

UNIT 16**MAJOR AUTHORS AND LITERARY
WORKS OF THE VICTORIAN AGE****STRUCTURE****16.0 Objectives****16.1 Introduction****16.2 Novelists****16.2.1 Charles Dickens****16.2.2 William Makepeace Thackeray****16.2.3 Bronte Sisters****16.2.4 George Eliot****16.2.5 George Meredith****16.3 Poets****16.3.1 Alfred, Lord, Tennyson****16.3.2 Robert Browning****16.3.3 Elizabeth Barrett Browning****16.3.4 Mathew Arnold****16.3.5 Dante Gabriel Rossetti****16.4 Let Us Sum Up****16.5 Key Words****16.6 Books Suggested****Answers**

16.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit are:

1. To discuss the overview of the Victorian Age in brief
2. To discuss major novelist of the Victorian Age
3. To discuss major poets of the Victorian Age

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The period from 1837 to 1901 is considered as The Victorian Age as it was under the reign of Queen Victoria. The reign of Queen Victoria transformed the Great Britain from predominantly rural, agricultural society into urban and industrial one. It was the era where new technologies like railways and steam printing press were introduced. The

Victorians were moving to an evangelical and atheist ideology from being conservative and religious. It was the time of rapid change. The common or working class, women and coloured people raised their voices to get the rights to vote, safe workplaces, sanitary reforms and universal education. These debates, values and cultural concerns are well reflected in the literature of this period. The Victorian literature differed from the eighteenth century and romantic period literatures in terms of its audience as in earlier ages the audience used to be a special and an elite class. But due to the great industrial revolution there emerged a new class of people altogether: the middle class. The newly developed readership of the middle class resulted in the prosperity of Victorian literature. The invention of printing press attracted more readers as it made the printing affordable. The invention of railroads made it easy for the producers to export it to more audiences across the globe.

Succeeding the era of romantic revival, Victorian age had its unique literary features. The Victorian period includes the features like morality, revolt, intellectual developments, new education, international influences etc. It is considered as a combination of sentimental and pragmatist way of writing. Though the Victorian Age witnessed two extraordinary artists, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning, the age is additionally exceptional for the greatness of its prose writing. It was for the first time that the novel as a literary form became popular.

With all its enormous creation, the age witnessed no incomparable author. It uncovered no Shakespeare, no Shelley, nor (in the global sense) a Byron or a Scott. The overall literature was profound in the sense that it portrayed the harsh realities of society. The Victorian age was incredibly beneficial of high quality literary work, at the same time, besides in the novel, the measure of true innovation is in no way, shape or form extraordinary. Authors were when in doubt substance to work upon previous models, and the upgrades they accomplished were frequently questionable and insignificant.

Although the age has witnessed so many marvelous authors and poets, here we will discuss about the major authors who played a significant role in this age. The literary writers can be divided into two parts i.e. novelist and poets. Some major poets include Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92), Robert Browning (1812-89), Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61), Mathew Arnold (1822-88), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82). Some major novelists the age has witnessed are Charles Dickens (1812-70), William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63), The Bronte sisters (Charlotte Bronte (1816-55), Emily Bronte (1818-48) and Anne Bronte (1820-49)), George Eliot (1819-80) and George Meredith (1828-1909).

- **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1**

Q.1 What are the literary features of the Victorian age?

Q.2 Which literary form was introduced in the Victorian age?

Q.3 Who were the major poets of the Victorian Age?

Q.4 Who were the major novelist of the Victorian Age?

16.2 NOVELISTS

16.2.1 Charles Dickens (1812-70)

Charles John Huffman Dickens (7 February 1812 – 9 June 1870) was an English novelist and a critic. Some of the most famous fictional characters have been produced by him which made him one of the famous authors of the Victorian era. His works delighted in extraordinary fame during his lifetime and, by the twentieth century, Scholars and critics had remembered him as a genius literary writer. His books and short stories are still broadly read today. His works portray the harsh reality of the society. Victorian era is known for the developments. Charles Dickens tells the story of oppression behind these developments. Although Dickens' novels were written during the Victorian period, it is still relevant in the current era. He wrote more than a dozen novels, short-stories which includes the theme of Christmas, ghost and children. Along with that he had written some plays and nonfiction books, essays and articles. His novels initially serialized in some magazines and later it was printed in the book form.

Charles Dickens' major works include *Pickwick Papers* (1836-37), *Oliver Twist* (1837-39), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Bleak House* (1853), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1861) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865). All his works award him popularity than any other author of his time. His quality of work attracts and interests not only the sophisticated class but also the simple class, not only the queen but also the poor. This quality of work as well as technological developments helps him to get a worldwide fame very quickly.

