

er, in *King Lear*, where the seemingly mad Edgar represents to his blind father, Gloucester, while on the plain, that they are ascending Dover Cliff. The description of the view, on looking into the depths below, actually excites a feeling of giddiness.\*

If, in Shakspeare, the inward animation of the feelings and the grand simplicity of the language gave such a wonderful degree of life-like truth and individuality to the expression of nature, in Milton's exalted poem of *Paradise Lost* the descriptions are, from the very nature of the subject, more magnificent than graphic. The whole richness of the poet's fancy and diction is lavished on the descriptions of the luxuriant beauty of Paradise, but, as in Thomson's charming didactic poem of *The Seasons*, vegetation could only be sketched in general and more indefinite outlines. According to the judgment of critics deeply versed in Indian poetry, Kalidasa's poem on a similar subject, the *Ritusanhara*, which was written more than fifteen hundred years earlier, individualizes, with greater vividness, the powerful vegetation of tropical regions, but it wants the charm which, in Thomson's work, springs from the more varied division of the year in northern latitudes, as the transition of the autumn rich in fruits to the winter, and of the winter to the reanimating season of Spring, and from the images which may thus be drawn of the labors or pleasurable pursuits of men in each part of the year.

If we proceed to a period nearer our own time, we observe that, since the latter half of the eighteenth century, delineative prose especially has developed itself with peculiar vigor. Although the general mass of knowledge has been so excessively enlarged from the universally-extended study of nature it does not appear that, in those susceptible of a higher degree of poetic inspiration, intellectual contemplation has sunk under the weight of accumulated knowledge, but rather that as a result of poetic spontaneity, it has gained in comprehensiveness and elevation; and, learning how to penetrate deeper into the structure of the earth's crust, has explored in the mountain masses of our planet the stratified sepulchers of extinct organisms, and traced the geographical distribution of animals and plants, and the mutual connection of races. Thus, among those who were the first, by an exciting appeal to the imaginative faculties, powerfully to animate the senti-

\* I have taken the passages distinguished in the text by marks of quotation, and relating to Calderon and Shakspeare, from unpublished letters addressed to myself by Ludwig Tieck.