

probably, to express the delight of man at the termination of the discomforts of winter. A natural description of winter is interwoven (perhaps by the hand of some Ionian rhapsodist) in the *Works and Days* of Hesiod.\* This poem, which is composed with noble simplicity, although in accordance with the rigid didactic form, gives instructions regarding agriculture, directions for different kinds of trade and labor, and ethic precepts for a blameless course of life. It is only elevated to the dignity of a lyric poem when the poet clothes the miseries of mankind, or the exquisite mythical allegory of Epimetheus and Pandora, in an anthropomorphic garb. In the theogony of Hesiod, which is composed of many ancient and dissimilar elements, we frequently find, as, for instance, in the enumeration of the Nereides,† natural descriptions of the realm of Neptune concealed under the significant names of mythical characters. The Bæotian, and, indeed, all the ancient schools of poetry, treat only of the phenomena of the external world, under the personification of human forms.

But if, as we have already remarked, natural descriptions, whether they delineate the richness and luxuriance of tropical vegetation, or portray the habits of animals, have only become a distinct branch of literature in the most recent times, this circumstance must not be regarded as a proof of the absence of susceptibility for the beauties of nature, where the perception of beauty was so intense,‡ nor must we suppose that the animated expression of a spirit of poetic contemplation was wanting to the Greeks, who have transmitted to us such inimitable proofs of their creative faculty alike in poetry and in sculpture. All that we are led by the tendency of our modern ideas to discover as deficient in this department of ancient literature is rather of a negative than of a positive kind, being evinced less in the absence of susceptibility than in that of the urgent impulse to give expression in words to the sentiment awakened by the charms of nature. Directed less to

\* *Hesiodi Opera et Dies*, v. 502-561. Götting, in *Hes. Carm.*, 1831, p. xix.; Ulrici, *Gesch. der Hellenischen Dichtkunst*, th. i., 1835, s. 337. Bernhardt, *Grundriss der Griech. Litteratur*, th. ii., s. 176. According to the opinion of Gottfr. Hermann (*Opuscula*, vol. vi., p. 239), "the picturesque description given by Hesiod of winter bears all the evidence of great antiquity."

† Hes., *Theog.*, v. 233-264. The Nereid Mera (*Od.*, xi., 326; *Il.*, xviii., 48) may perhaps be indicative of the phosphoric light seen on the surface of the sea, in the same manner as the same word *μαίρα* designates the sparkling dog-star Sirius.

‡ Compare Jacobs, *Leben und Kunst der Alten*, bd. i., abth. i., s. vii.