

say, a triangle, and making a great noise and stir. They appear to have been much in request with the Greeks and Romans, and are now an important article of food with the inhabitants of the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean.

But no fish is so important a gift of Heaven, as affording employment to a large number of individuals both in the catching and preparing it, and as adding very largely to the general stock of food, especially in Catholic countries, as that of whose history I shall next give a brief sketch.

Three thousand decked vessels, of different sizes, besides smaller boats, are stated to be annually employed in the herring-fishery, with a proportionable number of seamen, besides a vast number of hands that, at certain seasons, are occupied in curing them.

The *herring* to which I now allude belongs to the tribe called *abdominal* fishes, or those whose ventral fins are behind the pectoral, and may be said to inhabit the arctic seas of Europe, Asia, and America, from whence they annually migrate, at different times, in search of food and to deposit their spawn. Their shoals consist of millions of myriads, and are many leagues in width, many fathoms in thickness, and so dense that the fishes touch each other; they are preceded, at the interval of some days, by insulated males. The largest and strongest are said to lead the shoals, which seem to move in a certain order, and to divide into bands as they proceed, visiting the shores of various islands and countries, and enriching their inhabitants. Their presence and progress are usually indicated by various sea-birds, sharks, and other enemies. One of the cartilaginous fishes, the sea-ape,* is said to accompany them constantly, and is thence called the king of the herrings. They throw off also a kind of oily or slimy substance, which extends over their columns, and is easily seen in calm weather. This

* *Chimæra monstrosa*.