

the time chosen for this purpose is at daylight. The fish are now removed from the lower to the upper batter, and a fresh supply introduced in their place. This operation, in consequence of the heat of the batter, is hard and laborious, and fifty or sixty natives are usually employed in it.

Fire-wood is of course an important article in this process, each picul of biche de mar requiring about half a cord to cure it. This fuel is purchased from the chiefs, who agree to furnish a certain quantity for a stipulated compensation. As much as twenty cords are sometimes bought for a single musket. In carrying on the drying, it is important that the doors be kept shut while the fires are burning. Much also depends upon the location of the house, whose length should be at right-angles to the course of the prevailing winds. The batters also should be nearest to the lee-side of the house.

Before beginning the fishery, the services of some chief are secured, who undertakes to cause the house to be built, and sets his dependants at work to fish the biche de mar. The price is usually a whale's tooth for a hogshead of the animals, just as they are taken on the reef. It is also bought with muskets, powder, balls, vermilion, paint, axes, hatchets, beads, knives, scissors, chisels, plane-irons, gouges, fish-hooks, small glasses, flints, cotton cloths, chests, trunks, &c. Of beads, in assorted colours, the blue are preferred, and cotton cloth of the same colour is most in demand. For one musket, a cask containing from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and sixty gallons, has been filled ten times. When the animals are brought on shore, they are measured into bins, where they remain until the next day.

These bins are formed by digging a trench in the ground, about two feet in depth, and working up the sides with cocoa-nut logs until they are large enough to contain forty or fifty hogsheads. If the fishery is successful, two of these may be needed.

Near the bins are placed the trade-house and trade-stand. In the first the articles with which the fish is purchased are kept, and in the second, the officer in charge of them sits, attended by a trusty and watchful seaman. The stand is elevated, so that the persons in it may have an opportunity of seeing all that is taking place around them. All the fish are thrown into the bin before they are paid for.

In these bins the fish undergo the operations of draining and purging, or ejecting their entrails. These, in some of the species, resemble pills, in others look like worms, and are as long as the animals themselves.

The larger kinds are then cut along the belly for a length of three or four inches, which makes them cure more rapidly, but care must be