

missionaries place marks to indicate the point where each tribe should stop in its labours. We were surprised to hear this 'harvest of eggs' estimated like the produce of a well-cultivated field. An area accurately measured of one hundred and twenty feet long, and thirty feet wide, has been known to yield one hundred jars of oil, valued at about forty pounds sterling. The Indians remove the earth with their hands; they place the eggs they have collected in small baskets, carry them to their encampment, and throw them into long troughs of wood filled with water. In these troughs the eggs, broken and stirred with shovels, remain exposed to the sun till the oily part, which swims on the surface, has time to inspissate. As fast as this collects on the surface of the water, it is taken off and boiled over a quick fire. This animal oil, called *tortoise butter* (*manteca de tortugas*)* keeps the better, it is said, in proportion as it has undergone a strong ebullition. When well prepared, it is limpid, inodorous, and scarcely yellow. The missionaries compare it to the best olive oil, and it is used not merely for burning in lamps, but for cooking. It is not easy, however, to procure oil of turtles' eggs quite pure. It has generally a putrid smell, owing to the mixture of eggs in which the young are already formed.

I acquired some general statistical notions on the spot, by consulting the missionary of Uruana, his lieutenant, and the traders of Angostura. The shore of Uruana furnishes one thousand botijas, or jars of oil, annually. The price of each jar at Angostura varies from two piastres to two and a half. We may admit that the total produce of the three shores, where the *cosecha*, or gathering of eggs, is annually made, is five thousand botijas. Now as two hundred eggs yield oil enough to fill a bottle (*limeta*), it requires five thousand eggs for a jar or botija of oil. Estimating at one hundred, or one hundred and sixteen, the number of eggs that one tortoise produces, and reckoning that one third of these is broken at the time of laying, particularly by the 'mad tortoises,' we may presume that, to obtain annually five thousand jars of oil, three hundred and thirty thousand *urrau* tortoises, the weight of which amounts to one hundred

* The Tamarac Indians give it the name of *carapa*; the Maypure call it *limi*.