

maidens is disheveled by the rough winds of March. As Gudrun, hoping for the arrival of her liberators, is leaving her couch, and the sea begins to shine in the light of the rising morning star, she distinguishes the dark helmets and shields of her friends. This description is conveyed in but few words, but it calls before the mind a visible picture, and heightens the feeling of suspense preceding the occurrence of an important historical event. Homer, in a similar manner, depicts the island of the Cyclops and the well-ordered gardens of Alcinoüs, in order to produce a visible picture of the luxuriant profusion of the wilderness in which the giant monsters dwell, and of the splendid abode of a powerful king. Neither of the poets purposes to give an individual delineation of nature."

"The rugged simplicity of the popular epic contrasts strongly with the richly-varied narratives of the chivalric poets of the thirteenth century, who all exhibited a certain degree of artistical skill, although Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Gotfried von Strasburg* were so much distinguished above the rest in the beginning of the century, that they may be called great and classical. It would be easy to collect examples of a profound love of nature from their comprehensive works, as it occasionally breaks forth in similitudes; but the idea of giving an independent delineation of nature does not appear to have occurred to them. They never arrested the plot of the story to pause and contemplate the tranquil life of nature. How different are the more modern poetic compositions! Bernardin de St. Pierre makes use of events merely as frames for his pictures. The lyric poets of the thirteenth century, when they sang of *Minne* or love, which they did not, however, invariably choose as their theme, often speak of the genial month of May, of the song of the nightingale, or of the drops of dew glittering on the flowers of the heath, but these expressions are always used solely with reference to the feelings which they are intended to reflect. In like manner, when emotions of sadness are to be delineated, allusion is made to the sear and yellow leaf, the songless birds, and the seed buried beneath the snow. These thoughts recur incessantly, although not without gracefulness and diversity of expression. The tender Walther von der Vogelweide and the meditative Wolfram von Eschenbach, of whose poems we unfortunately possess but a few lyrical songs, may be adduced as brilliant examples of the cultivators of this species of writing."

* On the romantic description of the grotto of the lovers, in the *Tristan* of Gotfried of Strasburg, see Gervinus, op. cit., bd. i., s. 450.