

PROLOGUE

All efforts have been made to minimize errors and repetitions in this thesis. Wherever errors and repetitions have occurred in the text, they have been unavoidable in order to maintain both the continuity of all the chapters in the thesis as well as the strength of each chapter. And I Biren P. Thakkar, the candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Zoology, is solely responsible for any errors of omission or commission in this thesis and I apologize to all who may come across such errors while reading the thesis.

"What is there that confers the noblest delight? What is that which swells a man's breast with pride above that which any other experience can bring to him? Discovery! To know that you are walking where none others have walked; that you are beholding what human eye has not seen before; that you are breathing a virgin atmosphere. To give birth to an idea, to discover a great thought - - an intellectual nugget, right under the dust of a field that many a brain-plough had gone over before. To find a new planet, to invent a new hinge, to find a way to make the lightning carry your messages. To be the first - - that is the idea."

Mark Twain