

# NORTH AMERICAN TESTUDINATA.

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## CHAPTER FIRST.

### THE ORDER OF TESTUDINATA; ITS RANK, CLASSIFICATION, AND GENERAL CHARACTERS.

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#### SECTION I.

##### RANK OF THE TESTUDINATA.

THE necessity of reviewing critically the North American Testudinata,<sup>1</sup> in order to obtain a well-founded standard of comparison between the successive changes in the development of those species whose embryology I have examined, and the full-grown representatives of the types inhabiting the continent of North America, affords me a welcome opportunity of testing the principles of classification discussed in the first part of this work. It will be seen from this examination that, though their systematic arrangement requires here and there considerable modifications, yet the progress of science during this century has been such, that the changes I propose to introduce in the most generally adopted classification of the Testudinata are sometimes only confirmations of modifications already hinted at by previous writers, whose opinions have not been sustained from want of satisfactory

<sup>1</sup> The name Testudinata being older than that of Chelonians, and yet entirely synonymous with it, I deem it necessary to retain it in future as the systematic name of this order. The name Chelonians is, however, so generally adopted, that it may not be

desirable to discard it altogether from our illustrations. I shall therefore still use it whenever this group is contrasted with the Saurians and Ophidians, as they were named together, according to the same principle.