

ships in the Chilean nitrate trade. His ships were well-built, well-found, well-manned and hard-driven. Among seamen the world over they were noted as fast passage-makers. P was the initial letter of the names of all the ships in the fleet, which was generally known as the "Flying P. Line."

In its palmy days, before the last war, the Laiesz fleet included two famous ships, the five-masted barque "Potosi," of 4,026 tons gross register, and the five-masted ship "Preussen," of 5,081 tons. The "Preussen" was 433 ft. long and carried a cargo of 8,000 tons. Her five masts crossed thirty yards, and she spread forty-eight sails, measuring 59,000 square feet of canvas. Her main mast was more than 210 ft. in height from keel to truck, her lower yards were 102 ft. long, and her royal yards just short of 50 ft.

The "Potosi" was one of the few sailing-ships that ever rounded Cape Horn four times in twelve months. Between March 15, 1900, and March 6, 1901, this splendid ship completed two round voyages between Hamburg and Iquique (Chile). She went out in ballast and home with full cargoes of nitrate, eleven days in each voyage being her "turn-round" in Iquique. On the second of these voyages she discharged her cargo of 6,000 tons in seven days, completing on 13th March, just within the twelve months.

The "Pamir" joined a company of proud ships when she made her maiden voyage in 1906, and she proved herself as fast as any of them. She went out from Hamburg to Valparaiso in sixty-four days and home from Iquique in seventy-five. And her subsequent voyages in the nitrate trade were consistent with the reputation of the Flying P Ships for good sailing.

The last war meant for the "Pamir," with the rest of the Laiesz fleet, more than four years of idleness in port. Then, in 1919, the P ships became spoils of war and were distributed among various ownerships. The "Pamir," with three others, went to the Italians.

But Laiesz was not defeated. He bought back as many of the ships as he could get and set about building others.

The "Pamir," with "Parma," "Peiho," "Passat," "Pinnas," and "Peking," returned to their old flag, and by 1922 the famous P line was once more in existence. In 1919 Laiesz built the "Priwall" and as recently as 1926 the "Padua." The "Pamir" celebrated her return to the fleet by making, in 1925, the smartest outward passage round the Horn since the war—from Hamburg to Talcahuano in seventy-five days.

But the days of sailing-ships in the nitrate trade, even those of the P line, were numbered. Once more the Laiesz fleet, except the four-masters built after the war, was dispersed. The "Pamir," and several of her kind and age, passed to the ownership of Captain Gustav Erikson, of Mariehamn, and the flag of Finland. They became Ishmaels of the oceans, sailing many a long passage in ballast to find a modest freight.

Occasionally the "Pamir" sailed in the so-called "grain race" from Australia to the Channel, but for a year or so she earned her keep and a little over carrying cargoes of guano from the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean. It was one of these voyages that brought her to Wellington early in 1942. It was bad luck for her owner that his country was on Germany's side in the war: the Pamir was transferred to the New Zealand flag, a prize of war for the second time.

The "Pamir" was in a sad state when she was taken over—poverty-stricken and "parish-rigged." Her hull was sound enough, but her standing and running rigging was in bad shape. She needed a special survey and a thorough refit, and she got them. There was plenty of freight available, and even an old sailing-ship would serve to carry some of it in an ocean whose vast expanse kept war hazards within bounds.

And so the "Pamir" in her old age was rejuvenated by a general overhaul at considerable cost. All defects revealed by careful survey—and they were many—were made good, much of her rigging was renewed, and the accommodation for the crew was considerably improved. As handsome as ever, the "Pamir" was sound and seaworthy and thoroughly well-found when she once again proudly