

to bring under consideration one of the principles which has been proposed as a general expression of a number of facts in the structure of flowers, or, as a cause which may be assigned in explanation of some remarkable features belonging to particular flowers, explaining at once the relation to the common plan, and the meaning of the apparent discrepancy in the special case.

My subject is what was, I believe, first named by the French botanist Dunal, *chorisis*, a Greek word expressing *division* or *separation* and applied to supposed cases of a single organ in a floral circle being, so to speak, resolved by subdivision into a number of parts. At present, whilst many high authorities admit this principle as affording the true explanation of some remarkable facts in the structure of certain flowers, other authorities of not less general weight entirely reject the principle as unsupported by any sufficient evidence, and not needed to explain the phenomena. In such a case any contribution towards determining the point in dispute may be received with patience and may have some claim to attention. It may be expedient in the first place to consider what are the principles in relation to the structure and variation of flowers which may be regarded as known and established, and to what extent they go in explaining the appearances before us that we may be prepared to judge how far further assistance is required, and, if so, how far the proposed principle supplies what is wanted: nor will this view of what may be said to have been accomplished in an important field of enquiry be in itself destitute of utility since comparatively few years have changed the whole aspect of botanical science, and our greatest practical botanists continue to employ in description, terms founded on erroneous opinions, and suggesting false views where on so many accounts the utmost correctness of language is demanded, besides that the truths to be enumerated, though well established and admitted by those esteemed the best judges, are by no means so generally received and applied as not to require to be explained and enforced.

The 1st principle to be noticed is that every flower originates in an ordinary bud modified in its development, the increase of the axis being checked and the leaves reduced into circles and made to assume the characteristic forms of floral organs, which setting aside intermediate and anomalous ones are 4, described and named as follows: the exterior one, usually retaining most of the leafy character called as a whole the *calyx*, and its separate organs named *sepals*: within it an-