

ation. The preponderance of the descriptive element shows itself in the forty-eight cantos of the *Dionysiaca* of the Egyptian Nonnus, which are remarkable for their skillfully artistical versification. The poet dwells with pleasure on the delineation of great convulsions of nature; he makes a fire kindled by lightning on the woody banks of the Hydaspes burn up even the fishes in the bed of the river; and he shows how ascending vapors occasion the meteorological processes of the storm and electric rain. Although capable of writing romantic poetry, Nonnus of Panopolis is remarkably unequal in his style, being at one time animated and exciting, and at another tedious and verbose.

A deeper feeling for nature and a greater delicacy of sensibility is manifested in some portions of the Greek Anthology, which has been transmitted to us in such various ways and from such different epochs. In the graceful translation of Jacobs, every thing that relates to animal and vegetable forms has been collected in one section—these passages being small pictures, consisting, in most cases, of mere allusions to individual forms. The plane-tree, which “nourishes amid its branches the grape swelling with juice,” and which, in the time of Dionysius the Elder, first penetrated from Asia Minor through the Island of Diomedes to the shores of the Sicilian Anapus, is perhaps too often introduced; still, on the whole, the ancient mind shows itself more inclined, in these songs and epigrams, to dwell on the animal than on the vegetable world. The vernal idyl of Meleager of Gadara, in Cælo-Syria, is a noble, and, at the same time, a more considerable composition.*

* *Meleagri Reliquiæ*, ed. Manso, p. 5. Compare Jacobs, *Leben und Kunst der Alten*, bd. i., abth. i., s. xv.; abth. ii., s. 150–190. Zenobeti believed himself to have been the first to discover Meleager's poem on Spring, in the middle of the eighteenth century (*Mel. Gadareni in Ver Idyllion*, 1759, p. 5). See *Brunckii Anal.*, t. iii., p. 105. There are two fine sylvan poems of Marianos in the *Anthol. Græca*, ii., 511 and 512. Meleager's poem contrasts well with the praise of Spring in the eclogues of Himerius, a Sophist, who was teacher of rhetoric at Athens under Julian. The style, on the whole, is cold and profusely ornate; but in some parts, especially in the descriptive portions, this writer sometimes approximates closely to the modern way of considering nature. *Himerii Sophistæ Eclogæ et Declamationes*, ed. Wernsdorf, 1790. (Oratio iii., 3–6, and xxi., 5.) It seems extraordinary that the lovely situation of Constantinople should not have inspired the Sophists. (Orat. vii., 5–7; xvi., 3–8.) The passages of Nonnus, referred to in the text, occur in *Dionys.*, ed. Petri Cunæi, 1610, lib. ii., p. 70; vi., p. 199; xxiii., p. 16 and 619; xxvi., p. 694. Compare, also, Ouwaroff, *Nonnus von Panopolis, der Dichter*, 1817, s. 3. 16. 21.