dowry will be disallowed. Here we get another glimpse into the hard and mercenary spirit of the man.

As the duke and the stranger start to go down to the company below, the former draws attention to "Neptune taming a sea horse, thought a rarity." Putting this and previous facts together, we get a complete idea of the duke's character. He is a member of the Italian nobility, possibly of the period of the renaissance, a period in which the secular nobility and churchmen were patrons of art, and virtuosi in judging it, at least from the standpoint of external beauty of form and color, but seldom penetrating to its inner spiritual significance. The lives they led made them selfish and destroyed natural human feelings. They discharged no public duties, and had no interest in the life of the common

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 Vasaris' 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



phases and especially in religion and art. Hence, in this poem, in addition to the study of Lippo's character, we have an abstract question.

Italian art, up to this time, had been devoted to religious subjects and it was deemed irreverent to make a painting realistic. It could not be right to represent the Virgin and the Christ-child as ordinary beings of flesh and blood. Only so much of realism, whether in drawing of the body and its drapery or in landscape background was allowed as seemed necessary for suggesting the spiritual emotion or setting forth the story.

The Renaissance, however, brought a new sense of the beauty of the natural world and in this poem Fra Lippo is made an exponent of this new development in art. We must be on our guard against thinking that the view of Art expressed in this poem is wholly the view of Browning. It is his method to shew one aspect of his theory of things at a time and thus to stimulate thought.

We shall now proceed to the study of the poem. The scene is laid in Florence. Lippo has been seized on the streets after midnight by the city-guard and is being rather roughly handled. His words, "What's to blame? You think you see a Monk," indicate surprise of the guards at their having arrested a man dressed in the garb of a Monk and the words, "Aha! you know your letters?" indicate likely the approach of the captain of the guard. Lippo then proceeds to tell them who he is and when he gives the name of Cosimo de Medici as his patron he gets more civil treatment.

The scene starts the artist-instinct of the man. The face of one of the guards is that of "Judas to a tittle." He would like another guard's face for "the slave that holds John Baptist's head adangle by the hair with one hand and his weapon in the other, yet unwiped."

The captain of the guard has heard of Lippo's work as a painter and the

latter is in a communicative frame of mind. He will tell the captain his story. He has been working for the great man "apainting saints, and saints, and saints," but it is the time of spring and the nights, when "bands roam the town and sing out carnival," are come. One of these bands pass under his window with hurry of feet, with music and whiffs of song. Lippo affirms that flesh and blood was what he was made of, and hence he could do nothing else but climb out of his window an follow after. It was just when he was about to return for a little sleep before getting up to work again at "Jerome knocking at his poor old breast" the guards seized him. There is fine humor in this contrast of Lippo, with his keen enjoyment of pleasure, spending his days apainting saints like Jerome.

The captain still shews that he does not think Lippo's midnight rollicking fit conduct for a Monk. And so Lippo proceeds to shew him how it comes about. He tells the story of his life, how he starved on the streets as a child (an experience, however, which sharpened his senses) and, how after an eight years' experience of this kind he at last found refuge in a monastery and took an oath to "renounce this very miserable world." Here he soon showed a genius for painting which attracted the Prior's notice and gave him hope that Lippo, as a great painter, might some day bring honor to their order. He therefore allows the boy to daub away on the walls of the monastery. Lippo tells us the figures he drew. In the lines which describe the scenes at the confessional Browning shows wonderful power in depicting external circumstances and situations. The Monks praise Lippo's work for its truth to life, but the Prior and the learned soon began to shake their heads and ere long Lippo's "triumph's straw-fire flared and flunked." They lectured him and even now, he says,

"When I in my own master and paint as I please,

The old grave eyes are peeping o'er my shoulders as I work,

The heads shake still—"It's arts' decline my son!

You're not of the true painters great and old;

Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find;

Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer;

Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!"

And this old schooling sticks and Lippo feels impelled to paint to suit them but sometimes he wearies of it all, especially on some such warm eve as this, and then he says, "I do these fooleries you catch me at in sheer despite."

