

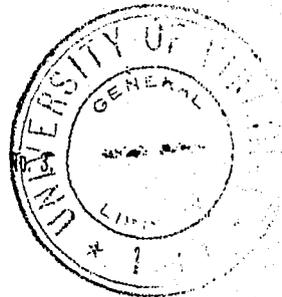
THE DEVELOPMENT  
—OF—  
THE NATURE-SENSE  
—IN—  
THE GERMAN LYRIC.

A COMPARISON OF THE TWO GREAT LYRIC PERIODS.

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY  
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UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA STUDIES IN TEUTONIC LANGUAGES :



PRESSER OF

W. F. BARNES, 19 MAGNOLIA STREET  
SPARTANBURG, S. C.

1902?

GIFT

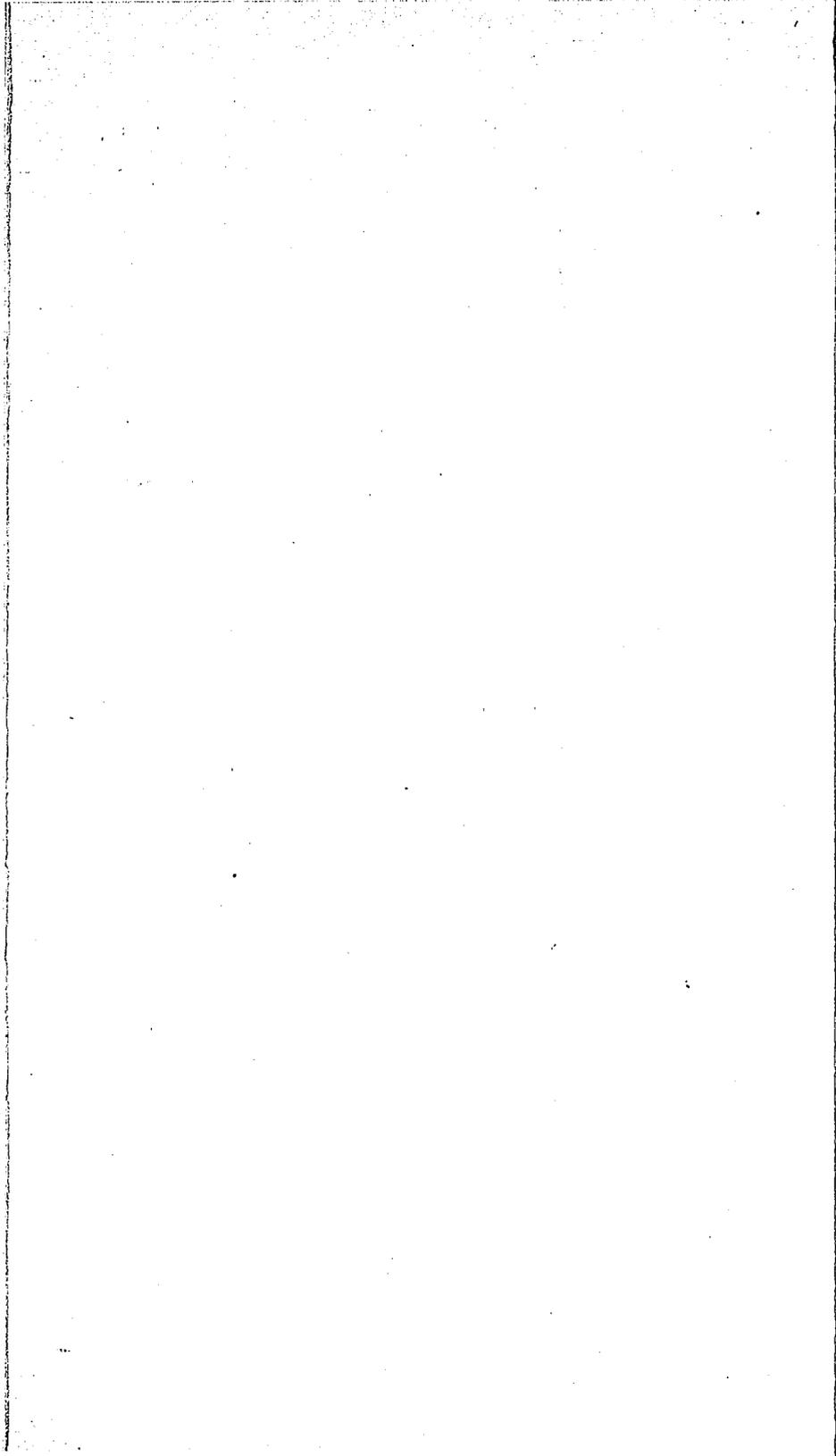
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TO THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER,  
WHO TAUGHT ME TO LOVE  
BOOKS AND NATURE.

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## I—INTRODUCTION.

More servants wait on man  
Than he'll take note of: in ev'ry path  
He treads down that which doth befriend him,  
When sickness makes him pale and wan,  
O mighty love! Man is one world and hath  
Another to attend him.

—G. Herbert.

To the student of literature, interested in every force that operates upon it to color its pages, no theme should be more engaging than the influence of Nature. It may be doubted whether any other single influence is so important. Wars, revolutions, crusades, migrations, are national, or at most international, and are temporal in their direct influence; but the influence of Nature is confined to nation nor time. In the beginning of things man was laid in the lap of Nature, and with every breath he drew life from her bosom, and that influence deepened when the nurse had become a companion, and deepens as man's life grows deeper even to the present day. "Who can guess," says Emerson "how much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? how much tranquility has been reflected to man from the azure sky, over whose unspotted deeps the winds forever drive flocks of clouds and leave no wrinkle nor stain? how much industry and providence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes?"

A glance at the proverbs and common words of any language will show how far beyond the confines of mere literature this influence has penetrated, into life, of which literature is but an imperfect reflection. In our own language, for example, those expressions which have taken such a hold upon the people as to become proverbs are drawn largely from Nature, e. g., "It is an ill wind that blows no one any good," "the darkest hour is just before dawn," "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," "still water runs deep," "the early bird catches the worm," "as the twig is bent, so the tree is inclined," "one swallow doesn't make a summer."

Many of these proverbs are not peculiar to us, but are the common property of several peoples. Their authors are unknown; they seem always to have been accepted. Just as the myth of Tell is understood wherever the spirit of liberty is known, these proverbs are understood wherever man has observed Nature. The words of common speech are often reflections from Nature. We speak of disposition as *bright, gloomy, stormy, calm*; of character as *upright* or *crooked*—all, borrowing from Nature. Our whole language is adorned with figures of speech drawn from the natural world.

Not only was the infancy of the race cradled in the lap of Nature, but every people has also had its cradle there, and has grown up with an ever increasing recognition of the world in which it moved; and as the people found in literature an expression of their life, this recognition was echoed there in its varying degrees.

It is such a growth in the sense of Nature among the German people that this essay attempts to consider. It does not claim to be exhaustive, but rather suggestive along the larger lines of tendency. It is not a chronological consideration of authors, but a comparison of periods: for by a comparison of periods it has seemed possible to bring out most clearly the development of the nature-sense. The lyric field is admirable for such a study, since we may hope to find there the clearest expression of this sense. The essay will be devoted, therefore, to the lyrists of the 12th and 13th and 14th centuries, comparing them with the lyrists of the 18th and 19th centuries.

It must be recognized that in thus putting the two periods together in comparison, the later period would have a great advantage, due to the recent strides in natural science and the quickened interest in Nature and knowledge of it, incident thereto. But a study of the periods shows a poverty of nature-sense in the early period which cannot be explained on this ground.

A knowledge of the life which the Minnesingers led, and the peculiar opportunities which that life offered for intimate observation of Nature, invites us to look more closely into

the causes of this marked indifference towards the natural world which is evidenced by their writings.

An age may have an aversion to the country, such as marked the 18th century in England, when "no person of sense would live six miles out of London." From such an age of writers shut up in town one might expect the sentiment that "the proper study of mankind is man." But such was not the case of the Minnesingers. They were wanderers, spending a part of their time at court and a part on the country-ways, with every opportunity for their sense to be quickened by contrast, with every opportunity to learn Nature at first hand. Yet, with few exceptions, their references to Nature show no individual contact, have no more coloring than if the writers had made them sitting by the fireside. There is little individuality. All borrow from the common stereotyped stock of phrases, none add to it. Each succeeding singer harps upon the same chords. The stock in trade is the *rose* and *lily* and *violet*; the *nightingale* and *cuckoo*, with an occasional *eagle* or *lark*; *sunshine* or *moonlight* or *starlight*; joyous spring, dreary winter.

The limitation of these poets is more striking when we consider the extent of their travel. They were not confined to a small district; many travelled to *Switzerland*, *Italy* and *Palestine*. They saw the Alps, the Italian sky, and the Mediterranean. Yet all this evoked from them not one reference to mountains or seas, nor one description of a landscape. The Crusades widened the horizon of trade, science, thought, indeed opened a new era in history; but they did not open men's minds on the side of nature. Alfred Biese says in his book *Naturgefuehl* (p. 88)—I translate here as elsewhere—"Although the actual and practical must chiefly engage the historian, it is nevertheless remarkable to the modern reader how little apparent impression the Nature of the Holy Land made upon the Crusader . . . . the references to Nature in the reports are always lacking." In the same connection he cites (p. 117) this from W. Grimm, "The question whether contact with Southern Italy, or through the Crusades with Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine has not

enriched German poesy with new nature-pictures, can in general be answered only in the negative."

So clear a critic as J. A. Symonds is yet misleading in this characterization of the Minnesongs: "The magic of May pervades them, the mystery of the woodland enfolds them. They are the utterances of generations for whom life has revived, who have escaped the winter of their discontent and bondage, to whom the world is once more full of wonder-breeding interest." If this is taken to mean merely that the Minnesong is a departure from the spirit of the preceding centuries; if the term "May," "woodland," &c., are used figuratively to indicate the blithe, free spirit that pervades the songs of this period, then the criticism is not far from correct. But if we are led by it to expect a strong, fresh savor of May and the woodland themselves—an acute sense of Nature—then we are misled entirely. A careful examination of these lyrics fails to reveal "the magic of May" or "the mystery of the woodland." There is scarcely an ecstasy over Nature or even a delight in her for her own sake in the whole range of Minnesong. The spring-tide of nature-love was not advanced to the full tide of May; it was rather the early, weak and spasmodic flowings before the chill of winter had been wholly cast off.

Bayard Taylor, too, overshoots the mark when he says in *Studies in German Literature* (p. 60), "It is a bright, animated, eventful age which we find represented in the literature of the Minnesingers. . . . original because reaped on fresh fields by fresh hands; and with a direct impress of Nature, which we find for the first time in any literature." And again (p. 31), "the latter (Minnesingers) sang of love and sorrow and the influence of Nature; (p. 39), He (Walter) was one of the very first, not merely to describe nature and rural life, but to express a sweet and artless delight in her manifold aspects."

The facts do not justify such an assertion; for, firstly, the Greeks and Hebrews had a marked nature-sense; and, secondly, Walter's appreciation cannot be called an "artless delight in her manifold aspects;" it is immature and artificial,

scarcely overstepping the very narrow scope of his contemporaries. Biese, a more careful and conservative critic says (p. 118), "Indeed, even the greatest among the Minnesingers, the master of the lyric of the 13th century, Walter, does not overstep the narrow bounds of the nature-sense of his time." On the poverty of the nature-sense of this period another German critic of great authority speaks in no uncertain voice. Says W. Grimm, "The German poets of this epoch (Crusades) have nowhere given themselves to a special consideration of Nature. . . . a sense of Nature was not lacking, to be sure, in the old German masters: but they left us no other expression of this sense than that which a connection with historic events permitted."

There is, in fact, with rare exception, no evidence of Nature for Nature's sake at this time. When the spring was welcomed, it was because the poet might then visit his mistress. The winter was hateful because it kept him from her. Flowers bloomed only when he walked with her, in fact or fancy, in the meadow, and then only lilies and roses, as if no other flowers grew there. (One is tempted to believe that the bard really never went there to see; that the flowers of the Minnesingers are, indeed, artificial, made in the shop, not gathered fresh from the field.) The nightingale sang only by his love's window, and for her delectation, and then in a very monotonous strain. Nature was, for the old poet, accessory to love, and those aspects of nature which could not be used in love-song were to him unknown. He is silent as to the larger, grander phases of Nature, storms, mountains, seas, broad expanse of sky or earth. "An individual conception of the landscape fails completely" says Biese, (p. 16) "a feeling for Nature that seeks her on her own account has not yet arisen. . . . the charm of Nature herself without reference to other things, joy in her for her sake, has not yet been revealed to the time."

It may be doubted whether there was at this period any sense of Nature in her broad general aspect. The old poet had no conception of the *tout ensemble* in Nature. He saw individual things, but did not see them in their setting; he

mentions flower, brook, birdsong; he saw minor things, things at hand. He gives no evidence of ability to grasp Nature in "her manifold aspects." He hears one note at a time, not Nature's harmony. His landscape, if his vague outlines can be dignified as such, is quite colorless and meager—a meadow and flowers being the usual scene, reproduced with wearying monotony by the succeeding poets.

This poverty in the early German song is worthy of consideration, and invites us to seek the underlying causes. In some respects these poets had better opportunities to feel the influence of Nature than had the later period, for the rapidity of travel in later years tends to militate against a study of landscape. Mr. Gladstone has happily said, "Once the traveller was bathed in Italy, now he is dashed by her spray."

One cause that has operated to produce in part this apathy towards Nature may be designated as *geographic* or *climatic*. The short summer of northern Germany, the long winter with its leaden sky, have wrought their effect upon the nature of the people, till they have become phlegmatic, philosophic, dreamers perhaps. The bright sky and warm climate of Southern France are reflected in the quick, passionate disposition of the people. These differences of disposition may be traced in the literatures of the Minnesingers and the Troubadours.

But this cause does not explain the discrepancies between different periods of the same place and people, such as are seen on a comparison of the Minnesingers with the earlier writers, in whom there is clearly a stronger sense of Nature. For one of the most potent causes we must look deeper into the times.

The nature-sense of the Greeks, though essentially different from that of our own time, was scarcely second to the latter in freshness and force. They had so personified all the phenomena of the natural world that they looked upon these as persons. The flower was Narcissus gazing upon his reflection in the pool, or it was Hyacinthus. The winds were real spirits, each with his own character—fierce Boreas and the rest. The moon and the stars skimming behind the

clouds were Diana and her nymphs on the hunt. The goddess and her train were in the bath, when moon and stars were reflected in the fountain. The hollow-sounding waves were Tritons, blowing their conch-shell horns. Nature was to the Greek a world of personalities, with passions and emotions like his own. And this feeling of affinity with Nature was handed down in modified form even into Roman literature.

But with the advent of the Christian era came a new attitude towards the natural world, an attitude of antipathy and hostility. To the early Christian the natural world was under the curse, an instrument in the hands of the devil, used once to work man's destruction, likely to prove a snare again; a thing to be shunned, a thing to be renounced along with the Spirit of evil. The attitude of these centuries is expressed in the Chancellor's reply to Mephisto in the second part of *Faust*,

Nature and Mind --to Christians we don't speak so.  
Thence to burn Atheists we seek so,  
For such discourses very dangerous be.  
Nature is Sin, and Mind is Devil.

—Taylor's *Trans.*, II, 14.

This hostility towards Nature continued far down the centuries—its traces remaining even in our own day. Which is the more remarkable, seeing that the Founder of the new belief had taught men to "consider the lilies of the field" and "behold the fowls of the air." But the church had put the world under the ban, and what the mediæval church denounced *was* denounced.

Under such an influence it is not remarkable that the minds of men were slow to open on the side of Nature. Symonds says in *Essays Speculative and Suggestive* (p. 297), "Under the prevalent conceptions of the universe no intelligent being could take either scientific or artistic interest in a world considered radically evil, and doomed to wrathful overthrow. Man's one business was to work out his own salvation, to disengage himself from the earth on which his first parents had yielded to sin, and to wean his heart from the

enjoyment of terrestrial delights.....The phenomena of Nature were vilipended as not worth a thought." "But" says the same author, "the vacuum created by the demolition of mythological lumber was filled to some extent by another set of polytheistic deities, Christ, Mary, Saints, Martyrs, Angels, Devils. These, however, unlike the deities of paganism had no relation to nature. So far as the material universe was concerned, that remained empty." The mediæval church is, therefore, a gap between the old and the new sense of Nature. It is the far swing of the pendulum *against* Nature. It was opposed to any step towards the physical world, whether in science or in art.

The accession of the House of Hohenstaufen in 1138 marks a resistance to the papal power, and consequent upon this resistance, a shaking off of the fetters which had bound the minds of men with such deadening effect—a renaissance in German literature.

It is, as it were, the first breaking from these bonds, the first awakening of the senses, the dropping of the scales from the eyes, which we find manifested in the writings of the Minnesingers. It is the first movings of a new nature-sense in literature, movings weak and uncertain, in which there is yet scarcely a promise of the coming deep current of sympathy towards Nature which finds its perfect expression in Goethe and especially Wordsworth—the modern pantheism which replaces the many of the old Greeks by the One. The Minnesinger viewed Nature from outside. His attitude was objective, not subjective. He noted superficial analogies between man and Nature, but he did not moralise; he did not feel an affinity between himself and the world about him. He was far from feeling himself and that world one sympathetic whole.

The early centuries had set Nature over against God. It was a far call from this attitude to the one which finds God in all the world. It was not the conversion of a moment, but a tedious growth. Eight centuries have scarcely prepared the way for "natural law in the spiritual world." It was first Wordsworth whose voice echoed back the words of the

Hebrew singer, "How manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches."

For the first ten centuries of the Christian era man was alone on the world's stage of literature: then he began to be supported by Nature. The following pages may serve to show in some measure to what extent men came to realize that

"Man is one world and hath  
Another to accompany him."

The titles of the following divisions indicate approximately steps in the orderly development of the nature-sense.

## II—THE SEASONS.

The succession of the seasons, with their contrasts, striking both to eye and feeling, would naturally be one of the first phases of Nature to force itself upon the observation of men. This is substantiated by the predominance of the seasons in early nature-poetry. And the season which appeals most strongly to the mind, both in individuals and in peoples, is

### SPRING.

The number of references to spring in the early poets exceeds that of any other season. Winter claims the second place, but is mentioned only for complaint, or to heighten spring by contrast. Summer is frequently noticed, autumn much more rarely.

This predominance of spring tends to show that the old poet's mention of Nature was not due, perhaps, so much to a real appreciation of Nature for herself as it was to the physical effect which Nature produced on him. And this is manifest not only in reference to the seasons, but elsewhere.

The fact that in riper periods of literature it is proportionately smaller, and when found there belongs rather to the earlier years of the poet, tends to show that this "rapture of May" is largely due to *physical* exuberance.

Tennyson suggests this in his lines (p. 108):

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;  
In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

The early poet sang of spring in his *age*, to be sure, but his attitude had always the simplicity of the childish mind. Even Walter, the most virile of all the singers, was no pioneer into the fields. His life added practically nothing to the small stock of nature-lore of that day. In youth it was *birds, meadows, flowers*; and in age it was the same refrain. The Minnesong, in its artless simplicity, savors of perpetual

youth—that is, perpetual immaturity. Take, for example, Walter's *Memory of Spring*, out of his later years,

Der rife tet den kleinen vogelen wê,  
 daz sie niht ensungen,  
 nû hôte ich s'aber wünnelîche als ê:  
 nû ist diu heide entsprungen.  
 dâ sach ich bluomen striten wider den klê,  
 weder ir leuger waere.  
 mîner frouwen seite ich disiu maere.

(Page 142.)

There is nothing here that shows more than would be revealed to a casual glance of the eye or turn of the ear. The references are quite colorless and have no individuality. There is no sign of friendly intimacy which alone unlocks the secrets of Nature, and makes her every feature individual in the eyes of her lover. The lines are drawn in dead white and black. There is no atmosphere, to use an artist's term. It is such a flat picture as a child might draw upon its slate.

Compare this tribute to May taken from Goethe's later years,

Leichte Silberwolken schweben  
 Durche die erst erwârnten Lüfte,  
 Mild, von Schimmer sanft ungeben,  
 Blickt die Sonne durch die Dûfte;  
 Leise wallt und drängt die Welle,  
 Sich am reichen Ufer hin,  
 Und wie reingewachsen helle,  
 Schwankend hin und her und hin  
 Spiegelt sich das junge Grün.

(I, page 394.)

How rich and varied is the coloring of this picture. May is not mentioned; no need of it. You feel it in the very movement of the verse; you see it in the very atmosphere of the picture. No vague generalities here, but every feature stamped with an individuality which shows direct, sympathetic contact with nature. Spring for Goethe is sky and earth and dancing water, all smiling for very joy, and each in its *own* inimitable way.

Deitmar von Eist's tribute consists of one stanza, whose

unique distinction is that it is dedicated solely to Nature, omitting love.

Ahî nû kumet uns diu zît,  
der kleinen vogellîne sanc.  
Es gruoget wol diu linde breit,  
zergangen ist der winter lanc.  
Nû siht man bluomen wol getân  
ûeben an der heide ir schîn.

(M. F. Page 33.)

Of a kind with this is Heinrich von Veldege's song—

In dem aberellen  
sô die bluomen springen  
sô louben die linden  
und gruonen die buochen,  
sô haben ir willen  
die vogele singen.

(M. F. page 62.)

Reinmar scarcely adds a touch of coloring to this when he sings—

Ze fröiden nâhet alle tage  
der welte ein wunneclîchiu zît,  
ze senfte maneges herzen klage  
die nu der swaere winter gît.

(M. F. page 191.)

Here is the oft heard plaint against winter's severity.  
Nithart plays upon the same strings—

der meie mit gewolde  
Den winder hât verdrungen,  
die bluomen sint entsprungen.  
Wie schône nahtegal, etc.

(D. L. page 105.)

