

CHAPTER THIRD.

NORTH AMERICAN GENERA AND SPECIES OF TESTUDINATA.

SECTION I.

GENERAL REMARKS UPON THE NORTH AMERICAN GENERA AND SPECIES OF TESTUDINATA.

IN submitting the North American Testudinata to a renewed critical revision, my object is chiefly to show, that, among the representatives of this order, there are many genera on this continent which have thus far escaped the notice of herpetologists. It is no part of my plan to describe anew the species which have already been so well characterized and so fully illustrated by Major LeConte¹ and Dr. Holbrook.² It will be sufficient, for the object I have in view, simply to enumerate them, to characterize briefly those which may easily be confounded with others, and to insert such additional information as I may have collected respecting their eggs, their young, the variations of their colors, and their geographical distribution. With reference to the specific names of the North American Testudinata, it will be observed that I have not always followed the nomenclature now generally received. Whenever I was led to adopt other names than those in common use among modern herpetologists, it was only done with immediate regard to the inflexible law of priority; and I have availed myself, in this respect, of the information I could obtain from the correspondence of Linnæus with Dr. Garden,³ of Charleston, who provided the great Swedish naturalist with so large a number of the animals of South Carolina, described in the *Systema Naturæ*.

I can hardly expect that the new genera I have characterized in this revision

¹ LECONTE. North American Tortoises, in *Ann. Lyceum Nat. Hist. of New York*, vol. 3.

² HOLBROOK. North American Herpetology, Philadelphia, 1842. 5 vols. 4to.

³ A Selection of the Correspondence of Linnæus and other naturalists, from the original manuscripts. By Sir JAMES EDWARD SMITH. London, 1821-2, 1 vol. 8vo.