# CATCHING FISH WITH A PIER

### THE BIG IRON WEIR AT MONTAUK POINT BEGINS ITS WORK.

**A Gigantic Arm Reaching Out into the Sea of Fish Up and Down the Coast—Fishermen's Debates About It—Will It "Bear" the New York Market?—Its Workings.**

An iron pier on the Atlantic coast at Napeague, L. I., sixteen miles from Montauk Point, was set to work picking on Wednesday morning last and it will be kept at work night and day until the frosty spray of December makes the nets stiffen. The pier is in principle a gigantic pound net. As to the name pound applied to a fishing net, it describes the way in which fish are imprisoned. The village pound confines poor widows' cows, vagrant horses, or children's goats; the sea pound takes and keeps anything that swims into it. The pound net is more properly called a weir, or "wier," or "weer," as it has been variously spelled, and its origin is ancient. The inventor knew centuries ago the habits and instincts of fish, and contrived such an apparatus as would lead them into his trap before they suspected danger ahead. The first weir was made of stakes set a few feet apart and driven into the bottom of a stream in a line at right angles to the river bank. Then twigs and withes were braided in and out among the stakes to make a basketwork. The fish found the obstruction in their journey, tried to go around it, and found themselves trapped in a pound set at the outermost end of the basketwork. The opening to the prison is small, and is on the land side. If the foolish fish were not so persistent in nosing along the basketwork, if they should make the smallest detour when they strike the basketwork and swim two or three feet away from it in going around it, or if they would take the back track, then they would escape. But persistency is and always has been a fish nature, and no better way of taking fish by wholesale has been devised than by letting them entrap themselves.

Fishing for fun and fishing for business are very different occupations; and hard fishing is fishing for business. Sporting fishermen look with disdain on pound fishing, as they do on pot hunting on land. The game has no chance to get away. This objection intensified has been urged against the building of such a weir as that at Napeague. It was intended by the opponents that if such a weir should be built the fish would never come near the nets