CRUISE OF THE RAIDER HK-33

German auxiliary cruiser *HK-33*, otherwise known as the *Pinguin*

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THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY · NEW YORK

Manufactured in the United States of America by the Vail-Ballou Press, Inc., Binghamton, New York

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 55-7320

PREFACE

BEFORE DEALING WITH THE OPERATIONS OF THE MOST SUCCESSful German auxiliary cruiser of the Second World War—or the First either for that matter—it seems desirable to say a few words about the personality and the career of the naval officer who conducted them.

Ernst-Felix Krüder was born on December 6th, 1897, in Hamburg, where as a lad he attended first the Realschule [1] St. Georg and then the Johanneum Realschule. As a youth, and despite the fact that his father had strictly forbidden it, he spent a good deal of his spare time sailing a small boat in the harbor and on the river Alster. The great attraction of the sea and boats was already making itself felt, and in later years he was accustomed to put it down to heredity; his grandfather on the maternal side was the famous Hamburg seaman Christoffers.

For a while these secret pleasures remained undiscovered, but one day he and a bosom friend were once again out in their boat, each seeking to outdo the other in daring at the tiller, when suddenly dirty weather blew up, the sort that makes Sunday sailors hurriedly shorten sail and scuttle for shelter. Not so these adventurous lads; they set all the canvas they had and began to enjoy themselves—for a while. But a real seaman must know all the tricks of wind and weather as well as being able to manage a boat, and neither

[1] Secondary school for modern subjects, science and also Latin. Tr.

of them had all that experience as yet. A sudden squall roared up, and before they quite knew what was happening their little yacht was over and they were in the water. They suffered—for the moment—only a ducking, but as they were dragged out of the water and up the bank, who should be passing to witness the mishap but a stern uncle who promptly reported the matter to Ernst-Felix's parents. The sequel was attended to by his father behind closed doors.

When the First World War broke out Ernst-Felix was still at school, but in 1915 he passed his Matric, and in the same year he saw his dearest ambition come true. He was accepted as a volunteer into the German Navy and started out on his career as a seaman. It was true that this was not quite what he had had in mind; he had intended to start as an apprentice in the mercantile marine and work his way up. But the war upset a good many things. He received his training in the sailing ship *Freya* and became a leading seaman. He was then signed on with the ship's company of S.M.S. *König*, at that time the most modern capital ship in the German Navy. The *König* was the flagship of the Third Squadron at the Battle of Jutland, during which engagement she received a number of direct hits and was very badly damaged.

Ernst-Felix Krüder experienced his baptism of fire in this battle while manning a gun in the midship turret. He never had much to say about this tremendous experience, but it is hardly too much to assume that it laid the basis for that clear-headedness and coolness he was subsequently to show no matter how desperate the situation in which he found himself.

After that he went through a navigation course at Mürvik, followed by naval gunnery and radio courses. Then he was transferred to an officers' training ship from which he passed out successfully, obtaining his commission. In 1917 he was a junior watchkeeper on board the famous cruiser *Breslau*

which, together with the battle cruiser *Goeben*, slipped through the British blockade, making Constantinople its operational base. From here Krüder took part in numerous mining operations in the Black Sea. From the *Breslau* he was transferred to the *Goeben*, and on December 13th, 1917, he was made sub-lieutenant. While at sea with the *Goeben* in 1918 the *Breslau* struck a mine and sank. Forty-eight of the crew of 300 were picked up by the British. The *Goeben* also suffered serious damage from mines and from air bombardment. On board the *Goeben* Krüder took part in the operations which led to the investment of Sebastopol. On November 4th he left Turkey with the greater part of the crew of the *Goeben* to return to Germany.

Before they arrived the German land front collapsed and the war came to an end.

In 1920 Krüder, still passionately attached to the sea, was accepted into the newly formed Reichsmarine, the exiguous navy of the Weimar Republic. He served for a year on shore duties at Wilhelmshaven and was then transferred to Minesweeper M. III, having in the meantime been promoted to lieutenant. This appointment proved of great importance for his subsequent career, since he became a specialist for mining operations. From 1924 to 1926 he was attached to the Baltic Naval Staff. Shore duties, and in particular desk duties, did not suit a man used to the fresh air and the open sea, but he disciplined himself sternly and performed them conscientiously. The experience he gained in this work certainly stood him in good stead later. It was during this period that he married—a girl from Hamburg. It was inevitable that the woman he chose for his wife should have some connection with the sea.

In 1927 he left his shore duties with some relief to take command of Minesweeper 145. After various other commands he was then transferred to the cruiser *Karlsruhe* and

took part in her world cruise, the first postwar cruise made by a German warship.

This cruise in the *Karlsruhe* did a great deal for Krüder; it widened his experience, increased his knowledge of men and things, and taught him to think politically in the broader sense.

Although he had not been through Germany's Naval Academy, the training school for professional naval officers, but had risen from the ranks in wartime, he was now appointed staff officer to the commander of the patrol forces, a job which he found deeply satisfying.

In 1933 he was transferred to the cruiser *Königsberg* and later on, in 1934, he was appointed commander of the First Minesweeper Flotilla based on Pillau. He also served on the Naval Board of Examination for Officer Candidates, and when the Second World War broke out he was serving with the rank of commander in the Office of Naval Construction.

He was then chosen to take command of an auxiliary cruiser, and on November 11th, 1939, he boarded Naval Unit 33, the former merchant ship *Kandelfels,* in process of being transformed into an auxiliary cruiser, or, as it is called in German, *Hilfskreuzer,* hence the title reference, "*HK*-33," later to become famous as the *Pinguin.*

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

CRUISE OF THE RAIDER HK-33

1. THE STORM BREAKS

IN THE MESS OF THE KANDELFELS, A NEW SHIP ONLY RECENTLY added to the German East-Asia lines, there was silence. The steaming teapot went the rounds and, as they sipped their tea, Hanefeld and his fellow officers studied the newspapers. What they read was disturbing. It was August 1939.

A sailor put his head into the mess.

"Half an hour to go," he said.

The *Kandelfels* was gliding along almost imperceptibly toward her moorings in Calcutta harbor. She was almost 8,000 tons burden but she required no tug to bring her alongside. A heaving line was made fast to the hawser and a seaman swung it around his head and then out toward the jetty. An Indian on land picked it up and pulled in the thick manila hawser that followed it.

"Over with her," shouted a voice from the deck high above him, and obediently the Indian trotted off with it, just as his yellow colleague in any Chinese harbor or his colored counterpart in any African port would have done, and looped it over a powerful iron bollard on the quayside. This he did, not because he had anything to do with the ship or because he was getting paid for doing it, but just because "it's done." It is the custom and the unwritten law of every harbor in the world.

Cork fenders squeaked and groaned between the iron plates of the *Kandelfels* and the quayside, donkey engines puffed

and rattled and wire ropes and lines now made fast from the ship to the shore shook and strained before they finally settled into place.

Darkness was falling rapidly now and great arc lamps began to throw a yellow light over the busy harbor. A world harbor never sleeps. Night and day there is always something going on. Along the miles and miles of apparently endless quays with their vast sheds, cranes swung their great arms here and there, iron chains and claws disappeared into the open holds of freighters and reappeared with bales and crates. Some of the hold entrances are so large that whole houses could be lowered into them or lifted out again with ease.