But Lippo foresees, he says, what is bound to come, namely, the triumph of realism. His own mind, warped as it is by the effects of his Monkish teaching, cannot work with free inspiration in that direction but he knows "a youth who'll paint apace ere long"

Here follows Lippo's defence of the painting of natural beauty. There is fin: poetical power manifested in these lines:

"You've seen the world,

The beauty, wonder and the power,

The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,

Changes, surprises—and God made it all!"

Further on he says in the same strain,

"It makes me mad to see what men shall do,

And we in our graves! This world's no blot for us,

Nor blank; It means intensely and means good."

In contrast with this he describes a painting of the religious sort, which he had done at Prato. Saint Lawrence is being roasted on a gridiron and three slaves are employed in turning his body off its toasted side. The pious people, however, have, out of compassion for the Saint, so pricked and prodded the three slaves that their painted forms are fast disappearing from the walls. "Thus" a brother tells Lippo, "does pity and religion grow in the crowd." "Hang the fools"

is Lippo's brief but forceful comment.

Feeling or pretending to feel that his auditor will scarcely approve his criticism of this religious art and the effect of the old training reasserting itself, Lippo apologizes and promises to paint, by way of penance, a picture of the religious sort which he has just been criticizing. This picture is still to be seen in the gallery of fine arts in Florence:

"God in the midst, Madonna and her babe, ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood, etc."

His story ended, Lippo gets him home to the palace of his patron.

To appreciate this poem fully we need to know something of the history of Italian art. The quarrel between realism and idealism in art belongs, however, as much to the present as to the past. It is still a problem whether art (and in art we include literature) should merely give us copies from nature and life or should attempt to idealize them. The poem we have just studied presents one side of problem. As we have already said it is not necessarily Browning's whole view, but he always sympathizes with the innovator and understands his position. His own poetic work was largely a new departure in style and subjects and mode of treatment.

#### RABBI BEN EZRA.

In this poem we come to a new type of monologue, a monologue in which the thought and feeling is the predominant thing and not the character. The quantity of these two elements varies in the poems of Browning. In the Bishop Orders His Tomb, the character is the main thing; in Rabbi Ben Ezra, as we have just said, the thought and feeling; while in Fra Lippo Lippi and Andrea del Sarto, there is a balance between the two.

Since then thought and feeling predominate in Rabbi Ben Ezra, the poem has less dramatic and more lyrical qualities than the other monologues we have studied. There is

one strong, predominant emotion, and hence the movement does not change as it does, for instance, in Fra Lippo Lippi, where the feeling is constantly varying, being now jocular, now coarse, now emotional and refined. In Rabbi Ben Ezra the movement is even and strong.

The presence of this predominating thought and emotion causes also the exclusion of the usual dramatic machinery, such as concrete surroundings, and incidents occurring in a certain place and time. These are not stated, nor are we required to supply them from suggestions given in the body of the poem. There is, moreover, no auditor to whom the monologist is addressing himself, nor concerning the latter are we given any information except that his name is Ben Ezra, and that he has the title Rabbi. This man was a Jewish philosopher who lived in Spain during the middle ages. Browning had become acquainted with some of his views of life, and found that they coincided with his own. But we do not get this information from the poem; we have to go to history for it.

This absence of dramatic qualities, both in form and manner of treatment, or, in other words, the fact that the poem is not a character study, indicates that the sentiments are more completely those of Browning himself. He is giving us his own views of life.

There is yet another effect which follows the predominance of a single emotion, and that is, great condensation of thought. Under the influence of intense feeling, the poet's mind leaps, as it were, from thought to thought, and it is difficult often to see the connection between them. In the same way an advanced mathematician, in teaching a complex problem to those who have not gone far in the subject taught, is apt to miss certain steps in the reasoning; all is plain to him and he thinks it is so to his pupils. Thus in Browning's poetry we often fail to understand the meaning of a stanza or even of a single line, and the difficulty

is increased by the absence of connecting words. The general meaning of the whole selection is clear, however, and to this we shall now advert.

