

L.N. Mithika Univ. Darbhanga

B.A. (Part-I) Eng.(H) Paper-II

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Topic: MY LAST DUCHESS

A poem by Robert Browning

The poem, My Last Duchess has been composed by Robert Browning, a Victorian poet, a representative of his age. He represented the intellectual and psychological curiosity of his time. There is astonishing vigour and hope in Browning. But he is an obscure poet.

There are several reasons which account for obscurity in Browning. Firstly, his thought is often obscure and subtle, which can not be adequately expressed in any language by any person. Secondly, Browning is led from one thing to another by his own mental association. He does not care for the association of the readers which may be different. Thirdly, Browning is careless in his English. He frequently clips his speech and gives us a series of ejaculations. We fail to understand the process of his thought. Fourthly, the allusions of Browning are often bar-tetched ~~and~~ and beyond the understanding of the common readers. Fifthly, Browning wrote too much and revised too little.

In the present poem, the Duke of Ferrara is exhibiting the portrait of his wife to a guest. His wife is no more. Her portrait is painted on the wall by Fra. Pandolf. The guest is asked to look at the portrait. There is depth and passion in her face. She was a large-hearted lady who could be easily made glad. ~~There was a~~

The lady could be easily impressed. Her looks were everywhere. She liked whatever she looked at. Everything would draw from her an approving speech. She thanked them. The Duke did not know how she thanked them. Whenever the Duke passed her, she smiled. Her portrait gives the impression that she is alive. Then the Duke decides to go down the stairs. He wants to marry the daughter of the envoy of a court. He knows that he would get sufficient dowry. The Duke then shows the guest the bronze figure of the Sea-god, Neptune which is a rare statue.

The poem in discussion is a monologue. We get the concentrated essence of a complete tragedy. Despite obscurity and unworthy theme, the poem has been liked by the readers. T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound have also <sup>praised</sup> ~~praised~~ it and called him the most modest of the Victorian poets.