There were Britishers, Frenchmen, Swedes and Germans lying there, very many Germans. The garish flags of all nations flew from their masts—like obstinate flecks of color in a vast painting. They were all moored peaceably side by side now. . . .

Big ports and harbors are much the same all over the world, but here it was impossible not to feel something of the multicolored tropical atmosphere of India. The clothing of the dockers and stevedores was strange and romantic for one thing, though there was nothing romantic in the way they bent their bodies resignedly to their work. Poverty-stricken creatures, these brown-skinned dockers who sweated and slaved for the white man to earn their bowl of rice. And through the acrid smell of tar, paint and rust there was the sweetish enervating whiff carried on the warm damp wind from the distant jungle.

"It's somehow always new and attractive for a European, no matter how often you've seen, heard and smelled it," said Becher as he leaned over the ship's rail. He seemed to be talking to himself more than to anyone else as he stared inland toward the reddish glow in the tropical night sky which indicated the center of the great town on the Ganges.

"Make the most of it. It may be the last time for a very long time," said the captain, who joined him at that moment and had overheard his words. The captain knocked his pipe out over the side and turned away.

"Might well be the last time altogether," said Becher.

A pencil of light slid across the sky, went out, reappeared—dot, dash, dot. Dot, dot, dash.

'They're getting their hands in,' thought Becher.

The unloading of the *Kandelfels* went on without a pause throughout the next day and the following night. The captain was in a hurry to get rid of his cargo and be off. The British port authorities were making no actual difficulties, but they were not being helpful.

As soon as the unloading was over, the loading began. Hanefeld sat down on one of the last cases intended for No. 3 hold. Actually this particular case had been one of the first to arrive, and if he had not kept his eyes open it would already have disappeared into the hold. But on it in enormous red letters were the words: "With Care! Fragile!" It was Hanefeld's job as the officer in charge of loading and unloading to see that breakable goods were not stowed away under other cargo. It was also his job to see that, as the cargo rolled up, it was stowed away where it belonged as rapidly and efficiently as possible so that neither time nor space was wasted. To make life more interesting the china usually arrived before the elephant and had to wait around, which meant delay, which meant extra harbor costs, which meant a greater expenditure of precious foreign currency.

Hanefeld mopped his forehead. "Phew!" he whistled. "What a hell of a rush in this heat."

There had been very little sleep for him for the past two nights. As quickly as possible, were his orders. Quicker, quicker! The brown-skinned stevedores of one shift were going off. The next shift was coming on and there was the

usual short pause. Hanefeld walked over to the ship's side and looked down on to the quays. There was no shift work for him; he went off duty when the job was done, the cargo stowed, the holds battened down and the *Kandelfels* trimmed, not before. Apart from the stevedores and dock laborers there were the inevitable loungers and idlers, the beachcombers to be met with all over the world.

The East-Asia freighter *Kandelfels* was ready to sail at last. In her holds the valuable raw materials she had loaded were packed away safely. If you haven't any colonies of your own you have to use other people's. There was jute, oil cakes, oil nuts, ground nuts, rubber, quinine, molybdenum, wolfram and a variety of piece goods unobtainable at home. The holds were battened tight with chocks and covered with tarpaulin. Hanefeld's job was done.

The moaning sound of the ship's whistle boomed, long and drawn out. The propellers began to turn, whipping up the water into a dirty froth. Cautiously the *Kandelfels* maneuvered herself clear, went astern slowly and then ahead again. As she reached the broader bosom of the Hoogly she gained speed. Soon the engines were thudding and hammering as she made her way out to the estuary and the Bay of Bengal. She had to get a move on now or she might never get home at all.

"We'll be seeing you," said Hanefeld cheerfully as they dropped the pilot. The man grinned and waved as he went over the side. In reality Hanfeld wasn't at all sure about it. The third officer of the *Kandelfels* had no idea then that he really would be back before long, and on the same ship—almost on Calcutta's doorstep. But not under the peaceable flag of the mercantile marine.

Crossing the Indian Ocean they passed Aden and steamed

up the Red Sea through water so still and turbid it looked like molten lead. The dry, burning wind of the Sahara took you by the throat. It was almost as though you were trying to breathe in an oven. It made you dull and heavy, made your limbs feel like lead and made every movement an effort.

As they approached the Suez Canal an Italian pilot came on board. The heat didn't seem to affect him and he talked a streak, chiefly about the coming war. To hear him you would think that he hated the British with all his heart and soul—but maybe that was because he was talking to Germans. With a mixture of indignation and contempt he pointed out the new barbed-wire entanglements the British had set up along the banks. Then suddenly he began to bellow an aria to the blue sky above. The thought of war seemed not to trouble him much after all. "Puccini!" said Becher. "Verdi!" hazarded the captain.

There were very many uniforms on shore: wiry little figures and tall slim ones: Indian, British, and Australian troops camped in the Canal zone.

It was dark when the *Kandelfels* left Port Said behind. Searchlights crossed and re-crossed in the sky. The sound of gunfire was heard and little silver bursts began to spangle the sky. British antiaircraft gunners were practicing.

It was not so hot now and the men breathed easier as the *Kendelfels* steamed through calm blue waters which belied the long history of battles fought and won throughout the centuries for the command of this ancient sea. Inshore along the rust-red coasts were fishing smacks with gaily-colored sails. It was a peaceful scene; no sign of trouble anywhere in the world. But in the Mediterranean sudden storms were common.

Then came Gibraltar, heralded by powerful gray warships escorted by long rakish destroyers sending the water up in

great double waves from their bows as they raced along, typical British destroyers with their narrow funnels and the tripod masts British naval designers seem wedded to. Painted in large white characters on their gray sides, and visible at a great distance, were their identification markings. The men on board the *Kandelfels* watched this unusual concentration of naval strength with keen interest but without comment—none was necessary.

By the time their ship passed through the Straits it was dark again, and from the Rock many searchlights swept the sky in a silver network of light that seemed almost to be shaking in the wind.

The *Kandelfels* put safely into Antwerp, and the second officer closed the logbook. The latest entry read:

"August 29th, 1939. Made fast at Antwerp. Uneventful voyage. Average speed."

The second officer turned to Hanefel, who, with disordered hair, was wading through a pile of loading papers and grumbling to himself.

"See that! The old hulk was exactly one day faster this turn."

"We took exactly the same course," said Hanefeld. "It only shows you. The old tub can move a bit."

"And that's not all."

"You think we could get even more out of her?"

"I don't think, I know."

A sailor put his head into the deckhouse.

"Mr. Hanefeld to the captain at once, please."

When Hanefeld presented himself in the captain's cabin the captain was holding a telegram in his hand. He was obviously excited but he spoke deliberately.

"I thought so. The cargo must be unloaded immediately and then we must sail for Hamburg as quickly as possible. Get your food later. Take every available man and open up the

holds for unloading. I'll see about the transfer to the Rhine barges."

"Very good, sir."

'The Old Man's a bit jumpy,' he thought as he went about his orders. 'Take it easy, boy; you'll get there just as quickly in the end.'

Hanefeld was from Bremen and not easily put out of his stride. It was late that evening before he finally got ashore. This was Belgium; not India, the land of cheap and plentiful labor. But for all that the Belgians were running around like ants. There was something in the wind and everybody knew it. It was like running to catch a bus late at night—it might be the last one.