Rabbi Ben Ezra (who, as we have said, represents Browning himself), has come to the period of old age. He is taking a retrospect of life, and is giving us his conclusions about it all, and his views of this period of old age upon which, he has just entered. His attitude is an intensely optimistic one. He believes that God orders all the events of life, and that life in all its stages, from youth to old age, and including both, is a good thing. It may be a struggle in which there are many defects; and sufferings, and disappointments may be experienced which are hard to bear, but all these are only the discipline and training which will make the soul stronger and fitter for higher activity in the hereafter. That a good God orders all, that all experience is a beneficial discipline for the soul, and that the soul will use in another sphere of action the powers developed in this, are fundamental tenets in Browning's creed. We find them recurring again and again in his poems.

We may contrast this view of life with the epicurean. The latter is skeptical; it knows nothing of the intelligent and loving purpose of the Power which rules in the affairs, and watches over the lives of men, and it has no faith in a future life. Epicureanism sees no good in the dark experiences of life, and it affords no clue through their mazes. *Carpe diem*, it says, and live a life of pleasure while you may, for soon sickness and suffering will come, and repulsive old age, and, last of all, the night of death. The epicurean emphasizes the ideal of enjoyment; the true optimist, like Rabbi Ben Ezra, that of discipline. Faith and stimulus results from the former view, enervation and despondency from the latter.

The epicurean ideal finds expression in ancient and modern literature. It

is found in the song of Solomon, in Horace, in the lyrics of Robert Herrick, and the Rubayyat of Amar Khayyam, a Persian poet. For instance Herrick sings :

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-playing,  
And this same flower that blooms to-day  
To-morrow will be dying.

That age is best which is the first  
When youth and blood are warmer,  
But being spent, the worse and worst  
Times, shall succeed the former.

Contrast this last stanza with Browning's

The best is yet to be  
The last of life, for which the  
First was made.

Herrick's poem, "To Daffodils," exhibits the epicurean complaint of the shortness of the time which life affords for pleasure. His cry is, "All is vanity." His tears for the daffodils are purely conventional; he only weeps for himself.

The following stanza from the Rubayyat express the same feelings :

Waste not your hours, nor in the vain  
pursuit  
Of this or that endeavor and dispute ;  
Better be jocund with the fruitful grape  
Than sadden after none, or bitter fruit.

A moment's halt—a momentary taste  
Of being from the well amid the waste—  
And lo!--the phantom caravan has reached,  
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh make  
haste !

Alas, that spring should vanish with the  
rose !

That youth's sweet-scented manuscript  
should close !

The nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Alas, whence and whither flown again, who  
knows !

Ah Love ! could thou and I with Fate conspire  
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,  
Would we not shatter it to bits--and then  
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire !

How great is the contrast between the firm, strong faith of Browning and these sceptical complainings of the futility of life and human striving ! We may proceed to contrast the philosophy of life with that expressed in Rabbi Ben Ezra. The first stanza

expresses the same idea as Tennyson expresses in *In Memoriam* : all that is, is co-operative to some great end. Man's life from first to last is planned for him by God so that even old age has its purpose.

In the second and third stanzas, the idea is expressed that a large part of youth seems wasted because it is difficult to decide what ideal shall be followed. This is especially true in the cases of great geni like Goethe and Browning. Their minds were so completely many-sided that it was hard for them to decide whether to devote their lives to one form of art or all forms together. To Browning, this uncertainty, "these hopes and fears annulling youth's brief years," are an indication of greatness of soul. It is man's reaching out for infinite knowledge and perfection which causes his doubt and his dissatisfaction with himself. Had he not these desires he would be on a level with the brutes; that we have them allies us with God.

