

toes of the hind feet are at or very near the shield where the edges of the carapace and plastron meet, so that the entire surface on each side between the fore and hind leg is protected by the bridge which connects the lower flattened surface of the plastron with the outer edge of the carapace. Thus the retracted limbs and the tail are placed nearly horizontally between the projecting free edges of the carapace and plastron; but when the plastron is hinged, its ends are raised, and they are pushed further upward and inward.

The size varies exceedingly in this family; it is larger than in the Cinosternoidæ, and smaller than in the Testudinina. The smallest known species, *Emys Mühlenbergii*, is about four inches long; the largest, *Ptychemys rugosa* and *concinna*, are about fifteen inches long. The largest species are among the most aquatic.

None of the species catch active prey, or are in any way ferocious; they are indeed entirely harmless, and only when hard pressed defend themselves by biting; they do not, however, snap repeatedly with the head against their assailants, as the Cinosternoidæ do. Their food is both vegetable and animal; the latter they tear with the jaws, holding it down, when necessary, with the fore feet. In captivity, they are very fond of worms, and green leaves, and berries; the more terrestrial species feed upon grass.

The Emydoidæ, like all other Turtles, lay their eggs upon dry land, in holes which they dig themselves with their hind legs. The number of eggs they deposit at one time varies more, with different species, than in any other family. The more terrestrial species lay the fewest eggs, from two to three, to five or seven; while the aquatic species lay many more, from ten to fifteen, to twenty, thirty, and even more. The form of the eggs is that of a more or less elongated ellipse; the shell is never brittle, but rather flexible, and less calcareous than in most other families.

The minor differences of form, observed among the Emydoidæ, suggest the following subdivisions, which appear to bear the character of sub-families; but, until I have examined a greater number of the species found in South America and in the Old World, I do not venture to insist upon the accuracy of their limits.

1. NECTEMYDOIDÆ. The body is rather flat. The bridge connecting the plastron and carapace is wide, but flat. The hind legs are stouter than the fore legs, and provided with a broad web, extending beyond the articulation of the nail joint. The representatives of this group are the largest and the most aquatic of the whole family.

2. DEROCHELYOIDÆ. The body is higher and more elongated; the bridge connecting the plastron and carapace is not only wide, but at the same time high. The plastron itself is narrower than in the preceding tribe. The neck is remarkably long and snake-like, and recalls that of the *Chelodinae* among the *Pleurodères*. The feet are webbed.