Hanefeld found a good restaurant and spent his remaining foreign currency on a bang-up meal: French champagne, Malossol caviar, Dutch oysters. The menu they brought him was as big as a small placard. A wine list of many pages was bound in pigskin like a Bible. 'Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die,' he thought, and he chose the food and wine with the knowledge and experience of a man who had been around the world. A soup for a gourmet, followed by *escargots* prepared in their shells and served with butter and seasoning. To drink? First a Château Châlon. The waiter produced it. Hanefeld took a sip and sent it back politely.

"This particular wine is drunk cool," he said. "Otherwise you lose its specific earthy flavor."

The head waiter arrived and apologized. The manager arrived and apologized: an unfortunate error, a most unfortunate error. The next time Hanefeld reached for the wine list the bowing manager was at his side in an instant. There were to be no more errors. When he left the restaurant after tipping liberally, the manager, the head waiter, the waiter, and the commis bowed him out obsequiously.

Hanefeld grinned to himself. 'If only they knew I'm just an

employee like they are and not a millionaire!' he thought. 'But handsome is as handsome does.'

He had spent his money on a dinner such as he was not likely to get again for a while, and he didn't regret it. He had a feeling that a good deal of unpleasantness was about to blow up. He went back to the ship.

"Captain's been inquiring for you, sir," said the quartermaster as soon as he put foot on deck.

Hanefeld discovered that the *Kandelfels* had been ordered to sail at once for Hamburg without unloading the rest of her cargo. On deck, under the suspiciously clear sky with myriads of bright stars, the third officer sniffed the air. It smelt like fog. Would the Old Man, ordinarily so cautious, go to sea in it?

By morning gray swathes of fog were rolling up, and the normal sounds of a busy harbor were being punctuated by the hoarse bellowing of whistles and the ringing of ships' bells. At 1100 the *Kandelfels* was ready to sail. Cautiously, almost as though she were feeling her way, she moved slowly out toward the gray and depressing sea. Her boats were hanging clear in the davits, ready for lowering, and in the chart room secret documents were lying ready for instant destruction. If necessary, the *Kandelfels* was to be scuttled at a moment's notice, while the crew took to the boats. But the last hours of her journey home before she reached the safety of German waters passed without incident—except the sudden eruption of an excited wireless officer from his cabin. The captain was already striding toward him.

"German armed forces crossed the Polish frontier early this morning, sir."

The captain looked worried. "The whole world will go up in flames now," he muttered. "Mark my words." And he recalled an earnest conversation he had had with a British colleague in Calcutta.

The *Kandelfels* continued on the last lap of her journey, her slender stem sliding through the gray mist. Everyone on board knew what had happened and the ship was as quiet as a mortuary. Only the noise of the engines and the lap of the water overside broke the silence. The *Kandelfels* passed Elbe I, the lightship stationed at the entrance to the estuary, without seeing her.

On their underwater acoustic apparatus they picked up the recognition signal, took a bearing of its maximum intensity and knew that they were on the right course. The *Kandelfels* still had a good deal of heavy cargo on board and she was lying low in the water. To make matters more difficult it was low tide. The pilot who came on board had all his work cut out to guide her through the difficult Elbe passage. Suddenly there was a puff of wind. Then another and another. Soon the mist was swept away and they could see land again as though a curtain had risen. The sun was shining. With relief the men on deck stared out over the low-lying countryside. It was Germany. They had made it!

Leaving Cuxhaven behind them, they sailed up the broad Elbe toward Hamburg. The water flowing under their keel out to the North Sea against the resistance of the ocean was rising now. A few fishing boats steamed down-river, leaving long, black clouds of smoke in their wake. Except that they were not fishing boats any more. They were painted gray and in their bows, mounted on wooden platforms and covered with tarpaulins, were guns. And on board were no longer the suntanned fishermen of more peaceable days in their oily, greasy denims, but white-clad young sailors. On the halyards flew the many-colored flags of the signal code. In their wake came a destroyer, then a steamer and, finally, a Swedish freighter. Her name and her national flag were freshly painted on the sides as large as possible as an anxious talisman against —against whom?

The *Kandelfels* made fast in the Free Port of Hamburg. The engines stopped and the low, comforting, bubbling sound in the funnel ceased. The crew hung around empty-handed. Their ship was lifeless now.

One day passed and then another. There were reports of fighting on all fronts in Poland. Another day passed and nothing happened. That night the air-raid sirens sounded in earnest for the first time. At Cuxhaven searchlights were picking their way across the sky and ugly red stars burst as antiaircraft guns went into action. Great Britain and France had declared war on Germany. The first bombs were dropping.

The second officer and Hanefeld stared at the performance with interest. Neither of them spoke. They knew that this was just the beginning. The worst was still to come.

2. METAMORPHOSIS

KIEL. FOR DAYS NOW THE COMING OF WAR HAD UPSET ALL normal routine. Many, many things had rapidly become different. A sunny autumn day gradually came to a close and dark clouds piled up in the western sky as night fell. Lieutenant Küster came out of the deckhouse of the sailing ship *Gorch Fock*, which was already being laid up. He picked his way carefully through the unaccustomed litter of spars, booms, yards, braces, and stays. Her masts were bare, just stumps.

The light of the moon wandered over the scene from distant forests, silvering the spires and roofs of the sleeping town and touching the water of the harbor. Despite the late hour there was still a great deal of activity. The moon glistened in the bubbling wake of racing little pinnaces, and only in the deep shadow of battleships, lying silently at their moorings, was it pitch black.

The harbor looked very different. No longer were there lines of lighted scuttles along the ships moored there or a multitude of lights on deck. The only light clearly visible came from the short, sharp flashes of the signal lamps as here and there ships spoke to each other or to the signal station on shore. The town, too, was plunged in darkness. And out at sea there was no longer the usual winking of warning and guiding lights. The war had ruthlessly imposed its blackout.

The telegram was still in Küster's jacket pocket, a little dog-eared now; it had been read so many times. It had reached him immediately on the outbreak of war and it instructed him to report at once to Pillau, the naval base in East Prussia. He had presented himself without loss of time to the Baltic Transport Officer in the hope of discovering how to get to Pillau, which was now cut off from Germany completely by the outbreak of war with Poland, only to be told that he must now regard the order as canceled. He should stay on board his ship and await events.

The young officer stared up into the sky discontentedly. Below him were the bare planks of the *Gorch Fock*, a ship on which many officers and petty officers had received their basic training as seamen. But that was all over now and it was irritating to hang around doing nothing when others were in the thick of it. Slowly, and almost, it seemed to Küster, as though it were bored, the moon sank. The masts of the ships in the harbor, the buildings on the quays, and the town behind them with its tall trees gradually faded and were finally lost altogether in the gathering darkness.

Every day after receiving that telegram Küster had presented himself to the authorities in the hope of receiving new instructions, and now he was gradually beginning to feel like an old shellback who was past his prime but obstinately went every day cap in hand to HQ in the hope of getting some sort of a ship.

Not that Küster was enthusiastic at the thought of war. On the contrary, like so many of his comrades and millions of his fellow countrymen, he regarded war as a disaster and he feared for the fate of his country. He had never bothered his head about politics; his country was his country, and that was all there was to it. If there had to be war, then he was willing and anxious to fight for it. And where could he be of most service as a seaman if not at sea?

