

will, in order to avoid too great an interruption of chronological order, record some of its circumstances in a separate section.

Sect. 3.—Stationary Interval.

THE method of Cæsalpinus was not, at first, generally adopted. It had, indeed, some disadvantages. Employed in drawing the boundary-lines of the larger divisions of the vegetable kingdom, he had omitted those smaller groups, Genera, which were both most obvious to common botanists, and most convenient in the description and comparison of plants. He had also neglected to give the Synonyms of other authors for the plants spoken of by him; an appendage to botanical descriptions, which the increase of botanical information and botanical books had now rendered indispensable. And thus it happened, that a work, which must always be considered as forming a great epoch in the science to which it refers, was probably little read, and in a short time could be treated as if it were quite forgotten.

In the mean time, the science was gradually improved in its details. Clusius, or Charles de l'Ecluse, first taught botanists to describe well. "Before him," says Mirbel,²¹ "the descriptions were diffuse, obscure, indistinct; or else concise, incomplete, vague. Clusius introduced exactitude, precision, neatness, elegance, method: he says nothing superfluous; he omits nothing necessary." He travelled over great part of Europe, and published various works on the more rare of the plants which he had seen. Among such plants, we may note now one well known, the potato; which he describes as being commonly used in Italy in 1586;²² thus throwing doubt, at least, on the opinion which ascribes the first introduction of it into Europe to Sir Walter Raleigh, on his return from Virginia, about the same period. As serving to illustrate, both this point, and the descriptive style of Clusius, I quote, in a note, his description of the flower of this plant.²³

²¹ *Physiol. Veg.* p. 525.

²² Clusius. *Exotic.* iv. c. 52, p. lxxix.

²³ "Papas Peruanorum. Arachidna, Theoph. forte. Flores elegantes, uncialis amplitudinis aut majores, angulosi, singulari folio constantes, sed ita complicato ut quinque folia discreta videantur, coloris exterius ex purpura candicantis, interius purpurascens, radiis quinque herbaceis ex umbilico stellæ instar prodeuntibus, et totidem staminibus flavis in umbonem coeuntibus."

He says that the Italians do not know whence they had the plant, and that they call it *Taratouffi*. The name *Potato* was, in England, previously applied to the Sweet Potato (*Convolvulus batatas*), which was the common Potato, in