Der Schenke von Limpurc shows a slight advance beyond the ranks in the lines—

Diu heide wunneclîche stât  
mit bluomen maniger lele,  
Sint gel, grûen rôet, sint blâ, brûn, blanc,  
sint wunneclîch entsprungen.

(D. L. page 189; M. P. page 181.)

He has added several colors to the conventional "rôt" and "blanc", known to his fellowsingers.

Examples such as these might be multiplied without limit, but they are all of a kind. These, selected as representative, may serve to show the stereotyped form of their references. They are almost utterly without individuality, being all apparently borrowings from some common source without addition. If it be true that no two persons ever see the *same* thing, these early lyrists could not have gone to look at Nature for themselves, since it is evident that they record the *same* things. Moreover they, with few exceptions, make their references to Nature merely introductory to a song of love with such a refrain as

Sost mîn wunne  
 gar ein reine saelic wip,  
 mich fröit weder loup noch sunne  
 niht wan eine ir lîp.

(D. L. page 234.)

The lyre of Mercury is said to have had nine strings, but the harp on which the Minnesinger sang of Nature had fewer still, and on these each harper plays till it becomes monotonous.

Take, for comparison, a few examples from the later period. Schiller, in the first stanza of *Klage der Ceres*, pictures the advent of spring.

Ist der holde Lenz erschienen?  
 Hat die Erde sich verjüngt?  
 Die besonnten Hügel grünen  
 Und des Eises Rinde springt  
 Aus der Ströme blauem Spiegel  
 Lacht der unbewölkte Zeus,  
 Milder wehen Zephyrs Flügel,  
 Augen treibt das junge Reis.

(I, page 139.)

Not *flowers* and *birdsong* make the Spring now, but something not dreamed of, much less seen, by the old bards—the whole world of Nature, from the least to the greatest features—the budding twig, the winged wind, the stream's mirror, the verdant sunny hills, the earth herself, and cloudless Zeus, make up the rich landscape where Spring has made her advent, and every one of these features is pulsing with life.

Here are lines from Heine's early life;

Der Mai ist da mit seinen goldnen Lichtern  
 Und seidnen Lüften und gewürzten Düften  
 Und freundlich lockt er mit den weissen Blüten,  
 Und grüsst aus tausend blauen Veilchenaugen  
 Und breitet aus den blumreich grünen Teppich,  
 Durchwebt mit Sonnenschein und Morgentau.

(I, page 135.)

The qualities here noted are not the superficial, revealed to the casual eye, but rather the secrets of Nature, revealed by real communion, the "golden lights," the "silky air," "spicy fragrance," and the "green flower-flecked carpet woven through with sunshine and morning dew." How fresh and original. The fragrance of May is there.

The following stanza from Herder's "Frühlingslied," is cited as a contrast to The Minnesinger's stereotyped treatment of winter, the enemy of spring:

Der Schnee zerschmilzt, der Frühling kommt  
 Mit seiner Blumen Schar,  
 Und Busch und Baum ist jung und grün  
 Und blühend wie er war,  
 Von Bergen rauscht der Strom nicht mehr  
 Mit wilder Fluten Fall;  
 In seinen Ufern murmelt er,  
 Ein schleichender Kristall.

(II, page 113.)

There is no bitterness against winter in these lines, but that larger mind which finds in the winter of life a wholesome balance to the more pleasant spring.

The poets of the later period do sometimes sing to the simple notes of Nature, and with a wild abandon, as Goethe in his earlier "Mailed"—

Es dringen Blüten  
 Aus jedem Zweig  
 Und tausend Stimmen  
 Aus dem Gesträuch,  
 Und Freud und Wonne  
 Aus jeder Brust  
 O Erd, o Sonne!  
 O Glück, o Lust.

(I, page 48.)

Or Heine—

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,  
Als alle Knospen sprangen,  
Da ist in meinem Herzen  
Die Liebe aufgegangen.

(I, page 66.)

Or Chamisso—

Der Frühling ist kommen, die Erde erwacht,  
Es blühen der Blumen genung.  
Ich habe schon wieder auf Lieder gedacht,  
Ich fühle so frisch mich, so jung.

(Page 43.)

The last is very like the older poets in confiding his song to the simpler themes of *birdsong, flowers, green hedge*; but with originality of treatment not found with them. In this he is followed often by Uhland, Bürger, Lenau and Körner.

To sum up in a few words: The later period is both broader in view and deeper in insight into nature and more individual in treatment than the earlier period. To use a permissible figure—the song of the old bard is simple and monotonous, like the music of the crude lyre on which he played accompaniment—the song of the new bard is the full gamut of the Aeolian harp.

#### WINTER.

The Minnesinger knows nothing of winter except in a negative way, as the enemy of spring and summer, the destroyer of flowers and the nightingale, the robber of the leaves, and the bringer of death to the world.

It brought no pleasures for him, and had no beauty whatever. We cannot think of him singing "the snow, the snow, the beautiful snow." It had nothing in harmony with the one theme of his song, he could not make it accessory to love. It would have remained, therefore, unmentioned in his verse, as were the storm and the mountain, but that it came to take away those things which were in harmony with love—the flowers and birds. It intruded upon his domain as an unwelcome visitor, and his mention of it is always a plaint over the ravages of winter, a shudder in verse. The languid

air of spring and summer is more in keeping with his mood than the bracing breath of winter which incites to the vigorous action of manhood and the pursuit of hardy sport. With these latter he seems to have no acquaintance, though skating, at least, was known at this day. He did not woo Nature in her sterner moods, and "faint heart ne'er won fair lady" in Nature's realm. The writer has seen in North Germany winter landscapes worthy the poet's pen, undulating fields of snow, studded with frost-covered or ice-laden trees that shimmered like crystal in the sun. The storm-king sporting with the snow-burdened *Tannenbaum* against a background of blue sky, would certainly have arrested the eye of the nature-lover, but a lover of Nature the old poet was not, and he did not see it. Indeed, it is rather remarkable how late in the literature is the appearance of a love for, and appreciation of, winter. The 19th century writers often draw back from winter with a shiver. That appreciation is tardy which is voiced by Burns: "There is scarcely any earthly object which gives me more—I don't know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me, than to walk on the sheltered side of a wood or high plantation in a cloudy winter day, and hear the storm-wind howling among the trees"; or by Emerson, "Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear." (Nature, page 13). It is scarcely true of this period, as Miss Reynolds in *Nature in English Poetry* (p. 17), says of a later period in that literature, that "a sense of joy in winter scenes is one of the very early indications of a reviving interest in the outdoor world."

But let us judge the poets from their own testimony.

Heinrich von Veldege strikes the common chord.

Sit diu sunne ir liechten schin,  
 gegen der kelte hât geneiget  
 und diu kleinen vogellin  
 ires sanges sint gesweiget,

trûrig ist das herze mîn  
wan ez wil nu winter sîn.

(M. F., page 59.)

Which is but echoed in Heinrich von Rugge,

Ich hôrte gerne eine vogellin  
daz hûebe wunneclîchen sonc.  
der winter kan niht anders sîn  
wan swaere und âne mâze lanc.

(M. F., page 108.)

Uolrich von Wintersteten repeats the refrain,

Komen ist der winter kalt,  
wâfenâ der leide,  
der uns twinget bluomen unde klê.  
Loubes hât er vil gevalt:  
ich was ûf der heide,  
dâ siht man den rîf und ouch den snê.

(D. L., page 170.)

If these represented passing, or occasional moods, it would be a natural phase of literature, for it must be acknowledged that the winter is not altogether enjoyable, and was less as to the Minnesinger, who had to meet it without the comforts of later days. But it is the sum and substance of his utterance, his constant attitude towards winter. It was partly physical discomfort which made winter hateful in his eyes; but one who courted the sufferings of the Crusades would scarcely have been restrained solely by the severity of winter. Moreover, in order to write of winter, it is not necessary to be "snow-bound." One can see the beauty of a snow-storm or a snow-scene without exposure to the rigor of the cold. It was not altogether physical discomfort that made him hostile to winter, but also the inability to see anything admirable in the season. He saw nothing praiseworthy, and therefore had no praise.

The same note of complaint is found also among the moderns, at times; as, for instance, Uhland's

O Winter, schlimmer Winter,  
Wie ist die Welt so klein.

(Page 26.)

Or Heine's half-humorous

O bittre Winterhärte!  
Die Nasen sind erfroren.

(I, page 394.)

Or Lenau's

Der Winter stand, ein eiserner Tyrann,  
Nie lösend seine Faust die festgeballte.

(Page 253.)

But that this is not the prevailing sentiment, the following will show. In Goethe's "Winter" we find this festive scene,

Wasser ist Körper und Boden der Fluss. Das neuste Theatre  
Thut in der Sonne Glanz zwischen den Ufern sich auf.  
Alle streben und eilen und suchen und fliehen einander  
Aber alle beschränkt freundlich die glattere Bahn,  
Durch einander gleiten sie her, die Schüler und Meister  
Und das gewöhnliche Volk, das in der Mitte sich hält.

(I, page 292.)

And Heine thus describes a sleighing party,

Und dass wir mit Pelz bedecket  
Und in buntgeschmückten Schlitten  
Schellenklingelnd, peitschenknallend  
Ueber Fluss und Fluren glitten.

(I, pages 216-7.)

And Herder, in his "Eistanz," pictures the winter sport,

Wir schweben, wir wallen auf hallendem Meer  
Auf Silberkristallen dahin und daheer:  
Der Stahl ist uns Fittich, der Himmel das Bach,  
Die Lüfte sind heilig und schweben uns nach.

(II, page 309.)

At first sight it might seem that this is merely the enjoyment of a sport in the face of winter, as "mit Pelz bedecket" would suggest, but a closer look will reveal that unexpressed delight and exhilaration which the unfettered life gets from winter; and in the last quoted lines there is unmistakable evidence of delight in the winter scene. In Goethe it is "a new theatre". In Herder it is a palace, whose floor is strewn with silver crystals, whose roof is Heaven's vault beneath which we glide on winged steel, while the healing air hovers after us. There is no murmur of winter's severity.

Once we seem to hear the same glad note among the early lyricists, when Nithart begins, "Kint bereitet iuch der sliten uf daz is," but after this single line he sinks back to

ja ist der leide winter kalt:  
 der hát uns der wünnelichen bluomen vil benomen,  
 (M. P., 100; D. L., 112)

and after running the usual gamut of complaints, turns to the dance within doors.

Again, we seem to find a welcome reception of the season in the Herzoge von Anehalt's lines—

Ich wil den winter enphân mit gesange  
 al swîgen stille die kleinen vogellîn.  
 (D. L., page 125.)

But the secret of his gladness crops out immediately in,  
 Des danke ich doch der vil lieben frowen mîn.

So Grave Kuonrat says,

Mir waere wol gelich  
 beidiu bluomen unde snê,  
 (D. L., page 266)

and we might think that he at least loved spring and winter equally, if the next line were not "welde si genâde an mir begân"; and we find him *equally indifferent* to both in the presence of his *Mistress*.

This is true of nearly all their song; if we look we shall find "a woman at the bottom of it."

This vein lingers into the modern period; as witness Bürger's "Minnelied",

Doch liebe Blumen, hoffet nicht  
 Von mir ein Sterbelied!  
 Ich weiss ein minneglich Gesicht,  
 Worauf ihr alle blüht.

(Page 42.)

Chamisso, Heine, and others strike this chord. Among the old poets there is rarely found such a touch of coloring as

Walter gives to the winter scene in the poem "Wintersüberdruss,"

Die werlt was gelf, rôt unde blâ,  
grüen' in dem walde und anderswâ:  
kleine vogele sungen dâ.  
nú schriet aber diu nebelkrâ  
pfligt s' ilt ander varwe? jâ,  
s' ist worden bleich und übergrâ:

(Page 8.)

There is one touch of individuality in the picture. Everything else is vaguely general—the vari-colored world, the green wood, the little birds—so general, that they are used equally by all his contemporaries. The touch of first hand observation is the introduction of "nebelkrâ." It shows an appreciation of that essential unfailing harmony that *may* be seen in Nature's pictures: that order in the fulfillment of which the eagle soars among the stately moving clouds, and the condor about the peaks of the Andes, while the lesser tribe flit on uncertain wing among the trembling tree-tops; that order in which the gay humming-bird is found hovering about the tinted flowers, while the bird of sable plumage flits silently among the shadows of the somber pines. Whoever has seen the broad, bleak plains of Germany in winter, lying dead beneath the low-hanging pall of leaden cloud, knows how perfectly in keeping with the scene is the advent of the "nebelkrâ", the raven, beating his way on labored wing beneath the blanket of slow moving cloud, or croaking his melancholy note from the top of some naked tree. This harmony Walter has caught in the one touch.

Now compare a picture from Chamisso's "Nacht und Winter".

Von des Nordes Kaltem Wehen  
Wird der Schnee dahergetrieben  
Der die dunkle Erde decket;  
Dunkle Wolken ziehen am Himmel,  
Und es flimmern keine Sterne,  
Nur der Schnee im Dunkel schimmert.

(Page 150.)

Every line here testifies to direct observation of the various

phenomena. It is not merely snow, but snow driven by the northwind. Not clouds, but dark clouds drawing across the sky, shutting out the stars, and, beneath, the snow shimmering through the night: as if he had them before his eye while writing.

We find here as in the treatment of spring a poverty, both in breadth and in acuteness of observation, when compared with the later period. The repertory is *wind, frost, snow, ice, ane-hanc-frozen rain*, and in the use even of these there is a lack of force, a failure to catch the expression of Nature. An exhaustive stock is not perhaps so much what the Minnesinger lacked, as it was the power to use the felicitous expression, the polarised word, which, like a window, opens to the view a whole landscape.

#### SUMMER.

The Minnesinger does not seem to distinguish between summer and spring. He notes the same phenomena in singing each season and finds in each the same spirit of gladness. When he mentions summer it is as the opposite of winter, the bringer of birds and flowers, green meadows and verdant woods. He sings the praises of "May" as belonging to "summer." To him the year was made up of a flow and an ebb of life; a birth and a death, rather than of four seasons each with its mood. "The two seasons," says Lüning in *Die Natur* (page 244), "which lie, so to speak, between the prodigal life of spring and the barrenness of winter, I mean *mid-summer* and *early autumn*, naturally do not come so often nor so prominently into the foreground of interest as do the other two."

The old bard was not sufficiently observant to see a difference between spring and summer. They stood for the one season of bright flowers and bird-song and love's overflow. The real difference was too fine and delicate for the unpractised eye and mind of the old bard to see—the difference between the low, multitudinous murmur of the tide of life flowing full; the velvety cloud-flecked blue of the May sky, and the cloudless, far cerulean of July; the softness of spring's colors,

and the hardness of summer's; such things never entered into his conception. Indeed, he scarcely looked to the sky except to mention star or sun, or moon, or rarely a cloud.

Flowers, birds and woman constitute here his major chord. Summer, the welcome successor to winter, is his minor. On these two he plays out his song. "Joy over summer and complaint over winter," says Biese (page 114), "are the basal notes, which are struck again and again; but of an inner penetration and quickening of the landscape with woman-love there is not a trace. It has a very monotonous effect to hear repeatedly the flowers and the little birds called on as the messengers of spring, or the dear *Frouwe* greeted as fairer than the sun."

That it is very monotonous soon appears to the reader of the middle German lyrics. The following, taken from a multitude of examples, will show the tone which recurs again and again through the entire range of lyrists, Walter says:

Dô der sumer komen was  
und die bluomen durch das gras  
wünneclîche entsprungen  
aldâ die vogele sungen.

(Page 14.)

And again—

Swie wol der heide ir manicvaltiu varwe stât,  
sô wil ich doch dem walde jehen,  
daz er vil mêre wünneclîcher dînge hât

ich sage dir, waz mir wirret: diu mir ist lieb, der bin ich leit.

(Page 43.)

Or again—

swaz kumbers an dem winter lît,  
den wânde ich ie des sumers hân verborn.

i'n vant sô staete freude nie  
si wolte mich ê ich sie lân.

(Page 46.)

The burden of the song is sooner or later a love affair. It

is the summer of love over against the winter of disappointment. For example, from Kuonrat der Junge,

Was hilfet mich diu sumerzît  
und die vil liechten langen tage?  
Mîn trôst an einer frowen lit  
von der ich grôzen kumber trage.

(M. P., 206; D. L., 220.)

A similar note is heard in Steîmar's,

Sumerzît, ich frôwe mich dîn,  
daz ich mac beschouwen  
Eine sîeze selderin,  
mînes herzen frouwen.

(M. P., 224; D. L., 241.)

This last gives the secret of the Minnesinger's glorification of summer. It offers opportunity for him to see his "frouwe."

Very rarely is a poem dedicated to summer alone, as is this anonymous stanza:

Ich gesach den sumer nie,  
daz er sô schône dûhte mich.  
Mit manigen bluomen wol getân  
diu heide hât gezieret sich.  
Sanges ist der walt sô vol:  
diu zît diu tuot den kleinen vogelen wol.

(M. P., 286; D. L., 293.)

This stanza is an epitome of the old lyricist's nature-sense. It includes in general almost all the phenomena with which he is acquainted.

Summer among the modern poets, as specifically mentioned, is rarer than among the Minnesingers; but wherever mentioned, it is with far greater understanding. Let two examples suffice to show the progress of the nature-sense along this particular line.

The first lines of Goethe's "Im Sommer are—"

Wie Feld und Au  
So blinkend im Tau!  
Wie perlenschwer  
Die Pflanzen umher!  
Wie durch's Gebüsch

Die Winde so frisch !  
 We laut im hellen Sonnenstrahl  
 Die süßen Vöglein allzumal !

(I, page 53.)

These features, if not just distinctive of summer as against spring, are certainly distinct in themselves, and give us, all together, a bright and refreshing picture, such as any sympathetic eye may see upon the meadow of an early June morning.

The second example is taken from Lenau's "Waldlieder," and is an excellent illustration of a finely developed sense of appreciation—

Schläfrig hangen die sonnenmüden Blätter,  
 Alles schweigt im Walde, nur eine Biene  
 Summt dort an der Blüte mit mattem Eifer;  
 Sie auch liess vom sommerlichen Getöne,  
 Eingeschlafen vielleicht im Schoss der Blume.

(Page 299.)

Here at last is summer distinct from spring. Not one touch in this picture could possibly be mistaken for spring; not one but is the reflection of the heart of summer. We should go far in the fields of literature to find so true and accurate a portrayal of that *dolce far niente* element; that utter listlessness, which pervades the still mid-summer scene. We can almost feel the hot, heavy air, oppressing us as we read—the sunshine-weary leaves hanging limp and motionless in the still forest, *one* bee droning lazily from flower to flower, till at last he, too, overcome with languor, ceases his droning and sinks to sleep in the heart of some drooping flower. To write such lines the heart and eye must have been open long to Nature's moods.

#### AUTUMN.

The Minnesinger's conception of this season may best be given in the lines of a modern poet.

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,  
 Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown  
 and sear.

Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the withered leaves lie  
 dead;  
 They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread.  
 The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the  
 jay,  
 And from the woodtop calls the crow through all the gloomy  
 day. (Bryant, p. 274).

He does not, however, see the other mood of autumn, as  
 does our poet—

The Mountains that infold  
 In their wide sweep the colored landscape round  
 Seem groups of giant kings in purple and gold,  
 That guard the enchanted ground;  
 And far in heaven, the while,  
 The sun, that sends that gale to wander here,  
 Pours out on the fair earth his quiet smile,  
 The sweetest of the year. (Ibid 172-3.)

Autumn to the old poet is but the promise, the beginning  
 of winter, never the fruition, the crown of summer. He  
 looks forward and not backward. His song is colored always  
 by the dreariness and gloom of his winter, instead of being  
 filled with the soft and gentle light of reflected summer. It  
 is death and not fulfillment. It is the falling leaf and fading  
 flower, not the yellow harvest, the ripened fruit, the festal  
 colors. It is the time for lament, and not rejoicing. As he  
 links spring and summer into one, so he links autumn and  
 winter, setting one group over against the other.

Lüning (p. 240) calls attention to these lines from Rein-  
 mar—

was dar umbe, valwent grüene heide?

ich hân mê ze tuonne danne bluomen klagen,

with the words, "We have found one singer who rejects this  
 complaint of the death of Nature as unmanly." This com-  
 ment, with the isolated quotation, might lead us to think that  
 the old poet condemned this plaintive treatment of the sea-  
 son as unjust, and would lead us to expect in his songs some  
 celebration of the more admirable features of autumn. Such  
 is, however, not Reinmar's intimation. He does not con-

demn the complaint over autumn as unmanly, but simply as not to be compared to the lament over love. That this is his attitude towards not only this season, but all phases of Nature, take other of his lines—

jo emmac mir niht der bluomen shîn  
gehelfen für die sorge mîn  
und och der vogellîne sanc.  
ez muoz mir staete winter sîn:  
sô rehte swaer ist mîn gedanc.

(M. F., page 189.)

That he *does* sometimes lament the death of Nature, these testify,

sît ich fröude niht enpfac  
sît der kalte rife lac.

(M. F., 203.)

This common note is heard in Dietmar von Eist's lines:

Sich hât verwandelôt diu zît  
daz verstên ich an den dîngen:  
geswiegen sint die nahtegal,  
sî hânt gelân ir sîezez singen,  
und valwet obenân der walt.

(M. F., page 37.)

The refrain of the fallen leaf is repeated in Ruodolf von Fenis—

Ich kluse an dem walde, sîn loup ist geneiget  
daz doch vil schône stuont froelîchen ê.  
nu rîset ez balde: des sint gar gesweiget  
die vogele ir sanges: daz machet der snê,

(M. F., page 82)

and the same complaint is heard in Steimâr,

Nu ist der sumer hin gescheiden  
wan siht sich den walt engesten  
loup von den esten rîset ûf die heiden.

(M. P., 227: D. L., 242.)

