

SECTION VII.

GENERA OF CINOSTERNOIDÆ.

Our knowledge of the genera and species of this family has progressed very slowly. For a long time only two species were known, which remained mixed up in the genus *Terrapene* with other species belonging to very different genera, until Fleming distinguished the genus *Cistudo*, Spix the genus *Cinosternum*, Bell the genus *Sternothærus*, and Wagler the genus *Staurotypus*, among which all the species thus far included in the genus *Terrapene* were at once divided, and new ones added. But, even after this first repartition of the species into several genera, much confusion continued to prevail in the nomenclature, as well as in the characteristics, of these animals. The name *Terrapene*, introduced in our science by Merrem, in 1820, to include all the fresh-water Turtles with a movable sternum,¹ was limited, in 1825, to the Box Turtle, *Cistudo*, by J. E. Gray,² while Bell still united heterogeneous species under that name.³ About ten years later, Canino applied the name *Terrapene* exclusively to the North American Emyds, and very properly retained the name *Emys*⁴ for the European species, to which it had been applied from the time of the first dismemberment of the old Linnæan genus *Testudo*. The genus *Cinosternum* was from the beginning circumscribed within natural limits by Spix,⁵ and maintained within the same limits by

læontogr., vol. 2, p. 238, pl. 26, 27, and 30,) has the front end of the plastron widened, as in *Platysternum*, while the posterior end is pointed, as in *Chelydra*. In *Chelydra Dechenii*, *Myr.*, (*Palæontogr.*, p. 242, pl. 28, 29, 30, fig. 5 and 6,) the case is exactly reversed. It is thus plain, that, while at the time of their first appearance upon earth the representatives of this family were not constructed exactly as they now are, they yet foreshadowed, in the combination of their characters, the peculiarities that distinguish the living genera, two of which occur in North America and one in China, though none are found where the type first originated.

¹ Besides two species of *Cinosternoidæ*, (*Terrapene Boscii* and *odorata*, which are one and the same species, now called *Ozotheca odorata*, and *Terrapene pennsylvanica* and *tricarinata*, which are also identical, and belong to the genus *Thyrosternum*.) the genus

Terrapene, as limited by Merrem, (in his *Testamen Systematis Amphibiorum*, Marburgi, 1820,) embraces a genuine *Sternothærus*, *Terrapene nigricans*, and two *Cistudos*, *Terrapene clausa* and *amboinensis*.

² *Genera of Reptiles*, in *Ann. of Phil.*, vol. 10, p. 211.

³ *Monograph of the Tortoises having a movable sternum*, in *Zool. Journ.*, vol. 2, 1825, p. 299. In this paper Bell still unites the European *Emys* with the North American *Cistudo* as one genus, under the name of *Terrapene*.

⁴ *Chelon. Tab. Annl.* 1836. In 1830, Wagler had already retained the name of *Emys* for the European species; but, like Bell, he still associated with it the *Cistudos*, which were at last duly distinguished by Canino.

⁵ Spix, (*J. B.*) *Species novæ Testudinum et Ranarum*, Monachii, 1824, 4to.