An abstract of the Ph.D. thesis entitled, "Victorian Verse-drama with special reference to the plays of Browning and Tennyson" by V. Sharma.

The thesis aims at estimating the worth of the verse-dramas of Browning and Tennyson in particular and of other Victorians in general from the literary as well as theatrical point of view. It evaluates the Victorian poetic plays - their problems, their relation to contemporary literature and stage conditions and their contribution to the evolution of the poetic drama. In order to assess the literary merit of the plays apart from their theatrical values, the dissertation tries to discover the similarities and contrasts among the poetic and dramatic works of these authors. It takes into consideration the poetical achievements of the poets, the chief characteristics of the age and the individual worth of the plays wherever necessary. By exploring these inter-relations, the thesis attempts to present a better appreciation of the plays and the poems of Browning and Tennyson and other Victorian poets. Thus, the thesis is an effort to fill up some lacunae that still remain in the history of Victorian verse-drama.

A chronological study of the verse-dramas, this thesis presents a detailed and careful analysis of all the verse-plays of Browning and Tennyson and some plays of such well-known playwrights as Arnold, Swinburne, Baddoe's and of less known dramatists such as Wells, Talfourd and Horne. The thesis tries to cover almost every aspect of the poetic plays of Browning and Tennyson and other Victorians - construction, characters, theme, action.
use of songs, soliloquies and prose etc. Wherever necessary an effort has been made to explore correlation of certain features of these verse-dramas to the comparable features of the non-dramatic verse of these poets, Elizabethan drama and recent poetic drama. The emphasis in the thesis all through has been on the broad tendencies in the plays rather than on individual plays.

The contents of the thesis fall into the following chapters.

**Introduction.** This refers briefly to the various charges levelled against Victorian verse-drama. I have pointed out the issues that still remain to be studied even after the works of several critics who have worked on this area. I have discussed my approach and the scheme followed in this thesis.

**Chapter I** discusses the Victorian theatrical and dramatic problems which the verse-dramatists had to face. It also describes the various types of trends in poetic and prose dramas and their interrelations with themselves and with the contemporary stage.

**Chapter II** deals with the main tendencies in the plot-construction of Browning's poetical and love plays - the single themes, the emphasis on inner conflict, the victory of good motives in the struggle of antagonistic emotions, traces of sentimentalism and domesticities, observance of the unities etc. Browning's dramas paved the way for the modern psychological drama.
Chapter III: Browning: examines the various types of characters and the devices used in characterisation in Browning's plays. The political plays contain the three categories—the tragic heroes, their foils and the intriguers or contrivers. In the love plays, too, the main characters fall into three groups—the heroines, their true lovers and the obstructionists. *Pipps Passes* contains a different method of characterisation.

Chapter IV: Browning: describes the nature of various forms employed in Browning's plays—action, dialogue, diction, use of soliloquies and prose etc. It also shows how far his dramas resemble his dramatic monologues.

Chapter V: Browning: deals with the interrelations among Browning's dramatic and poetic works. It also argues that Browning's dramas form an integral part of his total literary contribution and that they have led to the growth of modern drama.

Chapter VI: Tennyson: describes the various devices used by Tennyson in the plots of his historical and love plays. How far are his devices different from those of Browning?

Chapter VII: Tennyson: shows Tennyson's delineation of various types of characters—villains, noble characters, vicious women, virtuous ladies etc. How far do these characters show the dramatist's art of characterisation and embody the poet's conceptions?
Chapter VIII: Tennyson examines contemporary themes of politics, religion and love as reflected in the plays of Tennyson. It also institutes a brief comparison between the historical plays of Shakespeare and those of Tennyson.

Chapter IX: Tennyson deals with techniques in Tennyson's plays, such as action, dialogues, diction, use of songs, soliloquies and prose etc. What is the relation between his dramas and monologues?

Chapter X: Tennyson traces briefly the resemblances between the poetical and dramatic works of Tennyson. It also shows how far the dramas contributed to the full growth of the poet's genius and what place they occupy in his works.

Chapter XI: makes a broad survey of some other verse plays of Victorian era. The dramas of Wells, Reddose, Talfourd, Lytton and Horne appear in the first half of the nineteenth century, while those of Arnold and Swinburne were composed in the late nineteenth century.

Chapter XII: embodies my reflections on Victorian verse-drama, its place in Victorian literature and in the history of drama and its relation to modern drama.

Bibliography is divided into two parts. The first part gives a list of the plays of individual authors and important critical works. The second part contains a list of those books on which my relevant reading on the subject has been based.
The thesis claims to offer the following original facts and ideas:

1. It presents as no existing critical study does, a thorough analysis of Browning's and Tennyson's plays from all possible points of view: plot, characters, themes, action, dialogues, diction, use of songs, soliloquies and prose.

2. It examines, as no existing critical study does, inter-relations among the poetical and dramatic works of Browning and Tennyson and assesses the lasting place of the plays in the total literary achievement of these poets.

3. It contains a chronological survey of certain Victorian verse-plays which have been long out of print and which are not available in India.

4. It appraises the merit of Victorian verse-drama and its lasting place in Victorian literature and in English drama.

5. It considers how far the Victorian verse-drama follows traditional drama and how far it marks a transition leading to modern drama.

The main sources of the study of the subject can be classified as follows:

(a) PLAYS IN THE ORIGINAL - I have studied the verse plays of Browning, Tennyson in Tennyson, Poetical Works and Plays and the Poetical Works of Robert Browning, complete from 1853-1868 in the Oxford Editions of Standard Authors. The Poems of Matthew Arnold, 1840-1864 with an Introduction by Sir A.T. Quiller-Couch (London, 1913).

(b) POEMS - As most of the verse-dramatists were primarily the poets, their poems are the other sources of materials for the subject and they resemble the dramas in different ways. I have particularly tried to discover resemblances between the dramas of Tennyson and Browning and their poems and to deduce the former's poetic worth apart from their theatrical values.

(c) BIOGRAPHIES, REFERENCES, LETTERS ETC. - They also furnish materials relevant to the subject. The authors' views on
drama and sources and circumstances under which the plays were written lead to the proper understanding of their dramas and can be suitably correlated to them. Browning's letters (6 Vols.) and Prefaces to the dramas give his conception of drama. *A Browning Handbook*, by W.C. De Vane and *Browning Cyclopaedia* by E. Berdoe provide excellent clues regarding Browning's plays. *A Memoir* by Hallam Tennyson, the noted biography on Tennyson includes his various views, circumstances and materials to appreciate his plays. Arnold's Prefaces to his plays in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold, 1840-1864* contain the author's views on drama. Swinburne's letters and his excellent biography by E. Gosse in the Bonchurch edition (Vol. XIX) assist our understanding of the plays. I have tried to correlate all this relevant matter to the dramas of these poets in order to judge their proper urge and artistic achievement.

(a) HISTORIES AND SURVEYS - For understanding the contemporary theatrical and dramatic conditions, I have mainly depended on A. Nicoll's *A History of English Drama* (1660-1900) Vol. IV and Vol. V, *The Victorian Theatre, A Survey*, by George Rowell and *Early Victorian Drama* (1830-70) by E. Reynolds.