

tance of correct dates and labels for every specimen. A most valuable collection may be made almost useless from want of attention to these details; whereas if every contributor to public or private museums would furnish precise information respecting the origin of the specimens he has collected, he would confer a real service upon science. Every specimen should be marked with the exact date and place at which it was found, otherwise it may be worthless for purposes of comparison with other specimens. It would not be difficult to show how important are these apparently trifling details. One example may suffice. Thousands of specimens of the Blind Fish of the Mammoth Cave have been brought home by visitors of that interesting locality, and are now scattered throughout the country. They have been examined again and again by naturalists; but to this day the period at which they spawn has remained unknown, even though eggs have been observed in their ovary in an advanced state of development. Had the collectors marked the time at which such specimens were caught, we should know, from that observation alone, what is their spawning season. And so it is with every kind of specimens; without accurate dates we shall learn little from them, of what they might teach us, if they were properly labelled.

With reference to the subject of Turtles, now under consideration, the cause of the discrepancy between the knowledge of the learned and of the field observer lies in the circumstance, that, in the Old World, no Turtles are to be found in the immediate vicinity of the great centres of study, and that most of the information collected upon these animals has been recorded from the casual observations of travellers. In this estimation I do not, of course, include the investigations made upon their structure, which may very well be traced and completed from specimens preserved in alcohol; as every naturalist knows that one of the master-works upon Comparative Anatomy is that of Bojanus upon the Anatomy of the fresh-water Turtle of Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup> Rathke has also published as full an Embryology of that species<sup>2</sup> as the circumstances under which it was prepared would allow, a monograph, which, with his many other embryological researches, has won for him a place in that constellation of eminent writers whose studies have made Embryology what it now is. But it is felt, on almost every page of his work, that he labored under a scarcity of materials which constantly impeded his progress. As I can plead no such difficulties for the imperfections which my present

less than ten years, be made worthy of a careful examination by even the most critical professional naturalists, and would afford to the teachers and pupils a source of ever new interest in their walks, and of ever increasing extension of their knowledge, and ability to observe. In Massachusetts a very good beginning

has already been made, in several schools; and most successfully by Mr. J. W. P. Jenks, in Middleboro'.

<sup>1</sup> BOJANUS (L), *Anatome Testudinis Europaeae*, Vilna and Leip., fig. 1819-21, vol. fol.

<sup>2</sup> RATHKE (H), *Ueber die Entwicklung der Schildkröten*, Braunschweig, 1848, 1 vol. 4to.