

products; of which one hundred and fifty are English, and are no way distinguished from the exotics by the mode in which they are inserted in the work.

We shall see, in the next chapter, that when the intellect of Europe began really to apply itself to the observation of nature, the progress towards genuine science soon began to be visible, in this as in other subjects; but before this tendency could operate freely, the history of botany was destined to show, in another instance, how much more grateful to man, even when roused to intelligence and activity, is the study of tradition than the study of nature. When the scholars of Europe had become acquainted with the genuine works of the ancients in the original languages, the pleasure and admiration which they felt, led them to the most zealous endeavors to illustrate and apply what they read. They fell into the error of supposing that the plants described by Theophrastus, Dioscorides, Pliny, must be those which grew in their own fields. And thus Ruellius,<sup>25</sup> a French physician, who only travelled in the environs of Paris and Picardy, imagined that he found there the plants of Italy and Greece. The originators of genuine botany in Germany, Brunfels and Tragus (Bock), committed the same mistake; and hence arose the misapplication of classical names to many genera. The labors of many other learned men took the same direction, of treating the ancient writers as if they alone were the sources of knowledge and truth.

But the philosophical spirit of Europe was already too vigorous to allow this superstitious erudition to exercise a lasting sway. Leonicenus, who taught at Ferrara till he was almost a hundred years old, and died in 1524,<sup>26</sup> disputed, with great freedom, the authority of the Arabian writers, and even of Pliny. He saw, and showed by many examples, how little Pliny himself knew of nature, and how many errors he had made or transmitted. The same independence of thought with regard to other ancient writers, was manifested by other scholars. Yet the power of ancient authority melted away but gradually. Thus Antonius Brassavola, who established on the banks of the Po the first botanical garden of modern times, published in 1536, his *Examen omnium Simplicium Medicamentorum*; and, as Cuvier says,<sup>27</sup> though he studied plants in nature, his book (written in the

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<sup>25</sup> *De Natura Stirpium*, 1536.

<sup>26</sup> Sprengel, i. 252.

<sup>27</sup> *Hist. des Sc. Nat.* partie ii. 169.