The next day Küster was again at the local naval headquarters.

"We've got a sort of auxiliary cruiser here," the officer began, almost as though the whole thing bored him. But Küster noticed that the man's eyes were keenly summing him up and closely watching his reactions, while talking as though an auxiliary cruiser were no more important than a tug. What Küster didn't know was that he had already been chosen to join her.

"That sounds fine, sir. I couldn't think of anything better," he said eagerly when he had got over his surprise and astonishment.

"Not so fast, young man. Don't run away with the idea that serving on board an auxiliary cruiser is easy. It needs nerve, nerves like hawsers, in fact. And grit. You'll have to put up with a lot and go without a lot. Do you remember auxiliary cruiser *Wolf* in the last war? She was 465 days at sea. That's more than a year and three months. And expecting to be blown out of the water on every single day of it. That sort of thing's no pleasure cruise."

"I'm game, sir."

"Good. But don't forget that your chances of ever getting home again aren't very rosy. An auxiliary cruiser is alone, utterly alone, and she can't expect help from anywhere."

The old officer's voice had changed now. It was friendly, almost fatherly.

"I understand that, sir. It's an important and responsible job, and I'd very much like to do it."

"Very well, let me see," and the old officer looked through Küster's papers. "Ah! you're not married. So much the better. Any other ties?"

"No, sir. None that would make me unsuitable for this job."

When all the details had been settled they began to discuss auxiliary cruisers in general and the famous ships of the First

World War. Küster knew all about them, as the older man discovered. Finally Küster was dismissed.

"All right then, Küster. I wish you all the luck in the world. And I envy you, too. I wish I were your age. But we old fellows . . . Well, never mind. Off you go now. You've got no time to lose. There'll be plenty to do."

"Thank you, sir."

They shook hands and, once outside, Küster took the steps two at a time in his delight at the prospect of action at last. He hurried from office to office, signing on here, signing off there, and getting his papers in order. And when he saw the list of officers to be signed on with him he was delighted to see that he was not going to be entirely among strangers. Lieutenant Schwinne of his old ship was there and so was Karlheinz Brunke, familiarly known as Charlie, an old comrade and friend. He was the communications officer. That would make things easier.

When everything had finally been settled, he packed his gear hurriedly. At midnight he left in a darkened train for Bremen.

The *Kandelfels* was a prey to rumors. No one knew what was going to happen, but no one was in the least surprised when one afternoon a party of officers and officials of the Reichsmarine came over the side. Hanefeld received them and took them to the captain's cabin. Before he had time to close the door behind him he heard the senior officer informing the captain:

"We have orders to requisition the *Kandelfels* for naval service."

The rumors started up again with redoubled force. There were many possibilities. They might turn the *Kandelfels* into a troopship, a minelayer, a supply ship, a repair ship, or even a floating barracks.

"Vossloh." It was the rather hoarse voice of the Old Man calling for the chief engineer.

When the chief came out of the captain's cabin his step was alert and his manner assured.

"We must be ready to sail in five hours," he announced. "We're unloading the rest of our cargo in Bremen."

"And what happens then?"

Vossloh shrugged his shoulders. He didn't know that either. The other officers watched him disappear below and looked at each other. On the East-Asia Line they were used to clear and definite schedules. This military secrecy business took some getting used to. But no doubt they'd have to get used to quite a lot things before it was all over.

When they arrived in Bremen they found the stevedores already on the quay waiting to unload them, and hardly had the *Kandelfels* made fast when the cranes started lifting one case and one bundle after the other out of her holds. A whiff of faraway tropical lands rose up with each load. The smell of it in their nostrils awakened memories.

Before the unloading was even finished a Lieutenant Schwinne came on board and introduced himself to the captain as first lieutenant of the new ship's company to man the *Kandelfels* under Admiralty orders. All the crew were anxious to stay with their ship whatever its future fate, but the new man apparently had his orders; one or two officers, including Vossloh and Hanefeld, and some of the men were to stay. The rest were to be paid off.

Even the captain himself had to leave his ship, and neither he nor any of the other officers could get so much as an inkling of the use to which their ship was now to be put. With an amiable smile and a polite manner, Lieutenant Schwinne neatly side-stepped all inquiries.

In the gray light of a cold morning, snorting tugs steamed up to the *Kandelfels*. Her holds were now empty, and she rode

high in the water. Slipping her moorings, she left the Free Port like any other freighter, the tugs moving along at her side like watchdogs. But as soon as she had left the main wharves behind they turned her into an out-of-the-way auxiliary basin where she was made fast so securely that it suggested a lengthy stay. In the next few days—and sometimes at night—various ratings came on board carrying bulky kitbags. They dumped them on the deck, grumbling at the long trudge they had had and making derisory comments at finding themselves on board such a very unwarlike vessel.

"What's it all about?" was the invariable question which was put in this form or another by all those already on board to the newcomers; perhaps they would know something.

"No idea," was always the gist of their answers. "We got our tickets and here we are. You've been here longest, you ought to know better than us."

But nobody knew anything, and there was much shrugging of shoulders and shaking of heads.

In Lieutenant Schwinne's cabin Hanefeld saw a bright red file with the words in block letters: "Ship's Company Ship V." From the right-hand top corner to the left-hand bottom corner ran a yellow line. The third officer already knew what that meant: "Most Secret."

Lieutenant Küster was trying to find his new ship according to the instructions he had been given at the Personnel Office in Bremen. The way seemed endless. He picked his way carefully over rails and around piles of material. He went through great sheds in which oxyacetylene welders were hissing a bluish light and spitting showers of yellow sparks. Steel plates clanged as they were moved here and there. Ships' propellers were lying around, amidst rusty iron and steel waste, gear wheels and copper tubing. Men were hard at work every-

where and much too busy to give Küster even a glance as he went by.

Finally he found the entrance to the basin he was looking for. The place was surrounded by barbed wire and the gate was under naval guard.

"Your pass, sir, please."

Küster had no special pass, but he handed over his papers for inspection.

"Sorry, sir," said the sentry at last. "No can do. You need a special pass to get in here."

"Have a heart, man! Look, it says plainly in black and white that I'm to report for duty here."

"Yes, I see it does, sir, but I still can't let you through without a special pass."

"But all I'm looking for is a freighter; just an ordinary common or garden freighter. That's certainly her in there."

"Maybe, sir, but the fact remains that I can't let you in without a special pass. Strict orders, sir."

Küster gave it up. The man was right, of course. Muttering curses, he turned away and tramped back to the Personnel Office to get the necessary pass.

"What? You haven't got a pass!" they exclaimed innocently.

Küster took a deep breath and said nothing. They made out the necessary pass, and he started off on his journey again. By this time the guard had been changed. The new man took the pass, studied it very carefully, and then saluted.

"Very good, sir."

Küster now entered the holy of holies. It was difficult to see what all the fuss was about. All you could see was a freighter; a modern ship, but just a freighter. Behind her, against the silky blue of a September sky, was the crisscross structure of a large crane. He made his way between piles of wooden planking and climbed up a ladder to the deck.

The deck was metal, but that was nothing—all modern freighters had steel decks. He looked around him as a man might who has just set foot in a new country. So this was it? The auxiliary cruiser. His new home.

