

sian literature does not go further back than the time of the Sassanides; the most ancient monuments of their poetry have perished. It was not until the country had been subjugated by the Arabs, and had lost its original characteristics, that it again acquired a national literature among the Samanides, Gaznevites, and Seldschukes. The flourishing period of their poetry, extending from Firdusi to Hafiz and Dschami, scarcely lasted more than four or five hundred years, and hardly reaches to the time of the voyage of Vasco de Gama. We must not forget, in seeking to trace the love of nature evinced by the Indians and Persians, that these nations, if we judge according to the amount of cultivation by which they are respectively characterized, appear to be separated alike by time and space. Persian literature belongs to the Middle Ages, while the great literature of India appertains in the strictest sense to antiquity.

In the Iranian elevated plateaux nature has not the same luxuriance of arborescent vegetation, or the remarkable diversity of form and color, by which the soil of Hindostan is embellished. The chain of the Vindhya, which long continued to be the boundary line of the East Arian nations, falls within the tropical region, while the whole of Persia is situated beyond the tropics, and a portion of its poetry belongs even to the northern districts of Balkh and Fergana.

The four paradises celebrated by the Persian poets* were the pleasant valley of Soghd near Samarcand, Maschanrud near Hamadan, Scha'abi Bowan near Kal'eh Sofid in Fars, and Ghute, the plain of Damascus. Both Iran and Turan are wanting in woodland scenery, and also, therefore, in the hermit life of the forest, which exercised so powerful an influence on the imagination of the Indian poets. Gardens refreshed by cool springs, and filled with roses and fruit-trees, can form no substitute for the wild and grand natural scenery of Hindostan. It is no wonder, then, that the descriptive poetry of Persia was less fresh and animated, and that it was

Gitagovinda of Dschayadeva. (Rückert, in the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, bd. i., 1837, s. 129-173; *Gitagovinda Jayadeva poetæ indici drama lyricum*, ed. Chr. Lassen, 1836.) We possess a masterly rhythmical translation of this poem by Rückert, which is one of the most pleasing, and, at the same time, one of the most difficult in the whole literature of the Indians. The spirit of the original is rendered with admirable fidelity, while a vivid conception of nature animates every part of this great composition."

* *Journal of the Royal Geogr. Soc. of London*, vol. x., 1841, p. 2, 3; Rückert, *Makamen Hariri's*, s. 261.