

ume by publishing full quotations of all the works in which notices respecting our Turtles may be found. Every student, who may wish to make himself familiar with this branch of our science, will find ample references to all the works worth consulting in any general treatise on Herpetology. I have only alluded to the subject in detail where I had reasons to dissent from my predecessors.

SECTION II.

THE GENUS SPHARGIS.

The genus SPHARGIS was first pointed out by Merrem in 1820, under the name which is now generally adopted for it.¹ With the scanty materials I have on hand, I feel it the more difficult to draw up a description of the generic characters, as the habits of these Turtles are little known, and all the specimens I had an opportunity of seeing in America were adults, thus affording no opportunity for an appreciation of the changes they undergo with age. In the study of genera it is very important to compare young and adult specimens, as, from the differences they exhibit, it is generally possible to ascertain what constitutes generic characters, in contradistinction to family and specific characters. As far as I can judge from analogy, and by comparison with the genera of the Chelonioidæ, the following may be considered as generic characters.

The arch of the top of the skull is highest over the hind end of the brain-box, and grows narrower and lower thence forward to the eye orbits. The upper surface falls from over the hind end of the brain-box backward; it is depressed over the front end of the brain-box. The frontal region falls from the hind end forward. The upper edge of the opening of the nasal cavity is nearly on a level with that of the eye orbit. The intermaxillaries rise considerably above the level of the lower edge of the eye orbit; they are very thick above, and taper to a sharp edge below. The edges of the notch of the front end of the alveolar wall of the mouth meet the edge of the lateral notch of each side, on the maxillaries, near the suture with the intermaxillaries. The three notches occupy the alveolar edge of that part of the mouth which underlies the nasal cavity. The horizontal alveolar surface of this part of the mouth rises steeply forward; it is

¹ In 1828, Fleming called it *Coriudo*, in imitation of the name *Testudo*; in 1829, LeSueur, in Cuvier's *Règn. Anim.*, proposed the new name *Dermochelys* for it; in 1830, Wagler introduced still another name,

Seytine, in the plates to his *Nat. Syst. der Amph.*, a few copies of which bear that lettering; but he finally adopted LeSueur's name, changing it however to *Dermatochelys*.