In the sixth stanza we have a characteristic utterance of Browning's; life is a discipline; its sorrows and suffering are to be welcomed, because they are the means by which the soul is stimulated to action and growth. Apparent failure means real success as long as the heart desires and the will attempts to reach the best. In stanza eight the idea is expressed that that man has sunk to the level of the brute whose soul only works to invent new forms of pleasure for the body, which, even at its best cannot aid the soul on its lone way. In stanza nine we have a sudden breakdown. The statement in the eighth stanza might seem to indicate that the ascetic ideal was the best. Browning hastens to correct this impression. The physical world contributes to man's spiritual development, and the bodily senses and organs are the means by which nature communicates with the soul. This communication and development are a part of God's plan for man, and

manifestation of his power and love :  
so we should not say :

Spite of this flesh to-day  
I strove, made head, gained  
Ground upon the whole.

The body is not a hindrance but co-operates in man's highest development.

In stanzas thirteen and fourteen, the poet says that old age must decide that life is good, and brings happiness and strength to the upward-striving soul. Age itself is a period of rest between two periods of activity, the second of which will be entered upon when this earthly life is over. It is the period when the ambitions and the struggles of youth are reviewed and valued. It was right that youth should struggle, even blindly, toward this and that ; it is right now that age should consider and know the right or wrong of these struggles. One thing is assured and that is that there was a Divine purpose overruling the past life, and that is sufficient ground for confidence for the future :

"Thou waitedst age ;  
Wait death, nor be afraid."

There may be some who would laugh at the assumption of such a certainty that life was good. But Browning points out that it is only the man himself who can decide that question. It is not the work done, not the tangible and visible results which have been obtained, and which the

"low world can value in a trice"

which makes a man's life a success, but his instincts, desires, and purposes, whether realized or not.

The last seven stanzas of the poem are really a recapitulation, by means of the application of a metaphor, of ideas expressed in the previous part of the poem. This metaphor is that of the potter's wheel, and it is used by the writers, Isaiah and Jeremiah in the Old Testament. Fine power of expression is shewn by Browning in the elaboration of this metaphor.

The last stanza summarizes the thought of the poem .

"So take and use thy work,  
Amend what flaws may lurk  
What strain o' the stuff, what  
Warpings past the aim !

My times be in Thy hand !  
Perfect the cup as I framed ;  
Let age approve of youth, and  
Death complete the same."

### Literary Society.

January 31st.—After the usual routine had been gone through, Mr. Steer gave a satisfactory report of the concert held on December 13th, 1901. Mr. Grainger gave notice that at the next meeting of the society he would introduce a motion to abolish the office of critic. Programme : Piano Duett, Misses McClure ; Recitation, Miss McLellan ; Violin Solo, Mr. Baird ; Recitation, Miss McLellan ; Vocal Solo, Miss McLaren. Every number on the programme was well received. Miss McLellan as an elocutionist is a favorite with the students of the O. N. C. Miss Staples acted ably as critic.

February 7th.—The leading feature of this occasion was the spirited and learned debate between Mr. Keefe and Mr. McKendry, representatives of the O.N.C. Literary Society and Mr. Kelly and Dr. Thompson, representatives of the Stony Creek Literary Society. "Resolved that the existence of political parties in a country is conducive to the welfare of its people." The various speakers were highly praised for their oratory and learning. The judges : Inspector Ballard, G. M. James O.N.C. and Mr. Melson, Stony Creek, gave their decision in favor of our representatives. The following additional programme was also rendered : Vocal Selections, Miss Norris ; Piano Duett, Misses Johnston and Morrow ; Vocal Solo, Miss Smith ; Comic Selection, Mr. Glover. Mr. Loucks performed the duties of critic to the satisfaction of all.

February 14th.—After an animated debate the office of critic was abolished. Mr. Anderson of Toronto addressed the students briefly in reference to the Students' Volunteer Convention to be

held in Toronto, February 26th, to March 26th. Our students decided to send representatives to that convention. Programme: Piano Duett, Misses Balfour and Morgan; Piano Solo, Miss Burns. Miss Francis, the critic for this occasion, will be the last to hold that exalted position.

