

différentiels que je m'efforce de faire ressortir. Ces caractères sont quelquefois peu marqués : il arrive même que plusieurs d'entre eux s'effacent presque entièrement, mais il en reste toujours quelques-uns qui remettent l'observateur sur la voie." Now let it be noted what a difference, with regard to the immutability of the so-called specific characters this paragraph produces on the mind, from that above quoted from M. Godron.

I will add another remark : naturalists continually assert that no important organ varies ; but in saying this they unconsciously argue in a vicious circle ; for if an organ, let it be what it may, is highly variable, it is regarded as unimportant, and under a systematic point of view this is quite correct. But as long as constancy is thus taken as the criterion of importance, it will indeed be long before an important organ can be shown to be inconstant. The enlarged form of the stigmas, and their sessile position on the summit of the ovary, must be considered as important characters, and were used by Gasparini to separate certain pumpkins as a *distinct genus* ; but Naudin says (p. 20), these parts have no constancy, and in the flowers of the Turban varieties of *C. maxima* they sometimes resume their ordinary structure. Again, in *C. maxima*, the carpels (p. 19) which form the turban project even as much as two-thirds of their length out of the receptacle, and this latter part is thus reduced to a sort of platform ; but this remarkable structure occurs only in certain varieties, and graduates into the common form in which the carpels are almost entirely enveloped within the receptacle. In *C. moschata* the ovarium (p. 50) varies greatly in shape, being oval, nearly spherical, or cylindrical, more or less swollen in the upper part, or constricted round the middle, and either straight or curved. When the ovarium is short and oval the interior structure does not differ from that of *C. maxima* and *pepo*, but when it is elongated the carpels occupy only the terminal and swollen portion. I may add that in one variety of the cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*) the fruit regularly contains five carpels instead of three.<sup>140</sup> I

<sup>140</sup> Naudin, in 'Annal. des Sc. Nat.,' 4th ser. Bot. tom. xi. 1859, p. 28.