Autumn's sere leaf is to the poet of all periods often the symbol of blighted love. This is the usual interpretation of the season by the Minnesinger, whose songs are preeminently of love.

Take for example these anonymous lines—

Diu linde ist an dem ende nu jârlanc licht unde blôz.  
 mich vêhet mîn geselle: nû engilte ich des ich nie genôz.  
 Vil ist unstaeter wîbe diu benement ime den sin.  
 got wizze wol die wârheit daz ich ime diu holdeste bin.

(D. L., page 289.)

Compare with these Heine's

Das gelbe Laub erzittert,  
 Es fallen die Blätter herab;  
 Ach, alles, was hold und lieblich,  
 Verwelkt und sinkt ins Grab.  
 Mir ist als müsst' ich weinen  
 Aus tiefstem Herzensgrund;  
 Dies Bild erinnert mich wieder  
 An unsre Abschiedstund'.

(II., page 31.)

Once we seem to hear a note of welcome to autumn, when  
 Steimâr sings—

Herbest, underwint dich mîn,  
 wan ich wil dîn helfer sîn  
 gegen dem glanzten meien.  
 Durh dich mîde ich sende nôt.

(M. P., 228: D. L., 240.)

But we find in the following lines that his gladness does  
 not spring from any love of the season in itself, but from a  
 love of the festal board—

Herbest nu hoer an mîn leben.  
 wirt, du solt uns vische geben  
 mê dan zehen hande,  
 Gense hüener vogel swîn,  
 dermel pfâwen sunt dâ sîn,  
 wîn von welschem lande:

(Ibidem.)

One of the few delights which the old poet associates with  
 autumn is the abundance of "brâten" and "wîn" which it  
 brings; as instance again in Haloub's lines—

Herbest wil berâten  
 mang gesind mit gouten trachten  
 bî der gluot ald swâ sî sîn:

Veize swinîn brâten  
 dar umb sol ir wirt in achten  
 und ouch bringen guoten win.

(M. P., 257; D. L., 274.)

A frequent feature of the feast seems to have been something akin to our husking song, but it was sung in the barn and not under the open sky, as may be seen from Barkart von Hohenfels' description—

Ein altiu riet uns mit witze  
 in die schiure nâch gemache

fröide hâte leit besezzen  
 dô der tanz begunde slîchen  
 fröide unde frîheit  
 ist der werlte für geleit.  
 Diu vil süeze stadelwise  
 kunde starken kumber krenken.

(M. P., 146; D. L., 151.)

The plaint of the falling leaf is frequent; too, in the moderns, as for instance in Lenau's "Herbstgefühl."

An den Bäumen welk und matt,  
 Swebt des Laubes letzte Neige,  
 Niedertäumelt Blatt auf Blatt  
 Und verhüllt die Waldessteige.

(Page 68.)

or in "Herbst—"

Nun ist es Herbst, die Blätter fallen,  
 Den Wald durchbraust des Scheidens Weh,  
 Den Lenz und seine Nachtigallen  
 Versäumt' ich auf der wüsten See.

(Page 71.)

But we hear also another note, in the later poet's song of autumn; a note of gladness rather than of regret, a looking backward—an acceptance of autumn as the bearer of summer's fruition.

This note is found, for example, in Rückert's "Der Klare Herbst—"

Mir gefällt der Herbst, der klare,  
 Weil er bringt zu Markt als Waare  
 Frucht, die flücht' ge Blütte war;  
 Wie ich meinem Winter spare;  
 Was mein Sommer heiss gebar.

It is noteworthy that the poets of both periods seem insensible to the rich and varied coloring of autumn. They overlook all the gorgeous tints of the season, and see only the sere leaf. The omission is not due to color-blindness, for at various times they mention nearly all the colors presented in autumn's chromatic scale—*white, blue, brown, green, yellow, red*; nor is this omission confined to poetry. In painting, too, where colors play, of necessity, a more conspicuous part, we find even up to the last century almost no attempt to reproduce on canvas the colors of autumn. There are among the late moderns two autumn pictures by Faust in the Cassel gallery and one or two by other artists in the Berlin gallery, but even these are well nigh monochromes.

I have not noted among the Minnesingers one single mention of autumn color. Among the moderns Chamisso, in a poem entitled "Herbst," notes one color—

Niedrig schleicht blass hin die entnervte Sonne  
Herbstlich golbgelb färbt sich das Laub.

(Page 47.)

Lenau in "Herbstgefühl" compares the colors of autumn to the flush on the cheek of a sick man—

Der Buchenwald ist herbstlich schon gerötet  
So wie ein Kranker, der sich neigt zum Sterben.  
Wenn flüchtig noch sich seine Wangen färben;  
Doch Rosen sind's wobei kein Lied mehr flötet.

(Page 127.)

A notable utterance in this almost complete silence is that of Rückert in "Herbstfarben"—

Nicht einzle Purpurdolden,  
Nicht goldne Sternlein matt:  
Der ganze Wald ist golden,  
Und Purpur jedes Blatt.

(Page 194.)

In conclusion we note that the Minnesinger's treatment of the seasons, though perhaps the heartiest, freest and most natural in the whole range of his *Naturanschauung*, is nar-

row, imperfect, and often artificial when compared with the nature-sense of the 19th century. His range of objects observed is limited, his appreciation of them is nearly always accessory to something else. His vocabulary is restricted when used to treat nature; his phrases are largely stereotyped. The freshness of utterance which comes from sympathetic association is lacking.

### III—BIRDS AND FLOWERS.

In immediate connection with a study of the seasons, it will be fitting to consider those phenomena of nature which are associated with the seasons.

It has been shown in the preceding pages that the Minnesinger's appreciation was largely superficial and of that which forced itself upon his observation. The next step would naturally be to the consideration of those phenomena most conspicuous to the senses. A study of his attitude towards the seasons reveals the fact that the accessories most noted by him are birds and flowers. What evidence does his treatment of them give as to his nature-sense? Since his treatment of the seasons was so imperfect and stereotyped we shall not be surprised to find his mention of their accessories very conventional.

The early lyricist's mention of birds is usually in a general way which gives no evidence of any direct observation; he most often refers to them in such words as "die kleine voegele singen." He does, however, sometimes name the particular kind of bird. His catalogue is limited to *nightingale, thrush, blackbird, lark, swallow, "zisel," crow, falcon, eagle, swan,* and a few domestic fowl. Of these the conventional nightingale receives by far the most frequent notice in his verse, being named oftener than all the others together. The others appear very rarely—being mentioned, some of them, only once or twice in the whole period.

His mention of the birds is not usually such as a sympathetic eye witness would make. He notes but few individualising traits. The nightingale, the common property of poets, is his chief resource.

Rietenburg gives us these typical lines—

Diu nahtegal ist gesweiget  
und ir hôher sanc geneiget

die ich ê wol hôrte singen  
 doch tuot mir sanfte guot gedinge,  
 den ich von einer frowen hân.

(M. F., page 18.)

This is typical in its general mention of the bird, and its turn to the theme of love. It is notable that the poets should have known the bird so long in connection with love, and but recently have known it in and for itself. But perhaps Buffon accounts in part for the late awakened interest in the birds themselves, among the lyrists. An example parallel to the above is found in an anonymous poem:

Diu nahtegal diu sanc sô wol  
 daz man irs iemer danken sol  
 und andern kleinen vogellîn  
 dô dâhte ich an die frouwen mîn:  
 diu ist mîns herzen künigîn.

(D. L., pages 290-1.)

Perhaps a more frequent reference is made to birds in general without discriminating, as in these lines from Dietmar von Eist.

Ûf der linden obene  
 dâ sanc ein kleines vogellîn  
 vor dem walde wart ez lût:  
 dô huop sich aber daz herze mîn.

(M. F., page 34.)

Or these from Veldegge—

Ez sint guotiu niuwe mâre,  
 daz die vogel offenbâre  
 singent dâ man bluomen siet.

(M. F., page 56.)

In some cases an attempt is made to draw distinction between different birds, but not always with accuracy, as may be seen from this example from Heinrich von Morungen—

Ez ist site der nahtegal,  
 swan si ir liet volendet, sô geswîget sie  
 dur daz volge ich ab der swal,  
 diu liez durch liebe noch dur leide ir singen nie.

(M. F., page 127.)

The inconstancy of the swallow is proverbial. It will be information to the ornithologist, no doubt, to learn that she has a song, and that she continues to sing through weal or woe.

In the following lines from Kuonrat von Kilehberc there is a background touch of nature in the setting which he gives to his birds—

Towic gras, gel brüne bluomen schoene  
 diu vil liebe kunft des meien bringet  
 Sô diu lerhe lüftet ir gedoene  
 daz ir schal ûf dur diu wolken dringet.  
 Dâ bî hoeret man gar unverborgen  
 in den owen über al  
 süezen schal der nahtegal.

(D. L., page 265.)

The freshness and flavor of the outside world that pervade these lines is something unusual in the Minnesingers. The natural setting of the lark between the "dewy grass" and the "clouds"—the nightingale's clear note from out the dusk-shaded meadows, show a touch of nature which belongs rather to the 19th century poets. They strongly suggest Burns' beautiful ode—

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,  
 The bonie Lark, companion meet!  
 Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!  
     Wi' spreckled breast,  
 When upward-springing, blithe, to greet  
     The purpling east.

(Page 69.)

Or Shelley's famous lines

Hail to thee blithe spirit  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from heaven or near it  
 Pourest thy full heart  
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

(Page 541.)

Compare with these a stanza from Uhland's "Lerchenkrieg", which contains a like touch of nature—

Lerchen sind wir freie Lerchen,  
 Wiegen uns in Sonnenschein  
 Steigen auf aus grünen Saaten,  
 Tauchen in den Himmel ein,

(Page 272)

or these beautiful lines from Lenau, describing the lark mounting on the steps of song—

An ihren bunten Liedern klettert  
 Die Lerche selig in die Luft:  
 Ein jubelchor von Sängern schmettert  
 Im Walde voller Blüt' und Duft.

(Page 60.)

It is only a sympathetic eye that sees the golden ladder of song on which the lark ascends and descends between earth and heaven.

Mention has already been made of that unfailing harmony of Nature, where every creature has its proper setting; out of which setting it looks unnatural to us. Why, for instance, does the lark look out of place *on* the limb of a tree, but quite at home swaying on the treetop, or mounting from the meadow? Has not its fountain-like burst of music something to do with the case? Audubon seems to have been the first among naturalists to recognize this element in nature. He took pains in his drawings of birds and animals to put each in that frame which nature seems to have ordered for each—the partridge by a tussock of grass, the robin on an oak branch, the pine hatch on the pine twig, the field lark on the meadow. It is this harmony which we hear echoed in the lines quoted above. St. Pierre calls attention to Virgil's appreciation of this fitness of setting. "When," says he, "Virgil tells us 'the ash tree is very beautiful *in the woods*, the poplar *on the banks of the rivers*,' he puts the tree in the singular and the site in the plural in order to enlarge his horizon." It is the same harmony which Emerson describes so clearly in his "Each and All"—

I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,  
 Singing at dawn on the alder bough;  
 I brought him home, in his nest, at even;

He sings the song, but it pleases not now,  
 For I did not bring home the river and sky—  
 He sang to my ear—they sang to my eye.

(Page 14.)

Elsewhere is heard, too, the echo of this harmony, often and distinctly with the moderns, rarely and less clearly with the old bards—as in these lines where Otto zem Turne speaks of the eagle,

den sîn adel und sîn art,  
 in des luftes wilde twinget,  
 dar kein vogel nie glufuoc.

(D. L., page 286)

Or these words from Schiller—

Wild ist es hier und schauerlich öd. Im einsamen Luftraum  
 Hängt nur der Adler und knüpft an das Gewölke die Welt;

(I, page 229)

Or once again from Uhland,

Der Aar, ein König, schwebet auf,  
 Er rauschet in Wonne,  
 Will langen sich zur Kron' herab  
 Die goldene Sonne.

(Page 181.)

In each case the poet has seen Nature as she is, and represents her faithfully—the eagle's home is far up by the sun, the king of birds ruling the vast upper deep—great things grouped together—the sun, the deep sky, the stately cloud, the eagle. The wild duck beating his way across the sky on rapid wing gives us a sense of uneasiness, while the great hawk soaring on motionless wings holds the admiring eye. The uncertain flight of the duck is ill in keeping with the vasty sky and the slow, stately movements of the clouds. I cannot better indicate this grouping of great things in Nature than by quoting Tennyson's Eagle—

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
 Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.  
 The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
 He watches from his mountain walls,  
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.

(Page 130.)

What grouping of greatness! the sea, the eagle, the mountain walls, the azure world, the sun. And yet the little stanza does not seem to be over-full, because it is a picture of Nature.

The Minnesinger's ear does not seem to have been more sensible to the audible music of nature's realm than his eye was to the inaudible harmony. Of sounds he has very little to say. The only voices which he records as having heard in all the multitude of animate and inanimate nature are the bird-songs. He mentions the winds, but says not one word about their varying voices. He speaks of the brook in passing, but there is no echo of its murmurings. His soul was not moved

"By the murmur of a spring  
Or the least bough's rustling."

Even the birds sing the same song. He refers to it always in the vague terms—

"süeze doene," "wünneclîchen schal",

the one exception being the "nebelkrâ", who "schriet".

#### FLOWERS.

As has been remarked, the early lyrists do not seem to have been well acquainted at first hand with Nature's garden. They walked through it, to be sure, often enough, but either with a sweetheart or to sing songs at her window. When they turned for a moment to pluck a flower, by the way, it was for the adornment of the mistress and not for love of the flower. Their flower-sense is shallow. For them there was no expression in the flowers—there was no language of flowers; if they spoke, it was of love and in one common voice. The Minnesinger could not say,

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

He was rather the proverbial Peter Bell:

"A primrose by the river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more."

The catalogue of flowers given by the Minnesinger is not a large one, and those named are generally the conventional ones of poetry, the *rose*, *lily* and *violet* with *clover*; his use of them being well indicated in this selection from Reimar:

Ich sach vil wunneclîchen stân  
die heide mit den bluomen rô  
der vîol der ist wol getân.  
des hât diu nahtegal ir nô  
wol überwunden diu si twanc.

(M. F., page 183.)

For color and breadth, compare with this Schiller's description of the blooming meadow—

Kräftig auf blühender Au erglänzen die wechselnden Farben,  
Aber der reizende Streit löset in Anmut sich auf.  
Frei empfängt mich die Wiese mit weithin verbreitetem  
Teppich;  
Durch ihr freundliches Grün schlingt sich der ländliche Pfad.  
Um mich summt die geschäftige Bien, mit zweifelndem Flügel  
Wiegt der Schmetterling sich über dem rötlichen Klee,  
Glühend trifft mich der Sonne Pfeil, still liegen die Weste,  
Nur der Lerche Gesang wirbelt in heiterer Luft.

(I, page 223.)

The first picture is quite colorless and dead, like a photograph of a flower-bed in white and gray. There is no description, no touch of nature. It is all as vague as one could imagine; red flowers on a meadow, with scattered violets. Now note the other description. It is rich and full of color, and accurate. One might have written the former without ever having seen a meadow, or knowing one flower from another; but to write the latter the poet must often have looked lovingly upon this bright smile of nature—the broad carpet of the meadow, the changing colors, the path wandering through the green, the busy bee on doubtful wing, the butterfly flitting above the clover, sunshine and lark-song. These go to make a real picture of Nature.

There is sometimes, however, a more natural touch in the early poets, as, for instance, when Wolfram von Eschenbach says—

Der bliclichen bluomen gleston  
 sol des touwes anehanc erliutern, swâ sie sint,  
 (D. L., page 100.)

or when Der von Wildonje writes,—

Diu vrôunt sich der spilnden sunne,  
 swâ si vor dem berge ûf gât.  
 Waz gelîchet sich der wunne  
 dâ ein rôse in touwe stât?  
 (D. L., page 211.)

The sparkling of the dew-decked flower is a step forward in description. Still a further advance beyond conventional lines may be found in the following lines from Bâwenburc:

Waz ist daz liehte daz lûzet her vûr  
 ûz dem jungen grüenen gras als ob ez smiere  
 und ez uns ein grüezen wil schimpfen mit abe?  
 Ez sint die bluomen den sumer ich spûr.  
 (M. P., 263.; D. L., page 277.)

Here the flowers have life, and laugh a greeting from out the grass.

This idea is found still stronger in Schiller, where the flowers are the children of nature dressed in her colors—

Kinder der verjüngten Sonne,  
 Blumen der geschmückten Flur,  
 Euch erzog zu Lust and Wonne,  
 Ja, euch liebte die Natur.  
 Schön das Kleid mit Licht gesticket,  
 Schön hat Flora euch geschmücket,  
 (I, page 34.)

and in Heine where they become really personified—

Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen,  
 Und schaun mitleidig mich an.  
 (I, page 83.)

A frequent use of flowers with the Minnesinger is in comparison with some feature of his mistress,—

Reht als ein rôse diu sich ûz ir klösen lât,  
 swenn si des süezen touwes gert,  
 sus bôt si mir ir zuckersüezen rôten munt.  
 (D. L., page 261-2.)

We find in his treatment of flowers the first faint breathings of that delight in Nature which was to become such a strong element in the nature-sense of the Moderns—an element altogether essential to the developed sense. Liutolt von Savene sings of the benefaction of nature-love—

Wol in den der kleinen vogele singen  
troestet und der bluomen schön!  
Wie mac dem an vröuden misselingen?

(D. L., page 127.)

And Toggenburc voices the same sentiment in

Hât ie man ze fröiden muot,  
der sol kêren ze der grüenen linden.

(D. L., page 199.)

In the Minnesinger's eyes the flowers had one other significance. They were looked upon as the heralds of spring. "Ich sach boten des sumeres: daz wâren bluomen alsô rôt," says Meinloh von Sevelingen (M. F., page 14).

A more explicit love for the children of nature is found among the later poets—love akin to that between man and man, kindred spirits—a stage nowhere attained to by the old poets to whom the natural world was something outside themselves to be regarded objectively. For Goethe all creation breathed one common spirit; the trees were his friends;

Lebet wohl, geliebte Bäume!  
Wachset in der Himmelsluft!  
Tausend liebevolle Träume  
Schlingen sich durch euern Duft.

(I., page 305.)

This feeling of universal fellowship is notably strong in Körner's "Die Eichen," where the poet, no longer objectively critical, sinks into the great Mother's lap, where the trees and birds and flowers are his brothers;

Abend wird's, des Tages Stimmen schweigen  
Röter strahlt der Sonne letztes Glühn;  
Und hier sitz' ich uner euren Zweigen,  
Und das Herz ist mir so voll, so kühn!

(Page 8.)

Finally, to illustrate the wide difference in observation at the two periods, let us compare these selections taken, the first from Würzburg, the second from Chamisso—

Tou mit vollen aber triufet  
 ûf die rôsen âne tuft:  
 ûzer bollen schône sliufet  
 manger lösen blüete kluft;

(D. L., page 224.)

now—

Von der üpp'gen, grünen Blätter  
 Schatt'gem Netze dicht umwoben,  
 Wagt den Keich nicht zu entfalten,  
 Knospe noch, die zarte Rose,  
 Und sie reift das Gold der Düste  
 In des Kelches tiefem Borne  
 Reift der Reize stille Mächte  
 In dem Innersten verborgen.

(Page 363.)

The one eye looks at the rosebud from the outside; the other sees into the heart of the unfolding flower. These type the nature-sense of the two periods.

The lack of color-sense among the poets of both periods has been noted in connection with autumn. This lack seems to extend largely, among the Minnesingers, to all the phenomena of Nature. "The sense of color," says Mr. Symonds (p. 443), "cannot be judged by color-nomenclature. People, in a primitive state of society, may be acutely sensitive to colors, . . . and yet may have no names to denote the shades of hue." We shall not judge the poets, however, by their respective gamuts of color, for that would be injustice to the early poets. But we have the right to judge any writer's color-sense by his discriminate or indiscriminate application of the colors which he knows. It is on this basis we judge the poets of our two periods.

To the eye of the old poet the meadow and wood were usually *green* or *faded*. He knew the colors *red* and *yellow*, but never applied them to wood and field, although they must have donned them every year for a season. He limits his application of vari-colors to flowers. Between spring and winter he marked no change of nature's dress, nor did he

note the variegated garb at any season. Two notable exceptions must be made here, however. Walter, in a poem entitled "Wintersüberdruss," says,

Diu werlt was gelf, rôl unde blâ,  
grüen' in dem walde und anderswâ.

(Page 8.)

And Lîmpurc says,

Diu heide wünnelîche stât  
mit bluomen maniger leie,  
Sint gel grüen, rôl, sint blâ, brün, blanc.

(D. L., page 189.)

Rarely, too, the meadow bears "manifold color". The rose is proverbially red, the lily white—which tradition maintains to our days. The Minnesinger rarely looks toward the sky, though his eye was sometimes arrested by the sunrise or the sunset. He speaks of a "schoen âbentrôt" following a gloomy morning; and says his mistress' blush is "sam der âbentrôt." Further than this he does not speak of the colors manifested in the sky. The very fact that he notices the evening and morning colors, and turns from them with purely casual mention is an evidence that he had but slight appreciation of the gorgeous changing tints of these phenomena.

Among the moderns the coloring is too abundant to need examples—"the purple light of morn," "the golden flames of the mountain-top," "white clouds," "blue sky," "golden heaven," "rose clouds," are frequent characterizations.

I cannot refrain, however, from giving this beautiful stanza from Heine's "Atta Troll," which describes the lights of sunrise:

Sonnenaufgang Goldne Pefle  
Schlessen nach den weissen Nebeln,  
Die sich röten, wie verwundet,  
Und in Glanz und Licht zerrinnen.

(II, page 398.)

In regard of flowers the moderns have a like discrimination of colors.

I have found no mention of odor among the early poets.

