

depths between 60 and 100 fathoms, a mile or so from the shore. Large, clumsy fishing-boats are used, with a crew of from six to eight or nine men. A frame of two crossed bars of iron, weighted in the centre with a large stone, and hung with abundant tangles, some of them of loose hemp and others of net, is let down with a thick rope (one and a half or two inch), and eased back and forward on the ground till it has fairly caught; the rope is then led to a rude windlass in the middle of the boat, and it often takes the whole strength of the crew to bring the frame up. The branches of coral stick in the tangles and in the meshes of the net. It was a fearfully hot day—the hottest, I think, in its physiological effect on the human body, which I have ever experienced. There was not a breath of air, and the sea was as smooth as glass; and the vertical sun and the glare from the water were overpowering. We crouched, half sick, under our awning, muffled up to prevent the skin being peeled off; and even a few successful hauls in the afternoon, which yielded perhaps twenty or thirty fair branches of coral, scarcely restored our equanimity. A few of our first hauls were unsuccessful, so we steamed up close to one of the nearest fishing-boats. The coral-fishers, having no fear of competition, were very civil; indicating by signs when we were on the right spot. They were active, swarthy Spaniards, and had stripped themselves for their work to a pair of very scanty drawers, and their lithe bronzed figures heaving round the windlass were most picturesque; they got several pieces of coral while we were out. According to our experience, the coral grows at Porto Praya in loosely spreading branches, from two to perhaps eight inches high, attached firmly to ledges of rock and large stones. It is bad dredging-ground; our dredge got jammed more than once, and was extricated with difficulty. The Cape Verde coral is not of fine quality; it is dark and coarse in color, and it does not seem to be so compact in texture as the Mediterranean variety.