

I have endeavored, in this section, to manifest, in a fragmentary manner, the different influence exercised by the external world, or the aspect of animate and inanimate nature at different periods of time, on the thoughts and mode of feeling of different races. I have extracted from the history of literature the characteristic expressions of the love of nature. My object, therefore, as throughout the whole of this work, has been, to give general rather than complete views, by the selection of examples illustrative of the peculiar characteristics of different epochs and different races of men. I have noticed the changes manifested in the literature of the Greeks and Romans, to the gradual decay of those feelings which gave an imperishable luster to classical antiquity in the West, and I have traced in the writings of the early fathers of the Christian Church the beautiful expression of a love of nature, developed in the calm seclusion of an anchorite life. In considering the Indo-Germanic races (using the term in its strictest definition), we have passed from the German poetry of the Middle Ages to that of the highly-civilized ancient East Arians (Indians), and of the less favored West Arians, or inhabitants of ancient Iran. After a rapid glance at the Celtic Gaelic songs and the recently-discovered Finnish Epos, I have delineated the rich life of nature that breathes forth from the exalted compositions of the Hebrews and Arabs—races of Semitic or Aramæic origin; and thus we have traced the images reflected by the external world on the imagination of nations dwelling in the north and southeast of Europe, in Western Asia, in the Persian plateaux, and in the Indian tropical regions. I have been induced to pursue this course from the idea that, in order to comprehend nature in all its vast sublimity, it would be necessary to present it under a two-fold aspect, first objectively, as an actual phenomenon, and next subjectively, as it is reflected in the feelings of mankind.

When the glory of the Aramæic, Greek, and Roman dominion, or, I might almost say, when the ancient world had passed away, we find in the great and inspired founder of a new era, Dante Alighieri, occasional manifestations of the deepest sensibility to the charms of the terrestrial life of nature, whenever he abstracts himself from the passionate and subjective control of that despondent mysticism which constituted the general circle of his ideas. The period in which he lived followed immediately that of the decline of the Suanbian Minnesingers, of whom I have already spoken. At the