This omission may be due to the less poetic nature of *odors*—they receive in all poetry rarer mention than colors—or it may be due to the early poet's lack of direct touch with nature. Sight has a longer range than smell. Among the moderns there is frequent mention of "Duft," "der Däfte Balsam," "Kräuterduft," "die duftende Nacht," "Rosen-duft," "Hyacinthenduft," "Veilchenduft," etc.

#### IV.—THE HEAVENS.

Mr. Symonds, speaking of the literature of the Minnesingers, says (page 300), "The stars, and clouds, and tempets of the heavens, the ever-recurring miracle of sunrise, the solemn pageant of sunsetting, are almost as if they were not in this literature." The Minnesinger's appreciation of the heavens is in keeping with his appreciation of the earth. He rarely looks towards the sky, and when he does it is not to admire nor to meditate, but to borrow some figure for love. "Flowers were to adorn his mistress; so sun, moon, and stars are to adorn her in figure. What love cannot appropriate to herself from the treasures of the sky is 'as though it were not' to the old poet.

If he sees the sunrise it awakens in him no wonder nor admiration: he does not see its splendor; it does not kindle any imagination in him. He sees no Aurora in robes of dark and pink with light between, no Phoebus with fiery steeds, nor Apollo's golden arrows, neither does he sing "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech." Nor does he say, with the modern lyrist,

I stood upon the hills, when heaven's wide arch  
Was glorious with the sun's returning march,  
And woods were brightened and the soft gales  
Went forth to kiss the sun-clad vales.

(Longfellow, page 9.)

There is no mythology nor worship nor nature-love in his attitude towards the sky. The dawn suggests the smile of his mistress:

si lihtet sam der sunne tuot  
gegen dem liechten morgen.

(M. F., page 129.)

or,

ir tugent reine ist der sunnen gelîch  
diu trûebiu wolken tuot liechte gevar—

(M. F., page 123.)

If he sings—

“ich sihe des nahtes krefte balde swachen,”

(D. L., page 101.)

it is only to warn guilty lovers that day is at hand.

The morning star is mentioned, too, in the warning of lingering lovers,—

Ich sihe den morgensterne brehen:  
nu, helt, lâ dich niht gerne sehen;  
vil liebe, dêst mîn rât.

(D. L., page 296.)

This note is heard also as a minor note in the later poets—  
for instance, Chamisso says:

Die Sonne, die bringt viel Leiden,  
Es weinet die scheidende Nacht:  
Ich also muss weinen und scheiden,  
Es ist ja die Welt schon erwacht.

(Page 44.)

Very rarely we find in the first period a touch of nature  
in reference to morning, as in these lines from Wildonje:

man hoert in dem ouwen singen  
diu vil kleiniu vogellîn.  
Diu vröunt sich der spilnden sunne,  
suâ si vor dem berge ûf gât.

(D. L., page 211.)

A like sentiment is found in Uhland's "Morgenlied":

Noch ahnt man kaum der Sonne Licht,  
Noch sind Morgenglocken nicht  
Im finstern Thal erklungen.  
Die Vöglein zwitschern nur im Traum,  
Kein Sang hat sich erschwungen.

(Page 47.)

But there is among the moderns a deeper and more far-  
reaching note in the *sunrise song*—

Schiller sings of the morning—

Frisch atmet des Morgens lebendiger Hauch;  
Purpurisch zuckt durch düstrer Tannen Ritzen  
Das junge Licht und äugelt aus den Strauch;  
In goldnen Flammen blitzen  
Der Berge Wolken spitzen.

(I, page 33.)

Heine, in the following stanza, beautifully pictures the paling stars and the white flitting mists of morning—

Blasser schimmern schon die Sterne,  
Und die Morgennebel steigen  
Aus der Seeflut, wie Gespenster,  
Mit hinschleppend weissen Laken.

(I, page 384.)

And Lenau inspires the scene with life—

Des Himmels frohes Antlitz brannte  
Schon von des Tages erstem Kuss,  
Und durch das Morgensternlein sandte  
Die Nacht mir ihren Scheidegruss.

(Page 101.)

To the old poet the day sky was the sun alone. The blue vault, the changing colors, the procession of the clouds, never arrested his eye. The day star itself existed but for comparison with woman—

Treit ein reine wip niht guoter kleider an,  
sô kleidet doch ir tugent, als ich michs entstân,  
daz si vil wol geblüemet gât  
alsam der liechte sunne hât  
an einem tage sinen schîn.

(M. F., page 24.)

Once clouds are mentioned incidentally by Toggenburc in speaking of birdsong,—

dâ von sendes herzen muot  
ûf alsam diu wolken hôhe swinget.

(D. L., page 199.)

Goethe thus describes the mounting of the white-fleeced Cirrus clouds:

Doch immer höher steigt der edle Drang  
Erlösung ist ein himmlisch leichter Zwang.  
Ein aufgehäuftes, flockig löst sich auf,  
Wie Schäflein trippelnd leicht gelämmt zu Hauf.

(I, page 502.)

And Burger paints the wind-driven clouds as sheep fleeing before the wolf,—

Der Tauwind kam vom Mittags Meer  
Und schnob durch Welschland trüb und feucht.

Die Wolken flogen vor ihm her,  
Wie wann der Wolf die Herde scheucht.

(Page 139.)

Uhland gives us this picture of the retreating storm-cloud:

Schwarze Wolken ziehn hinunter,  
Golden strahlt die Sonne wieder,  
Fern verhallen schon die Donner,  
Und die Vögelchore singen.

(Page 171.)

I have found no mention of the rainbow among the Minnesingers. Certainly Walter does not allude to it, though it is mentioned in the epic of this time. Goethe gives in four lines a summer thunder-storm, concluding with the bow:

Grau und trüb under immer trüber  
Kommt ein Wetter angezogen;  
Blitz und Donner sind vorüber  
Euch erquickt ein Regenbogen.

(I, page 479.)

Even the gorgeous sunset evokes from the Minnesinger literally *no* admiration. He notices it just as he would a flower by the way. He never gets beyond the conventional "âbentrôt." When he has applied this epithet his description of sunset is finished, though why he does not see the *gold* and *blue* and *grey* and *green* in the clouds as elsewhere is to me inexplicable. The sunset glow is to him like woman's blush. Doubtless, as these other colors do not appear in the maiden's cheek, they do not appear in the sky to the poet, for here as almost everywhere he recognizes only those elements in Nature which he can appropriate for love:

si bran vor mir schône  
sam der âbentrôt.

(D. L., page 187.)

or,

si roubet mich der sinne mîn,  
sist shoene alsam der sunnen schîn.

(M. F., page 40.)

With this poverty of descriptive coloring compare the rich pen-pictures which everywhere illuminate the pages of the later poets.

Uhland thus depicts the breaking of the glow over clouds  
and sea—

Welche Glut ist ausgegossen  
Ueber Wolken, Meer und Flur!  
Blied der goldne Himmel offen  
Als empor die Heil'ge fuhr?

(Page 199.)

Rückert gives this picture, beautiful in its simplicity:

Ein Schein der ew'gen Jugend glänzt  
Ins Erdenthal,  
Die Höh'n mit Offenbarung kränzt  
Der Abendstrahl.

(Page 155.)

As the Minnesinger makes no note of the gradual transition from summer to winter, so he makes no mention of the hour when "the day is gone, and the night is not yet." There is no "twilight" in his day, and this is the more notable that he is the avowed singer of love, which is supposed to flourish best in the gloaming. This omission may be taken in further evidence of his casual and superficial observation of nature. He passes immediately from sunset to starlight and moonshine. Not so with our later lover of nature. For him there is the intervening hour when

Die Lerche singt der Sonne nach  
Von hohem Ort,  
Dann wird die Nachtviole wach,  
Und duftet fort:

(Rückert, page 155.)

the change-full hour, when

An dem Himmel herauf mit leisen Schritten  
Kommt die duftende Nacht.

(Schiller I, 113)

Lüning, in *Die Natur* (page 268), comments upon the use in Norse and Anglo-Saxon literature of morning twilight, "die uhte, die Vormorgendämmerung," as the waker of gloomy thoughts, and cites Napoleon I as having said that he had found among his generals only two who had courage two hours before sunrise. But there seems to have been no

recognition among the old lyrists of either the morning or the evening twilight as a specific mood of the day.

We should expect our singer-of-love to be in his element beneath the canopy of night. Surely if anywhere, here in the silence the manifold wonders of night will lure him from the thought of his mistress to dwell for a moment at least upon the beauties of the star-spangled sky, and he shall give us some evidence of love for the world of nature.

We shall be disappointed. He is a veritable Romeo, too enamored to be betrayed for a moment into forgetfulness of his Juliet. If the heavens are bright,

"Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their sphere till they return."

(Romeo and Juliet Act II, Scene 2.)

The moon and stars do but adorn his thoughts of her—

Dirre tunkel sterne, sich, der dirget sich.  
Als tuo du, frouwe schoene, sô du sehest mich.

(M. F., page 10.)

When the full moon mounts the starry sky it is not Diana with her huntress-train of nymphs, "swept in the storm of chase", but his mistress among women—

Wol ir, wie sie valsches âne  
in wîplîchen zûhten lebet!  
Reht alsam der liechte mâne  
in den sternen dicke swebet;

(D. L., page 138);

or he lives in her smile, as the moon lives by the light of the sun—

swenne si wil sô bin ich leides âne  
mîn lachen stât sô bî sunnen der mâne.

(M. F., page 84);

or,

ich muoz iemer dem gelîche spehen  
als der mâne sînen schîn  
von des sunnen shfn enpfât.

(M. F., page 124.)

This mingling of night and love appears in the moderns but secondarily. Goethe addresses the cloud-veiled moon as she rises—

Doch du fühlst, wie ich betübt bin,  
 Blickt dein Rand herauf als Stern!  
 Zeugest mir, dass ich geliebt bin,  
 Sei das Liebchen noch so fern;

(I, page 405.)

and Heine makes the stars love's messengers,

Schöne, helle goldne Sterne,  
 Grüsst die Liebste in der Ferne,  
 Sagt, dass ich noch immer sei  
 Herzekrank und bleich und treu.

(II, page 7.)

But the night-thoughts of the modern poets are more usually filled with admiration or wonder or awe in the presence of the starry heavens and the mystery of night. The advance of astronomy and the opening of the stellar deeps by the telescope may account in part for the element of awe and wonder in the later poets, but it does not explain away the poverty of the Minnesingers. It was before Galileo that another lyricist, standing under the same vault of night, sang: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him?—for thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." (Ps. 8.) More in keeping with this exaltation of man's spirit in the conscious presence of the sublime are Goethe's lines—

Und wenn mich am Tag die Ferne  
 Blauer Berge sehnlich zieht,  
 Nachts das Übermass der Sterne  
 Prächtig mir zu Haupten glüht,  
 Alle Tag und alle Nächte  
 Rühm ich so des Menschen Los;  
 Denkt er ewig sich ins Rechte,  
 Ist er ewig schön und gross.

(I, 407-8.)

There can scarcely be in literature a more beautiful ode to Night as the "Allmother of Life," than that of Rückert, which begins:

Nacht Allmutter des Lebens, ich preise dich herrliche Göttin,  
 Königin! keine wie du kränzet mit Sternen ihr Haupt.

Deinen umfangenden Armen entreissen sich trotzige Sonnen,  
 Lieblos löschen sie aus deinen bescheidenden Glanz;  
 Doch wehmütig empfängst du am Abend jegliche wieder,  
 Ihr hinsterbendes Haupt bergend im duftigen Schoss.

(Page 7.)

We can say of these lines as Goethe said of these two of his own —

How sadly rises, incomplete and ruddy,  
 The moon's lone disc, with its belated glow;

to say this "some previous observation of nature was necessary." (Taylor's Translation of "Faust." Vol. I, 305.)

Into the following lines Körner has wrought the very atmosphere of a still night; the metre even helps to convey the impression of pervading slumber —

Tief schlummert die Natur in süßen Träumen,  
 Und still und düster wogt die kühle Nacht;  
 Die Sterne funkeln in des Himmels Räumen,  
 Der Silbermond steigt auf in heil'ger Pracht.

(Page 76.)

Such close observation and interpretation of the phenomena of Nature, such minute description, such entering into the heart of Nature's mood, is foreign to the Minnesingers. It cannot accompany cold indifference. Nature does not brook any slight. However it may seem, the history of the nature-sense among these singers supports the words written by our American poet in another connection—

The bard must be with good intent,  
 No more his, but hers;  
 Must throw away his pen and paint,  
 Kneel with worshippers.—Emerson.

The early poets did not see the spirit of the natural world, which makes it worthy consideration in and for itself. Neither did they appreciate nature in her sober and her august moods. They could not have said, with Körner,

Wie die Nacht mit heil'gem Beben  
 Auf der stillen Erde liegt!

(Page 85.)

The night brought no benediction to them. They never felt that "darkness, like a gentle spirit," was "brooding o'er a still and pulseless world". They saw individual stars, the moon, or the sun; just as they saw single flowers and birds and trees. Nowhere were the individuals blended into an inspired whole.

This brings us to the consideration just here of another step in the progress of the nature-sense; that is, the appreciation of *the sublime* in Nature.

The treatment of *the sublime* might properly be deferred till a later chapter, since the sublime in Nature was practically unknown until several centuries after the Minnesingers, but it is inserted here in connection with the treatment of Nature as inanimate.

## V.—MOUNTAINS, SEA AND STORMS.

"The mountain kingdom of which I claim possession by the law of love," says Ruskin. If this be the passport to the mountains, we need not expect any mention of them by the early writers. Men who found sufficiency in the first-come flower would scarcely go so far afield in Nature as to catch sight of the great hills, and, if they did, what would they have to say of them? Green meadows and flowers, stars and nightingales, comport better with songs of love than do granite walls and leaping torrents and eternal snows. These singers of love could not follow Keats, who, when he had imagined the future a very "forest of Arden," sang,

And can I bid these joys farewell?  
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,  
Where I may find the agonies, the strife of human hearts.

(Page 55.)

Not theirs to sing the "nobler life," not theirs to see in Nature's sublimer moods an echo of the "agonies, the strife of human hearts." We shall have to leave the field of the simple love-lyric before we may expect to find a feeling for the sublime in Nature. Men were slow in coming to an appreciation of the grandeur in Nature. As a matter of fact this appreciation does not appear until some five hundred years after the Minnesingers, in the eighteenth century, and when the Romantic movement has set in strongly. Rousseau was the pioneer in this field. He was the first to reveal to men the beauties of mountain scenery; the first to find solace in the wildness of Nature. Biese says: "It was Rousseau who first struck the deepest note of inspiration for the beauty of the great mountains." This tardiness in the growth of the nature-sense is not peculiar to the French literature. Miss Reynolds, in *Nature in English Poetry* (p. 7) says, "Rarely in the long period between Waller and Wordsworth do we find any trace of the modern feeling towards mountains. If they are

spoken of at all it is to indicate the difficulty in surmounting them or to express the general distaste for anything so savagely and untameably wild. In no case does a sense of the sublimity and beauty of mountains find or even apparently seek expression."

Professor Palgrave, in *Landscape in Poetry* (p. 177) cites Wordsworth as saying that although, during the residence of Burns at Mossgiel Farm, splendid mountain scenery must have been constantly before his eyes, he nowhere has noticed it.

Biese (p. 94), speaking of the times of Crusades, says of the Alps, "The geographical knowledge of these mountains is very slow at first in appearing: of an aesthetic enjoyment of Alpine beauty there can be, therefore, no mention." And again (p. 393), "Goethe is the first German poet who feels most deeply the romantic grandeur of the snow-covered, ice-crowned mountains, and pictures them with inimitable mastery."

Various writers attribute this early hostility to mountains to personal discomfort and danger incurred by mountain travel. Professor Palgrave says (p. 180), "There was nothing of charm, no romance, in the painfulness with which mountain regions were traversed two hundred years since and later; nor could the discomforts of the road allure a traveller's mind to the contemplation of the Sublime." Miss Reynolds makes this significant remark (p. 7): "It is interesting to note that passages expressing the most active dislike of mountains show really some close observation and a good deal of picturesque energy of phrase. They were evidently the outcome of personal experience." This might explain the "energy of phrase," but scarcely accounts for the absence of mountain-love in the writers. The "personal experience" is the common experience of all mountain tourists even to our day. Heine says, with an emphasis born of experience,

Wenn du den stellen Berg ersteigst,  
Wirst du beträchtlich ächzen;

Doch wenn du den felsigen Gipfel erreichst,  
Hörst du die Adler krächzen.

(I, page 294.)

The toil of ascent did not, however, prevent Heine, in contemplation of the mountains, from feeling himself an eagle.

The conveniences of travel were not markedly different in the days of Walter and of Goethe: certainly not different in those of Rousseau and of Waller; nor were the dangers from elements or robbers materially different for these different men. Moreover—a fact not generally recognized by the commentators—mountain climbing is not essential to love of mountains. Schiller wrote "William Tell" without ever having seen the Alps. The Hartz mountains were not so wild nor so inaccessible as the Alps, and yet Mr. Biese informs us (p. 355) that "Zimmermann first broke the road to the Harz in 1775," that is, three years before Rousseau's death, and after the Alps had been opened; all which he attributes to easier travel over improved roads.

We gather from Rousseau's "Confessions" that it was not improved roads nor physical comfort, but something which had little to do with either, which enabled him to behold beauty in the great mountains. Ruskin comes near the truth when he says, "Your power of seeing mountains cannot be developed either by your vanity, your curiosity, or your love of muscular exercise. It depends on the cultivation of the instrument of sight itself, and of the soul that uses it" (Porter, 180). That is the explanation of the matter. The trouble with those poets was not inability to *travel* but inability to *see*. It is the same inability which we have noticed running through all the early literature. They did not *see* the flowers, nor the clouds, nor the autumn colors. They did not *see* the hills that rose against their own horizon. Naturally, then, when by force of necessity they go through the Alps, they do not see the mountains but only feel the discomfort. If Walter or Waller had been transported in a Pullman car to Interlaken he would still have been silent on mountain scenery, because having eyes he saw not.

When men begin really to open their eyes on the side of Nature, we shall soon find them interested in mountain scenery. This explanation based on discomfort would not apply, in accounting for the absence of seascapes from the literature, and mountains and sea go hand in hand in literature as they do in geography—the highest mountains always facing the deepest seas: ability to appreciate the one being sufficient evidence regarding the other. Biese (p. 320) speaking of F. Stolberg (cir. 1775), says “until this time mountain and sea had not played scarcely any rôle in German poetry;” and elsewhere speaking of these elements in Dutch art of the 17th and 18th centuries, he says, “mountain and sea do not find their inspired word-painters till one hundred years later.” Miss Reynolds (p. 14) notes the lack of appreciation in the 18th century. “It was simply a waste of waters, dangerous at times, and always wearisome. Though more often mentioned than the mountains it (ocean) received an even more narrow and conventional treatment.” Professor Palgrave (p. 118), confirms this statement. Speaking of the “Franklin's Tale” in Chaucer, he says, “Dorigen goes on to speak of the hundred thousand whom she fancies have been dashed against rocks and slain. This is the general aspect of the sea in our poetry till modern days.” Lüning (p. 92), in treatment of the Epic, says: “The middle high German poets seldom fail to apply to the sea the epithet *wild* or some such.”

The inland position of Germany might seem to account for the absence of the sea from the writings of the Minnesingers, if we did not know that they travelled far, and that even Venice and Naples failed to elicit from them one word of admiration. Here is further evidence that easy access to the phenomena of Nature has little to do with an appreciation of them, for “Strange as it may seem, it is yet true that the poets of sea-girt England were very slow in making the discovery of the ocean.” (Reynolds, p. 16).

The power to see these things, call it Romanticism or what not, depends at last upon the long “cultivation of the instrument of sight itself, and of the soul that uses it.”

We are then not surprised to find this appreciation wholly lacking in the poets of the 13th century. Toggenburc barely mentions *mountains* once along with *flowers* and *clover*, showing utter inappreciation by that very association, and at once waves all aside as not worthy of mention in comparison with the roses on *her* cheek—

Bluomen loup klê berge und tal  
und des meien sumersûeziu wunne  
Diu sint gegen dem rôsen val  
sô mîn vrowe treit.

(D. L., page 200.)

A few selections will serve to show the presence of mountain and sea in the 18th and 19th century poetry.

Goethe speaks of the snow-crowned Alps in these beautiful words:

War doch gestern dein Haupt noch so braun wie die Locke  
der Lieben  
Deren holdes Gebild still aus der Ferne mich winkt;  
Silbergrau bezeichnet dir früh der Schnee nun die Gipfel  
Der sich in stürmender Nacht dir um den Scheitel ergross.

(I, page 185.)

And Schiller, in *Bergleid*, sings—

Am Abgrund leitet der schwindlichte Steg.  
Er führt zwischen Leben und Sterben;  
Es sperren die Riesen den einsamen Weg  
Und drohen dir ewig Verderben;  
Und willst du die schlafende Löwin nicht wecken,  
So wandle still durch die Strasse der Schrecken;

(I, page 121.)

Körner strikes another note in *mountain song*—that of delight,

Hoch auf dem Gipfel  
Deiner Gebirge  
Steh' ich und staun' ich,  
Glühend begeistert,  
Heilige Koppe  
Himmelanstürmerin.

(Page 89.)

Chamisso gives us this picture of the snow-capped peaks towering into the blue sky of morning—

Und meine Berge erheben  
 Die schneeigen Häupter zumal  
 Und tauschen in dunkle Bläue  
 Und glühen im Morgenstrahl.  
 Und lauschen über den Hochwald,  
 Der schimmernd die Gletscher umspannt  
 In unser Thal herüber  
 Und schauen mich an so bekannt.

(Page 42.)

Here is a sort of affectionate companionship with the mountain.

Heine is notable among the lovers of the sea, portraying all its moods in his poems. In "Nordsee" he gives this fine picture of sunset—over the troubled waters.

