

Where nature has but sparingly bestowed her gifts, the senses of man are sharpened, and he marks every change in the moving clouds of the atmosphere around him, tracing in the solitude of the dreary desert, as on the face of the deep and moving sea, every phenomenon through its varied changes, back to the signs by which its coming was proclaimed. The climate of Palestine, especially in the arid and rocky portions of the country, is peculiarly adapted to give rise to such observations.

The poetic literature of the Hebrews is not deficient in variety of form; for while the Hebrew poetry breathes a tone of warlike enthusiasm from Joshua to Samuel, the little book of the gleaner Ruth presents us with a charming and exquisitely simple picture of nature. Göthe,* at the period of his enthusiasm for the East, spoke of it "as the loveliest specimen of epic and idyl poetry which we possess."

Even in more recent times, we observe in the earliest literature of the Arabs a faint reflection of that grand, contemplative consideration of nature which was an original characteristic of the Semitic races. I would here refer to the picturesque delineation of Bedouin desert life, which the grammarian Asmai has associated with the great name of Antar, and has interwoven with other pre-Mohammedan sagas of heroic deeds into one great work. The principal character in this romantic novel is the Antar (of the race of Abs, and son of the princely leader Scheddad and of a black slave), whose verses have been preserved among the prize poems (*Moallakât*) hung up in the Kaaba. The learned English translator, Terrick Hamilton, has remarked the Biblical tone which breathes through the style of Antar.† Asmai makes the son

and exposition of Umbreit (1824), s. xxix.-xlii., and 290-314. (Compare, generally, Gesenius, *Geschichte der Hebr. Sprache und Schrift*, s. 33; and *Jobi Antiquissimi Carminis Hebr. Natura atque Virtutes*, ed. Ilgen, p. 28.) The longest and most characteristic description of an animal which we meet with in Job is that of the crocodile (xl., 25-xli., 26), and yet it contains one of the evidences of the writer being himself a native of Palestine. (Umbreit, s. xli. and 308.) As the river-horse of the Nile and the crocodile were formerly found throughout the whole Delta of the Nile, it is not surprising that the knowledge of such strangely-formed animals should have spread into the contiguous region of Palestine.

* Göthe, in his *Commentar zum west-östlichen Divan*, s. 8.

† *Antar*, a Bedouin romance, translated from the Arabic by Terrick Hamilton, vol. i., p. xxvi.; Hammer, in the *Wiener Jahrbüchern der Litteratur*, bd. vi., 1819, s. 229; Rosenmüller, in the *Charakteren der vornehmsten Dichter aller Nationen*, bd. v. (1798), s. 251.