

SECTION IX.

GENERA OF TESTUDININA.

Were it not for the circumstance that Linnæus has united all Testudinata into one genus, I believe the classification of this order would long ago have been more natural than it is now. To this day only eight genera have been referred to the family of Testudinina, though its species are very diversified, and exhibit, no doubt, characters indicating generic differences beyond those acknowledged at present, if I may judge from the few that have come under my inspection. The name of Testudo must of course be preserved for that genus to which the common European *T. græca* belongs. Wagler has already separated from it the *T. marginata* under the name of *Chersus*, and Fitzinger has applied the name of *Chelonoidis* to *Testudo tabulata*, that of *Geochelone* to *T. stellata*, that of *Psammobates* to *T. geometrica*, and that of *Megalochelys* to *T. indica*; while Gray has retained the name *Chersina* for *T. angulata*, and Duméril and Bibron have established the genus *Homopus*, not to allude to the genera *Pyxis* and *Cinixys* of Bell. Although I believe most of these genera to be well founded, I cannot refer to either of them the two species which I have observed in North America.

XEROBATES, Ag. Differs from all other Testudinina in having the front legs compressed, without a sign of a plantigrade palm, and large, flat nails; the hind feet are plantigrade, with a round surface. There are only a few large scales side by side upon the forehead. The head is very broad across the temporal muscles; the region of the eyes, nose, and mouth is short; and the top of the skull nearly horizontal between the eyes. The mouth spreads out widely immediately behind the symphysis. The lower jaw is high, and spreads apart from above downward. The inner edge of the horizontal alveolar surface of the upper jaw descends to a sharp ridge all around; from it another ridge reaches across the surface at the symphysis to the vertical surface. The ridge which fits into the furrow of the lower jaw is very prominent and sharp; it is interrupted at the front end only for a short distance. The inner edge of the alveolar surface of the lower jaw rises no higher at its front than at its hind end, but is nearly horizontal, and nowhere as high as the outer alveolar edge; the ridge thus formed is interrupted for only a very short distance at the front end. In the horny sheath of the alveolar edge and the inner ridge at the symphysis there is a notch, which fits over the opposite ridge of the upper jaw. The oblong, rounded plastron is curved upward at the ends.