

often heavy and overcharged with artificial adornment. If, in accordance with the opinion of the Persians themselves, we award the highest praise to that which we may designate by the terms spirit and wit, we must limit our admiration to the productiveness of the Persian poets, and to the infinite diversity of forms imparted to the materials which they employ; depth and earnestness of feeling are wholly absent from their writings.\*

Descriptions of natural scenery do but rarely interrupt the narrative in the historical or national Epos of Firdusi. It seems to me that there is much beauty and local truthfulness in the description of the mildness of the climate and the force of the vegetation, extolled in the praise of the coast-land of Mazanderan, which is put into the mouth of a wandering bard. The king, Kei Kawus, is represented as being excited by this praise to enter upon an expedition to the Caspian Sea, and even to attempt a new conquest.† The poems on Spring by Enweri, Dschelaleddin Rumi (who is esteemed the greatest mystic poet of the East), Adhad, and the half-Indian Feisi, generally breathe a tone of freshness and life, although a petty striving to play on words not unfrequently jars unpleasantly on the senses.‡ As Joseph von Hammer has remarked, in his great work on the history of Persian poetry, Sadi, in his *Bostan and Gulistan* (Fruit and Rose Gardens), may be regarded as indicating an age of ethical teaching, while Hafiz, whose joyous views of life have caused him to be compared to Horace, may be considered by his love-songs as the type of a high development of lyrical art; but that, in both, bombastic affectation too frequently mars the descriptions of nature.§ The darling subject of Persian poetry, the “loves of

\* Göthe, in his *Commentar zum west-östlichen Divan*, bd. vi., 1828, s. 73, 78, and 111.

† See *Le Livre des Rois*, publié par Jules Mohl, t. i., 1838, p. 487.

‡ See Jos. von Hammer, *Gesch. der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, 1818, s. 96, concerning Ewhadeddin Enweri, who lived in the twelfth century, and in whose poem on the *Schedschai* a remarkable allusion has been discovered to the mutual attraction of the heavenly bodies; s. 183, concerning Dschelaleddin Rumi, the mystic; s. 259, concerning Dschelaleddin Ahdad; and s. 403, concerning Feisi, who stood forth at the court of Akbar as a defender of the religion of Brahma, and in whose *Ghazuls* there breathes an Indian tenderness of feeling.

§ “Night comes on when the ink-bottle of heaven is overturned,” is the inelegant expression of Chodschah Abdulla Wassaf, a poet who has, however, the merit of having been the first to describe the great astronomical observatory of Meragha, with its lofty gnomon. Hilali, of Asterabad, makes the disk of the moon glow with heat, and regards