

as they often appear to have imagined that the ultimate object of botanical methods was to know the name of plants, they naturally preferred the Swedish method, which is excellent as a *finder*. No person, however, who wishes to know botany as a science, that is, as a body of general truths, can be content with making names his ultimate object. Such a person will be constantly and irresistibly led on to attempt to catch sight of the natural arrangement of plants, even before he discovers, as he will discover by pursuing such a course of study, that the knowledge of the natural arrangement is the knowledge of the essential construction and vital mechanism of plants. He will consider an artificial method as a means of arriving at a natural method. Accordingly, however much some of his followers may have overlooked this, it is what Linnæus himself always held and taught. And though what he executed with regard to this object was but little,¹² the distinct manner in which he presented the relations of an artificial and natural method, may justly be looked upon as one of the great improvements which he introduced into the study of his science.

Thus in the *Classes Plantarum* (1747), he speaks of the difficulty of the task of discovering the natural orders, and of the attempts made by others. "Yet," he adds, "I too have labored at this, have done something, have much still to do, and shall labor at the object as long as I live." He afterwards proposed sixty-seven orders, as the fragments of a natural method, always professing their imperfection.¹³ And in others of his works¹⁴ he lays down some antitheses on the subject after his manner. "The natural orders teach us the nature of plants; the artificial orders enable us to recognize plants. The natural orders, without a key, do not constitute a Method; the Method ought to be available without a master."

That extreme difficulty must attend the formation of a Natural Method, may be seen from the very indefinite nature of the Aphorisms upon this subject which Linnæus has delivered, and which the best botanists of succeeding times have assented to. Such are these;—the Natural Orders must be formed by attention, not to one or two, but to *all* the parts of plants;—the same organs are of great importance in regulating the divisions of one part of the system, and

¹² The natural orders which he proposed are a bare enumeration of genera, and have not been generally followed.

¹³ *Phil. Bot.* p. 80.

¹⁴ *Genera Plantarum*, 1764. See *Prælect. in Ord. Nat.* p. xlvi.