

tute one of the most remarkable phenomena of Indian life, and must have exercised a special influence on the mental development of the whole race?"

In referring here, as I did in my public lectures, under the guidance of my brother and other learned Sanscrit scholars, to individual instances of that animated and frequently-expressed feeling for nature which breathes through the descriptive portions of Indian poetry, I would begin with the *Vedas*, the most ancient and most valuable memorials of the civilization of the East Arian nations. The main subject of these writings is the veneration and praise of nature. The hymns of the *Rig-Veda* contain the most charming descriptions of the "roseate hue of early dawn," and of the aspect of the "golden-handed sun." The great heroic poems of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are of more recent date than the *Vedas*, but more ancient than the *Puranas*; the adoration of nature being associated with the narrative in accordance with the character of epic creations. In the *Vedas*, the locality of the scenes which had been glorified by holy beings was seldom indicated, but in the heroic poems the descriptions of nature are mostly individual, and refer to definite localities, from whence they derive that animation and life which is ever imparted when the writer draws his materials from the impressions he has himself experienced. There is a rich tone of coloring throughout the description of the journey of Rama from Ayodhya to the residence of Dschanaka, in his life in the primitive forest, and in the picture of the anchorite life of the Panduïdes.

The name of Kalidasa was early and widely known among the Western nations. This great poet flourished in the highly-cultivated court of Vikramaditya, and was consequently the cotemporary of Virgil and Horace. The English and German translations of the *Sacotala* have added to the admiration which has been so freely yielded to this poet,\* whose tender-

*puellas Vasvalcienses* (Humboldt, *Examen Crit. de la Géographie*, t. i. p. 53).

\* Kalidasa lived at the court of Vikramaditya about fifty-six years before our era. It is highly probable that the age of the two great heroic poems, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, is much more ancient than that of the appearance of Buddha, that is to say, prior to the middle of the sixth century before Christ. (Burnouf, *Bhagavata-Purana*, t. i., p. cxi. and cxviii.; Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumskunde*, bd. i., s. 356 and 492.) George Forster, by the translation of *Sakuntala*, i. e., by his elegant German translation of the English version of Sir William Jones (1791), contributed very considerably to the enthusiasm for Indian poetry