

“In the *Prolepsis* the speculative matter, which Linnæus himself carefully distinguishes as such, must be separated from the rest, and this may I think be done in most of the sections. He starts with explaining clearly and well the origin and position of buds, and their constant presence, whether developed or not, in the axil of the leaf: adding abundance of acute observations and experiments to prove his statements. The leaf he declares to be the first effort of the plant in spring: he proceeds to show, successively, that bracts, calyx, corolla, stamens, and pistil are each of them metamorphosed leaves, in every case giving MANY EXAMPLES, both from monsters and from characters presented by those organs in their normal condition.

“The (to me) obscure and critical part of the *Prolepsis* was that relating to the change of the style of *Carduus* into two leaves. Mr. Brown has explained this. He says it was a puzzle to him, till he went to Upsala and consulted Fries and Wahlenberg, who informed him that such monstrous *Cardui* grew in the neighborhood, and procured him some. Considering how minute and masked the organs of *Compositæ* are, it shows no little skill in Linnæus, and a very clear view of the whole matter, to have traced the metamorphosis of all their floral organs into leaves, except their stamens, of which he says, ‘Sexti anni folia e staminibus me non in compositis vidisse fateor, sed illorum loco folia pistillacea, quæ in compositis aut plenis sunt frequentissima.’ I must say that nothing could well be clearer to my mind than the full and accurate appreciation which Linnæus shows of the whole series of phenomena, and their *rationale*. He over and over again asserts that these organs are leaves, every one of them,—I do not understand him to say that the prolepsis is an accidental change of leaves into bracts, of bracts into calyx, and so forth. Even were the language more obscure, much might be inferred from the wide range and accuracy of the observations he details so scientifically. It is inconceivable that a man should have traced the sequence of the phenomena under so many varied aspects, and shown such skill, knowledge, ingenuity, and accuracy in his methods of observing and describing, and yet missed the *rationale* of the whole. Eliminate the speculative parts, and there is not a single error of observation or judgment; whilst his history of the development of buds, leaves, and floral organs, and of various other obscure matters of equal interest and importance, are of a very high order of merit, are, in fact, for the time profound.

“There is nothing in all this that detracts from the merit of Goethe’s