Die Sonne neigte sich tiefer und warf  
 Glührote Streifen auf das Wasser,  
 Und die weissen, weiten Wellen,  
 Von der Flut gedrängt,  
 Schäumten und rauschten näher und näher,

(I, page 164)

with which may be contrasted his description of a calm—

Meeresstille; Ihre Strahlen  
 Wirft die Sonne auf das Wasser,  
 Und im wogenden Geschmeide  
 Zieht das Schiff die grünen Furchen.

(I, page 174.)

Lenau attributes to the calm more power over his spirit than to the storm;

Sturm mit seinen Donnerschlägen  
 Kann mir nicht wie du  
 So das tiefste Herz bewegen,  
 Tiefe Meeresruh.

(Page 123.)

And Herder, in "Am Meer bei Neapel," gives us a glimpse of that scene which the Minnesinger on his visit to the same shore had entirely missed—

Ermüdet von des Sommers schwerem Brande,  
 Setzt ich danieder mich ans kühle Meer  
 Die Wellen wallten küssend hin zum Strande

Des grauen Ufers, das rings um mich her  
 In seinem frischen, blumichten Gewande  
 Auffing der Schmetterlinge gaukelnd Heer.

(I, pp. 253-4.)

Rückert in "Sicilianen" acknowledges the charm which those Italian waters had for him—

Ich schaukelte durch's Meer auf schwankem Kahne,  
 Und macht' auf einem Bluteneiland and Rast.

Und wie dem Aug' die einz'len Farben starben  
 Im Grün der See und in der Luft Azur;  
 Empfan mein Herz, vergessend alter Narben,  
 Unendlichkeit der Lieb' und Sehnsucht nur.

(Page 64.)

Another manifestation of the sublime in Nature which the poets were slow to discover is *the storm*. We associate in our minds, I think, storms with mountains or sea—certainly with some large phenomenon of the outer world; which is but to say that we preserve in thought—unconsciously, perhaps—the harmony of Nature. The cradle of the storm is on the deep or upon the great plains or about the mountain crags. It sweeps across the sky. There is no littleness associated with the tempest in our minds. It does not destroy the flowers, it "breaketh the cedars of Lebanon—and layeth the forests bear." To know the storm, that is, to stand before it without fear, demands some feeling of sublimity. Old Caliban fell down in mortal terror before the tempest. So long as men have not discovered the depth of the sky, nor the expanse of the landscape, nor the existence of the mountain, there is no place for the storm in their thought. There was no inconvenience of travel standing between the early poets and an appreciation of the storm, and it will, therefore, be interesting to notice in just how far they mentioned the storm, and in what way. As the Minnesinger has thus far noticed those phenomena of Nature which evoke more gentle and pleasant feelings, we should not be surprised to find him occupying the same attitude towards the winds. He does not, in fact, speak of the strong winds, the fierce storms, the

lightning and thunder, and the angry clouds; but mentions only the gentle winds, the zephyrs, that bring him a message from his mistress—

Stâ bi lâ mich den wint an wêjen  
der kumt von mînes herzen kuninginne.

(D. L., page 126);

Walter's usual epithet for a trifle is "ein wint". Once he mentions the storm, but in a figurative connection representing some threatening disaster—

Owe! ez kumt ein wint, daz wizzet sicherlîche,  
dâ von wir hoeren beide singen unde sagen;  
der sol mit grimme ervaren elliû künicrîche,  
daz hoere ich waller unde pilgerîne klagen,  
boume, türne ligent vor im zerlagen.

(Page 304.)

Heinrich von Morungen mentions the wind in one line—

Mîn staeter muot gelîchet niht dem winde;

(M. F., page 136.)

and Hohenvels gives an echo of a summer storm in these lines—

Dô der luft mit sunnen fiure  
wart getempert und gemîschet,  
Dar gab wazzer sîne stiure,  
dâ wart erde ir lîp erfrîschet.

(D. L., page 151.)

Not the slightest trace in any of these rare instances of an appreciation—only the barest mention, and that mostly in figures.

These two lines from Walter's "Das Chamäleon" are a rare exception—

in sîme sîezen honege lît ein giftig nagel;  
sîn wolkenlôsez lachen bringet scharpfen hagel.

(Page 255-6.)

He compares the changeable character to the weather which sends a shower of sharp hail while it smiles upon you through the shower. Even this selection shows an apprecia-

tion by inference rather than directly. Another world has opened to men when they can say with Lenau—

Der Himmel donnert seinen Hader;  
Auf seiner dunklen Stirne glüht  
Der Blitz hervor, die Zornesader,  
Die Schrecken auf die Erde sprüht.  
Der Regen stürzt in lauten Güssen;  
Mit Bäumen, die der Sturm zerbrach,  
Erbraust der Strom zu meinen Füßen;  
Doch schweigt der Donner allgemach.

(Page 104.)

The sea, the mountains, and the storm were known and appreciated in all their phases by the poets of the later period. The discovery of the sky and storm in literature marks a revelation scarcely less significant than Galileo's discovery by which the heavens ceased to be a low-hanging roof and became the fathomless, animate depths of the universe. The one opened a limitless field for thought, the other a boundless scope for imagination. Only in the great spaces is there room for the sublime—whether in the realm of mind or of matter. Only because the Hebrew lyrist had broken through the low sky-vault and sung "how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens"—only because he saw the depths of sky could he also sing in the shadow of the tempest, "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth." Only because men had learned the wonder of the boundless blue expanse could they sing, with Chamisso, unafraid,—

Den stillen Schoss der dunklen Nacht durchdringen  
Des Donners Schmettertone; schwarz umzogen  
Wölbt unheilschwanger sich der hehre Bogen,—  
Die Sterne löschen—Elemente ringen,—  
Der Feuerengel schüttelt wild die Schwingen;  
Es stürzen Feuer—stürzen Wasserwogen;  
Des Windes Heulen stöhnet langgezogen  
Im Sturme ahn ich höherer Wesen Ringen.

(Page 388.)

The discovery of the depths of Nature in literature marks the opening of a corresponding depths in man—it is deep answering unto deep—a discovery which depends, let us repeat, "upon the cultivation of the soul."

The absence of Mountain, Sky and Sea from the literature of the Minnesingers is a natural omission at this stage in the development of the nature-sense.

## VI.—PERSONIFICATION OF NATURE.

Thus far we have treated Nature as set over against man—something outside him and separated from him—something to be seen, counted, catalogued, admired and enjoyed, with which, however, man had nothing in common, a foreign world—a soulless world. Henceforward we shall have to treat it as animate, having more and more in common with man, as he grows to see more and more unity in the world, until we come to that stage where men see the same spirit pervading the natural world and the human world, see the same moods in Nature which they feel in their own bosoms, find the outer world answering to them in all their experiences, glad when they are glad, sad, when they sorrow, passionate with them; till men shall say, with Wordsworth, "How exquisitely the individual Mind to the external World is fitted: and how exquisitely, too, the external World is fitted to the Mind".

The first step towards bridging over this wide gulf between man and Nature would be in discovering analogies between the two worlds. This in itself is unimportant, but it leads immediately to a vital step. Men noted that the rose was red and woman's blush was red, therefore, "her cheek was like the rose"—a superficial analogy. But the next step was to attribute the same cause to the two effects, and make "the rose blush upon the thorn." The mistress was radiant above other women, so she was like the moon moving among the stars; and forthwith the moon took on all the attributes of woman—became *personified*.

It is first through the medium of figures that life flows from man to fill the channels of Nature. It has always been analogies that have first led men to see themselves in Nature. Among the Greeks this analogy became mythology, wherein gods with human qualities lurked behind the visible phenomena of Nature. The pink dawn came to be Aurora ris-

ing from the couch of Tithonus; the sun became the ardent Apollo shooting golden arrows, and

The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye  
Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart  
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed  
That timely light, to share his joyous sport:  
And hence a beaming goddess, with her Nymphs  
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove

Swept in the storm of chase; as moon and stars  
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,  
When winds are blowing strong.

(Wordsworth, p. 517.)

Among the moderns this movement finally developed into a "Higher Pantheism" where the poet asks—

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—

Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

(Tennyson, p. 188.)

Step by step men drew nearer to Nature and found Nature drawing nearer to them. First she was a silence, then a murmur, then a voice, then a companion, and when finally men passed through Nature to Nature's God, she became a Gospel, and Arndt sang,

Ihr süsse Blumen, grüne Haine  
O seid ihr endlich wieder mein?  
Ich euch geborgen gar alleine:  
Doch nie bin ich bei euch allein  
Ihr sprecht mit wundersamer Stimme  
Die einz'ge Sprache ohne Trug,  
Der Vogel predigt hier, die Imme,  
Der Blutzweig wie Gottes Buch.

O Gottes Buch! o heil'ge Mächte!  
Hier brecht ihr alle Siegel auf:  
Heheimnis stummer Mitternächte  
Und Sonnenlauf und Mondenlauf  
Und was von irren Wandelsternen  
Die tiefe Menschenbrust durchkreist,  
Kann heir der stille Lauscher lernen,  
Wo alles hoch nach oben weist.

(Page 222.)

This first step analogy, with its consequent step personification, was of immense import to men, first adorning their language with the beautiful figures of speech, and opening up a field of illustration which becomes broader and more inexhaustible as men's lives are broadened, till today it is the chief means by which man passes thought to man. And secondly, it broadened the world to him, by making every tiniest flower or towering peak of interest, as being his fellow-creatures, multiplying his loves and sympathies, making every hill-side and dell and flowing stream speak to him in the language of his own heart, swelling the brotherhood of man to universal brotherhood, wherein even the stars had part and influence. Henceforward man was not alone nor lonesome in the world, but from every object in Nature poured in upon him streams of influence, and from him went back to them streams of sympathy.

How significant this step was may best be expressed in the words of our own Nature-prophet, Emerson: "These are not the dreams of a few poets, here and there, but man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects. He is placed in the centre of things, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man. All the facts in natural history, taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren, like a single sex. But marry it to human history and it is full of life." (Nature, p. 28.)

This bridge of figures led the old poets naturally only into the restricted field of Nature which they knew; but such passage as it was they made it, a passage as significant in principle as is the later appropriation of the manifold modern world. We cannot expect from these early pioneers great innovation, seeing that they were notably conventional in their reference to Nature, but even here the stronger ones were at times strikingly original in their observation of analogy, and left the beaten track of the conventional to bring in a forceful new figure from Nature.

A recital of the figures used will be largely a repetition of what has already been said, for it has been pointed out that

the old bard's use of Nature was almost always as accessory to love. His figures are, therefore, generally confined to such phenomena as are in harmony with the gentle mood of love. The coming of spring is like the flowering of his heart under love's sunshine; the falling leaves suggest fading love,

Diu linde ist an dem ende nû jârlanc licht unde bloz.  
mich vêhet mîn geselle: nû engilte ich des ich nie genôz.

(D. L., page 289.)

Winter is but a figure of love's death. Spring triumphs over winter when he triumphs in love. The rose and woman's lips are a common figure, "ein rôsenvarwer mund," "ûz einem mündel rôt sam die rôsen," "sô hât si einen rôten rôsen gezzen". Her cheek is like a rose "ir rôselohez wange". An unusual comparison is Dürner's tribute to her cheek as "rôsen rôt gestrôit ûf wîzen snê", and Morungen's "doch wast ir varwe liljen wîz und rôsen rôt". Woman is like a rose in the dew,

Waz gelîchet sich der wunne  
dâ ein rôse in touwe stât?  
Nieman danne ein schoenez wîp.

(D. L., page 211.)

She is like "the sun", "the sun at morning", "the cloudless sun", "the sun in dark clouds". Her blush is "sam der âbentrôt". Her eyes are "like the stars", "Wâ ist nu hin mîn liechter morgensterne?" A frequent figure for woman is the moon,

Reht alsam der lichte mâne  
in den sternen dicke swêbet  
Dem stât wol gelîch diu reine;

(D. L., page 183)

or,

und saz vor mir diu liebe wolgetâne  
geblecket rehte alsam ein voller mâne.

(M. F., page 136.)

Her smile is like sunlight on the moon—

swenne si wil, sô bin ich leides âne.  
mîn lachen stât sô bî sunnen der mâne.

(M. F., page 84.)

Such references occur frequently in the writings of these poets. But not all their figures are stereotyped. Some of them show an originality and an observation of the things mentioned, and occur rarely. For instance, Tröstberc says:

Ob in einem walde ein linde  
 trüege rôsen liehtgevar,  
 Reht alsame diu frowe mîn  
 hât die tugent,

(D. L., page 238)

and Dietmar, using the figure of a ship, says:

der bin ich worden undertân  
 als das schif dem stiure man.

(M. F., page 38.)

Otte zem Turne compares his mistress to the eagle:

So fröit sich mîn sender muot  
 saz mîns herzen spilndiu sunne,  
 hoehet als der adelar.

(D. L., page 286.)

He is fond of the figure of the eagle. The swallow is a symbol both of constancy and inconstancy;

dur daz volge ich der swal  
 diu liez durch liebe noch dur leide ir singen nie,

(M. F., page 127)

and elsewhere,

Ein swal klent von leime ein hiuselîn,  
 Dâs inn ist des sumers ein vil kurze vrist.  
 got vüege mir ein hûs mit obedache.

(D. L., page III.)

Still other original figures are "tears like the dew", "heart like adamant", and Morungen's lines,

Mich enzündet ir vil liechter ougen schîn  
 same daz fiur den durren zunder tuot.

(M. F., page 126.)

Walter is by far the most original of all the early poets in the selection of figures, as he is elsewhere. In his "Klage

Über den Verfall der Kunst," he speaks of certain poor, self-satisfied singers,—

die tuont sam die frösche in eime sê,  
den ir schrien alsô wol behaget,  
daz diu nahtegal dâ von verzaget,  
sô si gerne sunge mê—

(Page 141)

the nightingale being himself doubtless. His prince's kindness is like rain, and the prince, a fair meadow where one may gather many flowers,

des fürsten milte ûz Ôsterriche  
freut dem süezen regen gelîche  
beidiu liute und ouch daz lant  
er ist ein schoene wol gezieret heide,  
dar abe man bluomen brichet wunder.

(Page 185.)

A similar reference to the benefaction of the gentle rain is found in a parallel figure from Uolrich von Guotenburc,

Ir schoener gruoz ir milter segen,  
mit eime senften nîgen,  
daz tuot mir eimen meien regen  
reht an daz herze sîgen.

(M. F., page 69.)

And Walter compares inconstancy to the clover that fades,

swer hiure schallet unde ist hin ze jâre boese als ê,  
des lop gruonet unde valwet sô der klê.  
der Dürnge bluome schînet durch den snê.

(Page 215.)

The Minnesinger speaks of the *clover*, as he would of the *rose* or the *lily*; but in the later times the flower seems to have lost caste with the poets.

Walter speaks of the court under the figure of a garden full of weeds and good plants. He arraigns the Pope for his corruption, ending with this line—

"sîn hirte ist z' einem wolve im worden under sînen schâfen."

(Page 216.)

He compares the improvident and the provident under the

figure of *crickets* and *ants*—a slight variation of our time-honored fable.

Of figures from the sterner phases of Nature, representing the deeper or more serious moods of man, there are none, as there was no recognition of this side of Nature for its own sake.

The songs of the modern poets are too full of strong, original figures to call for any exhaustive consideration of this element in their writings. The following general allusions and a few selections will amply suffice for a comparison of the two periods.

In evidence of the more varied use of figures, and the broader field of analogy, Goethe speaks of life as tree and fruit; love is water; his dead friend is a transplanted tree; the soul is like rain that comes from heaven and returns. Of his song he says:

Dem Geier gleich,  
Der auf schweren Morgenwolken  
Mit sanftem Fittich ruhend  
Nach Beute schaut,  
Schwebe mein Lied.

(I, page 364.)

To Bürger the friend is a young eagle in full flight; love, sunshine through rifted clouds; modesty, a flower; "sinnenliebe," a butterfly. And life—

Dein Leben, Beste gleich' in Bilde  
Dem Bach, der stets heiter fließt  
Und durch ein schönes Lenzgefilde  
Sich ruhig in das Meer ergießt,

(Page 135)

and death,

Herrlich und hehr war deines Scheidens Gang,  
Wie der Mond auf blauer zitternder Woge.  
Nur liesst du uns im Dunkel,  
O erstes der Mädchen, zurück.

(Page 206.)

Herder sees life fade like the rose; songs are butterflies, or flying leaves; love, a rosebud; time is like wind or wave; life, a stream; Luther is an oak tree; and passion—

Dünste steigen auf und werden  
 In den Wolken Blitz und Donner  
 Oder Regentropfen.  
 Dünste steigen auf und werden  
 In dem Haupte Zorn und Unmut,  
 Oder werden Thränen.

(I, page 199.)

I cannot forbear giving one other quotation from Herder—his beautiful interpretation of the rainbow in his ode, "Der Regenbogen,"

Schönes kind der Sonne,  
 Bunter Regenbogen,  
 Ueber schwarzen Wolken  
 Mir ein Bild der Hoffnung.

Hoffnungen sind Farben,  
 Sind gebrochener Strahlen  
 Und der Thränen Kinder,  
 Wahrheit ist die Sonne.

(I, page 193-4.)

In Lenau life is a stream, a desert, a strand; song is the zephyr on flowers; winds are dying sighs; night is a black eagle with fiery wings.

The flight of fancy is evidently extended to further fields in the later poets than it is in the earlier singers.

From mere simile it was an easy step to personification, a step which the old poets were not slow to take. We find them often apostrophizing *May* or *Summer*, or representing the meadow and wood as donning their gala dress; but there is a marked sameness in their personification, both of subject and of manner.

Walter makes the meadow blush before the forest—

wan daz ich mich rihte nâch der heide,  
 diu sich schamt ir leide:  
 sô si den walt siht gruonen, sô wirt s'iemer rôt.

(Page 41.)

Nithart represents May as dressing the forest with new leaves,—

Der meie der ist rîche,  
 er füeret sicherlîche

den walt an sîner hende.  
der ist nu niuwes loubes vol.

(D. L., page 104.)

And again, the forest has opened his treasure-house to May:

Der walt hât sîne krâme  
gein dem meien ûf geslagen;

(M. P., p. 99; D. L., p. 106)

and elsewhere,

Der walt hât sîner grîse gar vergezzen;  
der meie ist ûf ein grüenez zwi gesezzen.

(M. P., p. 106; D. L., p. 109.)

Liutolt von Savene personifies May and the wood in almost the same words, adding, however, a pretty touch in the vieing of the meadow flowers,

Wol dir meie wie du scheidest  
allez âne haz!  
Wie wol du die boume kleidest  
und die heide baz!  
Diu hât varwe mê.  
du bist kurzer ich bin langer'  
alsô stritents ûf dem anger,  
bluomen unde klê.

(D. L., page 128.)

Kristân von Hamle addresses to the meadow this quite original apostrophe, in which he attributes to it human sentiment—

Hêr Anger, waz ir fröide iuch muostet nieten  
dô min frowe kom gegân  
Und ir wîzen hende begunde bieten  
nâch iuwern bluomen wolgetân.

(M. P., p. 132; D. L., p. 137.)

Ezzelingen makes the wood adorn itself and put on its garland, while the meadow reflects the splendor,

Walt hât sich mit kleiden schône gegestet,  
er hât ûf gesetzt mangel stolzen kranz  
Hî wie dem diu heide widerglestet!  
diu hât an geleit ir schoene wunderswanz.

(D. L., page 236.)

Beyond this very limited field of the meadow and forest, spring and summer and flowers, the Minnesinger does not seem

to have ventured in his personification of Nature; he does not reach even to the limits of his field of analogy; does not extend his figures to the phenomena of the sky. We do not find him addressing odes to "the cloud," "the sunset," nor apostrophizing the sun, moon or stars. Personification is the first step in the contemplation of Nature for itself, and therefore it is not unnatural that this element should find a very restricted expression in the early period of the literature.

The later poets often touch the same chord in their personifications, but with the greater depth of feeling and breadth of application in their figures which we have everywhere found characteristic of their nature-reference compared with that of the early poets.

Schiller refers to spring under the beautiful figure of a youth bearing a basket of flowers—a touch so fresh that it reminds one of the young spring of Greek mythology—

Willkommen, schoener Jüngling!  
Du Wonne der Natur!  
Mit deinem Blumenkörbchen  
Willkommen auf der Flur!

(I, page 35.)

And, elsewhere, changing the figure to that of a maiden bearing fruits and flowers, a modern Proserpine, he says—

In einem Thal bei einem Hirten  
Erschien mit jedem jungen Jahr  
Sobald die ersten Lerchen schwirrten  
Ein Mädchen schön und wunderbar.

(I, page 210)

Especially like the note of the early poets, however, are these lines from Arndt's "Frühlingslied",

Sei Willkommen, Frühling, du süsßer Gast  
Sei Willkommen, du fröhlicher Mai!  
Der die Freude bringt und die Sorge hasst.

(Page 16.)

The same simple note of the old bards, the flower-bedecked spring, is heard in these lines from his ode to "Blumen",

Die seinen Busen zu schmücken  
Der Lenz sich machen kann,

Sie sehn mit liebenden Blicken  
 Mich jung und lustig an.

(Page 18.)

Compare the same view of May, as seen in Platen's lines,

Enthüllt sich jährlich weit und weit  
 Die Maienzeit  
 Mit lust'gem Vogelschalle.

(Page 24.)

Goethe's ode to the moon is in quite another spirit than that which appeared in the early poets—no reference here to woman's beauty; the cloud-veiled moon is a veiled woman,

Schwester von dem ersten Licht  
 Bild der Zärtlichkeit in Trauer!  
 Nebel schwimmt mit Silberschauer  
 Um dein reizendes Gesicht.

(I, page 32.)

