

## CHAPTER SECOND.

### THE FAMILIES OF TESTUDINATA.

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#### SECTION I.

##### GENERAL REMARKS UPON FAMILIES.

For many years past, naturalists have extensively indulged in the practice of separating, as natural divisions, any group of genera, or even single genera, which appeared to differ strikingly from other genera, and of calling such divisions, families, without apparently caring to ascertain upon what characteristics they were founded; nay, frequently without even assigning to them any characters at all, remaining for the most part satisfied with naming such families.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, not enough to select some prominent genus, and give to it a patronymic ending, in order to establish the right of any natural group to be considered as a family. The result of this practice, as it now lies before us, has been to incumber the nomenclature of Zoölogy with innumerable names ending in *idae* or *inae*. For, regardless of every question of priority, the names of families and sub-families should end in that way, according to certain writers.

As no advantage can be derived, from such a method, to the real advancement of science, I have proceeded upon an entirely different plan in this work. After a most minute and careful comparison of all the Testudinata I could obtain, and having made myself familiar, as far as I could, with all their features, I have arranged them, according to their different degrees of relationship, into as many natural groups as I could recognize, and then only attempted to find out

<sup>1</sup> Naturalists who in no way deserve this imputation will pardon me if, to avoid useless personalities, I allude to the prevailing evil, without men-

tioning names. A mere glance at my "Nomenclator Zoologicus" will show to what extent this method of making families has been carried.