

science which no one would select as the peculiar field of Linnæus's glory; and the formation of a system of arrangement on the basis of this doctrine, though attended with many advantages, was not an improvement of any higher order than those introduced by Ray and Tournefort. But as a Reformer of the state of Natural History in his time, Linnæus was admirable for his skill, and unparalleled in his success. And we have already seen, in the instance of the reform of mineralogy, as attempted by Mohs and Berzelius, that men of great talents and knowledge may fail in such an undertaking.

It is, however, only by means of the knowledge which he displays, and of the beauty and convenience of the improvements which he proposes, that any one can acquire such an influence as to procure his suggestions to be adopted. And even if original circumstances of birth or position could invest any one with peculiar prerogatives and powers in the republic of science, Karl Linné began his career with no such advantages. His father was a poor curate in Smaland, a province of Sweden; his boyhood was spent in poverty and privation; it was with great difficulty that, at the age of twenty-one, he contrived to subsist at the University of Upsal, whither a strong passion for natural history had urged him. Here, however, he was so far fortunate, that Olaus Rudbeck, the professor of botany, committed to him the care of the Botanic Garden.¹ The perusal of the works of Vaillant and Patrick Blair suggested to him the idea of an arrangement of plants, formed upon the sexual organs, the stamens and pistils; and of such an arrangement he published a sketch in 1731, at the age of twenty-four.

But we must go forwards a few years in his life, to come to the period to which his most important works belong. University and family quarrels induced him to travel; and, after various changes of scene, he was settled in Holland, as the curator of the splendid botanical garden of George Clifford, an opulent banker. Here it was² that he laid the foundation of his future greatness. In the two years of his residence at Harlecamp, he published nine works. The first, the *Systema Naturæ*, which contained a comprehensive sketch of the whole domain of Natural History, excited general astonishment, by the acuteness of the observations, the happy talent of combination, and the clearness of the systematic views. Such a work could not fail to procure considerable respect for its author. His *Hortus Cliffortiana*

¹ Sprengel, ii. 232.

² Ibid. 234.