

above time, engaged in taking them. At other seasons turtles are occasionally taken in nets, made of cocoanut-husk sennit, among the shoals and reefs.

We have seen that the chiefs keep turtles in pens; and I have been informed, by credible witnesses, that when they do not wish to kill them, and have an opportunity of disposing of the valuable part of the shell, they will remove it from the living animal. They do this by holding a burning brand close to the outer shell until it curls up and separates a little from that beneath; into the gap thus formed a small wooden wedge is inserted, by which the whole is easily removed from the back. After they have been thus stripped, they are again put into the pens, and although the operation appears to give great pain, it is not fatal.

Each turtle is covered with thirteen pieces, five on the back, and four on each side. These together make what is called a head, whose average weight is about fourteen pounds.

Tortoise-shell, I am informed, sometimes sells in Manilla for from two to three thousand dollars the picul (one hundred and thirty-three English pounds). It constitutes the chief article of trade in these islands, and causes them to be visited by traders every season, while it is the chief inducement for the residence of whites among them, who endeavour to monopolize the trade.

The visits of the traders in tortoise-shell, who come in small vessels, are attended with no little risk, and there are many accounts of attempts made by the natives to cut them off. They resort to many methods of effecting this purpose; among others, one of the most frequent is to dive and lay hold of the cable: this, when the wind blows fresh towards the shore, is cut, in order that the vessel may drift upon it; or, in other cases, a rope is attached to the cable, by which the vessel may be dragged ashore. The time chosen for these purposes, is just before daylight. The moment a vessel touches the land, she is considered and treated as a prize sent by their gods.

By five o'clock we had anchored under the Vitilevu shore, off the point called Viti-rau-rau, where we lay until 2 A. M. Having the advantage of the moon, by whose light we trusted to find our way through the reefs, and being favoured by a land-breeze, we then weighed anchor, in hopes of reaching Malolo in time for early observations. At eight o'clock, A. M. it fell calm, and not wishing to lose the day, I determined to land on a small sand-island, a mile and a half in circumference, (which I called Linthicum Island, after my cockswain,) that was near us, and afterwards to connect it with that of Malolo by triangulation. The anchor of the tender was accordingly