Chapter - V

Conclusion
A careful study of Victorian poetry brings out several strains, the chief of them being a pre-occupation with the somber and pessimistic view of life. In Victorian age, the new science, which was changing the intellectual outlook of mankind and threatening the traditional values enshrined in religion and education, produced a number of poets. Among them Arthur Hugh Clough, James Thomson and Edward Fitzgerald are influenced by the spirit of age. "It was the endeavour to intellectualise the visions of the imaginative life that led Arnold, Clough, Fitzgerald and James Thomson into that mood of wistful melancholy, that crystallised soon into a more or less pessimistic criticism of life". This tone of melancholy has not been properly investigated. The present thesis examines the note of pessimism in the works of Arthur Hugh Clough, James Thomson and Edward Fitz Gerald. The study addresses the extent to which these poets were influenced by the spirit of their age and their own personal experiences. The method used in this study is a close reading of poems and biography of each of the three poets.

The first poet understudy is Arthur Hugh Clough. In the great spheres of human thought e.g. religion, morals,
social life, his poems reflect the complex tendencies of his age and surroundings. He was a fellow student of Arnold at Rugby and at Oxford during the years of Newman's influence. His serious nature was stirred to its depth by the movement. He resigned his Oxford fellowship in rejection of required Anglican orthodoxy and wrote a poem *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*. This poem clearly refers to his own intellectual state. It is a revolt of cultured mind against the hypocrisy and corruption of modern society. In *The Bothie*, Clough expresses the belief that in a successful love relationship he may discover certain values which are not readily to be found in modern life. Phillip's attraction towards a girl, who does hard work in the field, reveals Clough's love for nature. Thus he feels the attracted to reality; and then abandoning his conventional academic career, he migrates to New Zealand. This escape also reflect a victorian attitude. His rejection of an easy compromise is the reason behind his alienation. Clough's hero is alienated from society due to the opposite view. It is extremely painful but it has to be endured with courage. As a poet, Clough explores his world for help in a sorry time. He deals with the problems of poor men and position of women in *The Bothie*. 
Clough's next poem *Amours-de-Voyage* describes the mood of a Victorian who is living in a changing world and is unhappy about it. He analyses his time as confused and bewildering. Its hero, Claude, is a hesitant young man who is unable to take a decision about every matter whether it is love or war. He visits Rome and tells about the Revolution through the letters. He insists that revolutionaries are victims as well and that revolt is actually futile. This reveals his pessimism, here he also points out the futility of all political action. 

"Claude, Clough's male correspondent from Italy, seems bemused by human relationships and bewildered by the violence which intrudes both into his Roman Sightseeing and into his English political assumptions". Claude is disappointed in the situation; he just shares the feeling of pain; when the time demands action, he fails. This is the reason that he is not successful in his love affair. His failure is due to his lack of confidence which is a characteristic feature of Victorian age.

Clough's *Dipsychus* is a poem on religious issues. He was saddened by the spectacle of chaotic creeds, distracted lives, commercialism and moral degradation. In such a world, it seems to Clough the central problem is a moral one; it is how to conduct life. This poem is a record of
his search for the values of calm, centrality and morality. *Dipsychus* illustrates the introspective self-analysis with which the age discusses the fundamental problem of existence. The general decline of faith and Clough's own resultant bewilderment and melancholy constitute the theme of *Dipsychus*. In his pessimistic attitude, Clough reflected the mood which was spreading over England, as the result of the loss of the consolations of religious faith, and doubt of the power of reform to deal with the increasing misery of the poor - a mood from which no artist could be completely escaped.

Second poet who shares the feeling of pain with Clough is James Thomson. It is pertinent to suggest that Thomson's melancholia resulting from unhappy childhood left its indelible mark on his work. The feeling of misery and melancholy throbs almost in every poem of Thomson, except few earlier lyrics. To the poet, the world is a vale of tears, a place to endure and to suffer. The central theme of his work is the pain of living and the somber majesty of despair which is treated by Thomson in detail in *The City of Dreadful Night, The Doom of a City, To Our Ladies of Death, Insomnia* and some other short lyrics. *The City of Dreadful
Night which is his famous poems, reflects his temper of melancholy, influences by the death of his beloved Matilda. In this poem, Thomson deals with all the phases of his personal grief and sorrow, discusses the conflict between science and faith.

In The City of Dreadful Night, the world is represented as dreary as a desert. Man's lot in the universe is one of helplessness, hopelessness and despair. In this poem the poet is visiting in the city of darkness and his companions are despair and solitude. He describes the condition of that man who is lonely and solitary even in a populous world. This poem also reveals his aesthetic nature. He blames God for all the suffering of human beings. In grief and despair, man leads his life without experiencing the glow or joy in life. In The City the tragedy and pathos of man is pathetically presented.

His another poem The Doom of a City warns people about the wrath of God. This also recalls the memory of his beloved. To Our Ladies of Death and Insomnia describe his gloom on the unforgettable moments of his beloved's death. Thus, over all, Thomson's poetry has an air of melancholy, a sense of loneliness and of quiet desperation. It is the poetry
that contains inexorable despair and he employs many symbolic images of darkness. There is no hope in Thomson's city and human progress seems impossible. He also pointed out the threat of mechanism which was the cause of alienation in the Victorian age. At last, James Thomson appears as a poet 'without hope and without God in the world'.

The pessimistic characteristics of the concluding decades of the century found most poignant utterance in the 'Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam' by Edward Fitzgerald. He reflects the attitude of a true Victorian who is torn between belief and doubt, preaches wistfully to a sceptical world. In Rubaiyat, the miserable spectacle of men marching mournfully to the grave is poignantly struck. It lays emphasis on the power of destiny in human life. Man is a puppet in the hand of Destiny. The over-powering force of fate in human life is represented in Rubaiyat. He questions the meaning of life which was the topic of discussion among victorian poets. He suggests a way to escape from the burdens and problems of society and from the moral seriousness, and it is the pleasure of present life. Fitzgerald's melancholy sprang from many causes, the chief
of them being the contemplation of man's destiny from the hopeless tangle of his own age, and from the course of life of mortal men on earth. The failure of marriage, death of friends, loss of faith in the age, and above all the melancholic state of his mind are further responsible factors for his pessimistic outlook on life. The popularity of *Rubaiyat* is a measure of the extent to which the victorian view of life had been undermined.

The result of this study suggests that the works of these poets reflect not only their lives and thoughts but also the spirit of the age. A readable biography of every writer, shows how he lived and worked; how he met success or failure and how his age influenced him. Behind every poet's pessimism, there is the spirit of age and his personal experiences. They were asked to respond to the question of existence in a restless world and it could be noticed that there is a slight difference in their answers. Clough's attitude could not be said optimistic but it has a silver in its cloud. On the other hand, there is darkness in the work of James Thomson and his meloncholy is altogether sickening or sad. Edward Fitzgerald has a sceptical attitude in this matter. He left everything to Fate. One common problem of
these three poets is the alienation and they deal it from their own points of view. To some extent, it is justified to say that the work of a poet is rooted in his age and hence the pessimistic note of Arthur Hugh Clough, James Thomson and Edward Fitz Gerald is the ruling passion of their poetry.
REFERENCES
