The Book, The Ring, & The Poet: A Biography Of Robert Browning

William Irvine Park Honan

Biography of Robert Browning

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, Surrey on May 7th, 1812. He is the son of Robert and Sarah Wiedemann Browning. Robert's father worked as a clerk for the Bank of England and managed to amass a library of obscure and arcane books. His love for romance poets grew greater. As a follower of Shelley's works he briefly became atheist and a vegetarian. However, later he mentioned it was only a phase. At sixteen he attended the University College in London, England but soon dropped out after his first year. Robert continued his poetic career through much of the mid to late 30s. And in the early 1840s Browning wrote numerous volumes of plays and shorter poems under the series Bells and Pomegranates. The Ring and the Book cemented Browning's reputation as one of the foremost poets of Victorian England.

Critical Reception.

Contemporary critical acclaim evaded Browning for many years. Gertrude Reese Hudson observes that the poet's critics required regular and frequent exposure to his unique dramatic method in order to recognize the excellence of Browning's art. Hudson also notes that other factors contributed to Browning's winning over of his critics, including their changing opinion regarding the nature of poetry, as well as a growing appreciation for both the timeliness.