

A greater depth of feeling and a fresher spirit of animation pervade the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Bernardin de St. Pierre, and Chateaubriand. If I here allude to the persuasive eloquence of the first of these writers, as manifested in the picturesque scenes of *Clarens* and *La Meillerie on Lake Lemman*, it is because, in the principal works of this zealous but ill-instructed plant-collector—which were written twenty years before Buffon's fanciful *Epoques de la Nature**—poetic inspiration shows itself principally in the innermost peculiarities of the language, breaking forth as fluently in his prose as in the immortal poems of Klopstock, Schiller, Goethe, and Byron. Even where there is no purpose of bringing forward subjects immediately connected with the natural sciences, our pleasure in these studies, when referring to the limited portions of the earth best known to us, may be increased by the charm of a poetic mode of representation.

In recurring to prose writers, we dwell with pleasure on the small work entitled *Paul et Virginie*, to which Bernardin de St. Pierre owes the fairer portion of his literary reputation. The work to which I allude, which can scarcely be rivaled by any production comprised in the literature of other countries, is the simple picture of an island in the midst of a tropical sea, in which, sometimes favored by the serenity of the sky, and sometimes threatened by the violent conflict of the elements, two charming creatures stand picturesquely forth from the wild sylvan luxuriance surrounding them as with a variegated flowery tapestry. Here, and in the *Chaumière Indienne*, and even in his *Etudes de la Nature*, which are un-

* The succession in which the works referred to were published is as follows: Jean Jacques Rousseau, 1759, *Nouvelle Héloïse*; Buffon, *Epoques de la Nature*, 1778, but his *Histoire Naturelle*, 1749-1767; Bernardin de St. Pierre, *Etudes de la Nature*, 1784, *Paul et Virginie*, 1788, *Chaumière Indienne*, 1791; George Forster, *Reise nach der Südsee*, 1777, *Kleine Schriften*, 1794. More than half a century before the publication of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Madame de Sévigné, in her charming letters, had already shown a vivid sense of the beauty of nature, such as was rarely expressed in the age of Louis XIV. See the fine natural descriptions in the letters of April 20, May 31, August 15, September 16, and November 6, 1671, and October 23 and December 28, 1689 (Anbenas, *Hist. de Madame de Sévigné*, 1842, p. 201 and 427). My reason for referring in the text to the old German poet, Paul Flemming, who, from 1633 to 1639, accompanied Adam Olearius on his journey to Muscovy and to Persia, is that, according to the convincing authority of my friend, Varnhagen von Ense (*Biographische Denkw.*, bd. iv., s. 4, 75, and 129), "the character of Flemming's compositions is marked with a fresh and healthful vigor, while his images of nature are tender and full of life."