

—By Yacht to Durville Island—

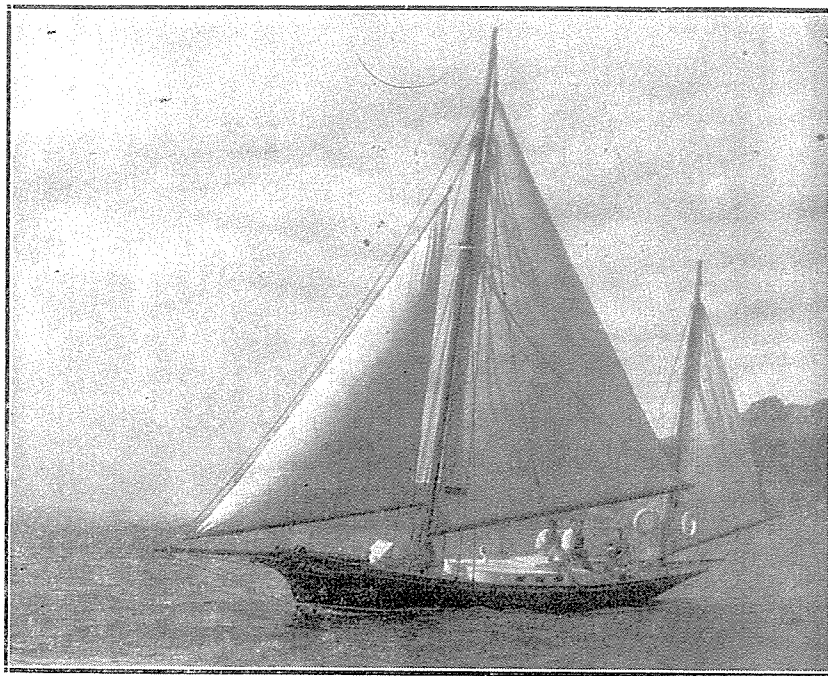
AN EASTER CRUISE

By Jack F. Just

When one is about to make one's first crossing of Cook Straits by yacht the nerve tension and excitement that takes possession of one's being is comparable only to that of making a first flight in an aeroplane, or a visit to the dentist. These emotions enhance, rather than diminish, the sense of adventure; episodes and unusual scenes become so vividly impressed upon the unconscious mind that one experiences no great difficulty in bringing back to the **conscious** mind at a future date, a graphic, mental moving picture of all that occurred.

Easter cruise! How I looked forward to it! The open sea, the rip-tides and the fresh breeze in the Straits laying the yacht at a sharp angle in the water, with waves swishing past as the yacht speeds onward. But most of all, that treacherous Terawhiti Rip, with its confused seas bearing down on us from all directions. Is it any wonder my imagination ran riot after having heard the narratives of the more seasoned yachtsmen. Little did I realise then how romantic and peaceful the notorious Cook Straits could be; to me it was a locality of perpetual turmoil, feared by the qualified mariners, and safe only in fine weather.

Our departure was set for the Thursday, previous to Good Friday, at 6 p.m. This allowed us ample time to catch the tide in the Straits; but checking stores, stowing kits and arranging space on deck for the cargo of petrol, etc., necessitated a longer period of time, and it was 7.40 before we eventually dropped our moorings



A Thing of Beauty—A.Y. "VIKING"

in Evans Bay, thus losing valuable time. As I rowed to and from the yacht with stores that night, I was impressed with the atmosphere of mystery and confidence radiating from the "Viking" as she lay silhouetted in the moon's reflection on the water, her porthole throwing out a welcoming radiance, gradually blending with and soon to be lost altogether in the greater radiance of the moon; the two seemed to enjoy the company of each other as they shimmered and danced on the waters of the bay.

We hoisted our great new mainsail and headsail off Point Halswell. Being new to ocean sailing, I was anxious not to miss any incident on this voyage, so I vounteered to take the first trick at the tiller. The run down the harbour took about three-quarters of an hour; at 8.40 p.m. we were off Pencarrow light, with the lights of Island Bay and Lyall Bay coming slowly into view.

The Straits were ahead of us, the glimmering lights of Island Bay fading in the distance aft, we were gradually leaving civilisa-

tion behind; we six in a proverbial cockle-shell, thirty-six feet by nine feet. The throb of the engine, the swish of the water as it swirled past and the lapping of the waves against the hull of the yacht, were a sonata by the Great Master, set in a romantic background of shimmering moonlight. How peaceful the sea was that night; it seemed as if old Father Neptune was welcoming us into his domain, administering an anaesthetic in the form of an undulating swell, which caused the yacht to rise and fall with just the same regularity with which we breathe. It was sufficient to induce any human being to indulge in a sleep of perfect contentment. That hypnotic seascape would have brought sleep to any poor unfortunates suffering from insomnia. Gone were all thoughts of depression, sorrow, time; thoughts of the successes and failures of civilised life vanished into the void. One became intoxicated with the grandeur of the rugged outline of coast lit by the pale light of the full Easter moon. It was as

if we were being wafted to Arcadia or even to Heaven, the going was so peaceful.