At that moment a voice sounded.

"Come up, Wolfgang. You've found it."

From the bridge above, the happily grinning face of Charlie, his old friend Lieutenant Karlheinz Brunke, gave him a welcome. Charlie was wearing a very old uniform jacket; his shirt was open at the neck, and his black tie was out of place. It looked as though things were a bit topsy-turvy on board Ship V. They greeted each other heartily, and Küster learned that the Old Man was ashore mustering the crew. It would be Küster's job to knock them into shape and train them for their jobs. Some of them had seen service in the first war and were no longer young, but they were reliable. Others had had no training at all. They were good peace-time sailormen, but they had had no naval service.

"Not so fast, Charlie. First of all, how much time have we got?"

"Time? Oh, quite a bit, I should say. There's a lot to be done before she'll be ready."

"Looks to me as though the show will be over long before this dump gets shipshape," and Küster made a gesture with his hand to the confusion all around. The decks, the bridge, the superstructure, almost everything had been reduced to its component parts.

"This is nothing," said Charlie cheerfully. "Wait till you get between decks; she looks as though she'd been struck by lightning. Never mind, she'll be ready sometime or other—and before the war's over. But I'm up to my neck in it. Got to fit up my own bits and pieces. So long for now. I'll be seeing you this evening."

And Lieutenant Brunke turned back to his radio gadgets.

'Evening!' thought Küster. He looked at his watch. It was seven o'clock. What had the old officer in Hamburg said? "Don't run away with the idea that serving on an auxiliary cruiser is easy."

At Küster's suggestion the mustering and training of the crew of Ship 33—for reasons of secrecy the old *Kandelfels* had been given a new tactical number—were shifted to Friedrichsort. A long and earnest discussion took place; it was important to decide who should be accepted and why—and who should be turned down and why. In the future a lot would depend on the quality of the crew. They decided to have a backbone of men who had seen naval service in the First World War as a solid reliable core to the bulk of the crew, who would be younger men and without experience. But all of them, without exception, must be fighting fit. Nothing less would do. And further, they must all be men of good character and thoroughly reliable in all respects.

It was no easy matter to get all these questions settled and to separate the wheat from the chaff, but it had to be done and it was Lieutenant Küster's job to do it. He did not find time hanging heavily on his hands, but occasionally he did manage to visit a bar that was very popular with naval personnel. In "the good old days" they had gathered there to talk about their duties, to discuss their "problems"—as far as they had had any serious problems—and to grumble about their officers. As he expected, he met a number of old comrades there, including a few who had already seen action.

"Hello, old sailor, where have they stuck you?"

"Friedrichsort."

"Friedrichsort, eh? What are you doing there?"

"I'm with a defensive boom commando."

"Good Lord! That doesn't sound very thrilling. I've seen the things in passing. Is that the best they can do for you? Poor

old Wolfgang! A shore job—and you were always so anxious to get to sea."

"It's all right," said Küster, trying to lend conviction to his tone. "It's an important job. Someone's got to do it, you know."

The others looked at him curiously. Küster was the last man they would have thought satisfied with a shore job—and a job like that!—in wartime. Defensive boom commando! A job for middle-aged men and fathers of families.

Defensive boom commando—that was Küster's own invention and he had urged all his men to play up to it. It was much better to be able to give a definite answer to curious questions than indulge in evasions which would only make questioners more curious than ever. Later on the truth could be told. In the meantime they would have to put up with the friendly mockery—and half-contemptuous pity—of old colleagues engaged on more interesting tasks. Secrecy and camouflage were absolutely necessary during the time of preparation.

It was during an official visit to Bremen that Küster first met the commanding officer of Ship 33. Küster was now stationed in the old fortress of Friedrichsort with Lieutenant Schwinne, three other officers, and the crew they were training. So far they knew their captain only by name and reputation, but what they did know was encouraging: Captain Ernst-Felix Krüder? A damned good man, they were told; one of the old school. He had served in the Imperial Navy with distinction during the First World War, and afterward he had volunteered for the dangerous job of clearing mines—just for the sheer joy and excitement of it.

Küster went on board Ship 33 and reported to the captain's cabin. In the uncertain light of the paneled room he found himself facing his commanding officer, a tall, broad-shouldered man with clear-cut features, a rather prominent nose, and keen eyes. There was another officer in the cabin.

At their introduction Küster heard the name Warning. If he was not mistaken, Warning had been first officer on board the North German Lloyd liner *Bremen*. Quite a big bug for the rank of lieutenant.

Küster made his progress report on the training of the crew, and Krüder listened attentively. When it was over he paced up and down for a moment or two as though considering what he had heard. Then he stopped and turned to Küster.

"Very good, Küster. Now listen. I want my officers to be everywhere and take a hand in everything, dodging no kind of work. I want them to get to know everything, and know it better than the best man on board. I want them to establish their right to be officers beyond all question, both morally and physically; and I want it done without a lot of noise and bluster. I don't care for the usual barrack-room tone, and I don't want it in my ship. And another thing: I like cleanliness and tidiness, even when we've been months at sea—particularly when we've been months at sea. I want my officers to see that I get it. Don't use a great many words, but be exemplary in action. It's easier to show men how to die than it is to show them constantly how to live in whatever situation arises."

He paused and looked at Küster keenly, as though to judge the effect of his words.

"And there's one last thing," he went on. "A ship's company's a family whether it wants to be or not. I want mine to be a happy one, and therefore I expect my officers to study the men off duty as well as on—without seeming to and without being grandmothers. They've got to know their men, every one of them; know them and appreciate them. Know what they are in civilian life, whether they're married, whether they've got any children, and, above all, know when anything's troubling them."

And, with greater emphasis: "An officer must win the men

under him. Once he's done that he won't have much cause to worry about discipline—he'll have the best; the sort that's freely given."

As soon as Küster was dismissed and before he left the cabin he noticed that the captain turned back at once to his work. He was studying the silhouettes of merchantmen of all nations. With Warning, a veteran of the seven seas, he often carried on this study of ships' types far into the night. It was long and tedious work, but it was to bear fruit later, both when they had to disguise their own ship and when they had to recognize the enemy swiftly.

As Küster went back to his quarters he thought over what the captain had said to him. He had gone through his own training on sailing ships, and it had been no easy life. Subsequently he had served as a training officer for cadets and petty officers, and he knew a bit about the relationships between officers and men. The words of Captain Krüder were not to be found in any training manual; they were born of long practical experience in the handling of men and of the character of the man himself.

Those members of the crew of the *Kandelfels* who had remained with Ship 33 had been sorry to lose their old captain, and they looked forward to the advent of the new one with mixed feelings and a certain mistrust. An old sailor gets hardened in his ways and he is inclined to regard anything new with suspicion. And Captain Krüder, when they finally met him, was something new. They looked at him with watchful eyes; he'd have to be good to take the place of the Old Man in their feelings.

He was a tall, almost spare, man, they noticed. He was always neatly dressed, and he moved like an athlete. From the moment he came on board he had an eye on everything, and he seemed to be everywhere—in person. He established a personal relationship with every officer and every man of

his crew. He turned out to be a disciplinarian, but a humane one, and he talked to them as a man to men. Apart from his wartime decorations, he wore the golden sport medal, and the men knew that that was no easy thing to win, particularly when a man hadn't all the time in the world to devote to sport.

