The present thesis attempts to bring out the impact of Tennyson’s classical learning on his sensibility and his response to it in his use of Greek mythology in his poems. Such a study has been long overdue and there is a need for an exploration of Tennyson’s deep involvement in and his rapport with the past, often resulting in his rumina-
tive absorption in it. More often than not he sought comfort of the classics, especially Greek mythology, during the trying periods of his life. Its contemplation helped him to analyse his own situation objectively, for Greek myths were a refuge for him from the harsh realities of life. They invigorated him and helped him to resolve his tensions.

Tennyson has written thirteen poems on Greek myths. They are, chronologically, "Hero to Leander," "The Sea-
poems on mythical personages have been further subdivided, on the basis of some formal and thematic criteria, into three sets:


(3) Odes and recitations on life and death by some Greek mythical heroes: "Ulysses," "Tithonus," and "Tiresias."

There are just two poems on Greek mythical places, "Ilion, Ilion" and "Parnassus." They form the fourth set.

The study is divided into six chapters. The above four sets of poems are analysed in the first four chapters which are entitled "The Choric Songs," "Poems with Greek Mythical Heroines as Protagonists," "Poems with Greek Mythical Heroes as Protagonists," and "Poems on Mythical Places and Miscellaneous Uses of Greek Mythology." The fifth chapter is entitled "Form and Style," and the sixth, the "Conclusion," recapitulates the general observations derived from our analysis in the foregoing chapters.
Chapter I deals with Tennyson's inner conflict between art-for-art's sake and the artist's social responsibility. Its genesis lay in his first interaction with the world at large, beyond the insulated world of Somersby, when he entered Cambridge and was absorbed in the coterie of the Apostles. They impressed upon him the onus of the high calling of a poet and asked him to write for the moral edification of society. The mission imposed on him was new. Ostensibly he agreed, but inwardly he was caught in a conflict depicted in "The Palace of Art," "Sense and Conscience," "The Sea-Fairies," "The Hesperides," and "The Lotos-Eaters." The two non-mythical poems ("The Palace of Art" and "Sense and Conscience"), express his overt agreement with the Apostles, but the three mythical ones are Tennyson's logical, cogent, sequential defense and defiance of the constraint imposed upon his genius.

Chapter II discusses Tennyson's concept of womanhood. He generally portrays two types of women, the femme fatale and the ideal women. But the fatal women in this set of poems ("Hero to Leander," "Oenone," "Semele," "Demeter and Persephone," and "The Death of Oenone") are rather mild, and in the nature of foils to his ideal women, modelled on his mother whom he adored. The poems of this
set, except "Hero to Leander," are about married love, for their protagonists are sedate wives who are victims of the indiscretions of their husbands. Tennyson's attitude towards love, marriage, and motherhood in these poems is the same as in "The Princess."

Chapter III reflects Tennyson's concept of life through his soulful cogitations on the death of his friend, Arthur Hallam. The mythical poems inspired by this tragedy are "Ulysses," "Tithonus," and "Tiresias." The concept of life in this trilogy is value-based; a long life is not necessarily desirable, just as a short one is neither to be pitied nor feared. The protagonists of this set of poems are men of action. When they are unable to live up to their ideals of life, they prefer death.

Ruminations on the artist's social responsibility which is the theme of the first chapter, persist at a subterraneous level in all the poems of chapters II and III.

The set of poems, "Ilion, Ilion" and "Parnassus," gives a cue to Tennyson's secret ambition of writing an immortal epic, and the final blighting of that hope in Chapter IV. It also throws light on Tennyson's other uses of Greek myths and epics.
Chapter V deals with the form, style, and technique Tennyson adopted in these poems. He makes use of personal allegory, dramatic monologue, and the narrative forms, and employs iterative symbolic images which contribute to the cohesiveness of the poems. He experiments with combinations and permutations of various stylistic devices and techniques in them. He uses nature both as background, and symbol. His landscapes and sea-scenes are a blend of realism and scholarship for he adapts his first-hand experience of nature to make it conform to the topography portrayed by the ancients.

Chapter VI sums up the conclusions of the study. The investigation establishes that Tennyson uses Greek mythology for ornamentation in his non-mythical poems, for translation of passages from Greek epics into English, and for subjects of his poems. The discussion shows the thematic importance and artistic refinement of Tennyson's Greek mythical poems. The salient features of his mode of handling the myths are: his originality in using them by focusing on a mood hardly touched upon in the source myths; his introduction of modifications in the myths to make them suit the themes of his poems; his endowing these poems with a
contemporaneous touch by making them reflect some of the major issues of the age; and his propensity to experiment in form and style.

We find that Tennyson's poems on Greek myths are multidimensional. He projects in them the past, the present, as well as himself, with superb craftsmanship. These poems are a veritable repository of his profound experience and yet have an unmistakable classical flavour.