Charles Dickens' first published novel was *Pickwick Papers* (1836-37). The story is about an innocent, naïve and a decent natured protagonist, Mr. Pickwick and his adventures. Pickwick recruits the streetwise Sam Weller in the way, and he assists them in surviving. This book is built on his earlier Sketches by Boz to launch him to fame and is now one of the most famous works. It is full of fun and captures the high spirited spirit of the young Dickens. *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839) is a satirical humor. It has the theme which exposes the cruelty of the society for the children. Abusiveness and corruption towards the children in the form of child labour is portrayed in the novel which also shows the harsh reality of the Victorian society. *Oliver Twist* is the second major novel of Charles Dickens. It is the story about the Oliver Twist, an orphan, who is a survivor of the suffering and torture of the criminals and some authorities from government officials. *Nicholas Nickleby* is the third novel written by Charles Dickens. The plot is about the protagonist Nicholas Nickleby. His family becomes poor after his father's death due to loss of money in an investment. Nicholas' remarkable success after a tough start is a tale that would connect to a broad audience.

The Old Curiosity Shop was published in a weekly serial Master Humphrey's Clock from 1840 to 1841. The plot revolves around the girl named Nell Trent and her grandfather; both living in the Old Curiosity Shop in London. The novel became so popular that Queen Victoria found it very interesting and cleverly written. The death of Little Nell is considered as one of the most remarkable scenes in the works of Dickens. *A Christmas Carol* is the first book of five books written on Christmas by Dickens in 1840, it is one of the most remarkable works of Dickens. It depicts Ebenezer Scrooge's transition from a tightfisted grumpy old man to a compassionate and honest man. This is triggered by a Christmas haunting and dreams that remind him of happy times, show the benevolent heart of those in adversity, and terrify him with dire consequences if he does not change his ways. *Dombey and Sons* was published in 1846-48. The pride and cold-hearted impertinence of Mr. Paul Dombey Senior, a businessman, pervade this job. Having followed the demise, he places all of his expectations in Paul, their only son, thus neglecting Florence, their daughter. Dombey marries again, but his will is thwarted by courageous strength and treachery, and he starts to lose his fortune. Finally, he had the love of his daughter, who assisted him throughout.

David Copperfield was published in 1848-1850 in the form of series and later in 1850 in book form. This partly autobiographical novel, told in the first person, is widely regarded as his best work. Mr Wilkins Micawber, who resembles Dickens' father in certain ways, is one of the most unforgettable characters. *Bleak House* was published in the form of series with 20 episodes in 1852-1853. This plot is based on a lengthy court dispute surrounding the distribution of an estate, which results in wretchedness and misery for the parties but considerable benefit for the attorneys. Inspector Bucket and Esther Summerson, a talented detective, are unforgettable characters. There are a lot of mysteries in this novel, as well as a murder and some detectives.

His novel *A Tale of Two Cities* was published in 1859. One more historical novel by Dickens, this one is set during the French Revolution, with London and Paris as the two cities. Charles Darnay, a Frenchman who has settled in London, returns to Paris to save his agent's life, only to be sentenced to death himself. Sydney Carton jumped replaced him and saved his life. Carton's words at the novel's conclusion are well-known: "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

Great Expectation, Dickens' one of the most well known and remarkable work, was published in 1860-61 similarly in the form of series. The story is told in the first person by the narrator, Philip Pirrip, also known as Pip, and traces him from his youth in the possession of a cruel sister and her kindly partner, a blacksmith, to leading the life of a gentleman in London with the aid of an enigmatic benefactor. Miss Havisham is a major figure in his life.

Our Mutual Friend, first published in 1864-65 in the form of series, is a work of art that exemplifies his extraordinary craftsmanship. *Our Mutual Friend* tells the storey of John Harmon, who claimed to be someone else before he developed an impression of Bella Wilfer, the woman he is expected to marry under his father's will. Despite plenty of other problems, all worked out in the end.

Dickens is a promoter of art for the sake of society. His work is purposeful art. Dickens' interests did not stop with "aesthetic culture" or "Gothicism." His books have a definite humanitarian bent to them. He is regarded as one of the most important social reformers of his day. The bulk of his books are based around a social topic. For Example, "The delay in laws is uncovered in *Bleak House*; *Nicholas Nickleby* uncovers the sadism of schoolmasters and the abuses of charitable schools; theme of political economy is portrayed in *Hard Times*. Dickens does not say everything is alright with the world but he does not say everything is wrong with the world either.

