

lines, but so far exaggerated as to appear one of the most aberrant representatives of the whole family; whilst it is so subdued in the most common species as hardly to be perceptible. This being the case, I feel justified in saying, that whosoever does not see that all Naiades have the same form, is still as far behind in Animal Morphology as the tyro in Geometry, who could not understand that the circle may belong to a series of which the straight line would be an extreme case, and again form another series with the ellipse, the parabola, and the hyperbola; with this fundamental difference only, that all these forms belong to an unstable equilibrium in the organic world, whilst they have fixed relations in the inorganic.

SECTION VI.

THE GENERA OF CHELYDROIDÆ.

I know only three genera belonging to this family, and am not aware that there exist others even remotely allied to them. These are the genus *CHELYDRA*, *Schw.*, the genus *PLATYSTERNUM*, *Gray*, and the genus *GYPCHELYS*, characterized in this work for the first time. The genus *CHELYDRA* was characterized by Schweigger¹ in 1812; Fleming² called it *Chelonura* in 1822; Latreille³ called it *Saurochelys* in 1825; in the same year J. E. Gray⁴ gave it the name of *Rapara*; and in 1835, Duméril and Bibron,⁵ overlooking the many names already proposed by their predecessors, insisted upon giving it another new one, *Emysaurus*, which they spell also *Emysaura*, and which has occasionally been further quoted under the form of *Emydosaura*.⁶ The genus *PLATYSTERNUM* was first characterized by J. E. Gray⁷ in 1831. Though I never had an opportunity myself of examining this last genus, I have no doubt that it belongs to the family of Chelydroids; and the descriptions and figures given by Gray, and Duméril and Bibron,⁸ furnish satisfactory evidence of its true relations. This being the case, it is interesting to notice how widely apart from one another the few living representatives of this family are found upon the surface of our globe. *Platysternum* with one species, in China; and *Che-lydra* and *Gypochelys*, each with one species, in North America. But this singular geographical distribution acquires a special interest when it is further stated, that the American genera *Che-lydra* and *Gypochelys* are only met with on the east-

¹ In the work q. n., p. 394, note 5.

² In his *Phil. Zool.*, vol. 2, p. 270.

³ *Familles naturelles du Règn. An.*

⁴ *Ann. of Phil.*, 1825, vol. 10, p. 210.

⁵ *Erp. gén.*, vol. 2, p. 199, and 318.

⁶ *Cat. Brit. Mus.*, 1844, p. 34.

⁷ *Proc. Zool. Soc.*, London, 1831, p. 106.

⁸ *Erp. gén.* Pl. 16, fig. 2.