A far more extended animation of the natural world than we have thus far found, occurs in the deeper moods of the modern singers, as illustrated below—a growth of the nature-sense which oversteps all the conventional past, leaves those phenomena which have been the time-honored stock of the bard, goes out into new fields, finds in a rich variety of new objects a likeness to the new life, and gives to literature the manifold fresh figures of personification, which add such delightful flavor to the new running of the wine-press of poetic thought.

To Herder the birch tree shedding its leaves over his sister's grave is a mourner weeping at the tomb—

Frühlingsbirke, du stehst hier über dem Grabe der Schwester  
 Herbstlich einsam, und streust Blätter und Thränen darauf.

(I, page 205.)

Lenau sees the moonlit clouds of evening as a company of mourners weaving of pale roses a garland for the dead day:

Leichte Abendwölkchen schweben  
 Hin im sanften Mondenglanz,  
 Und aus bleichen Rosen weben  
 Sie dem toten Tag den Kranz.

(Page 57.)

It is a long way from the old singer's simple tribute to woman's cheek as "sam der âbentrôt" to this inspiration of soul into the evening sky. The old singer had scarcely gotten beyond the simile, had not ventured to address a thought to the sunset as personified.

An even broader application of this figure, one common to our literature of today, is where he speaks of Nature as asleep, while the veil of twilight is drawn gently over her features,

Friedlicher Abend senkt sich aufs Gefilde;  
Sanft entschlummert Natur, um ihre Züge  
Schwebt der Dämmerung zarte Verhüllung und sie  
Lächelt, die holde.

(Page 97.)

Goethe addresses the brook in light, laughing lines, whose very movement reflects the rippling stream,

Wo willst du klares Bächlein hin  
So munter?  
Du eilst mit frohem leichtem Sinn  
Hinunter.

(I, page 127.)

And Körner, in equally appropriate measure, addresses the silent stepping of the morning light through the gates of darkness,

Süßes Licht! Aus goldnen Pforten  
Brichst du siegend durch die Nacht.  
Schöner Tag! Du bist erwacht.

(Page 83.)

Platen, in his ode to the Rhine, addresses it as a friend,

Lebe wohl, alter Rhein, wohl,  
Wie oft erquicktest du mich!

(Page 8.)

And also to the wind—

Schwelle die Segel, günstiger Wind!  
Trage mein Schiff an das Ufer der Ferne.

(Page 12)

while Schiller, with more stately stepping of the muse, gives greeting to the sun and the light-crowned mountain,

Sei mir gegrüsst, mein Berg mit dem rötlich strahlenden  
Gipfel,

Sei mir Sonne gegrüsst die ihn so lieblich bescheint.

(I, page 24.)

Other unusual figures are "the murderer ocean," "the mountain stretching its stone arms towards the clouds," "nature distilling wine from the hills," "nature walling in the land with Alps," "the rainbow the child of the sun," and the most strikingly original perhaps of all, the beautiful lines which stand at the close of Lenau's "Himmelstrauer:"

Nun schleichen aus dem Moore kühle Schauer  
Und leise Nebel über's Heidefeld;  
Der Himmel liess, nachsinnend seiner Trauer,  
Die Sonne lässig fallen aus der Hand.

(Page 79.)

These examples serve to show the field, as broad as Nature herself, where the imagination and the discerning eye of the 19th century poets moved and found the world breathing with a life like their own. Or did they merely *read* themselves into a *lifeless* world? Just here it matters not for our purposes. Suffice it that, through Nature, their thoughts and sympathies were multiplied, and their literature enriched.

## VII.—MAN'S MOOD REFLECTED BY NATURE.

In Wundereinklang ist das Leben  
Der Menschenbrust mit der Natur;  
Was jener als Gefühl gegeben,  
Geht hier in lichter Farbenspur.

(Körner, page 170.)

"Nature always wears the colors of the spirit," says Emerson; and elsewhere, "The greatest delight which the fields and the woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them."

The next step in the orderly development of the nature-sense, after *personification*, the giving of life to the outer world, would be the discovery of occasional harmonies between the life in man and the life in Nature; that is, a sympathy springing up *on occasion* between the observer's mood and that of Nature. Men had come to see the *raging* storm, the *frowning* precipice, the *weeping* willow, the *melancholy* day, the *smiling* sun, the *laughing* meadow, the *blithe* brook. How they came to apply these personifying epithets to these particular phenomena may be subject to discussion. It involves a principle which in its operations goes back to the very origins of language. Professor Max Müller, in his *Science of Language* (Vol. I, p. 512), cites two such authorities as Adam Smith and Leibnitz as holding diametrically opposite views as to whether in the early period of the language the word *cave* represented to the savage mind *first* the abstract idea of *hollowness*, and was afterwards applied to the individual object which possessed that quality, or vice versa; that is, whether the mind moves from the *generic* to the *individual*, or from the *individual* to the *generic*. So far reaching a consideration of the subject as that is beyond the scope of this essay. As to the question under consideration, we may presume that the earlier writers saw in the individual storm those ideas which they attributed in the

epithet *angry, melancholy, laughing*, etc., applied generally to man. This application of qualities to the phenomena of Nature we have treated under *Personification*. It is scarcely more than an individual application of this when man, in any one of these moods, should find the same mood reflected to him from Nature; when in high spirits he should see gladness expressed in the bright morning; or in gloominess, should feel that the dreary day was but in sympathy with him; or when exalted with pride, should see the same spirit in the towering rock, and name it "Stozenfels"; or when bent under the burden of sorrow, should feel a kinship with the bending willow, and plant it by the grave of the loved one in perpetual memory; when with soul wrought up he should cry,

"Brauset, Winde! schäume, Meer!  
Mir im Herzen braust es mehr."

Biese, commenting (p. 7) upon this sentence from Vischer, "the act by which we believe to find in the soulless our own soul-life rests simply upon a comparison. The physical brightness is like the spiritual brightness," etc., says, "The rock seems to rise full of scorn into the air, we think and feel ourselves into it . . . and so it not only appears to rise scornful into the air, but *does* so, . . . so the tree stretches its arms longingly towards heaven or drops them in melancholy towards the earth; the rain runs with heavy weeping through the leaves; the mountain-world, with its heaven-kissing snows, its blinding glaciers, its rushing torrents, is exalted and sublime, free and proud, etc. But the outer Nature would not become the symbol of the heart, if there did not exist an inner relation between the human heart within and the physical world without, if there did not meet us and speak to us intelligently a pervading spirit in all Nature." It is this "pervading spirit" in man and Nature which we find dominating the poetry of the 19th century, of which Wordsworth is the incarnation—a spirit which was well-nigh unknown even to the 18th century poets, to say nothing of those of the 13th.

The nature-sense has at this stage developed into a direct

sympathy between the individual man and the individual phenomenon of Nature which stands over against him. It is no longer vague and general; but has become clear and specific. Another new element which deserves our notice in this stage is that it depends on *occasion*. Man in an *undefined* state of mind cannot find sympathy in a *vague* landscape, nor feel any sympathy towards it. He must be in some *definite* mood and before some *specific* phenomenon. No attitude could be more conducive than this to the production of lyric poetry, which is essentially the outpouring of a wrought-up soul towards some exterior object. This is the situation—a world of human hearts in touch with a world of sympathetic Nature. Does not this alone suffice to account for an epoch of lyric poetry unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled, in the world's literature—an epoch which includes Goethe and Schiller and Heine, Burns and Shelley and Wordsworth, Longfellow and Lanier and Lowell, and Victor Hugo?

With a striking consistency we find that as the nature-sense in its development, proceeding from step to step, grows deeper and more complex, the part which the Minnesingers play decreases by inverse proportion till now, with the appearance of this individual sympathy, we find that they have, from the very nature of the subject, well-nigh passed beyond our consideration.

In the succeeding pages we shall have to devote our attention most largely to the modern period, these later phases of the nature-sense appearing but faintly in the early lyricists. When men could say with Goethe, in "Werther" (VI, p. 7), —to translate—"when I lie in the tall grass by the babbling brook, and see nearer to the earth a thousand manifold little sprigs of grass; when I feel nearer to my heart the swarms of the little world among the reeds; the countless forms of worms and gnats, and feel the presence of the Almighty who created us in his own image—when then in the gloaming the world round about me and the sky rests in my soul like the form of my beloved"—. When men could speak thus of the world round about *them*, they had made a great stride beyond the Minnesinger and his distant attitude towards the

world about *him*. However, we may find already here and there in the earlier bards the *first beginnings* of sympathy between man and Nature on occasion. Dietmar, speaking of the effect which winter has upon him, says—

sît ich bluomen niht ensach  
 noch erhôrte der vogel sanc,  
 sît was mîr min fröide kurz  
 und ouch der jâmer alze lanc.

(M. F., page 34.)

And Reinmar, speaking of the coming of May, says:

kûme ich des erbeiten mac.  
 sît ich fröide niht enpflac  
 sît der kalte rîfe lac.

(M. F., page 203.)

It must be noted of these examples, however, that they do not contain that clear, distinct sympathy between man and some particular phenomenon of Nature at some particular time, which we find in the later poets, but are the vague influence of a *season*. The old lyricist had not drawn near enough to Nature for her utterances to be very distinct in his poetic ear.

Goethe's nature-creed—and in large measure the creed of the later epoch—is couched in these lines of Faust,

Erhabner Geist, du gabst mir, gabst mir alles,  
 Warum ich bat.  
 Gabst mir die herrliche Natur zum Königreich  
 Kraft, sie zu fühlen, zu geniessen. Nicht  
 Kalt stauenden Besuch erlaubst du nur,  
 Vergönnest mir in ihre tiefe Brust  
 Wie in den Busen eines Freundes zu schauen.  
 Du führst die Reihe der Lebendigen  
 Vor mir vorbei, und lehrst mich meine Brüder  
 Im stillen Busch, in Luft und Wasser kennen.

(III, page 143.)

The last lines contain the strongest expression of sympathy—not only birds and animals, sentient things, are akin to him; but even the *bush* and *air* and *water* are his brethren in the cosmic family.

For such a man there is, therefore, no strainedness, nor

affectation, when he attributes even the deepest feelings of man to the inanimate world. When, for instance, on the occasion of his wife's death, he addresses the sun vainly striving to shine through the clouds,

Du versuchst, o' Sonne vergebens  
 Durch die düstern Wolken zu scheinen!  
 Der ganze Gewinn meines Lebens  
 Ist, ihren Verlust zu beweinen,

(I, page 686)

we feel that he is speaking in all the sincerity of his grief.

Literature scarce affords a more exquisite lyric gem than his "Wanderers Nachtlied,"

Ueber allen Gipfeln  
 Ist Ruh,  
 In allen Wipfeln  
 Spürest du  
 Kaum einen Hauch;  
 Die Vögelein schweigen in Walde.  
 Warte nur, balde  
 Ruhest du auch.

(I, page 66.)

Here the poet is one with the landscape. The calm and peace and hush of the evening are over all. They are the very atmosphere. Life's striving ended, desire stilled, submissive waiting—the hush of eventide. Such the soul, and such the setting. A perfect harmony.

Heine, in his "Der Traurige," gives a fine example of the sympathetic response of Nature to the mood of man,

Aus dem wilden Lärm der Stadter  
 Fluchtet er sich nach dem Wald.  
 Lustig rauschen dort die Blatter,  
 Lust'ger Vogelsang erschallt.

Doch der sang verstummet balde  
 Traurig rauschet Baum und Blatt,  
 Wenn der Traurige dem Walde  
 Langsam sich genahert hat.

(I, page 35.)

This is an unusually strong example. Here the mood of the man drives away the joyousness of the wood, till his sor-

row comes to pervade the whole scene. Usually man simply *finds* Nature in sympathy with him. Here the attuning takes place before his eyes.

The reverse of this response from the side of Nature is given in another of his poems, where he makes two happy lovers gradually succumb to the influence of their surroundings, till at last they are silent and fall to weeping, they know not why. A kind of telepathy, as it were, by which one mind is brought into accord with another;

Auf einem Grab, da steht eine Linde,  
Drin pfeifen die Vögel und Abendwinde,  
Und drunter sitzt auf dem grünen Platz  
Der Müllersknecht mit seinem Schatz.

Die Winde die wehen so lind und so schaurig  
Die Vögel die singen so süß und so traurig,  
Die schwatzenden Buhlen, die werden stumm  
Sie weinen und wissen selbst nicht warum.

(I, page 264.)

Another example of this silent compelling of man from the side of Nature is given in Herders "Andenken an Neapel," where, watching the evening glow fade away in the still sea, he is overcome to tears with yearning which the passing of this beauty breathes into his soul,

Wenn die Abendröt' im stillen Meere  
Sanft verschwebte, und mit seinem Heere  
Glänzender der Mond zum Himmel stieg,  
Ach! da flossen mit so neuem Sehnen  
Unschuldvolle, jugendliche Thränen,  
Nur ein Seufzer sprach, und alles schwieg.

(I, page 257.)

Lenau, with fine poetic touch, takes us with him on his walk into the "winter night," till we can see the ghostly fir trees bending under their burdens of snow, and feel the oppressive cold which compels the Landscape to silence,

Wie feierlich die Gegend schweigt!  
Der Mond bescheint die alten Fichten,  
Die sehnsuchtsvoll zum Tod geneigt,  
Den Zweig zurück zur Erde richten—

(Page 46)

and the feverish heart finds a voice in the poet's following appeal,

Frost! friere mir ins Herz hinein,  
Tief in das heissbewegte, wilde!  
Dass einmal Ruh mag drinnen sein,  
Wie hier im nächtlichen Gefilde.

In "Frühling's Tod" he presents to us another phase of Nature's sympathy. It is not a sympathy from Nature to man: rather man and Nature, standing side by side, pour out their common sympathy over the death of spring—

Warum, o Lüfte, flüstert ihr so bang?  
Durch alle Haine weht die Trauerkunde,  
Und störrisch klagt der trüben Welle Gang:  
Das ist des holden Frühlings Todesstunde.

(Page 67.)

Lenau, too, has felt that mystery mentioned by Heine above, that spirit of sadness which creeps unannounced into the heart, coming from nowhere; so unaccountable that in the midst of a pleasant scene, suddenly the tears well up into the eyes—

Wie mich oft in grünen Hainen  
Überrascht ein dunkles Weh,  
Muss ich nun auch plötzlich weinen,  
Weiss nicht wie?—hier auf der See.

(Page 130.)

In the second stanza he suggests an explanation:

Trägt Natur auf allen Wegen  
Einen grossen, ewgen Schmerz,  
Den sie mir als Muttersegen  
Heimlich strömet in das Herz?

The brooding sadness which steals into his heart unawares is, then, the voice of the mother whispering into his secret heart of the "eternal suffering" which she bears.

Körner, watching the red morning of the day of battle, reads his own feeling into the sky, and "the sanguine sunrise" becomes prophetic of the bloody battle that is to come—

Ahnungsgrauend, todesmutig,  
Bricht der grosse Morgen an

Und die Sonne kalt und blutig  
Leuchtet unsrer blut'gen Bahn.

(Page 27.)

A frequent turn of this phase of the sense is to represent Nature in contrast with man's mood—which is the obverse of the same element. For instance, Heine complains of the gladness of the world when he is sad—

Die Welt ist so schön und der Himmel so blau,  
Und de Lüfte, die wehen so lind und so lau,  
Und die Blumen winken auf blühender Au,  
Und funkeln und glitzern im Morgentau,  
Und die Menschen jubeln, wohin ich shau'—  
Und doch möcht' ich im Grabe liegen,  
Und mich an ein todes Mädchen schmiegen.

(I, page 77.)

And Arndt, in "Frühling und Liebe," furnishes a picture of contrast, where the joyousness of Nature is opposed to the sorrow of the singer—

Gott grüss' euch Blümchen fromm und schön  
Euch Vöglein hold und feine!  
Ich muss im Frühling einsam gehn,  
Muss traurig sehn  
Die grüne Lust der Haine.

(Page 68.)

Similar examples of *contrast* between Nature and man's mood are found, too, in some of the old singers; for instance, Reinmar says,

jo enmac mir niht der bluomen schîn  
gehelfen für die sorge mîn,  
und och der vogelline sanc.  
ez muoz mir staete winter sîn:  
sô rehte swaer ist mîn gedanc.

(M. F., pages 188-9.)

And Kuonrat, der junge, strikes the same note,—

Waz hilfet mich diu sumerzit  
und die vil liechten langen tage?  
Mîn tröst an einer frowen lit  
von der ich grôzen kumber trage.

(D. L., page 220.)

On the other hand, Anehalt, speaking of winter, says,

Ich wart noch nie sô von sime getwange  
daz ich durch in lieze die mîn vroude sîn.  
Des danke ich doch der vil lieben frowen mîn.

(D. L., page 125.)

Kuonrat, der Schenke, says, in like manner of winter,

Swie der winter uns wil twingen,  
doch wil ich der lieben singen.

(D. L., page 232.)

Beyond these simple, general contrasts between the seasons and his mood, and the dimly reflected mood which, to be sure, may be found in all his allusions to spring and gladness, winter and sorrow—beyond these there seems to be no affinity between man's mood and Nature in the Minnesingers.

Lüning in his treatment of Nature in the old and middle German Epic, cites from "Parzival" a more striking example of reflected mood, which is given here by the way, "elliu grüene in dûhte val, sin herze d'ougen des betwanc." (Parz. IV 8); i. e. his heart compelled his eyes to see as the heart was, and the green seemed faded.

The attitude of man towards the outer world is changed now. It is no longer an admiration of her beauties, a simple enjoyment of her ravishing forms and colors, a delight in the music of her voices, an awe in the presence of her sublimities. It passes now beyond a mere aesthetic appreciation,—beyond mere ecstasy over pictures, beyond rapture before some entrancing scene. It ceases to be a thrill as when some electric shock is felt. It is now the warm, continuous heart to heart communion, such as exists between two individuals in whom there is a mutual understanding. It is not such a knowledge as comes from cold investigation, for "Never can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick." Faust tried in vain by incantations to catch the secret of the old Erdgeist. The spirit departed with these ominous words: "Du gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst, nicht mir." But afterwards when Faust, alone in the forest, flung himself upon the bosom of Nature, he had come to know more:—

Du hast mir nicht umsonst  
Dein Angesicht im Feuer zugewendet.

. . . . .  
Vergönnest mir in ihre tiefe Brust  
Wie in den Busen eines Freunds zu schauen.

It is friend with friend; "man imprisoned, man crystalized, man vegetative speaks to man," says the poet-seer. Such is, in a measure, the later development of the nature-sense. Its fundamental element, a spiritual understanding rather than an intellectual insight. Lenau expresses this essential in these lines:—

Willst du im Walde weilen,  
Um deine Brust zu heilen,  
So muss dein Herz verstehen  
Die Stimmen die dort wehen.

(Page 296.)

The more men felt the responsiveness of Nature to themselves, the more they were impelled towards Nature. Thus far we have found scarcely more than a passive responsiveness. This rapidly develops into an active seeking of Nature by man. We find him yearning for the solace of Nature, fleeing to her, seeking a sympathy in joy or sorrow. Rousseau fled away from the distracting society of his fellows to calm his heart in the soothing lap of Nature. One of our own poets indicates this potency of Nature upon himself: "I fled in tears to the woodland and laid me down on the earth. There somewhat like the beating of many hearts came up to me out of the ground, and I looked and my cheek lay close to a violet. Then my heart took courage."—(Lanier.)

Among the old poets we find the very scantiest evidence of any tendency to seek Nature for inward benefit, whether of encouragement or solace or instruction. Liutolt von Savene speaks of the joy which bird-song brings—

Wol in den der kleinen vogele singen  
troestet und der bluomen schön!  
Wie mac dem an vröuden misselingen?

(D. L., page 127.)

And Toggenburc more explicitly urges those who would find joy to turn to "the green linden,"

Hât ie man ze fröiden muot,  
der sol kêren ze der grüenen linden:  
Ir wol blienden sumerbluot  
mac man dâ bi loubeschaten vinden.

(D. L., page 199.)

The last couplet strongly suggests that the joy which he finds in the linden is no higher delight than that which we have found elsewhere in the Minnesinger's writings—a joy based on physical comfort under the shade of the trees. These two selections represent the whole range of the early poet's longing towards Nature as comforter.

Compare this with Goethe's address to a similar phenomenon of Nature—

Anmutig Thal! du immergrüner Hain!  
Mein Herz begrüsst euch wieder auf das Beste  
Entfaltet mir die schwerbehanguen Äste,  
Nehmt freundlich mich in eure Schatten ein,  
Erquickt von euern Höhn am Tag der Lieb und Lust  
Mit frischer Luft und Balsam meine Brust!

(I, page 421)

This flight from humanity to Nature is one of the dominant elements in the latter lyric, manifesting itself in all the varying moods of the mind from the most unrestrained light-heartedness to the deepest emotions of awe and sorrow. Goethe's overflow of youthful spirits is clearly seen in these lines taken from his earliest productions—

Durch Feld und Wald ze schweifen,  
Mein Liedchen wegzupfeifen,  
So gehts von Ort zu Ort.

.....  
Ich kann sie kaum erwarten,  
Die erste Blum im Garten,  
Die erste Blüt am Baum.

(I, page 15.)

The same exuberant spirit flows through many of Körner's poems, an irresistible charm of the wide, wide world, which made him forsake everything and rush out into the free air

under the broad sky; a spirit that could not endure the oppressive house;

Schweigend liegt die Friedensnacht  
Auf dem stillen Thale,  
Und es bleicht der Sterne Pracht  
In des Mondes Strahle.  
Wie die dunklen Schatten dort  
Sinn und Herz ergreifen!  
Aus dem Zimmer muss ich fort,  
Muss den Wald durchstreifen.

(Page 159.)

Heine, too, loved to lose himself in the broad freedom of virgin Nature:

Durch die Tannen will ich schweifen,  
Wo die muntre Quelle springt  
Wo die stolzen Hirsche wandeln,  
Wo die liebe Drossel singt  
Auf die Berge will ich steigen,  
Auf die schroffen Felsenhöhn,  
Wo die grauen Schlossruinen  
In dem Morgenlichte stehn.

