

finished was remarkable. It fell into the hands of his pupil, Gaspard Wolf, who was to have published it, but wanting leisure for the office, sold it to Joachim Camerarius, a physician and botanist of Nuremberg, who made use of the engravings prepared by Gessner, in an Epitome which he published in 1586. The text of Gessner's work, after passing through various hands, was published in 1754 under the title of *Gessneri Opera Botanica per duo Sæcula desiderata, &c.*, but is very incomplete.

The imperfect state in which Gessner left his botanical labors, makes it necessary to seek the evidence of his peculiar views in scattered passages of his correspondence and other works. One of his great merits was, that he saw the peculiar importance of the flower and fruit as affording the characters by which the affinities of plants were to be detected; and that he urged this view upon his contemporaries. His plates present to us, by the side of each plant, its flower and its fruit, carefully engraved. And in his communications with his botanical correspondents, he repeatedly insists on these parts. Thus⁴ in 1565 he writes to Zuinger concerning some foreign plants which the latter possessed: "Tell me if your plants have fruit and flower, as well as stalk and leaves, for those are of much the greater consequence. By these three marks,—flower, fruit, and seed,—I find that *Saxifraga* and *Consolida Regalis* are related to *Aconite*." These characters, derived from the *fructification* (as the assemblage of flower and fruit is called), are the means by which genera are established, and hence, by the best botanists, Gessner is declared to be the inventor of genera.⁵

⁴ *Epistolæ*, fol. 113 a; see also fol. 65 b.

⁵ Haller, *Biblio Botanica*, i. 284. *Methodi Botanicæ rationem primus pervidit;—dari nempe et genera quæ plures species comprehenderent et classes quæ multa genera. Varias etiam classes naturales expressit. Characterem in flore inque semine posuit, &c.—Rawolfio Socio Epist.* Wolf, p. 39.

Linnæus, *Genera Plantarum*, Pref. xiii. "A fructificatione plantas distinguere in genera, infinitæ sapientiæ placuisse, detexit posterior ætas, et quidem primus, sæculi sui ornamentum, Conradus Gessnerus, uti patet ex Epistolis ejus postremis, et Tabulis per Carmerarium editis."

Cuvier says (*Hist. des Sc. Nat.* 2^o p^o, p. 193), after speaking to the same effect, "Il fit voir encore que toutes les plantes qui ont des fleurs et des fruits semblables se ressemblent par leurs propriétés, et que quand on rapproche ces plantes on obtient ainsi une classification naturelle." I do not know if he here refers to any particular passages of Gessner's work.