

further light of the Ilands; which lye alongst the coast, beginning some eight leagues, West south-west from *Panama*, and run to the south-wards neere thirtie leagues. They are many, and the most uninhabited, and those which haue people, haue some Negroes, slaues vnto the Spaniards, which occupie themselves in labour of the land, or in fishing for Pearles,

Fishing for
Pearles.

In times past, many inriched themselves with that trade, but now it is growne to decay. The maner of fishing for Pearles is, with certaine long Pinaces or small barkes, in which, there goe foure, five, sixe, or eight Negroes, expert swimmers, and great deeuers, whom the Spaniards call *Bufos*; with tract of time, vsf, and continuall practise having learned to hold their breath long vnder water, for the better atchieving their worke. These throwing themselves into the Sea, with certaine instruments of their art, goe to the bottom, and seeke the bankes of the Oysters, in which the Pearles are ingendered; and with their force and art, remove them from their foundation, in which they spend more or lesse time, according to the resistance the firmenes of the ground affordeth. Once loosed, they put them into a bagge vnder their armes, and after bring them vp into their boates; having loaden it, they goe to the shore: there they open them, and take out the Pearles: they lie vnder the vttermoost part of the circuite of the Oyster, in rankes and proportions, vnder a certaine part, which is of many pleights and folds, called the *Ruffe*, for the similitude, it hath vnto a *Ruffe*.

The Pearles increase in bignes, as they be neerer the end or ioyne of the Oyster: The meate of those, which haue these pearles, is milkie, and not very wholesome to be eaten.

In *Anno*, 1583. In the Iland of *Margarita*, I was at the dregging of Pearle Oysters, after the maner we dregge Oysters in England; and with mine owne hands I opened many, & tooke out the pearles of them; some greater, some lesse, and in good quantitie.

How the Pearle is ingendred in the Oyster, or Mussell (for they are found in both) divers and sundry are the opinions, but some ridiculous; whereof, because many famous and learned men haue written largely, I will speake no more, then hath beene formerly spoken, but referre their curious desires to *Pliny*, with other Ancient, and moderne Authors.

The places
where pearle
are found.

They are found in divers partes of the world, as in the west *Indies*, in the *South Sea*, in the east *Indian Sea*, in the Straites of *Magellane*, and in the *Scottish Sea*.

Those found neere the *Pooles*, are not perfect, but are of a thick colour; whereas such as are found neere the line, are most orient & transparent.