16.2.2 William Makepeace Thackeray (July, 1811 – Dec., 1863)

William Makepeace Thackeray, a British novelist, was born in 1811 in Calcutta, India. In 1815, his father died and his mother married an engineering officer in 1817. He was sent to England after his father's death. Thackeray and his mother reconciled in 1820. William Makepeace Thackeray studied from Trinity College, Cambridge. He left college without degree. He also studied law and then moved to painting as a profession.

Although Thackeray had written a lot of works his most prominent and well known work is *Vanity Fair* (1848). Initially it was published as monthly serial from 1847 to 1848, having the subtitle *Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society*. Later it was published as a novel in 1848. The work is a satire on English society. *Vanity Fair* is considered as one of the most remarkable works of Victorian era. The title is taken from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). *Vanity Fair* in *Pilgrim's Progress* refers to a place where pilgrims used to stop during their

journey to the pilgrimage. It was a never ending fair in the village Vanity which represents the sinful materialistic attachment of man.

Vanity Fair, subtitled *A Novel without a Hero and Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society*, is the only novel with two subtitles. The plot of the novel revolves around a puppet play performed at a fair. The narrator of the novel appears several times as a writer and a manager. The story is about two Becky (Rebecca Sharp) and Amelia (Emmy Sedley). The *Vanity Fair* is a realistic satire on Victorian society which shows how it gets consumed by the desire of social mobility and wealth. The major themes of *Vanity Fair* consist of selfishness, illusion and reality, heroism. *Vanity Fair* is considered as the only major work of William Makepeace Thackeray which brings him fame and success. The other work of William Makepeace Thackeray *The History of Pendennis*, shares the same method like *Vanity Fair*, portrays life with a view point of the author. The other minor works of Thackeray includes *The History of Henry Esmond (1852)*, *The New Comers (1853-55)* and *The Virginians (1857-59)*.

William Makepeace Thackeray was the first editor of The Cornhill Magazine for which he wrote *Lovel the Widower (1860)*, *The Adventures of Philip (1861-62)*. He also wrote Essays in the form of series, witty and charming trivials, *The Roundabout Papers (1860-63)*. These novels were inferior in terms of merit and size than the previous remarkable novels. His left an unfinished novel named *Denis Duval* at the time of his death. Lectures, just like Charles Dickens, bring him more success where he did not follow the methods of Dickens as lecturer.

16.2.3 The Bronte's Sisters (Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855), Emily Bronte (1818-48) and Anne Bronte (1820-49))

Bronte sisters were born in Yorkshire to an Irish Clergyman, Patrick Bronte. Charlotte Bronte became a school teacher and then a governess due to the financial crisis of the family. In 1842 she shared a visit to Brussels with Emily. When she returned to home she has to live with the family which compelled her to live as per the family's conventions. Her success in books made her free from the financial crisis. In 1854 she got married and died in the next year. Her two sisters died before.

Bronte's became the aspect of the Romantic Movement which had changed English poetry at the initial stage of the century. It was first felt in the novel. They became the pioneers of literature of the Romantic Movement's feature dealing with the revealing of the human spirit. Despite of detached observation of group of people or society, as it is portrayed in Jane Austen and the earliest authors, they portrayed trauma and suffering of an individual character. Apart from that Bronte also significantly presented the character of female protagonist with the strength of immense courage and passion. Their writings are as much about the creativity and passions as they are about the mind, and some of their most vital passages center on poetry.

Charlotte Bronte

Charlotte Bronte's first novel, *The Professor*, did not succeed to get a publisher. Then it was published posthumously in 1857. It portrays experiences of her own life in a passionless manner, Character lacks passionate understanding and the story is less appealing. *Jane Eyre* (1847) is the most remarkable novel of Charlotte Bronte. It presents a new English fiction as the love story of the simple but very vital protagonist is revealed with detailed understanding and very naïve truthfulness. The story is weak in nature. It has full of dubiousness and sometime melodramatic but the central characters are deeply pondered which gives a feeling of sheer terror throughout the novel. *Shirley* (1849), her next novel, is again the love story of a young girl. As in the earlier work it also has the weak plot. She represents simpler and less dispassionate portrayal of life. In *Villette* (1853), she recalls her experiences in life through the character Lucy Snowe. She represents herself in the form of the Lucy Snowe.

Though Charlotte's work has weak plot as she is limited to her own experiences, her humor decreases the seriousness of the plot. Charlotte's work is filled with passion which at certain point increases to a high level. Indeed she is a genius and her work is indisputable. Her passion and energy she has put into her novels allow the common class people to feel the exquisite beauty of romantic world.