February 21st.—The President announced that there would be no meeting of the Literary Society on February 28th, on account of the Teachers' Convention. The main feature of this occasion was an afternoon with Kipling. Mr. Hutchinson introduced Kipling biographically and as a prose writer. Miss Murray read by way of illustration "At Howli Thoma." Mr. Jones treated "the poetry of Kipling" in a most concise and artistic manner. An effort will be made to have this paper published in the MONTHLY. Mr. Osgoode followed with "the romance of Kipling's poetry." The whole afternoon was most enjoyable and instructive. Musical programme: Piano Solo, Miss McClure; Vocal Solo, Kipling's "Recessional," Mr. Mott.

March 7th.—The afternoon was taken up largely with very interesting scientific discussions. The various phases of science, botanical, zoological, domestic etc. were treated by the following speakers: Messrs. McPherson, McLaurin, Turner (of the Collegiate Staff) and Wilson. The addresses were so interesting that many, no doubt, will enter the field of original research. Musical programme: Piano Solo, Miss McPherson; Vocal Solo, Mr. Loucks; Chorus, Glee Club O. N. C. All on this section of the programme received encores. It was unanimously decided at this meeting that the present of the graduates and undergraduates to the O. N. C. to Dr. McLellan on the anniversary of his golden wedding, should be a purse of gold. Messrs. G. M. James and A. H. Hord were appointed to draft the address.

March 14th.—The Literary Society on this occasion resolved itself into a

high court of justice in order to meet out justice to one, W. P. Hedley, student of O. N. C. who had been presumably on various occasions libelled by G. M. James in the O. N. C. MONTHLY. Judge, Mr. Loucks; counsel for prosecution, Messrs. Wilson, Jones, McPherson and Keefe; counsel of the defense, G. M. James; clerk of the court, A. H. Hord; crier, Mr. Milburn; court stenographer, Miss McCullough. After the court was called to order and the jury selected, the indictment of prosecution was read. The defense entered a plea of not guilty and requested the judge to take the case from the jury and dismiss the action as no apology had been requested by the plaintiff. The judge, however, requested the plaintiff to give a bond for one thousand dollars to cover the costs in the event of his losing the case. The trial then proceeded in a most realistic manner. The witnesses on both sides were called upon to answer some questions which were very confusing but which made much merriment for the visitors of the court. Scarcely half of the witnesses on each side had been examined and cross-examined when the judge found it necessary to postpone the trial to a later date.

### *Dr. McLellan's Golden Wedding.*

On March 11th, 1902, the students of the O. N. C. presented Dr. McLellan, their esteemed principal with an address and a purse of gold as an expression of the esteem in which he is held by both the graduates and the undergraduates of this College. The beautiful and valuable presents sent by eminent men from all parts of the Dominion, the numerous kind letters and congratulatory telegrams all go to show that Dr. McLellan's work as an eminent educationist is duly appreciated. Many, on the above date wished Dr. McLellan and Mrs. McLellan many more years of happiness and usefulness.

*Help Me Be a Golden Year.*

Quiet the tumult, stir and feet;  
 Quiet the din of throbbing street;  
 From steeples high and massive towers,  
 The bells chime out the passing hours,  
 "Midnight," and Fancy lighted laid,  
 Her shadowy hand upon my head;  
 "Come at this hour and view with me,  
 A sight not new, but strange to thee."

"And is this time?" I asked my guide.  
 As we passed through an archway wide,  
 She answered not by look or word,  
 Nor seemed as if she even heard,  
 But hurried on with nimble feet,  
 Unto a place where two roads meet,  
 "And this is Time," now answered she,  
 "That way the past, this what's to be."

And while I gazed, in wonder lost,  
 Something unseen at my feet tossed,  
 In unsoiled robes, the New Year child,  
 Who spoke to me in accents mild:  
 "Though but the daughter of the past,  
 Yet I the future can forecast,  
 If—oh, to my request give ear!—  
 You'll help me be a Golden Year."

I took the New Year by the hand,  
 Her pleading voice could I withstand?  
 I felt the vow my heart had spoken,  
 Would never thoughtlessly be broken.  
 Oh, sons of men on every hand!  
 Oh, sons of men from every land!  
 In joy, in woe, in hope, in fear,  
 Come, make me this a Golden Year.

