

BOOK XVI.

CLASSIFICATORY SCIENCES.

BOTANY.

FOR the purpose of giving to my reader some indication of the present tendency of Botanical Science, I conceive that I cannot do better than direct his attention to the reflections, procedure, and reasonings which have been suggested by the most recent extensions of man's knowledge of the vegetable world. And as a specimen of these, I may take the labors of Dr. Joseph Hooker, on the Flora of the Antarctic Regions,¹ and especially of New Zealand. Dr. Hooker was the Botanist to an expedition commanded by Sir James Ross, sent out mainly for the purpose of investigating the phenomena of Terrestrial Magnetism near the South Pole; but directed also to the improvement of Natural History. The extension of botanical descriptions and classifications to a large mass of new objects necessarily suggests wider views of the value of classes (genera, species, &c.) and the conclusions to be drawn from their constancy or inconstancy. A few of Dr. Hooker's remarks may show the nature of the views taken under such circumstances.

I may notice, in the first place, (since this work is intended for general rather than for scientific readers,) Dr. Hooker's testimony to the value of a technical descriptive language for a classificatory science—a Terminology, as it is called. He says, "It is impossible to write Botanical descriptions which a person ignorant of Botany can understand, although it is supposed by many unacquainted with science that this can and should be done." And hence, he says, the state of botanical science demands Latin descriptions of the plants; and this is a lesson which he especially urges upon the Colonists who study the indigenous plants.

¹ *The Botany of the Antarctic Voyage of H. M. Discovery Ships Erebus and Terror, in the years 1839-40. Published 1847. Flora Novæ Zelandiæ. 1858.*