

the business feel that they must get everything ready and set the nets as soon as possible. With great expectation, they start out when the river is only partly frozen over, and even when the cakes are sinking beneath their feet, attempt to take out everything needful, and sometimes they are no sooner in a position to lower the nets, than a gale of wind comes; shanties, pickets, break-winds go down, and they merely escape with their lives. Horses have been lost before they reached the fishing-grounds, and were it not for boats which some keep near at hand, the fishers would never reach land, the ice breaking up very often at first along the shores.

Not very long ago a young man almost lost his life in the waters of the Bay de Chaleur. After assisting a number of others to take out their nets and supplies before it was really safe, he started for home one night after dark and was almost drowned. While walking along about half a mile from shore, he felt the ice sink under his feet, and the more he endeavored to get safe footing the further he went down. His cries for help were heard by those whom he had left shortly before, and they, realizing the danger to which he might be exposed, hastened to the rescue with several long poles. When they reached him his head and shoulders were above water, and he was vainly clinging to pieces of ice that continued to break off as he tried to keep above water. Not daring to get too near in case they themselves might go under, they managed, from a distance, to place the poles under his arms, and, thus assisted, he was finally landed on the ice, and, much exhausted after the struggle, was carried back to the shanty.

In another part of the bay a person of great daring was fishing by himself, and during the high tides, about the middle of the night, the ice suddenly broke away, and, the current being unusually strong, everything was drawn under except the shanty, which partly floated. Not seeing any other means of escape, he clung to it, and was carried miles from shore by the outgoing tide. After some time, he was picked up by a boat, half-frozen from exposure to the cold. Thus, we see how the lives of the fishermen are in danger, especially at the beginning of the season, for smelts are much more plentiful then, and rather than lose several hundred dollars, some will run almost any risk.

A great disadvantage is the long hours. It is almost day and night work, for the smelt-fishers fish by night as well as by day, there being just about five hours between each fishing, from the time they set the net till they take it up. If they get about ten barrels of fish, they are kept busy removing the seaweed, and raking the fish until they become frozen and ready to put in barrels for those who take them to market.

The turn of the tide has also to be watched, for the smelts run with the tide, coming in with the rising and going out with the falling water. When it starts to rise, the mouth of the net is pulled open; as it reaches its full height the net is closed, then hauled up on the ice, and the smelts taken out. This being done, it is put back in the hole, but not opened again until the tide begins to fall or rise as the case may be. The net is always placed so that the mouth is against the current. If set on a bar of the channel, the smelts cannot be fished by one alone as the current is too swift. Then the laws allow one person to fish with two nets in certain parts of the bay, so those who have had experience find that the best and most economical way is to go in partnership.

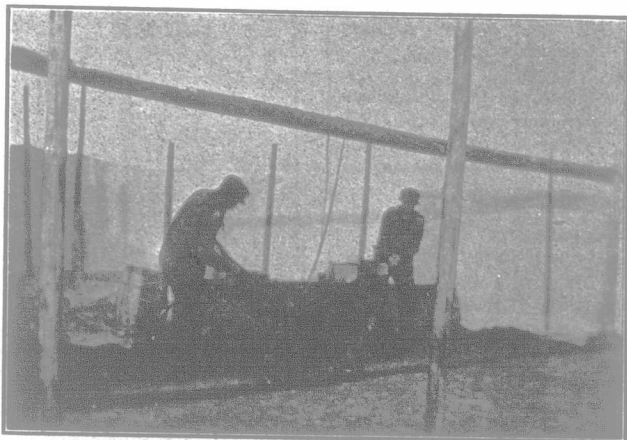
On Saturday night at twelve o'clock all nets have to be closed, and left closed till Sunday night at the same hour. It is a good thing that the law does not allow fishing to be done on the Sabbath, for if it did, many, in their eagerness, would not think of resting. As it is, they are simply compelled to do so, while others look forward to the day as a time when they can make up for sleep lost during the week.

Perhaps if it were not for the severe winters the smelt-fishing business would not be looked upon as a hardship. Days go by when it is impossible to fish because of the piercing cold, and blustering weather; even while in the shanty, one can expect almost anything to hap-

pen, should a great gust of wind strike it.

Two young men some time ago had a very interesting experience. For twenty-four hours there was such a terrific gale that they thought it best not to venture out to work, and after putting some coal in the stove, stretched themselves out to take a nap. The little building stood on blocks about two feet above the ice, and at the back, outside, there was a good-sized tub. Suddenly a terrific gust of wind came up, blowing the shanty backwards about five feet, so that it was carried off the blocks and landed on top of the tub. You can imagine the result. The tub was forced up through the floor, upsetting the stove; the pail of molasses fell off the shelf

ter. But I'll keep Tunis for my next letter, and tell you now of our trip here. When we left Taormina, on our way to Palermo, we stopped off at Messina a couple of hours to see the wreck of that once beautiful city. We were the only passengers to alight, and all the unemployed porters and guides fell upon us like ravening wolves the minute we landed. In spite of our emphatic protestations, we were speedily appropriated by an English-speaking guide, who whisked us off to a carriage and personally conducted us around the ruined city, entertaining us en route with harrowing tales of his own experiences during the terrible time. He had been buried five days under a fallen building, he said, and was the sole sur-



Drawing Net Up Through Hole in Ice.

above their heads; also a gallon of fresh water. No time was lost putting out the fire, replacing the stove, and gathering up the remnants, but no attempt was made to put the shanty on blocks till the storm subsided. After that, it was more securely fastened.