Emily Bronte

Emily Bronte was the greatest among the Bronte sisters. She did write more than Charlotte. Her most remarkable and well known work is *Wuthering Height* (1847). It is considered as the unique work in the history of English literature. It represents the essence of the bleak, wild moors. Its core characters are conceived in vast proportions, and their impulses possess an elemental energy that propels them into the realms of poetry. The novel's sustained intensity is brought to almost incredible heights of emotion in a sequence of climaxes, portrayed with a sharp, unflinching realism.

Emily Bronte also wrote some poems in which few were of high level and majority of poems lack class. Her poems uncover her strength of being courageous and passionate. Her remarkable poems include *No Coward Soul is Mine* and *Cold in the earth- and the deep snow piled above thee*.

Anne Bronte

Anne Bronte was the youngest one among the three Bronte sisters. She is least significant of the three. She wrote two novels *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). Both of her novels lack intensity and power which make them inferior to her sisters.

16.2.4 George Eliot (1819-80)

George Eliot is a pen name used by Mary Ann Evans. George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), daughter of Land agent in a Warwickshire, born near Nuneaton. She studied from Nuneaton and Coventry. She was fond of religious and philosophical speculation. Eliot translated *Life of Jesus* in 1846. After his father's death in 1849 she jumped into the field of literary

work. She secured the position of assistant editor and then became a member of a literary circle. In her later life she travelled extensively before her marriage. She married to J. W. Cross in 1880. After her marriage she died in the same year.

During the middle years of her life she found her interest in fiction writing. Her first work was the collection of three short stories which was published in 1857 in Blackwood's Magazine. After a year it was republished under the title of *Scenes of Clerical Life*. It explores the tragedy in lives of ordinary people, uncovers with an enormous empathy and clear insight into the reality of character. *Adam Bede* published in 1859 is the work which constituted her image as writer with an immense caliber. It reflects the picture of Victorian life among the sophisticated and common classes. The plot revolves around the character Hetty, and the murder of her child. The novel is remarkable for the portrayal of its characters. The significant characters of the novel include Mr. Poyser, Hetty and Adam Bede himself. *The Mill on the Floss* was published in 1860. This work is considered as one of the best work written by her. It is autobiographical in nature. The plot revolves around the tragedy of two characters named Maggie and Tom Tulliver. The story is set in sophisticated rural background. The character of Maggie acknowledges her profound understanding of human personality. The work is simple in style and most of the part is poetical. *Silas Marner: the Weaver of Ravelope* was published 1861. It was a shorter novel. The novel portrays the essence of village life. This work, like her previous novel, is a tragedy. The novel also has the content of humour. The melodramatic ending make it dissipated like the earlier work *The Mill on the Floss*.

Till the production of these works the essence of ethical interest lack in the novels of George Eliot. The next phase of her work represents the essence of ethical interest which makes it dominating the other novels. Set in medieval Florence, Italy the novel uncovers the story of Romola. The novel lacks the note of innateness which is most remembered for its study of deterioration in the character of Tito Melema. *Felix, Holt the Radical* was published in 1866. It is included in the list of minor works. The other minor works include *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* published in 1871-72. *Daniel Deronda*, her last novel, was published in 1876. In this novel, which is less novel and more like dissertation, she portrays her tendencies with the moral problems. Though it presents few fine scenes it is almost entirely devoid of the lighter touches that marked her earlier work. The *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, collection of essays, was published in 1879.

George Eliot is a prominent writer in the history of English literature. Her study of human psychology to understand the human problems, relationship with outer forces and to dwell into the realms of inner consciousness changed the future of English novel. The concept of realism portrayed in most of George Eliot's work became the one of the significant features in the rapid developments in English literature. After her death her reputation was declined but surprisingly her works regained her reputation during the last decades.

16.2.5 George Meredith (1828-1909)

George Meredith, born at Portsmouth in 1828, is one of the most significant authors of the Victorian era. He completed his education in Germany. He left study of law and jumped into the field of writing and chose it as a profession. Earlier he contributed to newspapers and magazines. He was of the same ideology as some of his contemporary to participate in the struggle for freedom of Germany and Italy. He worked as a reader in London publishing house. Once his own works start creating an impression he became a fulltime writer. He was also a part time editor in *The fortnightly Review*. He died at Box Hill, Surrey.

The Ordeal of Richard Feverel was the first novel of significance. It was published in 1859. This novel has weak plot but as the story moves forward it becomes incredibly interesting till the end. The story revolves around the character of the educated young aristocrat who is the hardworking. His nature ends up in complications in his relationship with others. Majority of the characters belong to the elite class and portrayed well. As the story moves forward it presents the extraordinary language speaking by them like they belong to the characters of Oscar Wilde or Congreve. The language is extremely well elaborated which makes the reader difficult to understand. The novel is considered as the most remarkable among his all works.

