

the power possessed by the observer of representing what he has seen, the animating influence of the descriptive element, and the multiplication and enlargement of views opened to us on the vast theater of natural forces, may all serve as means of encouraging the scientific study of nature, and enlarging its domain. The writer who, in our German literature, according to my opinion, has most vigorously and successfully opened this path, is my celebrated teacher and friend, George Forster. Through him began a new era of scientific voyages, the aim of which was to arrive at a knowledge of the comparative history and geography of different countries. Gifted with delicate æsthetic feelings, and retaining a vivid impression of the pictures with which Tahiti and the other then happy islands of the Pacific had filled his imagination, as in recent times that of Charles Darwin,* George Forster was the first to depict in pleasing colors the changing stages of vegetation, the relations of climate and of articles of food in their influence on the civilization of mankind, according to differences of original descent and habitation. All that can give truth, individuality, and distinctiveness to the delineation of exotic nature is united in his works. We trace, not only in his admirable description of Cook's second voyage of discovery, but still more in his smaller writings, the germ of that richer fruit which has since been matured.† But alas! even to his noble, sensitive, and ever-hopeful spirit, life yielded no happiness.

If the appellation of descriptive and landscape poetry has sometimes been applied, as a term of disparagement, to those descriptions of natural objects and scenes which in recent times have so greatly embellished the literature of Germany, France, England, and America, its application, in this sense, must be referred only to the abuse of the supposed enlargement of the domain of art. Rhythmical descriptions of natural objects, as presented to us by Delille, at the close of a long and honorably-spent career, can not be considered as poems of nature, using the term in its strictest definition, notwithstanding the expenditure of refined rules of diction and versification. They are wanting in poetic inspiration, and consequently strangers to the domain of poetry, and are cold and dry, as all must be that shines by mere external polish.

* See *Journal and Remarks*, by Charles Darwin, 1832-1836, in the *Narrative of the Voyages of the Adventure and Beagle*, vol. iii., p. 479-490, where there occurs an extremely beautiful description of Tahiti.

† On the merit of George Forster as a man and a writer, see Gervinus, *Gesch. der Poet. National-Litteratur der Deutschen*, th. v., s. 390-392