

of the desert go to Constantinople, and thus a picturesque contrast of Greek culture and nomadic ruggedness is introduced. The small space occupied in the earliest Arabic poems by natural delineations of the country will excite but little surprise when we remember, as has been remarked by my friend Freytag of Bonn, who is so celebrated for his knowledge of this branch of literature, that the principal subjects of these poems are narrations of deeds of arms, and praise of hospitality and fidelity, and that scarcely any of the bards were natives of Arabia Felix. A wearying uniformity of grassy plains and sandy deserts could not excite a love of nature, except under peculiar and rare conditions of mind.

Where the soil is not adorned by woods and forests, the phenomena of the atmosphere, as winds, storms, and the long-wished-for rain, occupy the mind more strongly, as we have already remarked. For the sake of referring to a natural image of this kind in the Arabian poets, I would especially notice Antar's *Moallakât*, which describes the meadows rendered fruitful by rain, and visited by swarms of buzzing insects;* the fine description of storms in Amru'l Kais, and in the seventh book of the celebrated *Hamasa*;† and, lastly, the picture in the *Nabegha Dhobyani* of the rising of the Euphrates, when its waves bear in their course masses of reeds and trunks of trees.‡ The eighth book of *Hamasa*, inscribed "Travel and Sleepiness," naturally attracted my special attention; I soon found, however, that "sleepiness"§ was limited to the first fragment of the book, and that the choice of the subject was the more excusable, as the composition is referred to a night journey on a camel.

* *Antara cum schol. Sunsenii*, ed. Menil., 1816, v. 15.

† *Amrulkaisi Moallakât*, ed. E. G. Hengstenberg, 1823; *Hamasa*, ed. Freytag, Part i., 1828, lib. vii., p. 785. Compare, also, the pleasing work entitled *Amrilkais, the Poet and King*, translated by Fr. Rückert, 1843, p. 29 and 62, where southern showers of rain are twice described with exceeding truth to nature. The royal poet visited the court of the Emperor Justinian, several years before the birth of Mohammed, to seek aid against his enemies. See *Le Divan d'Amro 'lkais*, accompagné d'une traduction par le Baron MacQuackin de Slane, 1837, p. 111.

‡ *Nabegha Dhobyani*, in Silvestre de Sacy's *Chrestom. Arabe*, 1806, t. iii., p. 47. On the early Arabian literature generally, see Weil's *Die Poet. Litteratur der Araber vor Mohammed*, 1837, s. 15 and 90, as well as Freytag's *Darstellung der Arabischen Verskunst*, 1830, s. 372-392. We may soon expect an excellent and complete version of the Arabian poetry, descriptive of nature, in the writings of *Hamasa*, from our great poet, Friedrich Rückert.

§ *Hamasæ Carmina*, ed. Freytag, Part i., 1828, p. 788. "Here finishes," it is said in p. 796, "the chapter on travel and sleepiness."