Evan Harrington was published in 1861. It is partly autobiographical as it presents experiences of his family life. *Emilia in England* was published in 1864. The title was later changed to *Sandra Belloni*. Most of the setting of this work is in Italy. *Rhoda Fleming* was published in 1865. In this work Meredith endeavored to talk about plebian folk. As Meredith was very conscious about portraying heroine with the same important as the hero, in this work he portrayed the female character having a good position and reputation in aristocratic society. The next work *Vittoria* was published in 1867 which is the sequel of the earlier novel *Sandra Belloni*. It deals with insurrectionary movement held in Italy. *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* was published in 1871 which is set in England. *The Egoist* was published in 1879 in which Meredith has reached to the climax of his art. The style of the work is incredible, declined in the glitter he presented in his earlier work. The portrayal of characters is much accurate, close and appropriately detailed. It is a triumph of comic artistry. Meredith's later works are of less importance. His other works includes *The Tragic Comedians* (1880), *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), *One of our Conquerors* (1891) and *The Amazing Marriage* (1895). All of his later works were lack a good plot and over developed in style.

• CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

Answer the following questions:

1 Which of the following novel of Charles Dickens is autobiographical?

- A. David Copperfield
- B. Hard Times
- C. Pickwick Papers
- D. A Tale of Two Cities

2 Mr. Wilkin Micawber appears in which of the novel of Charles Dickens'?

- A. David Copperfield

B. Hard Times
C. Pickwick Papers
D. A Tale of Two Cities
3 The Old Curiosity Shop was published in a weekly serial called _____?

4 The character of Miss Havisham appears in _____.
A. The Great Expectations
B. David Copperfield
C. Bleak House
D. Pickwick Papers

5 In which town was Thackeray born?
A. Calcutta
B. London
C. Delhi
D. Florence

6 Which of the following novel is called a "Novel without a hero"?
A. Vanity Fair
B. Mill on the Floss
C. Pickwick Papers
D. Northanger Abbey

7 George Eliot's novel Romola is a
A. Historical Novel
B. Religious Novel
C. Gothic Novel
D. Picaresque Novel

8 George Eliot was the pen name of?
A. Mary Anne Evan
B. Mary Collisions
C. Lara Evans
D. None

16.3 MAJOR POETS

16.3.1 Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92)

No English literary scholar and an admirer of poetry is unfamiliar with the name Alfred, Lord Tennyson. He was not only the most important literary figure of the Victorian period, but was also a poet of unrivalled genius. His remarkable keen sensibility for writing lyric and poetical narratives is fondly remembered today by the learners of English literature. His technique and methods for creating great poetry, place him among the greatest poets of English literature. Let's learn more about his life, significant works, and the importance of his writings.

Tennyson was born in Somersby, Lincolnshire, to a clergyman father. He was the fourth of George Clayton Tennyson's twelve children. Tennyson, like the era he lived in, possessed the eccentricities of everyday life. He

can as well be considered the spokesperson of Victorian era. He received his early education in Louth before moving to Cambridge in 1828. He was awarded the 'Chancellor's medal' at a young age for his first poetical work, *Timbuctoo*. Tennyson was a Cambridge dropout, and most of his early works reflected his mediocrity as a poet. He couldn't find his inner poetic voice until he moved to peaceful places like the Lake District and Stratford-on-Avon.

However, life started to throw obstacles at him, and the year 1844 was a year of unlucky events, as he lost most of his small fortune. But he obtained a government pension in 1845 shortly thereafter. In 1850, he was appointed Poet Laureate, succeeding Wordsworth. For almost two decades, he lived on the Isle of Wight. He was later made a baron after being designated to the House of Lords. Tennyson died in Aldworth and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Interestingly, Tennyson worked with his brother to compose a book of poetry when he was only seventeen years old, which was later published in 1827 under the title, *Poems by Two Brothers*. As previously mentioned, his subsequent amateurish poetry, such as *Timbuctoo*, published in 1829, and *Chiefly Lyrical*, published in 1830, lacked the craftsmanship of his later poetical masterpieces. With the passing of time, his personality evolved, as can be seen in the following volume, which was originally titled *Volumes of Poems* but is now known as *Poems*. *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Lotus Eaters*, and *The Palace of Art* were among the poems included. This collection of poems signalled his 'poetical' arrival and elevated him to the ranks of the greatest poets of all time. These poems are full of vivid images, picturesque landscapes, Victorian romances, and flawless execution.

