

This is the position which I am prepared to sustain by a further comparison. But even if the *Thalassites* and *Amydæ* were genuine families, and not sub-orders, this would not constitute an objection against subdividing them farther into minor natural groups, any more than the nature of the type of *Falconidæ* constitutes an objection against subdividing them into sub-families like those mentioned above, each of which contains still a number of distinct genera. Let us take, for instance, the group of our *Terrapins*, all of which are now generally referred to the genus *Emys*. It contains a great many species, which in the ultimate details of their structure differ as much, if not more, one from the other, than any two genera admitted among either the *Falconidæ*, the *Vulturidæ*, or the *Strigidæ*. I am willing to stake the correctness of my views on this whole subject upon one single case, taking as an example *Emys rugosa* (*rubriventris*), *mobiliensis*, and *concinna*, (*floridana*), which together constitute, in my opinion, a natural genus, and comparing them with any other natural group of species of this very same type, as for instance *Emys scabra* (*serrata*), *Troostii*, and *elegans* (*cumberlandensis*), taken together as another genus; or *Emys picta*, *Bellii* and *oregonensis*; or *Emys geographica*, and *LeSueurii*; or *Emys concentrica*, or *insculpta*, or *marmorata*, or *reticulata*, or *guttata*, or *Mühlenbergii*, which constitute singly as many natural genera. Any zoölogist, who, after a thorough comparison of the external characters and of the skeletons of the three first-named species, (*Emys rugosa*, *mobiliensis*, and *concinna*), taking especially into account their skulls, their jaws, and their feet, and contrasting them with those of *Emys picta* and *oregonensis*, or of *Emys insculpta*, or any other of the groups of species just named, — any zoölogist, I say, who, having made such a comparison, would deny their generic difference, must be either blinded by prejudice against truth, or incapable by nature of applying himself to higher questions in Natural History. If this be true, it follows that among the *Testudinata* most of the genera contain very few species, and that this order affords an excellent opportunity to learn how generic characters may be ascertained, even without comparing many species.

These new genera differ in reality in the same manner as *Vultur*, *Cathartes*, and *Gypaetos*, or as *Pandion*, *Aquila*, and *Harpyia*, or as *Milvus*, *Pernis*, *Buteo*, and *Circus*, etc., differ one from the other. The same may be said of *Chelydra*, and *Gypochelys*, of *Ozotheca* and *Cinosternum*, etc. I need not enumerate here the characters of these genera, which are fully given hereafter in their proper places. Moreover, any one who would competently discuss this question, should examine specimens of all these species for himself. zoölogically and anatomically, when he will at least perceive that, in all our systematic works on Herpetology, the species of our *Terrapins* are either placed side by side without any reference to their true affinities, or grouped together according to characters which