

"The question, whether contact with Southern Italy, or the intercourse opened by means of the crusades with Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine, may not have enriched Germanic poetry with new images of natural scenery, must be answered generally in the negative, for we do not find that an acquaintance with the East gave any different direction to the productions of the Minnesingers. The Crusaders had little connection with the Saracens, and differences ever reigned among the various nations who were fighting for one common cause. One of the most ancient of the lyric poets was Friedrich von Hausen, who perished in the army of Barbarossa. His songs contain many allusions to the Crusades, but they simply express religious views, or the pain of being separated from the beloved of his heart. Neither he, nor any of those who took part in the crusades, as Reinmar the elder, Rubin, Neidhardt, and Ulrich von Lichtenstein, ever take occasion to speak of the country surrounding them. Reinmar came to Syria as a pilgrim, and, as it would appear, in the retinue of Duke Leopold VI. of Austria. He laments that he can not shake off the thoughts of home, which draw his mind away from God. The date-tree is occasionally mentioned when reference is made to the palm-branches which the pilgrims should bear on their shoulders. I do not remember an instance in which the noble scenery of Italy seems to have excited the imaginative fancy of the Minnesingers who crossed the Alps. Walther von der Vogelweide, who had made distant travels, had, however, not journeyed further into Italy than to the Po; but Freidank* had been in Rome, and yet he merely remarks that grass grows on the palaces of those who once held sway there."

The German *Animal Epos*, which must not be confounded with the "animal fables" of the East, has arisen from a habit of social familiarity with animals, and not from any special purpose of giving a representation of them. This kind of epos, of which Jacob Grimm has treated in so masterly a

* *Vridankes Bescheidenheit*, by Wilhelm Grimm, 1834, s. l. and cxxviii. I have taken all that refers to the German national Epos and the Minnesingers from a letter of Wilhelm Grimm to myself, dated October, 1845. In a very old Anglo-Saxon poem on the names of the Runes, first made known by Hickes, we find the following characteristic description of the birch-tree: "Beorc is beautiful in its branches: it rustles sweetly in its leafy summit, moved to and fro by the breath of heaven." The greeting of the day is simple and noble: "The day is the messenger of the Lord, dear to man, the glorious light of God, a joy and trusting comfort to rich and poor, beneficent to all!" See, also, Wilhelm Grimm, *Ueber Deutsche Runen*, 1821, s. 94, 225, and 234.