

The wood-cut at the head of this article represents the manner in which the marine tortoises are caught on the coast of Cuba and on parts of the South American continent. The Count de Lacepede, in his History of Oviparous Quadrupeds, has described the various modes in which the business of tortoise-catching is carried on ; and we shall conclude this notice with an abstract of his account. It must be remarked that the turtle is a most important addition to the ordinary mode of victualing a ship ; and that, therefore, the war in which the human race engages against them is rendered absolutely necessary by the wants of navigators.

“ In spite of the darkness which is chosen by the female tortoises for concealment when employed in laying their eggs, they cannot effectually escape from the pursuit of their enemies ; the fishers wait for them on the shore, at the beginning of the night, especially when it is moonlight, and, either as they come from the sea, or as they return after laying their eggs, they dispatch them with blows of a club, or turn them quickly over on their backs, not giving them time either to defend themselves or to blind their assailants, by throwing up the sand with their fins. When very large, it requires the efforts of several men to turn them over, and they must often employ the assistance of handspikes or levers for that purpose. The buckler of this species is so flat as to render it impossible for the animal to recover the recumbent posture, when it is once turned on its back.

“ A small number of fishers may turn over forty or fifty tortoises, full of eggs, in less than three hours. During the day, they are employed in securing those which they had caught in the preceding night. They cut them up, and salt the flesh and the eggs. Sometimes they may extract above thirty pints of a yellow or greenish oil from one large individual ; this is employed for burning, or, when fresh, is used with different kinds of food. Sometimes they drag the tortoises they have caught, on their back, to enclosures, in which they are reserved for occasional use.