

110.—THE INCIPIENCY OF THE MENHADEN OIL BUSINESS.**By E. L. BARKER.**

[From letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

I passed my youth in daily contact with those who constituted more than one-half of all the "menhaden fishers" of that day. My grandfather was the originator of the net then and now in use, and was the first to discover, to "try out," to market, and to give value to this most valuable product. I have made from this fish, selected and properly cooked as the "staff" of the meal, more enjoyable breakfasts while yet a boy than ever since from "A 1" mackerel. I have seen my father and nine others realize \$440 cash for a few hours' work in seining, and this at a single catch. This was years before the use of steam in the business. I sincerely wish it were in my power to throw a little light on any recent changes, real or alleged, in their habits, in their migrations, as well as upon their relations to what are known as edible fish.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *December 28, 1882.***111.—REASONS FOR RESTRICTING THE USE OF STEAMERS AND SEINES IN THE MENHADEN FISHERY.****By LOUIS C. d'HOMERGUE.**

[From a letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

I have received, through the courtesy of a friend, a copy of the testimony taken by the subcommittee on Foreign Relations, "to examine into the subject of the protection to be given by law to the fish and fisheries on the Atlantic coast."

It seems to me that the questions were so put as to procure admissions on the part of the menhaden fishermen that they caught large quantities of food-fish in their nets, and that owing to the rapidity with which they were bailed into the vessels it would be impossible to detect them. This, of course, is a wrong impression, for other fish are so distinct that they are detected as easily as a lump of chalk would be in a load of soft, fine coal. The fact, however, has been clearly established by all the witnesses examined in the interest of the menhaden steamers that they do not catch enough food fish to furnish diet for their crews, and that whenever this rule is broken by an exception the food-fish is brought to market for sale. But the truth is that the market is soon glutted, so that what remained on two occasions had either to be thrown overboard or turned into guano which went to make food.

Tons of food-fish are removed weekly from Fulton market, in summer especially, and taken by two well known fertilizing firms.