The publication of Tennyson's much acclaimed long narrative poem, *The Princess*, in the year 1847 led to the founding of another critical phase of his literary career. *The Princess*, represented 'the new woman'. It had all of the elements of vivid imagination and beautifully carved details of the popular Tennysonian style. The poem is led by a powerful and unique saga of the imaginary ladies' academy with the intelligent and scholarly princesses, ends very conventionally with The Princess marrying the blameless hero in the end.

Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, which was written in 1850, represented the deeply rooted emotional side of his literary talent. It's described as a 'long series of meditations on the death of his close friend Arthur Henry Hallam, who died in Vienna'. This poem's elegiac nature showed intensely emotional features of Tennysonian poetry, which were adorned with elegant sketches of English scenery. *Maud and Other Poems*, published in 1855, set a different tone. The chief poems, such as 'monodrama,' included a string of verses with the themes of love and hate, optimism and desperation, and glorification of war and bloodshed. It is well known that Tennyson was enthralled by tales of Arthurian legend. It is noticeable in most of his poetical works. But, as a result of this fascination, *Idylls of the King*, a delicately illustrated and ornamented poetical work was published in a series in the years 1859, 1869, and 1879. The tale of a sea-man, entitled *Enoch Arden* (1864), includes a

descriptive depiction of a tropical island. Old age seems to be overpowering his poetical creativity in the latter part of his poetical career, as the poetry here has a darker tone. In shorter poetry like *Locksley Hall Sixty Years Later*, the tragic echoes can be heard.

Here we looked at Tennyson who we now know as a master of poetical craftsmanship, a champion at selecting unusual subject matter, and a pioneer in introducing pictorial qualities into the English poetry.

16.3.2 Robert Browning (1812-89)

Browning was the poet of extraordinary talent known for his philosophical, religious, and romantic writing. His poetical style covers everything from rhythmic and melodic arrangement to descriptive and obscure passages. His fondness for historical settings, and human abnormality is known to the literary world. His understanding of the 'human spirit' and 'human consciousness' is unparalleled. The detailed descriptions in his poetical works can be likened to the bright colours of a painting. His love lyrics and dramatic monologues are remembered with compassion even by the modern readers of English poetry. Let's learn more about his life, significant works, and the importance of his writings.

As per the historical evidences concerning Browning's life, he was born at Camberwell. His father was associated with the Bank of England. He was a 'decently-paid' clerk there. At a very young age, his family allowed young Robert to pursue education in unusual subjects, which liberated him as an individual. This is also well-reflected in his poetry, and dramatic works. Browning was heavily influenced by his predecessor Shelley. He only became acquainted with the leading figures of the literary and dramatic worlds during his stay in London. In 1845, he met Elizabeth Barrett, a celebrated poetess, they eloped and got married in a private ceremony soon after. He travelled to countries such as England, France, and Italy later in his life. He was awarded the degree of D.C.L. by the University of Oxford. He passed away in Italy and was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey.

The publication of *Paulin* in 1833 marked the beginning of his career as a poet. It was introspective in nature, and it seemed to be following the footsteps of Shellenian poetry. Browning considered Shelley to be his muse at the time, and had a great deal of appreciation and admiration for him. Later, in 1835, a work titled *Paracelsus* arose on the page, portraying the saga of its protagonist's "unquenchable desire for Knowledge." Its passages are written in blank verse. In the year 1837, he published his play *Strafford*, which was produced by the acclaimed actor Macready.

This piece was full of pathos and pointed to the interconnected facets of art and life. It's also regarded as one of Browning's most obscure works. Later, in his career the eight remarkable volumes published by him 1841 onward were compiled into this one volume called *Bells and Pomegranates*. It was published in the year 1846. This collection contains the lyrics, narrative poems, his six remarkable plays namely, *Pippa Passes*, *King Victor and King Charles*, *The Return of the Druses*, *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon*, *Colombe's Birthday*, *Luria*, and *a Soul's Tragedy*.

Browning attained perfection in his *Dramatic Lyrics* published in 1842, and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* in 1845. The scholars of English literature call him the master and propagator of dramatic monologues. His known works such as *The Italian in England*, *The Bishop orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's*, and *Pictor Ignotus* were published in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, whereas, *Dramatic Lyrics* mostly contained lyrical works like *Cavalier Tunes*. His happy marriage and companionship with his wife mostly reflect in his love lyrics. For instance, *Meeting at Night* depicts their sweet romance in full bloom.

Works like *Men and Women*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Andrea del Sarto* and several others display Browning's talent at its best. The blank verse was used in abundance in his powerful compositions. Browning wrote one of his masterpieces, *Dramatic Personae*, in 1864. The remainder of Browning's long life witnessed the publication of works such as *Balaustion's Adventure*, *Fifine at the Fair*, *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*, *The Inn Album* etc. The chapter in his literary career was powerfully concluded, with the publication of his *Asolando*, which depicts the tired and disillusioned old man, once in his firm and enthusiastic prime.

