XXXIX.—*On the American Box-Tortoises.*

By G. A. Boulenger, F.R.S.

When revising the Tortoises in 1889, I felt somewhat perplexed as to the taxonomic rank to assign to some of the forms of the genus *Cistudo* which had previously been described by Gray and Agassiz. With regard to Agassiz's *Cistudo ornata*, no doubt could be entertained that it fully deserves to be regarded as specifically distinct from *C. carolina*; the other forms, owing to the insufficient material at my disposal, I provisionally admitted as varieties, which, as I remarked, perhaps deserved to rank as species. Dr. G. Baur ('Science,' xvii. 1891, p. 190, and Amer. Natur. 1893, p. 677) has since shown that the latter alternative is the more correct, and pointed out various important additional characters by means of which the species may be easily distinguished. In the light of this latest information I have re-examined the specimens in the British Museum, and fully agree with Dr. Baur. Moreover, I may add that Mexico is inhabited by at least two species of the genus *Cistudo*, as evidenced by three specimens obtained in North Yucatan by Mr. Gaumer and presented to the Museum by Mr. Salvin. These specimens are not so perfect as might be desired; the skins have been dried, and all the bones, except the skulls, are wanting. Nevertheless they appear to show this difference from all the described species except *C. major*, that the digits are distinctly webbed, although a bony temporal arch is absent. The latter character was believed to be characteristic of the genus *Cistudo* until Dr. Baur pointed out the presence of a complete bony quadrato-jugal arch in *C. major*.

We may now distinguish six species of *Cistudo*, for the determination of which the following synopsis will be of service:—

I. Plastron completely closing the shell, without trace of a bridge; carapace with at least a trace of a vertebral keel; median fingers with three phalanges.

A. Digits shortly but very distinctly webbed; upper jaw notched in the middle, bicuspid.

A bony temporal arch ..... 1. *C. major*, Ag.
No bony temporal arch; quadratojugal bone vestigial ..... 2. *C. yucatana*, Blgr.

B. Digits free or with a very indistinct web.

Upper jaw notched in the middle, bicuspid; hind limb with three clawed digits; six vertebral shields ..... 3. *C. mexicana*, Gray.

Upper jaw notched in the middle, bicuspid; hind limb with three clawed digits; five vertebral shields ..... 4. *C. cinosternoides*, Gray.

Upper jaw without notch; hind limb with four clawed digits ..... 5. *C. carolina*, L.

II. Plastron incompletely closing the shell, with a very short but distinct bridge; no vertebral keel on the carapace; fingers all with two phalanges ..... 6. *C. ornata*, Ag.

In shape and size (length 145 millim.) the shell of *C. yucatana* resembles more *C. carolina*, but it is, in one of the specimens, rather more elongate. The shields of the carapace are yellowish, bordered with dark brown and with small irregular brown spots, or nearly uniformly dark brown. The plastron is yellow with large dark brown blotches, or dark brown with the borders of the shields yellow.

The suture between the gular shields is longer than that between the pectorals, and that between the anal shields is nearly as long as the distance which separates them from the plastral hinge.

XL.—*Description of a new Species of* Helictis *from Borneo.*

By Oldfield Thomas.

The genus *Helictis*, whose members range from Nepal and China to Java, has not hitherto been known to occur in Borneo, and Mr. Everett, to whom this fact was of course well known, was proportionally pleased when his collectors brought him from Mount Kina Balu four skins referable to this striking group of Carnivores. Two of these specimens have now been acquired for the British Museum, and prove to represent a new species, which I propose to call after its discoverer.

Helictis Everetti, sp. n.

Size small; form, as judged by the skull, light and delicate. Coloration generally dark, the white markings of the head and neck less developed than in any other species known.