

Arians or Persians, who had separated in different parts of the Northern Zend, and who were originally disposed to com-

the Indian nation, the first and most important appears to me to have been that which was exercised by the rich aspect of the country. A deep sentiment for nature has at all times been a fundamental characteristic of the Indian mind. Three successive epochs may be pointed out in which this feeling has manifested itself. Each of these has its determined character deeply implanted in the mode of life and tendencies of the people. A few examples may therefore suffice to indicate the activity of the Indian imagination, which has been evinced for nearly three thousand years. The first epoch of the expression of a vivid feeling for nature is manifested in the Vedas; and here we would refer in the *Rig-Veda* to the sublime and simple descriptions of the dawn of day (*Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, ed. Rosen, 1838, Hymn xlvi., p. 88; Hymn xlviii., p. 92; Hymn xcii., p. 184; Hymn cxiii., p. 233: see, also, Höfer, *Ind. Gedichte*, 1841, Lese i., s. 3) and of 'the golden-handed sun' (*Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, Hymn xxii., p. 31; Hymn xxxv., p. 65). The adoration of nature which was connected here, as in other nations, with an early stage of the religious belief, has in the Vedas a peculiar significance, and is always brought into the most intimate connection with the external and internal life of man. The second epoch is very different. In it a popular mythology was formed, and its object was to mold the sagas contained in the Vedas into a shape more easily comprehended by an age far removed in character from that which had gone by, and to associate them with historical events which were elevated to the domain of mythology. The two great heroic poems, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, belong to this second epoch. The last-named poem had also the additional object of rendering the Brahmins the most influential of the four ancient Indian castes. The *Ramayana* is therefore the more beautiful poem of the two: it is richer in natural feeling, and has kept within the domain of poetry, not having been obliged to take up elements alien and almost hostile to it. In both poems, nature does not, as in the Vedas, constitute the whole picture, but only a part of it. Two points essentially distinguish the conception of nature at the period of the heroic poems from that which the Vedas exhibit, without reference to the difference which separates the language of adoration from that of narrative. One of these points is the localization of the descriptions, as, for instance, according to Wilhelm von Schlegel, in the first book of the *Ramayana* or *Balakanda*, and in the second book, or *Ayodhyakanda*. See, also, on the differences between these two great epics, Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumskunde*, bd. i., s. 482. The next point, closely connected with the first, refers to the subject which has enriched the natural description. Mythical narration, especially when of a historical character, necessarily gave rise to greater distinctness and localization in the description of nature. All the writers of great epics, whether it be Valmiki, who sings the deeds of Rama, or the authors of the *Mahabharata*, who collected the national traditions under the collective title of Vyasa, show themselves overpowered, as it were, by emotions connected with their descriptions of external nature. Rama's journey from Ayodhya to Dschanaka's capital, his life in the forest, his expedition to Lanka (Ceylon), where the savage Ravana, the robber of his bride, Sita, dwells, and the hermit life of the Panduides, furnish the poet with the opportunity of following the original bent of the Indian mind, and of blending with the narration of he