That was the first thing that made the men inclined to respect him, but it wasn't the last. Before long, opinion had hardened: the new skipper would do. Krüder had done what he had urged Küster and his brother officers to do; he had won the men under him.

Somehow or other it leaked out to the lower deck: the merchantman *Kandelfels*, now Ship 33, was to be an auxiliary cruiser—hence all these preparations. "Auxiliary cruiser!" Two words that meant something, two words with an aura of legendary heroism and adventure on the high seas. As one group of men after another returned from their special training and learned what it was all about they began to look at "the old tub" with new eyes and new respect. Each man now put his back into his particular job as though he had shares in the ship.

Kruder had already enjoined the greatest possible discretion on both officers and men: "No one is to say a word about this ship. No one is to say a word about what she looks like. And no one is to drop a single hint about the job she's going to do. One day the time will come to go to sea, and if anyone of you puts two and two together and guesses it on account of certain necessary preparations, then not even your nearest and dearest must be given the slightest indication of it."

It was not easy for the men to hold their tongues, but orders were orders, and each man knew that a word too many might ruin the whole undertaking and cost them all their lives. Like Lieutenant Kuster, they had to grin and bear it when fellows

engaged on more heroic tasks pulled the legs of the "defensive boom squirts."

Weeks passed and lengthened into months, but the iron hull of the *Kandelfels* still towered against the walls of the Goten Basin as quietly and peaceably as though she were waiting to take on cargo in Calcutta, Hamburg, or Bremen. Outwardly the only difference was that her crew were now navy men. Inwardly there was a good deal of change. For one thing, there were now guns to port and starboard, but compartments in which they were hidden were marvelously camouflaged. From outboard there was not a sign of the screens that would open at a moment's notice to allow them to hurl their shells at the target. Even a man with some idea of the truth could have studied her from the shore and never have formed a single indication to confirm his suspicions. Outwardly Ship 33 was still the old *Kandelfels,* a peaceable merchantman and nothing else—and not a soul was allowed on board her apart from the crew and certain specially authorized persons.

From time to time railroad cars rolled onto the quay alongside the ship and cranes grappled cases from them, raised them into the air, and swung them around to lower them into the holds of the *Kandelfels.* They were all numbered and stamped with the markings of the naval arsenal, but there was nothing about their shape or size to indicate their contents. Neither the railwaymen, nor the dock workers, nor the cranemen had the slightest suspicion that they contained munitions of various calibers.

One morning the Goten Basin was empty; Ship 33 was gone. A few days later she slid into another berth. The crew went on shore leave, and neither their parents, nor their wives, nor even their girl friends learned that gunnery exercises had taken place in the Baltic—incidentally, with good results.

The first of May came, but it was too early for spring flowers in this bleak northeast corner of Germany. However, they celebrated. The Old Man, for that was what Krüder was by this time, had a bright idea, and he organized a sort of "Works Outing," ship and all. They sailed up the coast, quite close to the shore so that the crew could see whatever was to be seen, and opposite the Pillkoppen Sands they dropped anchor and shipped every dispensable man ashore to enjoy himself—together with the kind of drinks that really belong to a sailor's May Day celebration. It was subsequently reported that a good time was had by all.

In May there were a number of more businesslike outings, during which they practiced camouflaging and de-camouflaging until they were almost sick of it—and also almost letter perfect. A plane was taken on board, and with this they exercised until stowing away and making ready went without a hitch. One day they steamed slowly into the arsenal docks, and there the eyes of the crew widened as they watched the many mines being stowed safely away in the ship's holds.

After that Ship 33 went to sea, but three days later she was back again. Another false alarm. That evening the men were silent and morose. The long wait and the repeated disappointments were beginning to tell.

An order marked "Most Secret" was lying in the captain's safe. Krüder had received it the previous day by special courier from the Naval Command in Berlin. He now sent for the first lieutenant.

"Schwinne," he said when the first lieutenant arrived, "I've sent for you because I'm a little uneasy about the men's present mood. They're anxious to get going. I realize that. They're good fellows, but this long delay is getting on their nerves. I think we'll give shore leave to every man we can possibly

spare. See to it, will you. And err on the side of generosity."

"Very good, sir."

"Oh, yes, and another thing. I'm going to Berlin this evening. I shall be back tomorrow. All libertymen to be on board by ten o'clock. There may be loading to do, and we'll need every man."

The next day, which was Friday, Lieutenant Küster went ashore with his bosom friend Charlie Brunke, the communications officer. It was too early to visit any of the interesting little bars there were in the place and they hardly knew what to do with themselves. But they passed the day somehow, and in the early evening they turned into a good restaurant. Brunke insisted on paying.

"Order what you like, old boy," he said. "Money's no object tonight. And the best wine on the card."

Afterward they went on to a bar where it was arranged that they should meet the other officers who had gone ashore. All of them were turning over in their minds the same interesting problem: why had the Old Man cut leave to ten o'clock? He had mentioned the possibility of further storing, but somehow that didn't sound very convincing. He had promised to drop in on his return from Berlin, and anxiously and with growing tension they waited to see whether he would or not.

"Captain Krüder!" exclaimed the first lieutenant as the captain finally entered. At the sharp warning they all sprang to their feet.

"Officers of Ship 33 present for . . ."

Lieutenant Schwinne hesitated and looked at the captain hopefully.

"You were going to say for a farewell drink, weren't you?" said Krüder smiling. "I'm afraid we've not got that far yet. Stupid business. However, we're leaving this evening for Bremerhaven or Kiel. We'll learn more details on the way.

The chairborne gentlemen in the offices, you know," and the captain shrugged his shoulders. "However," he went on with a twinkle in his eye, "that needn't stop us from taking a little drop of the right stuff here and now. But take it easy, gentlemen! Take it easy!"

Kuster nudged his friend Charlie Brunke: "Sounds like the real thing," he whispered.

Both of them stared at a point on the tablecloth where there was nothing at all to stare at. There was silence around them, an electrically charged silence. Each man was busy with his own thoughts, trying to suppress a triumphant grin. They had all caught the meaning of the captain's tone, and their hearts were beating harder.

3. HK-33 PUTS OUT

EIGHT BELLS SOUNDED. MIDNIGHT. THE CAPTAIN WAS ON DECK. He turned to the officer of the watch.

"Make certain that all hands are on board. See that the engine-room watch is called at 0015 and the whole starboard watch at 0030."

The boatswain of the watch heard the orders. 'Oho!' he thought. 'The whole starboard watch!' And with the sure instinct of the experienced seaman he realized that the moment they had all been waiting for was at last at hand. Although he had only just applied for leave and his girl was coming to see him, he felt a surge of elation. What did that matter? Plenty of time for that later.

He hurried below to his comrades.

"Hoi! Hands turn out! Rise and shine! Big news, boys."

They rolled over unwillingly, rubbing the sleep out of their eyes.

"This is it. We're off. We're getting ready to sail at one o'clock."

But the others were unconvinced.

"Just another rumor! We'll still be squatting here when they sign the armistice. We've been led up the garden path too often. You needn't have awakened us for that. Good night."

"Oh, is that so! And why did the navigating officer get out the charts for the Belt, the Kattegat, and the Norwegian coast?

