

in no ways difficult. Innumerable analogies remind us that this show of sensible objects which we call nature is intended as a training—a discipline. The flowers ever turning towards the sun, and exhaling, at morn and eve, the incense of a mute thanksgiving, the fidelity and fortitude of the lower animals, the symmetry and order everywhere apparent, the continual succession of death and renaissance,—hinting, not obscurely, at the immortality of the soul: these, to the thoughtful, teach more than books. There is something thoughtful in Schubert's theory of an ascending metempsychosis. He beholds in all things, from the lowest upwards, the vital principle continually moving on, step by step, to the highest degree of perfection. In effect, do not the minerals, by their crystallisation, afford a mute prophecy of the coming vegetation? The blossom of those flowers which botanists have termed *Papilionaceæ*, with its wonderful assemblage of reciprocal organs and functions, how closely does it resemble the flower-shaped insect from which it derives its name! And the whole chain of animal life, from the mere muscular vitality of the insect upwards, how does it point, by its wonderful instincts, almost by its rehearsal of our moral affections and charities, to the approach of something greater and better still—to the fast-kindling dawn of humanity!

But this may not be pursued farther. Neither is it necessary to insist at any length on the peculiar phasis which the world of letters has assumed, under the Promethean influence of the Christian religion. It bears the impression of something infinite and eternal. It hath life in it: it is vital, far-seeing, and prophetic. To constitute poetry, images are necessary. Flowers, and groves, and fountains sufficed for the poets of paganism; but to the profound and spiritualised Christian, the awful solitude of forests, the boundless ocean, and the starry sky, are hardly sufficient to express the eternity and infinitude with which his soul is filled. Wordsworth, Klopstock, De Lamartine,—these have something in them, greater than anything which has emanated from the worshippers of a fate-bound Jove. How vast and all-comprehending are their ideas! They are universal as the air we breathe. They are not Romanists, or Greeks, or Anglo-Catholics, but priests of a Catholic Christianity. Theirs is that benign spirit of love, which, like the great sun itself, shines equally on all.

In the first century before Christ, a colony of Svear, or Swedes, under the conduct of their high priest, and legislator, Odin, proceeded from the north slope of the Caucasus to the Mælar Lake in Sweden. Whatever doubts Gibbon and others may have entertained with respect to this indivi-

dual, Professor Greijer seems clearly to have established the fact of his being a historical personage. The Gotnar, or Goths, a branch of the powerful nation which had grown up on the southern shore of the Baltic, were already settled in the land, and the aboriginal Lapps and Finns receded rapidly before these two powerful cognate races. The Swedes and Goths seem to have existed together in Southern Sweden, for a length of time, in peace and amity; but the former eventually obtained the ascendancy. In the third generation from Odin, occurred the transition from the priestly to the military character in the rulers of Sweden.

Among the causes of those manifold voyagings which filled Europe with dismay, is to be considered, not only the physical conformation of the country, so deeply indented with fiords or friths, and making some sort of navigation absolutely necessary, but also the gradual consolidation of the kingly power. According to the *Ynglingasaga*, the first blow was struck at the authority of the numerous petty chiefs or kings during the reign of Ingiald, the last of the sacred line of Odinn. The barbarity of the transaction is characteristic of the times. Ingiald caused six of these sub-kings to be invited to his father's funeral banquet, at which he made a solemn vow to increase his kingdom by one half its size, towards all the four winds of heaven, or to die. The same night he had them seized, and caused them to be burned alive. A relative of one of the victims levied an army to avenge him, and marched against the tyrant. On his approach, Ingiald and his daughter collected all their dependants, set fire to their palace, and perished in the flames, like the Sarguntines of old, with all their servants and property.

The island of Iceland was discovered by one of these fugitive jarls or chiefs, and, half a century later, Normandy was taken possession of by another. But amidst all the changes which affected the language and poetic literature of the continental Goths, the Icelandic branch alone remained true to the original type: and here, up to the subjection of the islanders by their Norwegian kinsmen, we behold a pure specimen of that ancient and parent Gothic family to which the Tentons and Scandinavians stand equally related.

The scenery of Iceland is, for the most part, of a wild and fantastic character. All is torn and convulsed: the island itself seems to have been erupted from the ocean-depths by the expansive energies of fire. Dark and precipitous coasts wall it in: the interior is one vast desert—a tempestuous sea of hills—an uninhabited wilderness of lakes and volcanic mountains. In these awful wilds, the silence is broken only by signs of ter-