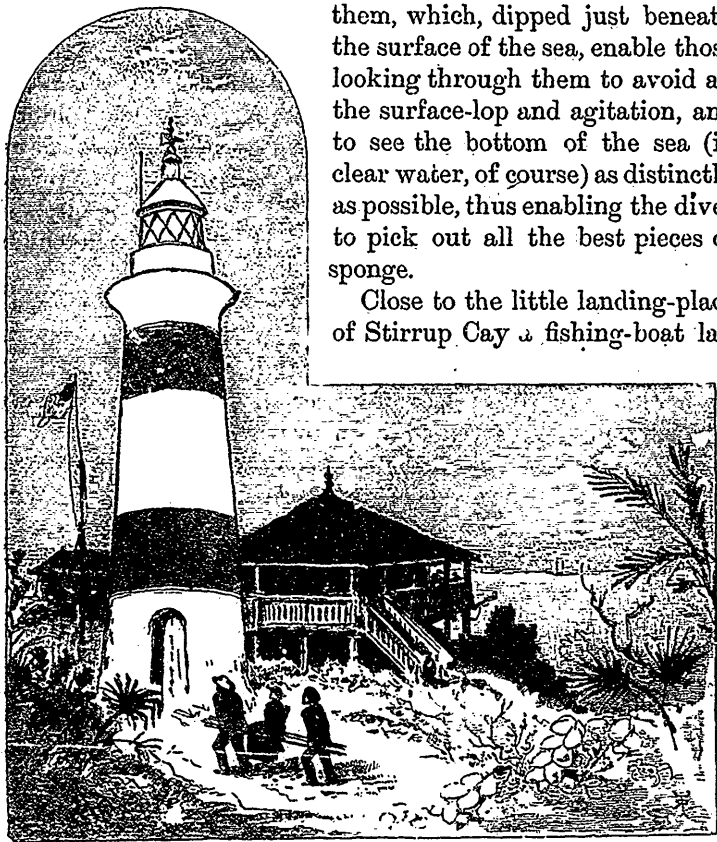


situated, a small schooner was fishing for sponges—a very simple process apparently. The “spongers,” as they are called, know approximately the whereabouts of what they seek; and, letting their vessels drift, they soon discover by looking through their sponge-glasses the exact spot where the finest specimens are growing. These glasses may be best described as square buckets with a glass bottom to them, which, dipped just beneath the surface of the sea, enable those looking through them to avoid all the surface-lop and agitation, and to see the bottom of the sea (in clear water, of course) as distinctly as possible, thus enabling the diver to pick out all the best pieces of sponge.

Close to the little landing-place of Stirrup Cay a fishing-boat lay



STIRRUP CAY LIGHT.

at anchor, well filled with some of the most beautiful and multicoloured fish imaginable, all alive, and swimming about as merrily as possible. I had been for some time past out of health, and was so pulled down by my few days' illness that I could not manage to walk from the boat to the lighthouse; but Tom had a board rigged up for me to rest upon, and he and the sailors carried me up. The lighthouse-keeper and his com-