I heard him give the orders. If you know so much perhaps you can tell me that?"

The others were sitting bolt upright now.

"I'll be damned!" said one. "If that's really true . . ."

Cheerfully they tumbled out, and if a sailor tumbles out cheerfully before his time there's something in the wind. The rumor—if rumor it was—went through the ship like lightning. It woke up the engine-room watch, and even men who had been dreaming sweetly of their forthcoming leave were delighted at the change that was about to come over their condition.

A little later the shrill tones of the boatswain's pipe were heard, followed by the bellow of the boatswain's official voice:

"Hands turn out! Rise and shine. Men of starboard watch on deck."

By this time there wasn't a man aboard who still needed waking.

The first pale gleam of an early spring day was already lighting up the eastern horizon, and under the thin clouds a delicate pinkish reflection began to spread. To port there was already a strip of pale blue sky between the sea and the clouds. It was just visible through the swathes of mist moving from land out to sea. All the men on deck had their eyes glued in the direction of land, for they wanted to see the last of home before they left it, probably for a very long time.

Ship 33 had left her moorings almost stealthily, as though fearful of the daylight. Strong hands had hauled in the brow, and astern of her as she went ahead her thick hawsers slapped into the water and were hauled on board and stowed away —they would not be needed again for a while. The last tangible bond with Germany was now broken.

Lieutenant Gabe was officer of the watch. He was a young man, and he was proud to stand beside the navigating officer

as the ship was taken out to sea. He heard the captain talking to the first lieutenant behind him.

"I have a certain feeling that this trip is going to be successful, Schwinne. But it's also going to take it out of all of us. We've got a good crew. It's up to you to see they're well looked after and kept up to scratch."

"I'll do my best, sir."

Hilfskreuzer 33, formerly the *Kandelfels,* left German waters without a word of farewell. The tangible bonds between her crew and everything they held dear were broken without a word. What connections they, as seamen, still had with civilian life fell away. From now on they were a ship and her company, living together in their own small world for days, weeks and months on end. Their real life—a very different one—was beginning. The future before them was uncertain and full of dangers, but every man on board prepared to face it with a stout heart.

As the sun sank red below the horizon and daylight began to fade, the freighter that had lain so long in Goten Basin became a different ship with a different name. The shadows gathered behind her, and among them, following her on her first sortie, were the shades of the *Wolf,* the *Möwe,* the *Seeteufel,* and the still more famous *Emden.*

The date on the calendar in the captain's cabin was June 15th, 1940. *Hilfskreuzer* 33 was the fifth of her kind to be sent out. The motor-ship *Kandelfels,* launched in 1936, had dropped her name and taken on board six not altogether modern 15-cm. guns. In her bows, carefully camouflaged, there was a smaller gun intended for firing warning shots over the bows of recalcitrant ships. At various strategic points along the upper deck were a number of light antiaircraft guns, carefully camouflaged so as to be invisible to prying eyes. Four

torpedo tubes completed her armament, and in her lower hold there were 400 mines.

All these weapons were so hidden that they could not possibly be detected from the sea, but when the moment came for action and international law demanded that the war flag should run up the mast, then, whether a moment before the ship had been masquerading as a harmless Latvian freighter or a peaceful Australian going about her proper vocations, the screens could be dropped in a matter of seconds. This was the operation the crew had practiced again and again during their period of training in the Baltic until now it had become second nature.

The enemy was inclined to overestimate the speed of Germany's auxiliary cruisers. The top speed of *HK*-33 was around seventeen knots, but she could cruise at sixteen and keep it up for long periods. With the exception of the *Thor*, the *Kormoran*, and the *Skorpian*, the other auxiliary cruisers were no faster. The *Thor* and the *Skorpian* could cruise at seventeen knots, while the latter, the dwarf of the German auxiliary cruiser fleet, could steam at nineteen knots. However, the *Skorpian* never actully saw service as an auxiliary cruiser; the only war service she saw was as the minelayer *Barbara*.

Painted gray, flying no flag, and looking completely mercantile, *HK*-33 steamed at high speed through the Great Belt. The men had grumbled at their enforced idleness, but now they were lighthearted and happy as their ship forged ahead of the squat, fantastically camouflaged troopships and transports carrying reinforcements and supplies to the German forces in Norway. No one on board them dreamed that the old freighter overtaking them was not a freighter at all, and certainly not an old one.

As *HK*-33 left the Great Belt behind and moved into the Kattegat, the lookout reported several ships to port. The little dots on the horizon rapidly grew as *HK*-33 came up. Masts,

funnels and then hulls became visible. They proved to be torpedo boats waiting to escort her into Norwegian waters. When *HK*-33 joined them they took up formation and after that, occasionally altering course and speed, they did not leave her side. Planes appeared in the sky ahead, but after a moment or two the lookouts posted at strategic points all over the ship and alert for strange vessels, floating mines, suspicious wakes, and enemy planes, lowered their glasses in relief. The planes were German fighter patrols ready to deal with enemy air attacks and keep a weather eye open for enemy submarines.

During and after the Norwegian campaign, and despite heavy losses, British submarines were very active in the Kattegat. Their tactics were to lie in wait in Swedish waters and make forays from safety in the hope of finding German convoys or ships steaming independently.

Straight as arrows and faster than the flight of gulls the fighters swept down toward *HK*-33 until it seemed they must crash on to her deck, but then in a flash they rose and were away again.

"Drifting objects bearing 012 degrees."

With this form of bearing indication the basic line is the ship's course; that is to say, the imaginary extension of the keel ahead is the zero point on a 360 degrees circle reckoned clockwise. In order to indicate the compass bearing, all that is necessary is to add this angle to the ship's compass course (with the gryoscopic compass the bearings are always reckoned clockwise) and the exact compass bearing is thus obtained.

"Something for your department, I think," Krüder called out cheerfully to Lieutenant Schmidt, the mine expert. The drifting objects were apparently German mines. During the heavy spring storms they had probably wrenched themselves loose from their moorings. As an old minesweeper captain,

Krüder was particularly interested in the bobbing, dipping fellows that drifted along lazily with the sea swell. His own mining officer confirmed his supposition; they were German mines. Krüder steered a little closer, but he left it to their escort to render the mines harmless by machine-gun fire. It was not necessary to explode them. When the outer hull was pierced they bubbled harmlessly to the bottom like old tin cans.

Krüder watched them thoughtfully, perhaps recalling the hard and bitter period after the First World War. When the fleet had broken up and the crews had dispersed in all directions—most of them only too glad to get away from the sea and all thoughts of war—a few men had remained loyal to their old love. These men had then served in the minesweepers which had made German waters safe for shipping. After that they had formed the core of the new Reichsmarine. Felix Krüder had been one of them. For him and the others a lost war was merely an incident.

The formation of ships was approaching the Norwegian coast now. It was already late, but in these parts night did not mean darkness; there was always a pale, transparent twilight, quite enough to see the countours of the bare mountains as they stood out grimly against the sky. The water around the Norwegian islands was still, and its surface was almost like a mirror. Taking advantage of the shelter offered by these islands and avoiding the open sea, they steadily made their way toward their objective.