The price of smelts is a source of worry to many, because it varies at different times. If the fish are numerous in other waters besides the Bay de Chaleur, the price is apt to go down, but even when the value is low, if there is a large run of smelts, a great deal of money can be made. On the other hand, seasons go by when the fishing is poor, many merely making enough to pay expenses. However, there are times when the price is reasonable, and the fish plentiful, so that it pays the people to

vivor of a family of ten. It may have been true, and it may have been a dramatic touch inserted for our benefit, but it added to the desolation of the scene.

Apparently nothing has been done since the earthquake of four years ago. The city is a mass of ruined walls and crumbled stone. There is a current report about that terrible time, that no one seems to deny, and that is, that the enormous sums of money contributed by other countries for the relief of the destitute poor went principally into the pockets of rich men in power, and the people for whom it was intended were left to starve and suffer, or die.

We spent three busy days in Palermo sightseeing. One day we went by train to Monreale, a hill-town overlooking



Men in Shawls, Monreale, Sicily.

living along the shores of the Bay de Chaleur to engage in the business, notwithstanding the cold and hardship, and if they only make little more than what will meet their expenses the first year, they are usually more than compensated the second season, and so on.

Letters from Abroad.---VI.

ON MEDITERRANEAN SHORES.

Tunis, Africa, March 6, 1913.

Dear Jean,—I am so dazzled by the strange sights of this Mohammedan city that I can hardly keep away from the window long enough to write you a let-

ter. Palermo, which has a cathedral famous for its wonderful mosaics. The interior of the cathedral is very vast, and most impressive. The entire surface—ceiling, dome, walls, pillars, and floor, is fairly ablaze with marvellous mosaics, which depict the entire history of the Bible, from the Creation to the Resurrection.

The quaint conception of the old-time artists is most interesting. I remember especially the landing at Mt. Ararat, in the Noah's Ark series. The ark was a ridiculously small, cottage-like affair, with turned-up corners, and was resting on the crests of two rigid waves. A ladder reached from the door to the mountain, and the most mammoth ani-

mals were issuing from a diminutive, door, and scrambling fearlessly across to dry land. The Garden-of-Eden series was also intensely interesting, but was so near the ceiling that it was too break-necking a business to look at it for more than a few minutes at a time.

We were fortunate in seeing the Cathedral when it was peopled with worshippers,—but, oh, the contrast between the wealth on one side of the altar-rail and the poverty on the other! In the chancel, the richly-adorned priests and acolytes moving slowly through an elaborate ritual, the haze of rising incense, the scarlet-gowned choristers, the chanting and color, and the architectural beauty of the background, made a solemn picture of ideal beauty; contrasting with this was the picture in the nave, full of ignorant peasants, kneeling on the cold stones, the women with cheap-colored handkerchiefs on their heads, and the men bare-headed, ragged, and muffled in shawls. Shawls, by the way, are the overcoats of the Sicilian peasants.

The next day we visited the catacombs connected with the Cappuccini Monastery. A big, fat monk, cowed and sandalled, and garbed in the brown robes of his order, conducted us to the dim underground passages, where rest the bones of eight thousand monks—that is what our guide told us. We followed him through a labyrinth of narrow aisles, flanked on either side by dusty coffins and ancient skeletons, each one tagged and gowned, and standing upright, fastened to the wall behind his coffin. Such a ghastly sight!

It made one break out in goose-flesh just to walk past them. Many of them had tilted forward, as if they were too tired to stand up any longer, and I should think they would be after being stationary for several centuries. Some of them had tipped over sideways, and some had fallen together in ghastly groups, and the frightful expression on those fleshless faces! Ugh! It gives me the shivers now to think of it! And just think—this awful form of burial was only discontinued thirty years ago. We did not stay long in the catacombs, the air was oppressively heavy, and the sight too gruesome. We were glad to get out into the disinfecting glare of sunlight again, and felt a tourist's pride in having accomplished a disagreeable item on our daily programme.

Palermo is both ancient and modern. The new town is quite up-to-date, with broad avenues, modern buildings, and jingling street-cars; the old part is a net-work of narrow streets, with fluttering clothes-lines above, and swarming humanity on the pavements below—and to go from one century to another, one has but to cross the street.

In the modern part, few women are seen on the streets except tourists and working women, as it is not regarded as proper in Palermo for women to go upon the streets unchaperoned. But at the sunset hour, all the fashionable women of the city may be seen in carriages upon the avenues. It is the event of the day, and all who wish to see or be seen, appear then. I shall always remember Palermo as part of a wonderful color scheme in which the marvellous streaks of blues and greens formed the foreground; the town in rich tones of yellow ochre the middle distance, and the brownish-pink hills, with their high, pointed peaks, sharply defined against a deep violet sky—the background.

That was the last glimpse we had of Palermo, as we sailed away from Sicily over the blue waters of the Mediterranean to Africa.

LAURA.

An American doctor built an elegant home, says the San Francisco Chronicle. His bathroom was of white marble, and a music-box was concealed in the room. An Englishman came to visit the doctor, who, when he escorted his guest to the bath-room, turned on the music-box to give his guest a pleasant surprise. An hour later the Englishman joined his host, and the doctor asked what his guest thought of the bathroom. The Englishman replied, "It is beautiful." "How did you like my music-box?" Said his guest with great disgust in his tones: "Bah! That music-box! The old thing played 'God-Save the King,' and I had to stand up the whole time I was trying to bathe."