

North America, introducing only such comparisons with foreign ones as may be imperatively required to appreciate their mutual relations.

All the genera thus far established among the Chelonii have representatives along the coast of the United States, and I am not aware that there are any genera of this sub-order, except those which have already been recognized by herpetologists: the family of Sphargididae, containing only one genus, the genus *Sphargis*; and the family of Chelonioidea proper, containing three genera, namely, *Chelonia*, *Thalassochelys*, and *Eretmochelys*. But as some of the most prominent herpetologists recognize only one genus in this family, I will give below my reasons for believing that the genera *Thalassochelys* and *Eretmochelys* are as well founded in nature as the genus *Chelonia* proper.

Of the sub-order Amydæ, the family of the Trionychidae has only four representatives in America, which however bear a very peculiar relation to the other members of the family; for while all the *Trionyx* of the old world are inhabitants of the tropical fresh waters, or at least occur only south of the twenty-first isothermal line, those of America are all found to the north of that very line, neither Central nor South America nourishing a single *Trionyx*, while in North America they range over the whole continent east of the Rocky Mountains, as far north as the great Canadian lakes and the upper St. Lawrence.

If we were to judge by the opinion prevailing about the Chelydroidæ a few years ago, it would appear that we had only one species of that family; and yet Dr. Holbrook, in his *North American Herpetology*, long ago described a second species, under the name of *Chelonura Temminckii*, which seems to have remained unknown to European writers, for all their references to this animal are either expressed with doubt, or are evidently mere compilations, or abstracts from the *North American Herpetology*. I have now in my possession a number of specimens of this species weighing between ten and fifty pounds, preserved in alcohol, and also several skeletons made from specimens presented to me by Prof. Baird, Prof. Chilton, Dr. Gessner, and Winthrop Sargent, Esq. I had, besides, an opportunity of seeing two living specimens in their native waters, in the neighborhood of Mobile, one of which weighed about two hundred pounds, and many others which were sent to me alive by Mr. Sargent and which I preserved alive during the whole of last summer. I have, in addition, examined several very young ones, preserved in alcohol, which were forwarded to me by Prof. Baird and Dr. Nott. I can, therefore, not only vouch for the specific distinction of the two species, but am prepared to show that they differ generically, as a fuller comparison below, illustrated with many figures, will prove. (See also above, p. 248.)

The family of the Chelyoidæ has no North American representatives, nor has that of the Hydraspididae; but of the family of the Cinosternoidæ we have two genera,