

Finch & C^o



A BLOND TURTLE SHELL CARAPACE

THE BLONDE CARAPACE OF A TURTLE (PODOCNEMIS EXPANSA)

OLD SMOOTH AGED AND PALE PATINA

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 61CM HIGH, 47CM WIDE – 24 INS HIGH, 18½ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

IN THE ENGRAVING OF 1655 OF THE DANISH OLE WORMS MUSEUM THERE HANGS ON THE WALL A SINGLE LARGE TURTLE SHELL. THESE BLOND SHELLS WERE REGARDED IN THE 17TH CENTURY AS EXOTIC AND EVOCATIVE OF DISTANT OCEAN SHORES. TURTLE MEAT, TASTING LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN VEAL AND LOBSTER, WAS A LUXURY IN EUROPE. IT WAS MOSTLY EATEN BY SAILORS IN NEED OF FRESH FOOD ON BOARD SHIP. THEN, IN THE 18TH CENTURY TRADERS RETURNING FROM THE WEST INDIES BEGAN TO SHIP LIVE TURTLES IN SEAWATER TANKS TO SELL ON THE LONDON MARKET AT LUCRATIVE PRICES AND THE MEAT GRADUALLY BECAME MORE AVAILABLE.