

tion from the rest of the order, in the farther subdivision of which we find, however, the greatest discrepancy among modern herpetologists. But, whether we subdivide the digitated Chelonians of Oppel and Merrem into two, or three, or more natural groups, the question at once arises, how these groups shall be called, whether they are sections, sub-orders, families, or tribes, names which in the chaos now prevailing in nomenclature might seem equally applicable to all and any of them, or whether nature points out a real difference between them. Let us consider, in the first place, the more extensive of these groups, such as they are admitted by Oppel under the names of CHELONI and AMYDÆ, and by Merrem and Bell under the names of PINNATA and DIGITATA. What do they indicate? A difference in the mode of locomotion, that is to say, a structural difference, and that difference is of such a kind that, whether consciously or unconsciously, all authors have regarded those Turtles which have pinnate limbs as inferior to those in which the fingers are distinct. We find, at least, that in all works in which the animal kingdom is arranged in a descending order, the digitated Testudinata are mentioned first, the pinnate last, and where these are subdivided, as they have been by Ritgen, Wagler, Duméril and Bibron, and Canino, those with club feet are placed above those with webbed fingers. Their intention is therefore evident, to mark the respective rank of the Testudinata in these subdivisions of the order, a gradation which is, however, not founded upon differences in the whole structure, but only on such as are prominently marked in some parts of the body. In as far then as this is correct, these divisions all partake of the character of orders; they are akin to what we have called orders, inasmuch as orders are founded upon the gradation or complication of structure, but they are not real orders, inasmuch as that gradation does not extend to all the organic systems of their structure. At least, it is neither so extensive as to afford a means of comparison of any of them singly with any other order of the class, without involving the enumeration of characters common to all; nor is the element of form, which is so important in the characteristics of families, introduced distinctly in any of these minor groups.

We can, therefore, consider these divisions only as sub-orders; and the precision with which their gradation can be pointed out from the Thalassites through the Potamides and Elodites to the Chersites leaves no doubt in my mind that, whether two general groups are to be adopted under the head of Testudinata, as Oppel, Merrem, and Bell recognize, or three, as Ritgen and Wagler admit, or three combined in the manner in which Canino has them, or four, as Duméril and Bibron have them, these divisions must be considered as sub-orders, since they express a gradation within the order, or, in other words, are founded, under certain limitations, upon characters of the same kind as those on which the whole order is