

IT was the middle of May, 1892. The place was Pier 9, East River, New York, where two vessels were moored, one on either side of the pier. One was a barquentine and the other a barque.

The barque, belonged to New Zealand, and was named the Kathleen Hilda. She was owned in Auckland and was commanded by Captain Geo. Davies, an old Nova Scotian who had sailed out of New Zealand for years. He had Billy Nagle with him as mate, and old Tom Tree as second mate. The crew forward were all New Zealanders, and every man from captain down to the apprentice was a sailorman. Every man of that crew forward secured his foreign master's ticket, and in later years most of them commanded ships. Of the three surviving members, two are in charge of large steamers, and the other is an Anglican parson somewhere in New Zealand.

The Kathleen Hilda was a broad, beamy vessel of shallow draught, bluff in the bows and square in the stern, and a good, comfortable ship in a sea way.

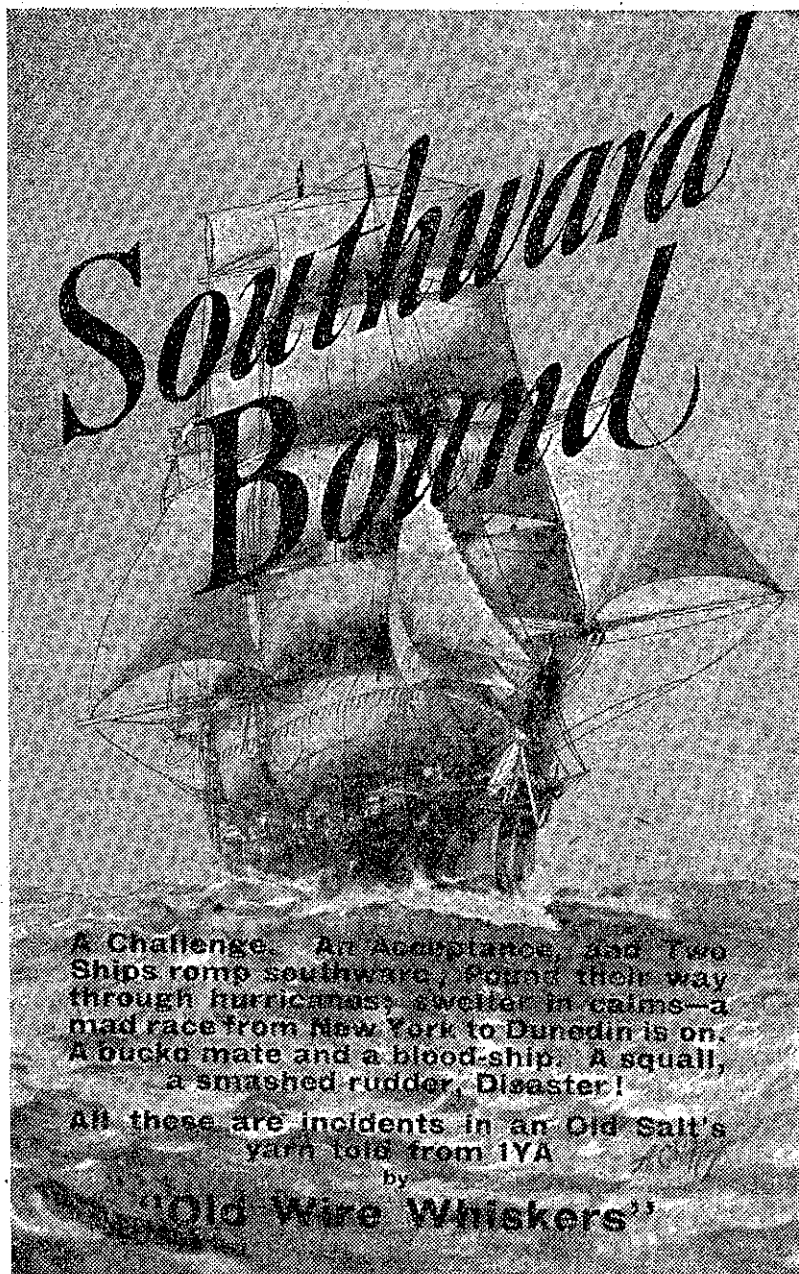
The barquentine was the Elinor Vernon, belonging to New York, and a steady trader to New Zealand. She was a long, narrow, lean ship with low bulwarks, and she was a brute in a sea way. She was very heavily sparred and extremely lofty, and her huge fore and aft sails and heavy booms and gaffs made her hard to handle. She could sail all right, but it was dangerous to drive her if there was any sea on. She was commanded by Captain Chadbourne, a down-Easter who was a sailor and a driver. He was getting old then, but he still had plenty of "ginger," so he said.

The mate was a German Yank, whose ambition was to be known as a bucko mate. There were only four of us aboard—the captain, the mate, the cook and myself. The rest of the crew were to be aboard in a couple of days, and only the shipping master and crimps knew what they would be like. The two ships were loading for New Zealand—the Yank for Dunedin and the New Zealander for Auckland.

It was Thursday morning, and the two captains were yarning on the pier. "You are pulling out this morning, captain?" said the Yank. "Yes," said Captain Davies, "I am going to an anchorage down the bay, and when I am ready I will tow out. I expect to sail early on Saturday."

"What about a race out, Davies?" said the Yank. "Say, for 50 dollars. I am sailing on Saturday, too."

"No," said Davies, "I don't do that sort of thing." They then



discussed it, and the matter was ended by a bet of a silk hat. "Not that it matters much, for I am sure to beat you," remarked the Yank. "Well, I suppose you will," answered Davies, as he went aboard.

A couple of hours later the Kathleen Hilda hauled out and was taken to an anchorage in the bay by a tug boat. Well, we finished loading on Friday morning, the hatches were put on, and the sails were bent by the riggers.

On Saturday morning the rest of the crowd came aboard, or rather they were put aboard, for they were all either drunk or doped. Staggering and even crawling over the side, they came, encouraged by the boots of the boarding masters who supplied them. Two were absolutely dead to the world and were just dumped into the fo'c'sle to recover at their leisure. Their gear was dumped aboard after them. Growling and cursing, reeling and falling, they staggered forward, assisted by the two mates who used the boot, fist and belaying-pin indiscriminately.

The tug lay alongside, the lines were let go, and off we went to sea with a crew drunk or doped, and only the two mates and myself fit to take the wheel or set sail. The crew of the tug helped us to put sail on the ship and, casting off the towrope, off we went. With the assistance of a few buckets of water, liberal doses of black coffee, and boot and belaying-pin soup, the officers eventually got the crew into a sort of working order. At noon the next day the crowd was mustered aft and the watches were picked.

The whole crowd consisted of: Master, American; first mate, German; second mate, Norwegian Yank (no tickets); cook, Frenchman; 1 Bulgarian, 1 Turk, Salonika, 1 Greek, Salonika (no English); 1 Greek, Candia (a few words of English); 1 Spaniard (no English); 1 Belgian (spoke German and a little English); 1 Cardiff boy; and myself. I got as watch mates one Greek, one Turk, and the Spaniard, and none of them could speak English.

Well, off we went with everything set. The Kathleen Hilda had evidently got away a few hours before us, and we cracked on to beat her, for, as the captain said, "We must beat the old blue-nosed Maori at any cost"—and to our cost it was.

We crossed the Gulf Stream, and it was here that the captain's dog committed suicide. He was sitting on the after-part of the cabin when he suddenly got up, and peering down into the cabin attentively for a few moments, (Continued on page 24.)