

ited compass, the whole universe—the heavens and the earth—sketched with a few bold touches. The calm and toilsome labor of man, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, when his daily work is done, is here contrasted with the moving life of the elements of nature. This contrast and generalization in the conception of the mutual action of natural phenomena, and this retrospection of an omnipresent invisible power, which can renew the earth or crumble it to dust, constitute a solemn and exalted rather than a glowing and gentle form of poetic creation.

Similar views of the Cosmos occur repeatedly in the Psalms* (Psalm lxxv., 7–14, and lxxiv., 15–17), and most fully, perhaps, in the 37th chapter of the ancient, if not ante-Mosaic Book of Job. The meteorological processes which take place in the atmosphere, the formation and solution of vapor, according to the changing direction of the wind, the play of its colors, the generation of hail and of the rolling thunder, are described with individualizing accuracy; and many questions are propounded which we in the present state of our physical knowledge may indeed be able to express under more scientific definitions, but scarcely to answer satisfactorily. The Book of Job is generally regarded as the most perfect specimen of the poetry of the Hebrews. It is alike picturesque in the delineation of individual phenomena, and artistically skillful in the didactic arrangement of the whole work. In all the modern languages into which the Book of Job has been translated, its images, drawn from the natural scenery of the East, leave a deep impression on the mind. “The Lord walketh on the heights of the waters, on the ridges of the waves towering high beneath the force of the wind.” “The morning red has colored the margins of the earth, and variously formed the covering of clouds, as the hand of man molds the yielding clay.” The habits of animals are described, as, for instance, those of the wild ass, the horse, the buffalo, the rhinoceros, and the crocodile, the eagle and the ostrich. We see “the pure ether spread, during the scorching heat of the south wind, as a melted mirror over the parched desert.”†

* Noble echoes of the ancient Hebraic poetry are found in the eleventh century, in the hymns of the Spanish Synagogue poet, Salomo ben Jehudah Gabirol, which contain a poetic paraphrase of the pseudo-Aristotelian book, *De Mundo*. See *Die Religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien*, by Michael Sachs, 1845, s. 7, 217, and 229. The sketches drawn from nature, and found in the writings of Mose ben Jakob ben Esra (s. 69, 77, and 285), are full of vigor and grandeur.

† I have taken the passages in the Book of Job from the translation