Karori Rock light at last, the last sentinel on the northern coast line of the Straits was slowly coming into view. I shook myself clear of the fantastic reverie that enveloped my being, alert and waiting, bracing myself for the thrill to come; the onslaught of Terawhiti Rip, where the mighty waters of the Pacific and Tasman Oceans meet in everlasting conflict, where the seas whirl and surge, causing discomfort to seafarers even in larger vessels. The tension that had relaxed somewhat, became intensified, as did also the breeze from off the shore. The yacht lay at a more sharp angle, and with the extra power derived from the engine must have been logging something like ten knots.

From the moment Karori Rock light came into view till we were abeam of it, a period of nearly two and a-half hours had elapsed. The sea continued to cradle our craft with the same regularity as before. Of the notorious rip, there was no sign, and when one has not slept for twenty hours, the moon's light reflected from the new sails, the motion of the yacht, the lullaby of the waves swishing along the hull, all had a detrimental effect on one's power of self-control. It seemed as if nature was modest of her beauty, and was striving to her utmost to induce one to sleep and so miss the romantic solitude hidden beneath her cloak of strife and conflict. As we left the coast we left the adverse current also, and our progress over the ocean's bed became more rapid; the desire for sleep also became more intense, and one felt a genuine sense of pleasure at being relieved of the tiller by another member of the company.

To-night, the waters of two mighty rival oceans had declared a truce. It seemed as if they had retired to recuperate after a strenuous battle and Father Neptune was taking advantage of this brief spell to indulge in sleep.

Our yacht's progress round one of the most treacherous corners on the ocean was impeded only by the usual tide which sweeps



Hobart Centennial Regatta

RACES FOR 14-FOOTERS

AUCKLAND BOAT MAY COMPETE

The Committee of the Hobart centennial regatta has written to the Royal Akarana Yacht Club, in answer to its request for details, notifying that races for 14-footers will be included in the programme. The club asked for the restrictions for 14-footers and has been informed that any type of 14-footer is eligible provided sail area does not exceed 220 sq. ft., with a tolerance of 3 ft. Spinnakers are limited to 250 sq. ft. and leading jibs to 150 sq. ft. The mast must not exceed 26ft. above the gunwale line and no ringtails are allowed. There are no restrictions in beam or number of crew.

The prize money, already on a liberal scale, will be increased in proportion to the number of boats from other States, each State being allowed up to five boats. The contest will be held in three races of nine miles each, one-third of course to be on the wind. Cash prizes of £5, £2 and £1 will be given in each heat.

The centenary committee will donate £25 to each centre towards the cost of transport to Hobart. The regatta takes place between February 19th and 22nd, 1938. Already one Auckland yachtsman has notified the club that he is prepared to compete.



round the cape at an alarming rate. As I lay on my bunk, disillusioned about Cook Straits, disappointed at being frustrated of

an encounter with Terawhiti, but in a measure glad that I had been spared on my first voyage, I lapsed into the peaceful sleep of the just. Little did I realise how rude my awakening was to be.

To be thrown under the table is hardly an ideal way of being roused from one's slumbers. The breeze off the Southern coast was not proving as hospitable as that of the Northern. I had been indulging in one of those trance-like slumbers where I had been conscious of the sharp angle of the yacht; conscious enough to hang on to the thin chromium-plated rail above the bunk to prevent myself from falling off it. To be rudely aroused by being thrown under the table was not quite in harmony with the atmosphere in which I lay down to sleep, and even for a small yacht was not dignified and most unseemly. As I extricated myself I viewed with dismay the utter confusion of the cabin, where previously tidiness reigned. Tins of jam, fruit and soups rolled unchecked across the bunks and floor of the yacht, laying out so flat that water, green and clammy, swirled past the portholes where once the moon had sent her magical rays stealing in.

Then as the wind eased for a few seconds I caught a glimpse of the dawn—rust-red and lemon-yellow—blending together and producing the most sickly colour. It was the last straw to one who had been fighting against an attack of mal-de-mer. It produced an ideal background for that particular ailment, sufficient to say there was no more sleep for me.

I wanted fresh air and plenty of it, so after arranging the shambles into a state of order, and replacing tins, etc., back in the lockers, I made my way to the hatch. Father Neptune had certainly got out of his bed on the wrong side that morning; it was a nasty, steep beam sea that came swirling down upon us as we made a lead for Whareatea.

Continued November Issue