

occupying only a very small space. There is no individual portraiture of particular localities,\* but a deep and intimate comprehension of nature is depicted in soft colors. Where, for instance, has the gentle play of the waves, or the stillness of night been more happily described? And how well do these pleasing pictures contrast with the powerful description of the bursting tempest in the first book of the *Georgics*, and the picture in the *Æneid* of the voyage and landing at the Strophades, the crashing fall of the rock, or the flames emitted from Mount *Ætna*.†

From Ovid we might have expected, as the fruit of his long sojourn in the plains of Tomi, in Lower *Mæsia*, a poetic description of the marshes, of which, however, no account has been transmitted to us from antiquity. The exile did not indeed see that kind of steppe-like plain, which in summer is densely covered with juicy plants, varying from four to six feet in height, and which in every breath of wind present the aspect of a waving sea of flowering verdure. The place of his banishment was a desolate, swampy marsh-land, and the broken spirit of the poet, which gives itself vent in unmanly lamentation, was preoccupied with the recollection of the enjoyments of social life and the political occurrences at Rome, and thus remained dead to the impressions produced by the contemplation of the Scythian desert, with which he was surrounded. As a compensation, however, this highly-gifted poet, whose descriptions of nature are so vivid, has given us, besides his too frequently-repeated representations of grottoes, springs, and "calm moon-light nights," a remarkably characteristic, and even geognostically important delineation of a volcanic eruption at Methone, between Epidaurus and Træzene. The passage to which we allude has already been cited in another part of this work.‡ Ovid shows us, as our readers will re-

\* The passages from Virgil, which are adduced by Malte-Brun (*Annales des Voyages*, t. iii., 1808, p. 235-266) as local descriptions, merely show that the poet had a knowledge of the produce of different countries, as, for instance, the saffron of Mount Tmolus; that he was acquainted with the incense of the Sabeans, and with the true names of several small rivers; and that even the mephitic vapors which rise from a cavern in the Apennines, near Amsanctus, were not unknown to him.

† Virg., *Georg.*, i., 356-392; iii., 349-380; *Æn.*, iii., 191-211; iv., 246-251; xii., 684-689.

‡ Compare Ovid, *Met.*, i., 568-576; iii., 155-164; iii., 407-412; vii., 180-188; xv., 296-306; *Trist.*, lib. i., *El.* 3, 60; lib. iii., *El.* 4, 49; *El.* 12, 15; *Ex Ponto*, lib. iii., *Ep.* 7-9, as instances of separate pictures of natural scenery. There is a pleasant description of a spring at Hymettus, beginning with the verse,