Here we looked at Browning who we now know as a master of dramatic monologues, a champion of writing inimitable love lyrics, and a pioneer in introducing dramatic monologues and verses in the literature of Victorian era.

16.3.3 Elizabeth Barret Browning (1806-1861)

Elizabeth Barret Browning, whose name before marriage was Elizabeth Barret, was born at Durham in 1806. At the early age of eight years she started writing poems. She suffered from intense pain in head and spine for the rest of her life after a severe illness at the age of 15. Later she went through lung disease, probably tuberculosis. Her medication of laudanum results in further health issues. John Kenyon, her cousin introduced her to the literary society. In 1838 her collection of poems was published. Her most of works published in between 1841 to 1844 which includes some prose and translation work. She contributed to the campaign "The Abolition of Slavery" and her writings emerged as a big influence in reformation in the child labour legislation. Browning was nominated along with Tennyson for the next poet laureate after the death of Wordsworth which made her the first female poet nominated for the award of poet laureate. Her work *Elizabeth's Volume Poems* which was published in 1844 was a great success which earned her the appreciation of Robert Browning. Later she married to Robert Browning in secret as they were scared of her father's disapproval. Elizabeth was disinherited by her father after the truth was revealed. The couple, in 1846, moved to Italy and there she spent rest of their life. Robert Wiedeman Barrett Browning, nickname Pen, was their only son. After her death Robert Browning published a collection of poems which was her last work. Her writings had a major influence on her contemporaries which also includes Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson. Her one of the most remarkable

and well known works are *How Do I Love Thee?* and *Aurora Leigh* which were published in 1845 and 1856 respectively.

Though she had written several works, here we will mention her important works. *An Essay on Mind; with Other Poems* was published in 1826. She did not write for almost nine years after her first work published. She returned with the *Prometheus Bound* which was published in 1833. Her other works worth mentioning are *The Seraphim and Other Poems* published in 1838, *Sonnets from the Portuguese* published in 1847, *Casa Guidi Windows published in 1851*, *Aurora Leigh* published in 1857, a poem written in blank verse, and *Last Poems* as mentioned above published by her husband shortly after her death in 1862.

16.3.4 Mathew Arnold (1822-88)

Mathew Arnold was born in December, 1822. His father was a headmaster in a rugby school. He is considered as the author of several activities, but significantly as critic and a poet that he holds a place in history of English literature. He was educated at Winchester, Rugby. He received the Newdigate Prize for poetry when he was studying in Balliol College, Oxford. He became inspector of a school in 1851 and there he proved his worth as an official with caliber. He resigned from the job in 1883, later started receiving pension from the government. After the span of five years he died of heart disease.

Matthew Arnold is one of the few great Victorian authors whose prestige is built on both his poetry and his poetry criticism. While he only dedicated a portion of his active life to poetry, much of the same beliefs, attitudes, and emotions reflected in his poems find a richer or more balanced expression in his prose. The regular assessments of his poetry as full of thoughts and aphoristic, or as elegiac or melancholy, and of his prose as instructive, urbane, and frequently satirically witty in its complete self mission of elevating England's social consciousness overshadowed this unity for most earlier readers.

As far as his poetical works are concerned they are not much bulky. Mathew Arnold is well known for his poem *Dover Beach*, but apart from this work he wrote several remarkable classical poems along with this. His first book of poetry *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* was published in 1849. *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems* was published in 1852. Both the books of collection of poems appeared under the nom de plume of 'A'. His next work was *Poems* which was published in 1853 which includes its well known critical preface. *New Poems*, again a collection of poems, was published in 1867. Most of these works were shorter in size though Arnold succeeds in keeping the quality high. Arnold embraces classical themes as a subject, giving them a contemplative, even melancholy tone that is popular in modern works. In some of his poems, for instance *The Scholar Gypsy*, a nobly pessimistic poem, he is particularly good at describing traditional English scenery. He has most of the classic stateliness and more formal sort of elegance in his style, but he can still be elegant and friendly, with a note of genuine passion on occasion. In its subdued depressive resignation, his meditative

poetry reflects Gray's, yet all of his writing is meticulous, intellectual, and skilful.

His most remarkable and well known work includes *Dover Beach* published in 1867. It was a part of the *New Poems* which is a collection of poems. The poem was inspired by a white cliff of Dover Stand which he came across while his visit with his new wife to the south coast of England which was near to the coast of France about twenty two miles. As the poem reflects the theme of romantic love many critique consider it as a honeymoon poem. But the poem express the deep meaning of human's spiritual state and notion of happiness.

