

numerous species, other families are small, and their representatives more remotely allied and fewer in number; and, while some are limited in their range, others have the widest distribution, so much so indeed, that even those peculiarities of their existence which may seem the most trifling appear to have been devised with the same thoughtfulness and the same providential care as their most important general characteristics. It is, however, in the mode of their embryonic development, that Turtles show, most directly, the thoughtful connection which may be traced among all their peculiarities. For, while the young embryo Turtle exhibits, at some period of its life, the closest resemblance to other Reptiles, and while still younger, even to other Vertebrata, as soon as its Turtle characters begin to appear, nothing can be more surprising, or more attractive to watch, than the manner in which the peculiarities of the *Amydæ* and *Chelonii* proper, and those of their different families, are successively blended and specialized in the periodicity of their exhibition, in their prevalence, in their transformation, and in their final growth. It seems almost as if we were allowed to penetrate into the sanctum of the great Artist, and could behold him so combining his thoughts as to produce a variety of master-works, in this case all representing the same idea, but each in a peculiar way, and at last endowing them with life for ages to come.

The nature of these combinations, as characterizing the different families of Testudinata, will be illustrated in the following chapter.