(II Page 69.)

This is a representative example of one phase of the modern movement in the nature-sense—an illustration of the gentler side of the sense. Before Heine it had found a voice not only in the lyric but also in prose. It is the spirit of "Werther" of "Wilhelm Meister," of "Paul and Virginia." It is the basis of the romantic novel,—this setting of human life into natural scenery. Not only is there an attraction towards the gentler aspects of Nature, but a real charm in the sterner features. That mood in which a man finds delight in climbing the wild mountains of a stormy night is something different from the mood which enables him to be soothed by the gentle murmuring of a brook beneath green boughs. In Chamisso we read these notable lines:

Ich hab' in den Klüften des Berges gehaust  
Gar manche schaurige Nacht,  
Und, wann in den Föhren der Sturm gesaust,  
Recht wild in den Sturm gelacht.

Da, wo die Spur sich des Menschen verlor,  
 Ward's erst mir im Busen leicht;  
 Ich bin geklommen auf Gipfel empor,  
 Die sonst nur der Adler erreicht.

(Page 21.)

But the lyric of the modern singer has its softer notes as well as its deep bass, and often while we are listening to the vibrations of these chords suddenly the lyrist touches the minor chords into music. Such a singer is Chamisso, when he turns from the music of the mountain storm to the melody of the azure sky,

Heiter blick' ich, ohne Reue  
 In des Himmels reine Bläue,  
 Zu der Sterne lichtigem Gold,  
 Ist der Himmel, ist die Freundschaft,  
 Ist die Liebe mir doch hold.  
 Laure, mein Schicksal, laure!

(Page 52.)

The later poets show not only a recognition and appreciation of the sublime in Nature as already indicated,—in mountains and storms—not only a distant admiration, but a longing to lose themselves in the great hills; to throw themselves into the storm, to press it to their bosom, as it were, to be rapt away by the mighty wind for love of its moving spirit. So Rückert in "An den Sturmwind" appeals to the storm:

Mächtiger der du die Wipfel dir beugst  
 Brausend von Krone zu Krone entsteigst  
 Wandle du stürmender, wandie nur fort,  
 Reiss' mir den stürmenden Busen mit fort.  
 Wie das Gewölke, das donnernd entfliegt,  
 Dir auf der brausenden Schwinge sich wiegt,  
 Führe den Geist aus dem irdischen Haus  
 In die Unendlichkeit stürmend hinaus.

(Page 9.)

The first lines of Körner's ode, "Beim Gewitter," furnish a fine example of the responsiveness of the poet to the storm; his bosom heaves, his heart swells, his whole nature is wrought up, as the lightnings play and the thunders roll with majesty across the stormy sky, till he would fain rush

out from his narrow "cell" to where the might of the storm finds play:

Der Donner rollt in wilden Regenschauern,  
Die Blitze leuchten majestätisch drein.  
Mich treibt die Sehnsucht aus den dumpfen Mauern:  
Wie gross ist's dort in Blitz und Regenschauern  
Wie in der engen Zelle hier so klein!

(Page 238.)

Heine finds that the climbing of the mountains has an ennobling influence, despite the labor of the ascent. The largeness and freedom of the surroundings seems to enter into the observer, till he feels himself newborn, and free like the eagle:—

Wenn du den steilen Berg ersteigst  
Wirst du beträchtlich ächzen:  
Doch wenn du den felsigen Gipfel erreichst,  
Hörst du die Adler Krächzen.

Dort wirst du selbst ein Adler fast,  
Du bist wie neu geboren,  
Du fühlst dich frei, du fühlst du hast  
Dort unten nicht viel verloren.

(I, page 294.)

This seems to be the reverse of the more usual reading of self into Nature. Here it is the appropriation of Nature to self. In the presence of the great he becomes for the moment great. On the mountain-top he feels himself transformed into an eagle. This transfer of qualities has long been known in some of its manifestations. A rider seeing and feeling the motions of his horse feels the transfer of all the horse's energy to himself, feels powerful like his steed. But this transfer depends upon a recognition of these qualities in the circumstances. The engineer with his hand on the throttle feels the power of his engine pass to him; the passenger looking from the window feels no thrill. The old poets were in the presence of as sublime aspects of Nature as those which the moderns saw, but they felt no thrill of transferred qualities, because they did not see them first in Nature.

But Lenau can sing,

Des Berges Gipfel war erschwungen,  
 Der trotzig in die Tiefe schaut;  
 Natur, von deinem Reiz durchdrungen,  
 Wie schlug mein Herz so frei, so laut!

(Page 103.)

Although the contribution which Nature had thus far made to men was very great; although it was a spiritual influence, rather than an intellectual quickening, (which later came in the advance of natural science), still our poets of this later period had not found in Nature that which Cowper saw vaguely, and Wordsworth clearly. Palgrave after quoting these lines from Wordsworth,

The Being, that is in the clouds and air,  
 That is in the green leaves among the groves,  
 Maintains a deep and reverential care  
 For the unoffending creatures whom he loves,

says, "But this peculiar sentiment seems to have been unknown to mediæval feeling about Nature."

But rarely do we hear even from these modern poets a word of the *moral* contribution which Nature makes. They did not feel with Emerson, that "the happiest man is he who learns from Nature the lesson of worship." Klopstock, who is the spiritual brother of the hymnist Cowper, finds in Nature more moral teaching than does any other poet of the group; indeed this is his chief use of Nature, to praise the wisdom and majesty of the Creator. Again and again he makes Nature testify to the existence of the Invisible.

Take these lines from "Frühlingfeier:"

Nun schweben sie, rauschen sie, wirbeln die Winde.  
 Wie beugt sich der Wald, wie hebt sich der Strom!  
 Sichtbar, wie du es Sterblichen sein kannst,  
 Ja, Das bist du, sichtbar, Unendlicher!

Der Wald neigt sich der Strom flieheth, und ich  
 Falle nicht auf mein Angesicht?  
 Herr, Herr, Gott, barmherzig und gnädig!  
 Du Naher, erbarme dich meiner!

(Page 119.)

Compare this with the storm song of the Hebrew lyricist in the 29th Psalm;

The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.  
 The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars;  
 Yea, the Lord breaketh in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

The Lord sat as king at the flood;  
 Yea, the Lord sitteth as king forever.  
 The Lord will give strength unto his people;  
 The Lord will bless his people with peace.

There is between these two lyrics a striking resemblance, both in substance and in form. They both refer to the storm, one as the voice, the other as the manifestation of the Creator. In both the retreat of the storm is heard, and the mercy of the Creator acknowledged. Both end, as it were, with peace—the bow after the tempest.

This is not a common element in the German lyric, however. Even to the pastor Herder Nature is but dimly moral in its teachings, his use of it being not different from that of the other poets. These lines from Lenau's "Waldlieder," which strongly suggest those quoted above, and at the last lead us to anticipate a like ending, fail to bring in a moral reference;

Der Donner bricht herein  
 Es kracht die Welt in Wettern,  
 Als wollt am Felsgestein  
 Der Himmel sich zerschmettern.

Doch mir im Herzensgrund  
 Ist Heiterkeit und Stille;  
 Mir wächst in solcher Stund'  
 Und härtet sich der Wille.

(Page 295.)

The peace of the conclusion is not here that of *trust*, but that of the *will*.

### VIII—NATURE AS BACKGROUND.

"It is a psychological fact," says Lüning (p. 278), "that the spirit when aroused seeks by unconscious inclinations to bring itself into accord with the surrounding Nature, that is, is accustomed to seek out that surrounding which harmonizes with its mood." The writer can scarcely mean that this psychological fact is universal and true of all times, for in order to seek a harmonious and natural surrounding there is necessary the pre-recognition of expression in Nature, of different moods in different phases; a recognition of that in Nature which is in harmony with that in self; and the ability thus to see moods in Nature has not existed at all times in men. To put it differently men have not always conceded a personality to the inanimate world. Granted this concession on the part of man, however, we may expect him to seek in Nature that surrounding which is in accord with his mood. In proportion as men recognize this personal element in Nature will they seek it, and in proportion as they seek it will they come to use it in the art of expression, whether of pen or paint, to heighten and set off that element of human life which, at the time, they are seeking to present. It may not be a conscious art, but it must *once* have been so. The "unconscious inclination" springs from conscious effort. Shakespeare's use of Nature in *Macbeth* is so natural that we cannot think of it as conscious art, but the poet must long have studied the expression in Nature's various phenomena.

The use of Nature as background in literature can scarcely precede a recognition of affinity between man and Nature. It is subsequent in genesis, though it may be contemporary in use.

Commentators upon the early Epic seem not to be quite agreed as to the strength of the nature-sense in the German Epic; which disagreement can perhaps be explained by examination into the influences operating on the literature at different periods. Biese says, (p. 99), "there is scarcely in

world-literature an Epic so poor in painting of time and place as the 'Nibelungenlied'—Elementary nature plays no role *not even as frame*—the portraying of the time (of day) is as insipid as possible—Even the picturing of places is not more individual.—Even the description of the hunt and Siegfried's murder is sober and wanting with reference to landscape.—No trace of any sympathetic "Naturanschauung," which lends to flowers, trees and mountain a sensitive, sympathetic heart—as even the old Norse Sage does so touchingly at Balder's death!" Lüning says, (p. 276), "That poet will have to reckon upon the greatest effect who keenly feels this secret connection between place and action, who knows how to catch that hidden soul of a certain landscape, and bring it into concert with his action, in short knows how to find the right stage for his play. The Germanic poets have not let escape them such a means of preparing themselves a ground in the minds of men, and especially in the Anglo Saxon poetry do we find very impressive examples of the harmony between place and action."

These two German authors agree in granting a background use of Nature in *the very early poetry*,—Norse and Anglo Saxon. But Lüning says further (p. 278), "On German ground we have likewise a number of such cases of agreement in setting and action," citing in evidence from *Tristan and Isolde* and other middle German Epics. Upon the whole, however, it seems that a nature-background is not common even in the middle German Epic.

Why, it may be asked, does the use of Nature as a sympathetic background to human action or emotion appear in this early literature, and fail from a later period in the same fields? Is it not evidence against an orderly development in the nature-sense? This explanation is suggested in answer. The Norse and Saxon mythology is very like that of the Greeks in its richness and scope, especially in its pantheistic interpretation of Nature. Behind the phenomena of Nature were the gods. Odin was in every movement of the air. When it thundered it was Thor with his hammer. To these old singers it was not so much Nature, as we accept her

today, as it was the manifestation of gods with human qualities. They had, therefore, in their mythology lifted Nature from the inanimate, and given her a manifold human personality. Their treatment of Nature was the classic treatment at bottom. With the conquests of Charlemagne about 800 A. D. began the wane of mythology and the waxing of Christianity. The early writings came under the influence of mythology, the later writing in the new order of things, when Nature had, in the minds of men, been robbed of her mythical personality, and had lain for a long while voiceless. The difference between the Saxon poem and the middle German poem is due to the same causes which, operating through longer time, replaced in literature the Greek interpretation of Nature by the modern. The middle German nature-sense was not a continuation of the Norse and Saxon. It was a new growth in new fields, and had to have its slow beginnings.

It would be an anachronism, if we found in the Minnesingers a prominent nature-background. We find, in fact, a great poverty. The old singer rarely gives a nature-setting to his persons. His very use of Nature precludes such. He rarely brings Nature and man together in a picture. It is either a comparison of Nature and woman by figures, or, rarely an ode to some phase of Nature. He rarely blends human action and nature-effect. When he does so, it is a simple, idyllic picture as for instance when Steimâr describes his mistress as going out into the meadow to gather flowers,

Nu nimt si ûf die heide ir ganc  
in des meien kleider,  
Dâ si bluomen zeinem kranze  
brichet den si zuo dem tanze  
tragen wil.

(D. L. page 241.)

or in Tanhûser's really romantic description of his sweetheart sitting by a fountain in the wood, which reminds us rather of St. Pierre,

Ein riviere ich dâ gesach,  
durch den fôres gienc ein bach

zetal über ein plâniure.  
 ich sleich ir nâch unz ich si fant die schoenen créâtiure.  
 bî dem fontâne saz diu klâre sîeze von faitiure.

(D. L., page 193);

Walter gives us a pleasant picture—a summer idyl—in his “Traumbedeutung,” where on a hot day he comes to a spring by the wood and falls to sleep under a tree by the spring, while the birds are singing near by, and the meadow-flowers blooming;

Dô der sumer komen was  
 und die bluomen durch daz gras  
 wûnneclîche entsprungen,  
 aldâ die voegele sunge,  
 dar kom ich gegangen  
 an einen anger langen;  
 dâ ein lûter brunne espranc;  
 vor dem walde was sîn ganc,  
 dâ diu nahtegale sanc.  
 Bî dem brunnen stuont ein boum,  
 dâ gesach ich einen troum.

(Page 14.)

Such examples as the following from Kristân are not uncommon,

Wunneclîchen sol man schouwen,  
 meien schîn über elliū lant,  
 Voegele singent in den ouwen  
 die man dicke truric vant.  
 Swâ ê lac vil toup diu heide,  
 dâ siht man schoen ougen weide;  
 nust mîn liehter meigen tac ;

(D. L., page 138.)

But this is not background use of Nature, since no person really appears upon the scene. It is contemplation of the landscape from without, not a mingling of Nature and human action. The human element is thus usually held aloof from Nature by these poets.

Let us consider this element as found in the later poets.

Heine approaches nearer to the simple love idyl of the old singers than perhaps any other of the later period. This might well be a translation of some minnesong,

Der Mond ist aufgegangen  
 Und überstrahlt die Well'n;  
 Ich halte mein Liebchen umfangen.  
 Und unsre Herzen schwell'n.

(I. page 100.)

This stanza from Uland's "Die Nonne," may be taken as a companion picture;

Im stillen Klostergarten  
 Eine bleiche Jungfrau ging;  
 Der Mond beschien sie trübe,  
 An ihrer Wimper hing  
 Die Thräne zarter Liebe.

(Page 120.)

The same nature-setting in part is used in both pictures, and yet the tones in the two pictures are diametrically opposite. Each poet has shown a mastery in the use of Nature. In both cases it is moonlight, but notice how a few touches change the tone. The first is by the shore and the waves are touched by the gentle moon—the setting for happy love. The second is in the still cloister garden and the feeble moonbeams touch a pale face—the setting for blighted love.

Bürger paints a pastoral in seven words,

Ein niedlich Schäfermädchen stand  
 Am klaren Wiesenbache.

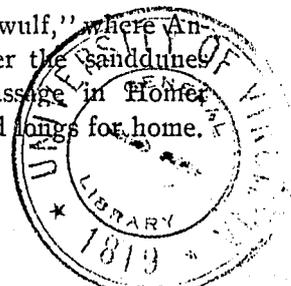
(Page 24.)

Heine in "Erklärung" catches admirably the spirit of the place when he blends "Heimweh" and twilight falling over the rippling sea;

Herangedämmert kam der Abend,  
 Wilder toste die Flut.  
 Und ich sass am Strande, und schaute zu  
 Dem weissen Tanz der Wellen,  
 Und meine Brust schwoll auf wie das Meer,  
 Und sehnend ergriff mich ein tiefes Heimweh,

(I. page 170.)

Lüning cites a parallel passage in "Cynewulf," where Andreadan, sorrow laden, goes at twilight over the sanddunes along the breakers; and refers to the passage in Homer where Odysseus sits by the waving sea and longs for home.



For the same in painting see Böcklin's (b. 1827) "Villa am Meer."

The moderns are more versatile than the old poets in their use of Nature, finding a background for other moods than *love* and *longing*. Here is a setting for death-lament, taken from Chamisso's "Todesklage";

Windsbraut tobet unverdrossen  
Eule schreiet in den Klippen—  
Weh! Euch hat der Tod geschlossen  
Blaue Augen, ros'ge Lippen!

(Page 80)

This background which Körner paints for the funeral procession needs no comment,

Die Erde schweigt mit tiefem, tiefem Trauern,  
Vom leisen Geisterhauch der Nacht umflüstert;  
Horch wie der Sturm in alter Eichen knistert  
Und heulend braust durch die verfall'nen Mauern.

Auf Gräbern liegt, als wollt'er ewig dauern,  
Ein tiefer Schnee, der Erde still verschwistert,  
Und finst'rer Nebel, der die Nacht umdüstert,  
Umarmt die Welt mit kalten Todesschauern.

Es blickt der Silbermond in bleichem Zittern  
Mit stiller Wehmut durch die öden Fenster:—  
Auch seiner Strahlen sanftes Licht verglüht!—

Und leicht und langsam zu des Kirchthors Gittern  
Still wie das Wandern nächtlicher Gespenster,  
Ein Leichenzug mit Geisterschritten zieht.

(Page 99.)

Quite a different mood is seen in Lenau's "Abendbilder," where the background is made to accord with the spirit of prayer in the foreground. It is evening in the picture: the sun is sinking over the forest: the meadow is hushed; scarce is the low twinkling of the bells audible as the herd slowly crop the grass: the simple shepherd, turning towards the setting sun, lets fall his flute and his staff, while he folds his hands in silent prayer,—an Angelus in words,—

Schon verstummt die Matte: den satten Rindern  
 Selten nur enthallt das Geglock am Halse,  
 Und es pflückt der wählende Zahn nur, lässig  
 Dunklere Gräser.

Und dort blickt der schuldlose Hirt der Sonne  
 Sinnend nach; dem Sinnenden jetzt entfallen  
 Flöt' und Stab, es falten die Hände sich zum  
 Stillen Gebete.

(Page 97.)

The following selections from Lenau are unusual, because they show the use of nature-background not to heighten the effect of human foreground, but to give a fitting frame for some individual aspect in the landscape itself. In the first the "forsaken, silent forest-chapel" is almost human, so strongly does it suggest a melancholy mood, there under the shadow of the mountain at sunset of a bleak November day, the dead leaves of autumn driven past it in the wind;

Der dunkle Wald umrauscht den Wiesengrund,  
 Gar düster liegt der graue Berg dahinter;  
 Das dürre Laub, der Windhauch giebt es kund,  
 Geschritten kommt allmählich schon der Winter.

Dort wo die Eiche rauscht am Bergesfuss,  
 Wo bang vorüberklagt des Baches Welle,  
 Dort winket wie aus alter Zeit ein Gruss,  
 Die längst verlassne, stille Waldkapelle.

(Page 142.)

The foreground of the second is likewise taken from the landscape itself, but here it is a *castle-ruin*. How admirably does the poet, by his choice of setting, distinguish between the neglected chapel and the ruined castle. The one is of the present, the other is of the past. Therefore the bleak day is the setting of the first; the still moonlit summer night and the sighing in the fir trees—the spirits' hour—is the setting of the second.—

Vom Berge schaut hinaus ins tiefe Schweigen  
 Der Mond beseelten schönen Sommernacht  
 Die Burgruine: und in Tannenzweigen  
 Hinseufzt ein Lüftchen, das allein bewacht

Die trümmervolle Einsamkeit,  
Den bangen Laut: "Vergänglichkeit!"

(Page 152)

A not infrequent treatment of nature-background is *contrast*, where the foreground is brought out in greater relief by contrasted setting—the obverse of the above cited treatment. The old poets' use of *contrast* leaves us in doubt as to whether they intended a landscape effect, or merely a contrast between moods not brought really upon the same canvass: as when Wintersteten says,

Berc und tal in allen landen  
sint erlöst úz winters banden  
heide rôte rôsen treit.  
sich fröit al diu welt gemeine,  
niemen trüret wan ich eine.

(D. L., page 163.)

Or when Walter von Klingen says,

Heide ist aber worden schoene,  
si hât manger hande varwe kleit;  
Vogele singent süeze doene.  
swie diu sumerwunne ist vil gemeit,  
Dâ bî dulde ich sendiu leit.

(D. L., page 219.)

The landscape is there but instead of the individual clearly drawn in the foreground, we have a shadowy suggestion of his presence there.

A like example from Kuonrât der junge will be sufficient to show the very doubtful use of background by these singers ;

Der mei wil uns ergetzen wol  
mit manigem wünnelichen tage:  
des ist diu welt gar fröiden vol.  
Was hilfet mich diu sumerzit ?

(D. L., page 220.)

These selections might almost as fittingly have been given under "Contrasted mood," so separately are the personal and natural features treated.

Drummond says in his *Addresses* (p. 113) "Two painters each painted a picture to illustrate his conception of

rest. The first chose for his scene a still, lone lake among the far off mountains. The second threw on his canvas a thundering waterfall with a fragile birch tree bending over the foam ; at the fork of a branch almost wet with the cataract's spray, a robin sat on its nest." Both these conceptions appear in the literary art of the 18th and 19th centuries—effect by harmony ; effect by contrast. Of the latter Lenau gives an illustration in these lines, in which he represents a man in reverie beneath the beetling cliff where wild the brook is leaping down ;

Dort am steilen Klippenhänge,  
Wo der Wildbach niederschäumt,  
Lehnt beim Sonnenuntergange  
Einsam still ein Mann—und träumt.

(Page 54.)

and again when he makes the traveller drink in rest, lying beneath the towering, ice-harnessed giants of the Alps ;

Alpen, o wie stärkte mich die Rast,  
Lagernd auf dem weichen Grün der Wiesen,  
Kräuterdüfte fachelten den Gast,  
Eisgeharnischt ragten eure Riesen.

(Page 272.)

Körner paints a like contrast in the village nestling in the still valley, while behind are the mountain, the dark fir-forest, and the rushing stream ;

Freundlich an dem Berggehänge  
In des Thales stiller Enge,  
Freundlich, wie ich keines sah,  
Liegt das liebe Dörfchen da.

Oben auf des Berges Höhen,  
Alte, dunkle Fichten stehen,  
Unten rauscht der Strom vorbei,  
Und die Luft ist mild und frei.

(Page 133.)

