CRAB CATCHING.

A Popular Fall Sport on the Atlantic Coast.

Points for the Uninitiated in the Art of "Nabbing" the Nimble Crustacean—An Inexpensive Pastime for Old and Young.

Out of the wide-spreading Hackensack meadows and along the Shrewsbury in New Jersey, in all the shallow bays and inlets of Long Island and the Connecticut shore there nowadays is great fun afloat, says the New York World. Every man, woman and child that can pole a square-ended scow or handle a scoop-net is prowling along the sedgy creek banks or drifting up the shoal coves netting crabs. This is the heart of the crab season.

The biggest and fattest of the blue-claws are now hunting tideway and creek, coming and going with every tide, hungry and eager as they sail in on the flood, and coy and well fed as they lazily depart on the ebb. Every one who wants to go crabbing and can't is profoundly to be pitied, and the few who can and don't want to rather do not realize what a satisfying, all-absorbing pastime it is or else they have lost interest in life.

It is an inexpensive pastime and the fishing grounds are near at hand. For the matter of that a man may take his wife and children along. He has only to look up the time of tide and train schedules, buy a net for a quarter, a dozen baits of tough, raw meat and a ball of twine for a line, shoulder his basket and start. He must try to time his departure so as to reach the creek on the rising tide, for Mr. Crab comes in very lame and hungry from the sea and bites eagerly then what a few hours later he will turn up his well-fed nose at and ignore.

If you cannot, or do not care to, hire a boat, the accommodating crab will humor you and let you capture him from the muddy bank. Bank fishing is done by driving little stakes in the edge of the shore at about a rod's distance apart, and to each of these tying a line about twelve feet long, on which you have tied a bit of meat. If the current bothers you you should have some small sinkers along, for if the meat floats on top few crabs will notice it.

Ten or a dozen lines are all one party can manage generally, for the crabs feed like newsboys at a Christmas dinner. The man who handles the net will have his hands full running from one line to another, as some one yells: "Here, don't wait all day; there are two old lappers here!" or: "Come quick! Come quick! This one will let go!" One of the beauties of the sport is that the children can all help. Even the little shaver of eight or nine can be shown how to draw in his crab gently and slowly and then how to tenderly lift him till the net has him fast.

The women all like it, too; like to shout over slipping in the mud, like to scream when a crab gets out of the basket or net and runs sideways at their feet; and like, above all, to have found an outdoor sport in which they can join their husbands and boys. And it is not like wooing the trout or fickle black bass, when one may toil day after day with little or no profit, just because he has not on a darker or brighter fly.

If one is not blest with wife and little one and is going alone, he may try a still more exciting form of the sport. That is what is technically known as "nabbing." "Nabbing" consists in floating up with the tide over shallows and scooping up the crabs as they feed or run without the use of bait. Now, from the number of his pedal extremities, the quickness of his queer bulging eyes and his ability to start in any direction without turning the crab could not be called by his bitterest enemies a sluggish or a clumsy fish. When he has a particular reason for going up creek toward a certain bed of eel grass or sea lettice and gives his personal attention to the subject it takes a gentleman of considerable agility to intercept his flight. No dreamy, absent-minded or profoundly thoughtful person should try to "nab." The thread of their reasoning is apt to be abruptly severed by a plunge into the black ooze of the creek.

The "nabber" stands at one end, or, if there are two "nabbers," one at each end and they simply let the boat drift with the tide. Along the shore is a favorite haunt of crabs rather than in the middle of the bay or creek, perhaps because floating bits of food are apt to lodge in the sedge.

The net whose thirteen or fifteen-inch frame seemed so large when you bought it now seems as small as an arrow point when you drive it at a vanishing crab and miss him clean. Too vicious a thrust often sticks the net deep in the mud bottom, and if you are not lively in rescuing it the boat passing over will smash the handle or the sudden wrench will hurl you into the water. Then once you are fouled in such a way the most tempting sort of opportunities always present themselves.

Big luscious crabs come slowly, languidly by, blinking in peaceful security as if they realized your predicament, and guardian crabs take advantage of that particular moment to scurry past with their soft-shelled wards. You are wiser and hotter, and usually tired after you have succeeded at last in prying that net loose.

At high tide one may only skirt the shore, catching what stray crabs he may find clinging to the sedge and reeds, for out in the bay the depth is too great. When the tide turns you may go down with it, catching just as many or more than you took going up, for the midday meal has made his crabship more slow and lazy in his movement. Expert "nabbers" can turn with one crab captured in the net, plunge for a second and a third and even a fourth, and at last fling the whole quartette snapping and kicking into the bottom of the boat.

FANCY WOOD IS DANGEROUS.

Naval Officers Take Warning from Hapless Vessels in the Yalu Battle.

The details of the great naval battle at the mouth of the Yalu river as laid before the public in the Associated Press dispatches have been of great interest to naval officers. This engagement is bound to have an effect on naval construction in at least one feature. It is noted by the naval experts that the heaviest losses in the fight were caused by fire, and at least three of the vessels engaged were in flames during the fight, caused by the explosion of small shells from the secondary batteries. That steel ships should prove to be combustible was regarded as an extraordinary fact, calling for explanation and correction, and the attention of the board of naval bureau chiefs has been directed to that end. The result will be a heavy reduction in the amount of woodwork that will be allowed in the ships of this country.

During the great naval meet at Hampton roads preliminary to the review at New York the visiting foreign naval officers expressed astonishment and delight at the luxurious apartments and finish of the interiors of our ships, which made the foreign vessels seem barren by contrast. The British vice admiral, Hopkins, complained that his officers had been discontented by the comparison of their own plain quarters with the mahogany finish, carved and decorated wardrooms of our ships. The British naval vessels, by the way, are exceptionally devoid of this class of work, and plain steel walls, unadorned even by pictures, are the rule rather than the exception. The objections to woodwork had already been under consideration by the naval designers, when they received the hint conveyed by the Yalu fight of the startling danger from fire to which these splendidly-fitted ships were exposed, and as a result it is safe to predict that in designs for future American warships the British officers will find nothing to envy on the score of luxury. Some covering, it is true, is necessary to prevent the "sweating" of the steel walls. The British rely for this upon heavy coats of paint.

A GIFTED ACTOR.

Who Was Enabled to Draw the Pensions of the Soldiers.

A regular personification of deceased pensioners has been discovered at the station of Dapoolie. This is a delightful, healthy place in the district of Ratnagiri, about five miles from the sea, at an elevation of six hundred feet. It was the residence of veteran sepoys who had been pensioned after doing good service in 1857-8. An anonymous petition brought to light the distressing fact that the pensions had been drawn long after the decease of the real incumbents, and that there was, besides, an original scheme by which pensions still due to survivors had been intercepted and were in the main enjoyed by money lenders in the bazar and by the native clerks of the department, says the Saturday Review.

A long investigation followed, in