16.3.5 Dante Gabriel Rosseti (1828-82)

Dante Gabriel Rosseti was born in London. His father was an Italian refugee and professor of Italian in King's college. Rosseti completed his study from the same college where his father was working as professor. At the age of sic he started writing poems and then moved to study painting at the Royal Academy School (1846). He was the prominent member of the Pre Raphaelite brotherhood with Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown, and the Painter Millais. He later became friend with Ruskin, William Morris and Swinburne. Ruskin became the financial support to him. He addicted to Chloral which had affected his health. At the time due to his addiction of Chloral his sanity was questionable in 1872. He died at Margate in 1882.

Rosseti was the eldest among all the Pre-Raphaelites. He was both a poet and a painter. He challenged the old conventions not only in poetry but in painting too. His poetical works are not large in size which includes only two poems namely *Poems* published in 1870 and *Ballads and Sonnets* published in 1881. There should be no doubt about the high quality of these poems. He would have found a position among the greatest if he had a bit more depth of view and perhaps a little more of the humane factor in him.

The Blessed Damozel, published in 1850, was perhaps the only well known work of Rossetti. It was published in the Pre-Raphaelite journal "The Gem". It was revised twice by Rossetti and later published in 1856, 1870 and 1873. The poem was influenced by Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven," which portrays a lover mourning on Earth for the loss of his beloved. Rossetti preferred to depict the entire scenario in the opposite direction. The damozel observes her lover from heaven, and her unsatisfied desire for their reconciliation in heaven is described in the poem.

• CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-3

Answer the following questions:

1. Tennyson was awarded for the "Chancellor's Medal" for his which work?
 - A. Timbuctoo
 - B. The Lady of Shallot
 - C. The Lotus Eater
 - D. The Palace of Art

2. Which poem of Tennyson is a long series of meditations on the death of his close friend Arthur Henry Hallam?

- A. Timbuctoo
- B. The Lady of Shallot
- C. The Lotus Eater
- D. In Memoriam

3. Paulin, published in 1833, was written by _____?

- A. Robert Browning
- B. Tennyson
- C. Rosseti
- D. Arnold

4. Bells and Pomegranates, a volume of poems written by Robert Browning was published in ____.

- A. 1846
- B. 1845
- C. 1840
- D. 1844

5. A poet worked in campaign "The Abolition of Slavery" and emerged as a big influence in reformation in the child labour legislation. Name the poet.

- A. Elizabeth Barret Browning
- B. Robert Browning
- C. Tennyson
- D. Arnold

6. Which two American poets had a great influence of Elizabeth Barret Browning?

- A. Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe
- B. Walt Whitman and Robert Frost
- C. Sylvia Plath and Allen Ginsberg
- D. Ezra Pound and T S Eliot

7. Scholar Gypsy is the poem written by

- A. Robert Browning
- B. Arnold
- C. Tennyson
- D. Rossetti

8. Dover Beach is the most remarkable work of

- A. Arnold
- B. Tennyson
- C. Rossetti
- D. Robert Browning

9. Along with Dante Gabriel Rossetti who were the members of Pre Raphaelite Poets?

- A. Robert Browning, Tennyson, Arnold
- B. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lord Byron
- C. Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown, Painter Millais
- D. Elizabeth Barret Browning, Edgar Allen Poe, Emily Dickinson

10. The Blessed Demozel is the poem written by

- A. Dante Gabriel Rossetti
- B. Tennyson
- C. Arnold
- D. Browning

16.4 LET US SUM UP

Because literature was an accessible and pervasive part of Victorian society, studying it is crucial in understanding the attitudes and concerns of the people who lived during this era. Much of the writing during this time was a reaction to the rapidly changing notions of science, morality, and society.

16.5 KEY WORDS

- Era: a long and distinct period of history.
- Pervasive: present or noticeable in every part of a thing or place
- Nation: a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory.
- Reign: monarchy

16.6 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- 1) David Daiches. A Critical History of English Literature. Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2005
- 2) Long, William J. English Literature. Atlantic Edition, 2015.

Answers

- **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2**

1. David Copperfield
2. David Copperfield
3. Master Humphrey's Clock
4. The Great Expectations
5. Calcutta
6. Vanity Fair
7. Historical Novel
8. Marry Anne Evan

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-3

1. Timbuctoo
2. In Memoriam
3. Robert Browning
4. 1846
5. Elizabeth Barrett Browning

6. Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe
7. Arnold
8. Arnold
9. Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown, Painter Millais
10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti