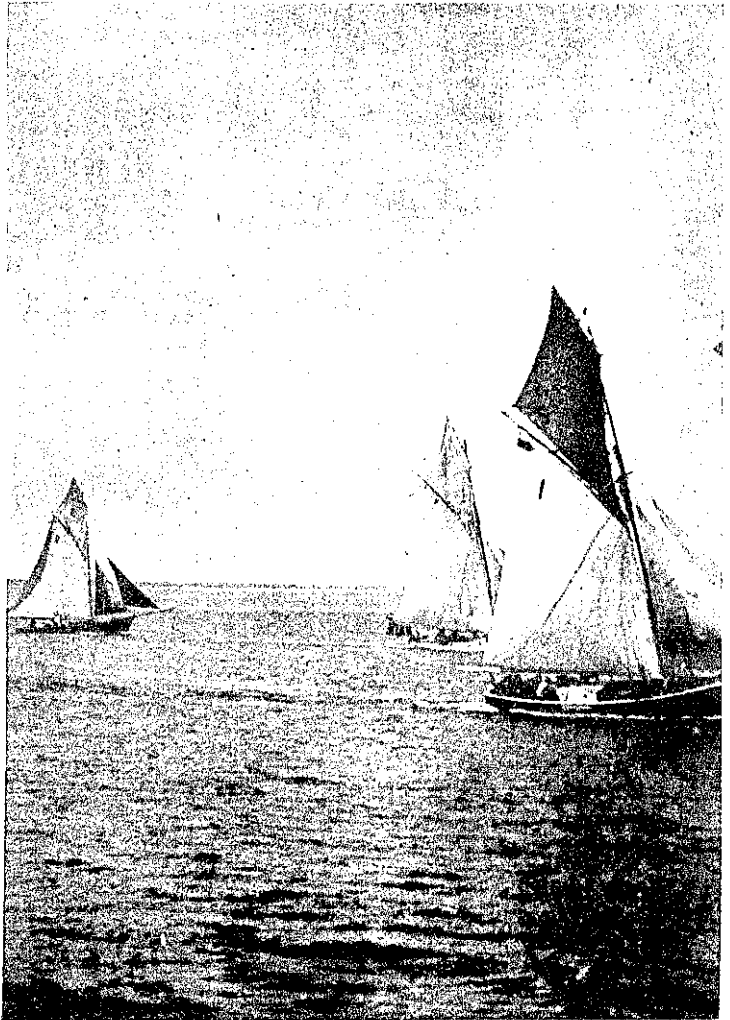


other dredge, and keep on so till they have got to the end of the bed. If the cutter is drifting slowly, they culch out each dredge, (that is, take all the saleable oysters and throw the rubbish overboard) but if the cutter is drifting quickly, they work all the time and culch afterwards. The oysters are then brought to the Bluff, and put in artificial beds to await shipment to their several destinations. The dredges are pulled up by a winch on the cutter, and, by the time the cutter is ready to come in, the men have earned their pay, as it is anything but easy work. The crew generally consist of three.

Captain Scollay, now living at Half Moon Bay, and Capt. Cross, of the Bluff, were amongst the first to dredge for the Stewart Island oyster. Although the amount sold had not then reached its present proportion, the men made better wages, as they were getting sixpence and sevenpence per dozen at the Bluff, now they only get about one penny per dozen, but they can bring in a greater quantity. If a fine spell of weather comes on, the merchants have to knock

the cutters off for a time and send them fishing, as the oysters do not keep long on the artificial beds. The season opens on the 1st of February and closes on the last day of September, thus leaving four months closed. The oysters, towards the end of September, begin to be full of "spat." A bad year for "spat" has more to do with the failure of a

bed than over dredging. So far, down here, we have not been troubled with a bad year; and I think the present regulations that we have, protect the oyster as much as human foresight can do. There is generally great rivalry in the commencement of the season as to which cutter will be in first with a fair catch. The winning cutter generally keeps



GOING OUT WITH A BREEZE.

a red flag flying all the season. It would be hard to find men better able to sail small craft than some of the men in these cutters, having been born and bred up to their business. If New Zealand is ever engaged in war, she should have plenty of young New Zealand natives of this type to defend her shores.