

DREDGING FOR OYSTERS.

A LIVELY TIME BETWEEN THE DREDGERS AND THE STATE AUTHORITIES.

BALTIMORE, Md., Nov. 1.—Four hundred oyster vessels lay yesterday afternoon in a cove under cover of Swan Point, Kent County. The 600 men aboard them were quietly and illegally dredging on one of the private and richest oyster beds in the Chesapeake. Many of them had gathered half a cargo, when around the point came the police sloop Mary Compton bearing down upon them under full sail. When within speaking distance the commander of the sloop called to them to surrender in the name of the State of Maryland, but he might as well have talked to the breeze that filled his sails, for the dredgers said not a word, and made no attempt to escape. Again the commander shouted, and this time he received an answer, several hundred muskets peering a volley into the police boat. Had not the commander dodged behind a water barrel when the guns were raised he would have been a dead man. The crew of the sloop were quick to action, and a dozen or more volleys of musketry were interchanged when the sloop's big gun was turned upon the little craft, and at every discharge the heavy shot carried away the tops of the masts of the dredgers. No effort, however, was made to punish the law-breakers except dismantle their craft. The volleys of the dredgers, however, compelled the sloop to put about and show her heels to the shouting, jeering Chesapeake pirates. Later in the evening the sloop returned, accompanied by the State steamer McLane, and together they put the dredgers to flight. The steamer then left and the sloop cruised across the bay. Under cover of the night the dredgers slipped back to the forbidden beds, and this morning when the Mary Compton peeped around the point there were the dredgers at work again. The police, however, tackled them and there was some lively firing, the dredgers finally getting away with some of their number wounded, though how seriously could not be learned.

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