A highly dramatic blending of Nature and human action would fall rather into the field of the play writer than of the lyric. Instance the weird witch-scene, the thunder and lightning, with which Shakspeare ushers us into "Macbeth."

Hear the mad old King Lear in his ravings provoke the  
bursting storm,

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!  
You cataracts and hurricanes, shout  
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drowned the cocks!

This dramatic use of Nature is seen in Schiller's "Tell," where the brewing storm prepares the way for the precipitate appearance of Baumgarten pursued by the tyrant's horsemen; and again when the calm sunrise on the Rütli foretells the happy outcome of the confederacy.

Goethe's masterly use of background is shown nowhere better than in "Faust;" first, on the occasion of Valentine's murder, when Faust says as if in premonition of the crime,

Wie von dem Fenster dort der Sakristei  
Aufwärts der Schein des ewgen Lämpchens flämmert  
Und schwach und schwächer seitwärts dämmert,  
Und Finsternis drängt ringsum bei,  
So siehts in meinem Busen nächtig!

(III, page 164.)

and again in the weird brocken-scene, and lastly at the Rabenstein, which in its uncanniness and omen, suggests the witch-scene of "Macbeth,"—

F. Was weben die dort um den Rabenstein?  
M. Weiss nicht, was sie kochen und schaffen.  
F. Schweben auf, schweben ab, neigen sich, beugen sich.  
M. Eine Hexenzunft.

(III, page 200.)

Among the lyrists we find, however, examples almost as strongly dramatic as these. Chamisso prepares the way for a suicide scene by depicting the background in these lines,

Zu des Meeres dunklen Schosse  
Senkte trauernd blut'gen Scheines,  
Sturmverkundend sich die Sonne.  
Nächtlich hebet dumpf herbrausend  
Sich des Sturmes wilder Fittich.  
In dem Streifen roher Winde  
Ziehn die Wolken, oft des Mondes  
Silberstrahlen nächtlich hemmend.

(Page 389.)

Lenau prepares the reader's mind for the self-destruction of the Indian chief at Niagara, by this introduction,

Mächtig zürnt der Himmel im Gewitter,  
Schmettert manche Reiseneich'in Splitter,  
Übertönt des Niagara Stimme,  
Und mit seiner Blitze Flammenruten  
Peitscht er schneller die beschäumten Fluten,  
Dass sie stürzen mit empörtem Grimme.

(Page 116.)

The poets use contrast, also, to lend greater force to the action which is to occupy the foreground.

Körner prefaces a description of battle with a moonlit scene and the sleeping world,

Es schweigt die Nacht, die Erde träumt,  
Und bleich der Mond die Wolken säumt.—  
Was bist du Welt, so still, so leer?  
Was lau'rst du wie ein falsches Meer?  
Es saust so öde durch dein Reich  
Und Schauer fasst die Seele, gleich  
Als wolltest du mit leisem Beben  
Des Morgens blut'gen Schleier heben.

(Page 12.)

Even in the peaceful scene there is felt a premonition of something terrible impending—a calm which precedes the storm and almost heralds it. For a like effect compare Duncan's interpretation of the scene as he enters the castle of Macbeth on the fatal evening;

This castle has a pleasant seat ; the air  
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself  
Unto our gentle senses.

(Macbeth, Act I, Sc. vi)

which heightens the effect of the coming events as portended by lady Macbeth's words from within the castle walls,

. . . The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements.

(Act I, Sc. v.)

In the first scene of "Tell" the dramatic use of contrast is equally strong. The play opens by the lake in a quiet sunlit

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scene. A fisher-boy in his boat is singing to the melody of the "Kuhreihen,"

Es lächelt der See, es ladet zum Bade,  
Der Knabe schlief ein am grünen Gestade,

and the herdsman answers from the mountain side with a variation of the same melody. Then immediately the landscape changes, and before the first pleasant picture can fade from the reader's mind, the storm has broken over the scene, Baumgarten has rushed up escaping for his life, a violent scene on the shore is followed by Tell and Baumgarten in a boat battling against wind and wave.

The gap is clearly widening more and more between the old singers and the new as we compare them in the progress of the nature-sense.

## IX—LANDSCAPE.

Landscape, or the consideration of Nature for itself and not as accessory to man, belongs to the period of full and complete development of the nature-sense. It is, in its own completeness, the last word on Nature. It demands in the writer or artist an ability to apprehend Nature in its largeness and breadth, and too its depth; an ability to see clearly not only minor things, the flowers and trees and streams of the foreground, but also broad sweeps of earth and sky, mountains and the great clouds, which fill in the background on Nature's picture; ability to see not only the *individuals*, but the scene in its *tout ensemble*. The proportion, the relations, the perspective, the depth, the atmosphere, all enter into the landscape, whether in Nature or in its artistic reproduction. And this *whole* must be apprehended not as dead, but as living and breathing and having expression. Landscape would therefore, naturally come, in the progress of the nature-sense, after the use of Nature as background. It would be, indeed, only a development of this use of Nature; only an accentuation of the background instead of the foreground, the assigning of greater importance to the setting as compared with the thing set. An examination, especially of painting, shows that such a gradual transition really took place. Symonds says, (p. 304), "Clinging still to the tradition that some historical or mythological subject is required to make up a picture, these masters introduce Abraham, Odysseus, a sacrifice to Pan, or possibly S. Jerome with his skull, somewhere in their composition. But the relation between the human motive and the landscape is reversed. The former, which had hitherto been all-important, is now subordinated to the latter. The artist's energies are bestowed on working out the scene, the atmospheric luminosity, the open champlain, the massive foliage, and the mighty clouds. The figures are carelessly sketched in, and little heed is paid to emphasizing their action."

He is speaking of Rubens, Claude, the two Poussins and Salvator Rosa, and therefore of the last stages of this transition in painting, for Claude and S. Rosa, at least, are sometimes called the first pure landscape-artists. Their paintings show the fading out of the human foreground from canvas.

But what qualities has our investigation showed us thus far in the nature-sense of the Minnesinger? We have found, as already indicated, that he notices minor things, the individuals of the scene, birds, flowers, brooks, things usually near at hand, such features as would enter into the making of a foreground; that he omits the larger features such as broad expanses of earth or sky; that he does not mention mountains nor extended woods nor clouds, such features as would enter into the background. Under these limitations, his landscape, if he drew one, could not be otherwise than simple and flat. Biese, (p. 233) has very aptly put the general case in these words, "A landscape painting will not be possible in times and among people . . . who grasp only the individual, who consider only brooks and flowers, grasses and dew-drops, who without reference to the whole landscape, offer mere foreground without distance, as is the case in the middle ages until the renaissance in poetry."

Professor Palgrave properly confesses to a limited knowledge of the Minnesingers when he makes this statement; (p. 79) "It is indeed only among the once famous Minnesinger school of the 12th and 13th centuries, so far as my limited knowledge goes, that a distinctive landscape element is found." In fact, there is almost no landscape element in the writings of this school, as will be indicated by selections below.

A glance at the "Naturanschauung" in painting may not be inapropos just here, since this art runs almost parallel with literature as a medium of expression. That the Greek school made use of Nature as a background in painting is proven by the surviving vestiges of that school in the fresco paintings of Pompeii. But from the Christian era until well

into the 14th century there is almost no recognition of Nature. The old painters gave to their figures a background of gold. These works are almost without exception religious in subject. "But at the close of the thirteenth century," says Ruskin, "Giotto, and in the course of the fourteenth, Arcagna, sought for the first time, to give some resemblance to Nature in their backgrounds and introduced behind their figures pieces of true landscape, formal enough, but complete in intention." (Lectures on Architecture and Painting, lecture III.) With the advent of Raphael (1483-1520) and his contemporaries nature background had advanced somewhat as may be seen in his "Transfiguration," "Mount Parnassus," and "Madonna of Foligno," in the Vatican; and also from the works of his master Perugino. This tendency to Nature in art developed in the different schools at different paces. Miss Reynolds says that in the English school up to 1725, "even a landscape background is of rare occurrence." Biese says that in the Dutch school landscape was considered for its own sake as early as Rubens (1577-1640). Claude Lorraine (1600-1682) of the French, and Salvator Rosa (1615-1673) of the Italian school are considered as landscape painters. These meagre data will serve to give us an idea as to the date of the appearance of Nature in art and its rapid growth in certain ground. It seems that in the 15th century the time was ripe; but it had not occurred to the old masters "that landscape might be treated as an object in itself."

But the Minnesingers belong to the 12th and 13th centuries, full two hundred years before Raphael. We can hardly expect in them a distinctive landscape element. Let us examine their utterances in this field first hand, and see if these conclusions are in accordance with facts.

Walter's single landscape, if such it can be called, is contained in these lines,

Ich saz uf einen grüenen lê,  
da entsprungen bluomen unde klê  
zwischen mir und einem sê.

der ougenweide ist dâ niht mê :  
 dâ wir schapel brâchen ê,  
 dâ lît nû rîfe unde snê.  
 daz tuot den vogellînen wê.

(Page 8.)

This is but the veriest skeleton of a landscape. It is only a picture drawn in, as if the artist had said, "I shall paint a picture with flowers and clover in the foreground and beyond the meadow some water." It has not been filled in. There is no coloring, no "atmosphere," no depth: it is a flat surface, which only makes us wonder what the picture would be. We of today can so easily fill it in that we are in danger of thinking it is full.

Nithart gives us just such another sketch in these words,

Komen ist uns ein liehtiu ougenweide  
 man siht der rôsenwunder ûf der heide ;  
 die bluomen dringen durch daz gras.  
 wie schone ein wise getouwet was,  
 dâ mir mîn geselle zeinem kranze las !

(D. L., page 109)

This is a foreground solely, where roses fill the meadow. The poet keeps his eye to earth so persistently that we almost wonder if there were no distance to him, no horizon, no serrate rim where earth and heaven meet, no clouds. He never gets beyond the individual in his picture, and this individual is the simplest, most patent that Nature affords.

Liutolt von Savene furnishes another example of early landscape attempt ;

In dem walde und ûf der grüenen heide  
 meiet ez sô rehte wol.  
 Daz man sich der lieben ougenweide  
 wol von schulden troesten sol :

(D. L., page 126.)

The Minnesinger praises the "ougenweide"—the "pasture for the eyes," but despite his passing praise his eyes seem never to have found great sustenance there, for they return ever and anon to "pasture" upon his mistress. In the above cited lines there is the usual simplicity. We should scarcely take the description of the first two lines to

be that of a landscape, if he did not label it as such in the third line.

Toggenburc makes a bundle of the landscape and throws it in as not worth mention along with his "vrowe,"

Bluomen loup klê berge und tal  
und des meien sumersûeziu wunne  
Diu sint gegen dem rôsen val  
sô mîn vrowe treit.

(D. L., page 200.)

Kuonrât der Schenke gives us this winter landscape, as bare as the naked tree that is *not* drawn by the poet,

walt und ouwe die sint val,  
Dâ bi anger und diu heide,  
die man sach in liehtem kleide,  
in den landen über al.

(D. L., page 232.)

Der wilde Alexander seems to have in mind something like a picnic scene in these lines,

Ich gedenk wol daz wir sâzen  
in den bluomen unde mâzen  
welch diu schoenest möhte sîn.  
dô schein unser kintlich schîn  
mit dem niuwen kranze  
zuo dem tanze  
alsus gât diu zît von hin.  
Seht dô lief wir ertber suochen  
von der tannen zuo der buochen  
über stoc und über stein  
der wîle daz diu sunne schein.

(D. L., page 231.)

There is here, as elsewhere, no landscape proper; there are only a few objects immediately at hand,—trees and flowers.

Otte zem Turne's description has at least the virtue of brevity commensurate with the picture,

Schouwent wie diu heide lît;  
liehte bluomen sint entsprungen.

(D. L., page 286.)

These descriptions of landscape represent the very best the Minnesong affords, so far as I have discovered it: and they

show that our inference regarding the landscape of this literature was not far wrong.

Let us consider now briefly landscape as found after five hundred years in the literature of the same people. Goethe in "Wilkommen und Abschied," describes a night scene,"

Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde,  
Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht ;  
Schon stand im Nebelkleid die Eiche  
Ein aufgetürmter Riese da,  
Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche  
Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.

Der Mond von einem Wolkenhügel  
Sah kläglich aus dem Duft hervor,  
Die Winde schwingen leise Flügel  
Umsausten schauerlich mein Ohr.

(I, page 45.)

In this scene all is intended to be obscure, but there is clearness in the obscurity. There is no vagueness in conception such as appeared in the early period, but only the obscurity of night, through the veil of which we can see the individual features. There are the mountains through the gloom, and the giant oak wrapped in the mist like a spectre in its shroud, and the struggling moon-beams: and even the soft beating of the unseen wings, that makes the scene breathe with a sigh. Nature sometimes paints, like Parhasius, a veil over her picture, but we can always see the face behind. She is never vague. The painter *may* be. Herder gives a similar veiled picture in "Abendlied;"

Der Mond ist aufgegangen,  
Die Goldnen Sternlein prangen  
Am Himmel hell und klar:  
Der Wald steht schwarz und schweiget  
Und aus den Wiesen steigt  
Der weisse Nebel wunderbar.

(II, page 314.)

A beautiful picture is that which Goethe makes Mignon give of her native land Italy; it is the voice of his own longing for the south-land;

Kennst du das Land wo die Citronen blühn,  
Im dunkeln Laub die Goldorangen glühn,  
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,  
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht.

(I, page 106.)

An ideal Italian landscape—green trees and golden apples kissed by the zephyrs, and over all the deep blue sky. In "Ilmenau" he gives us a kinetoscopic picture; a quick shifting of the scene;

Melodisch rauscht die hohe Tanne wieder,  
Melodisch eilt der Wasserfall hiernieder;  
Die Wolke sinkt, der Nebel drückt ins Thal,  
Und es ist Nacht und Dämmerung auf einmal.

(I, page 421.)

Schiller describes in "Der Spaziergang" the view which greeted him from the hill-top, a description notable for its breadth and intensity;

Unabsehbar ergiesst sich vor meinem Blicke die Ferne,  
Und ein blaues Berg endigt im Dufte die Welt.  
Tief an des Berges Fuss, der gählings unter mir abstürzt,  
Waltet des grünlichten Stroms fließender Spiegel vorbei.  
Endlos unter mir seh ich den Aether, über mir endlos,  
Blicke mit Schwindeln hinauf, blicke mit Schaudern hinab.  
Aber zwischen der ewigen Höh und der ewigen Tiefe  
Trägt ein geländerter Steig sicher den Wanderer dahin.  
Lachend fliehen an mir die reichen Ufer vorüber  
Und den fröhlichen Fleiss rühmet das prangende Thal.  
Jene Linien, sieh! die des Landmanns Eigentum scheiden,  
In den Teppich der Flur hat sie Demeter gewirkt.

(I, page 224.)

Claude Lorraine nor Salvator Rosa could have desired a wider compass than is found in these lines, nor a more exquisite blending of the sublime and the idyllic on a single canvas.

Heine, the poet of the sea par excellence, gives us in "Die Nordsee, this graphic seascape,

Wie schwarzgrüne Rosse mit silbernen Mähnen  
Sprangen die weissgekräuselten Wellen;  
Wie Schwanenzüge schifften vorüber  
Mit schimmernden Segeln die Helgolander

Die kecken Nomaden der Nordsee !  
 Ueber mir, in dem ewigen Blau,  
 Flatterte weisses Gewölk  
 Und prangte die ewige Sonne,  
 Die Rose des Himmels, die feuerblühende,  
 Die freudvoll im Meer sich bespiegelte.

(I, page 191.)

Bürger, who loved rather the gentler aspects of Nature than the sterner, describes in the poem "Das Dörfchen" the landscape in which the little village lay,

Welch ein Gefilde !  
 Kein Dietrich fand  
 Zu einem Bilde  
 Den Gegenstand !  
 Hier Felsenwand,  
 Dort Aehrenfelder  
 Und Wiesengrün  
 Dem blaue Wälder  
 Die Grenze ziehn ;  
 An jener Höhe  
 Die Schäferei  
 Und in der Nähe  
 Mein Sorgenfrei.

(Page 30)

Here are sheep pasturing on the slope, rocky walls, corn fields and green meadows shut in by *blue* woods. Heretofore the woods had been stereotyped *green* ; now the poet puts them far enough away from him to be *blue*, a result of larger landscape. Elsewhere the poet gives us a morning landscape of a like tone,

Die Luft war rein, der Himmel blau ;  
 Die Bächlein flossen still und heiter ;  
 Es glänzten Blumen, Gras und Kräuter  
 Noch von Aurorens Perlentau.  
 Die Sonne kaum ein wenig weiter  
 Als durch ein Viertel ihrer Bahn  
 Liess auch auf schattenlosem Plan  
 Ihr Strahlenlicht, gemildert von Zephyren,  
 Die lebende Natur nur noch zur Wollust spüren.

(Page 372.)

Lenau in four lines draws a landscape which, in the great-

ness of its elements, reminds one of the strokes of a Rubens or a Rembrandt ;

Schon ist der Berge Purpurglut verglommen,  
Und zitternd flieht des Tages letzter Strahl  
Der Nacht schon aus dem Wege. Sei willkommen,  
O Dunkelheit, im ersten Eichenthal !

(Page 75.)

Here the minor features of the foreground have been lost before the titanic movement in the background ; the mountains, the flight of day before the night, and the fall of darkness.

One of the most perfect landscape pictures in the poetry of the whole period is that given by the same writer in "Auf eine holländische Landschaft." The gem is so exquisite that I would not mar it—here is the whole poem,

Müde schleichen hier die Bäche  
Nicht ein Lüftchen hörst du wällen,  
Die entfärbten Blätter fallen  
Still zu Grund, vor Alterschwäche.

Krähen, kaum die Schwingen regend,  
Streichen langsam ; dort am Hügel  
Lässt die Windmühl' ruhn die Flügel ;  
Ach, wie schläfrig ist die Gegend !

Lenz und Sommer sind verflogen  
Dort das Hüttlein, ob es trutze,  
Blickt nicht aus, die Strohkäpuzen  
Tief ins Aug' herabgezogen.

Schlummernd, oder träge sinnend,  
Ruht der Hirt bei seinen Schafen,  
Die Natur Herbstnebel spinnend,  
Scheint am Rocken eingeschlafen.

(Page 179.)

Saint Pierre (1737-1814) said of the travellers of his day, "If they describe a country to you, you will see in it towns, rivers, mountains ; but their descriptions are as barren as a geographic map : Hindostan resembles Europe ; *there is no character in it.*" No one could possibly mistake the above

description of a Dutch landscape, with its windmill and thatched-roof huts.

The landscape of the modern period is stamped with character. It has *breadth* and *depth*. It has diversity and unity. "Quam fluctus diversi, quam mare conjuncti" might be said of the features of the 19th century landscape. It embraces all the phenomena of Nature—the great and the small, the far and the near. It has perspective and proportion ; it has depth ; it is *natural*.

## X.—CONCLUSION.

The Minnesinger recognized in Nature first and foremost that which ministered to his physical comfort—the spring, the summer, the shade of the trees. Secondly, he recognized the simpler forms of beauty—flower, brook and bird. He had no eye, however, for largeness nor extent. Nature never became for him a voice, nor a language. She never spoke to him. He looked upon her, within the narrow compass of his view, but there was never any communication. There was, therefore, never a companionship between the two. We have indicated above (page 67) the gradual revelation of Nature to man as, "first a silence, then a murmur, then a voice, then a companion." The "silence," when man saw only comfort or discomfort; the "murmur," when he began to see beauty; the "voice," when Nature was personified; the "companion," when man found that personality congenial. Emerson classes Nature in an ascending scale of *Commodity, Beauty, Language, Discipline*. This is notably parallel to our classification, reached independently and in another field.

The Minnesinger never passed perceptibly beyond the first two classes. It might seem that this judgment is unfair; that the very theme which, as a singer of love, he treated, excluded from his consideration a large field of Nature, which he might, in other circumstances, have brought into his treatment. This would qualify a judgment of the old poet's nature-sense if he really were *solely* a singer of love. But he did treat a great variety of subjects. For instance, Walter furnishes us 79 *Lieder*; thirty of these are devoted to other subjects than love, of which thirty, six are dedicated to Nature. The same poet has given us 108 *Sprüche*, of which three only are devoted to love; the others treat *politics, the church, morality, friendship, constancy, tolerance, war*, etc. So wide a range of subjects would give great freedom to the poet; and yet, as has been already said, even this largest of the Minnesingers scarcely oversteps in his "Naturanschauung" the narrow limits of his contemporaries. We are constrained to conclude that the nature-sense in the Minnesong is fairly representative of the whole period.

The nature-sense of the modern period contains the whole gamut of Nature.

THE END.

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## VITA.\*

The author of this thesis was born and reared at Melton's, Virginia. Until his 15th year he attended an old field school, where the yearly term was six months. He then attended the graded school of Gordonsville, Virginia, beginning there the study of foreign languages, and afterwards spent one year in an Academy at Culpeper, Virginia. At the age of eighteen he began teaching, and after five years entered the University of Virginia. At the end of three years he graduated with the Bachelor of Arts degree, having completed, also, all the residence work required for the Doctor of Philosophy. The Graduate work was in Latin, directed by Prof. W. E. Peters, and in the German and French, directed by the late Prof. W. H. Perkinson.

Immediately after graduating he was elected to the chair of German and French in Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he has since served.

In the summer of 1898, he spent a term in the University of Chicago, studying the Romance and Germanic languages. In 1899 he went to Europe for a year's study. At Göttingen he took work under Professors Heyne and Roethe in Germanic language and literature, under Professor Stimming in old French. Two months were spent in the University of Berlin to hear lectures on German literature by Professor Erich Schmidt. The summer of 1900 was spent at Tours, France, in the study of French.

The final work of the degree was directed and approved by Professor Jas. A. Harrison, chair of Teutonic Languages, University of Virginia.

\*The *Vita* is appended by request of Professor Harrison.

Leo  
CV

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