

ment are a faithful reflection of the character of the country in which they were composed, of the alternations of barrenness and fruitfulness, and of the Alpine forests by which the land of Palestine was characterized. They describe in their regular succession the relations of the climate, the manners of this people of herdsmen, and their hereditary aversion to agricultural pursuits. The epic or historical narratives are marked by a graceful simplicity, almost more unadorned than those of Herodotus, and most true to nature; a point on which the unanimous testimony of modern travelers may be received as conclusive, owing to the inconsiderable changes effected in the course of ages in the manners and habits of a nomadic people. Their lyrical poetry is more adorned, and develops a rich and animated conception of the life of nature. It might almost be said that one single psalm (the 104th) represents the image of the whole Cosmos: "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted; where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house." "The great and wide sea" is then described, "wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein." The description of the heavenly bodies renders this picture of nature complete: "He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness, and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor unto the evening."

We are astonished to find, in a lyrical poem of such a lim-