

Bibron, under the name of *Elodites Pleurodères*. Wagler was the first to notice the characteristic lateral movability of the neck of these Turtles;¹ but neither he nor any of the earlier herpetologists availed themselves of this remarkable anatomical peculiarity to separate the fresh-water Turtles into minor groups.

SECTION VI.

FAMILY OF CHELYDROIDÆ.

The family distinguished by Swainson² under the name of *Chelidridæ* rests upon an unnatural combination of the true *Chelydroidæ* and the *Chelyoidæ*, as characterized in the preceding section. But, while such an association of these Turtles is contrary to the principles of classification discussed in the first part of this work, it seems more in accordance with the practice generally followed in similar cases to adopt the name proposed by Swainson than to frame another for the family characterized in the following pages. This is the more feasible, as Swainson himself considered the genus *Chelydra* as the type of the family. All the other naturalists who have written upon the Reptiles unite the *Chelydroidæ* with the *Emydoidæ*.

The body of the *Chelydroidæ* is high in front, and low behind; the middle line along the fixed part of the vertebral column descends from its front end backwards;

Pleurodères, in particular, seems to me to have a deep significance. All the other Turtles, even the *Chelonii*, as far as their neck is flexible, bend it in the perpendicular plane of the longitudinal axis of their body, in the shape of an S, more or less arched. The *Pleurodères*, on the contrary, turn it sidewise, and conceal it under the projecting edges of the carapace and plastron, in the same manner as the Birds hide their head under the wing. Thus this anatomical character excludes the *Pleurodères* entirely from the natural progressive series which begins with the *Sphargididæ* and ends with the *Testudinina*, and stamps them as a distinct type, bearing among *Testudinata* a similar relation to the two sub-orders of *Chelonii* and *Amydæ*, characterized above, (p. 308,) as the *Marsupials* bear to the *placentalium Mammalia*. There is even this remarkable analogy between the

representatives of these two classes, that, as among the *Marsupials* and the higher *Mammalia* the families correspond, to a great extent, to one another, so also the families of the *Pleurodères* recall the families of the other *Testudinata*. The *Emydoid* form of Owen's *Chelone Benstedii*, from the chalk of England, its small size, and its early appearance in the geological series, render the supposition quite plausible, that it may as well be a *Cheloniod* *Pleurodère* as a genuine *Cheloniod*. At any rate, it has in no way the form of a marine Turtle.

¹ See Wagler's *Natürliches System der Amphibien*, p. 214 and 218.

² SWAINSON, (W.) *Natural History and Classification of Fishes, Amphibians, and Reptiles*, London, 1839, vol. 2d, p. 116. The family name ought to be spelled *Chelydroidæ*, and not *Chelidridæ*.