Dr. McLellan—I have very little use for the so-called nature studies as they are now carried on.

Jealous youth—Nor I. Why do they gaze so steadfastly Woodward?

ECHOES FROM THE AT HOME.—Maiden Fair—Do you know where my partner is?

Young Gallant—No but I can get you one just Osgoode.

Can you? Where?

Oh, Summers.

There was once a ped—so 'tis said,  
 Who a score of bristles had,  
 And this student poor he walked the floor,  
 For he wanted a moustache bad.  
 He had hoped to stride with pomp and pride  
 With the moustache down the street,  
 And the boys would fear as he drew near,  
 And the girls would say, "Aint it sweet?"  
 But to his disgust—stop here we must,  
 Cheer up, old comrade, if you can't raise her  
 You can raze her with a razor.

*Worse than Marriage.*

A bachelor old and cranky  
 Was sitting alone in his room;  
 His toes with the gout were aching,  
 And his face was o'erspread with gloom.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

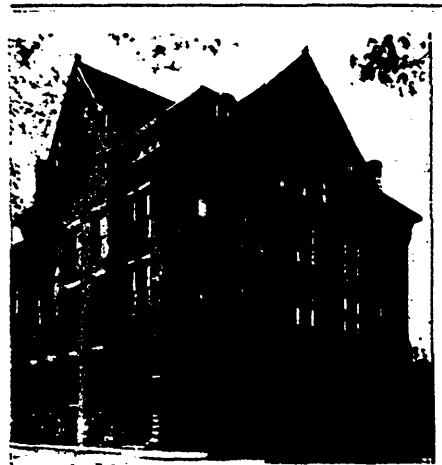
No little ones' shouts disturbed him,  
 From noises the house was free;  
 In fact, from the attic to cellar  
 'Twas quiet as quiet could be.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

No medical aid was lacking;  
 The servants answered his ring,  
 Respectfully heard his orders,  
 And supplied him with everything.  
 \* \* \* \* \*

But still there was something wanting,  
 Something he couldn't command;  
 The kindly words of compassion,  
 The touch of a gentle hand.

And he said, as his brow grew darker,  
 And he rang for the hireling nurse,  
 "Well, marriage may be a failure,  
 But this is a great sight worse."

N. B.—This is a true incident.



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JAMES MILLS, M. A., President.

## Education Department Calendar, 1902.

### APRIL.

- 1.—Annual meeting of the Ontario Education Association, Toronto.  
Returns by clerks of counties, cities, etc. of population to Department, due.
- 7.—High Schools, third term, and Public and Separate Schools open after Easter holiday.
- 15.—Reports of Night Schools due (session 1901-02.)
- 17.—Examinations in School of Practical Science begin.
- 22.—Annual examinations in Applied Science begin.
- 24.—Art School examinations begin.
- 25.—Last day for receiving applications for examination of candidates not in attendance at the Ontario Normal College.

### MAY.

- 1.—Toronto University examinations in Arts, Law, Medicine and Agriculture begin.  
Notice by candidates for High School entrance examination to Inspectors, due.
- 2.—Arbor Day.
- 23.—Notice by candidates for the Public School Leaving, Junior Leaving, Senior Leaving, University Matriculation, Commercial Specialist, Commercial Diploma and Kindergarten Examinations to Inspectors due.  
Empire Day.
- 24.—Queen Victoria's Birthday.
- 26.—Examinations at Ontario Normal College, Hamilton, begin.

*Departmental examination papers for the various examinations for past years, can be obtained from the Carswell Co., 30 Adelaide Street East, Toronto.*



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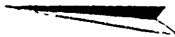
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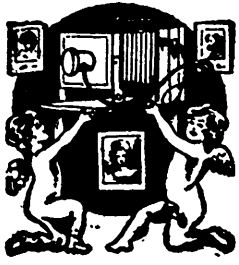
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