Four days after having left her German moorings, *HK*-33 dropped anchor in Sorguten Fjord. It was a small, out-of-the-way place not even marked on ordinary maps. There were high mountains on either side with woods and meadows at their feet. Not a house was to be seen. The escorting torpedo boats and fighters had gone now, and *HK*-33 was alone. Thin swathes of mist were floating over the fjord, giving the whole

scene an eerie note of sadness and melancholy. A broader and somewhat lighter strip across the lower levels of a valley indicated the presence of a stream. Curling billows of mist rose above the water like the chariots of the ancient sea gods, gradually dispersing in a multitude of glistening colors under the rays of the sinking sun. Solemn stillness surrounded the German ship.

On board, the captain gave instructions to his first lieutenant, Lieutenant Schwinne.

"The ship's appearance is to be refashioned according to this plan. Every man must lend a hand. Mind you keep strictly to this design."

The captain handed over photographs and the silhouette of a ship similar in some respects to the *HK*-33 but with some markedly different characteristics.

"Very good, sir."

The deck became animated, and the silence was broken by sharp commands. Both officers and men played the part of scene shifters with equal enthusiasm and worked side by side with matter-of-fact comradeliness.

The transformation scene took two days to complete. At the end of that time the appearance of the ship's structure, her silhouette, and her color had been changed in accordance with the diagrams handed to the first lieutenant. She was now painted jet black. On either side of her hull was the national emblem of Soviet Russia: yellow hammer and sickle crossed on a blood-red background. And in large white lettering, visible at a great distance, was the name "Pechora" in white. The real *Pechora* was a Russian ship stationed in Archangel. Captain Krüder had himself taken around his ship in the motorboat. Standing up, with folded arms, he surveyed the handiwork of his men. A satisfied smile crept over his face.

"Splendid, lads!" he exclaimed when he was once again on board. "Good enough to deceive comrade Stalin himself."

4. OBJECTIVE: DIRTY WEATHER

JUNE 22ND, 1940.

HK-33 weighed anchor. With a dull bumping sound and a rattling of chain cable, the capstan dragged the anchor off the rocky bottom and up into the hawse-pipe. There was suppressed excitement on board among both officers and men. The engines began to throb.

"Both engines slow ahead!"

At the stern the water began to swirl and froth, and then *HK*-33's bows sheared slowly through the still waters of the fjord. Before long, an authentic-looking Russian ship was heading for the open sea. Minesweepers were waiting to escort her out and make quite certain the fairway was clear of all obstructions.

On board the minesweepers, men were wondering why they had to take so much trouble over a Russian ship—a whole flotilla for escort, and in the night, too. But that was probably politics, and minesweeper crews weren't supposed to know much about that. They had their own feelings about the matter, but they kept them to themselves.

The cloud covering hung low and there was a sharp wind. Gradually the grim ridges of Norway's mountains sank back into the sea astern. The weather grew worse. Squalls raced up, whistling and howling around the ship, which soon began to dip and roll. Here and there a man turned green and swallowed hard, as though he were tackling ship's biscuit.

"Lee side if you must get rid of your tucker," ordered a grinning officer.

"Aye aye, sir."

The first man made a dive to the lee side. He was not the last.

Lieutenant Michaelsen laughed good humoredly as he stood there on the bridge with straddled legs and observed the distress of some of the new hands. This sort of thing was second nature to him. He had been used to a pitching, rolling deck from early youth.

"Your first seagoing lesson, my lads," he shouted. "Any little squirt can be sick on shore, but you've got to learn how to be sick on board if you don't want your dinner back in your face."

The advice tendered to the seasick sailors by their more hardened fellows was even more drastic: "A lump of fat bacon on the end of a string pulled up and down. Tastes the same way going down as coming up."

The thought seemed to be encouraging: the men turned greener and still others joined them.

"You've got the idea, boys. Heave it up."

The wind rose and became even more boisterous. The ship danced up and down in the heavy seas like a cork, while the unfortunates hung over the side and didn't care if it snowed.

It was after midnight and the captain was still on the bridge; 0130 said the chronometer. From time to time he seemed to be sniffing into the wind, almost as though he expected to detect something. The men could see that the Old Man was on the alert, and they did their own duties with redoubled zeal. They all knew by this time that he could come down on them like a ton of coal if he thought the situation warranted it.

"Keep awake," warned the officer of the watch. "Don't keep

your glasses glued to your eyes all the time. Use your own eyes now and again as a check."

Otherwise there was silence on the bridge.

Suddenly the captain stiffened.

"Look!" he exclaimed, pointing out to sea. "If that isn't a periscope it's damned like it."

A few hundred yards on the port bow something that looked like an iron stanchion lurched in the boiling sea. The light was unfavorable, and it was not easy to identify the object with any certainty. It might have been a log thrown upright for a moment by the sea, or a floating spar. All the glasses of the watch were now concentrated on it. As they watched, a black mass reared up out of the water, and the sea ran away from it on all sides. At that moment the lookout reported the suspicious object as the periscope of a submarine. The conning tower was already visible.

Krüder gave his orders rapidly but without excitement: "Alarm! Action stations!"

It was a submarine, and not a German one. According to radio information given to *HK*-33, there were no German submarines in these waters. In any case, Krüder could already see from the superstructure that it was British.

The captain turned away only for a moment, but by the time he turned back again the submarine had vanished. Even the periscope was no longer to be seen.

Wind force 7. Between 8 and 10 in gusts. And the sea to match. It was highly probable that the submarine commander had never intended to surface at all but had been unable to prevent his boat from being hoisted out of the water by the high seas.

"Helm hard a'starboard."

The helmsman twisted the wheel frantically, his eyes on the shining compass dial. Krüder himself put the engine-room

telegraph to "Full speed ahead." With a metallic rattle the repeater swung round.

"Helm hard a'starboard, sir."

"Very good."

The water around began to boil, as *HK*-33 turned. A frothing wake indicated the beginning of the turn.

"Ease the helm!"

"Midships! Steady as you go."

For the moment the enemy ship had been deprived of its attacking position.

"Periscope bearing 210 degrees!" came a new report.

Yes, there she was again, but if she were to fire a torpedo into the wake of the *HK*-33 she would have very little hope of a hit. In any case, by this time the submarine commander must certainly have recognized the supposed Russian.

"Boat is surfacing again!"

For the second time the superstructure of the submarine emerged from the boiling spray, to be followed now by the rest of the boat as far as the waterline. It looked as though her captain intended to overhaul the freighter on the surface. He could certainly never guess that the old Russian tub—as he must think her—was capable of seventeen knots.

Or did he already know the truth? Had they been betrayed? Was it really a coincidence that a British submarine should be waiting right outside the fjord in which *HK*-33 had put on her disguise? Subsequent happenings, some of them revealed only after the war, made the suspicion by no means fantastic.

Krüder was in a dilemma now. The enemy was not more than a couple of miles astern and steaming at full speed, as the heavy waves which broke over her, sometimes causing her to disappear in a wall of foam and spray, clearly indicated. All eyes were on Krüder. He was scratching his nose, a familiar gesture when he was making up his mind.

"We'll have to let her go," he said finally with some reluc-

tance and annoyance. And turning to the navigating officer, Lieutenant Michaelsen, he continued calmly: "If we wanted to hit her hard and mortally, we should have to turn broadside on. That would make her suspicious and, at the same time, give her a first-class target. And again, it's far from certain that we could sink her quickly in this sea. If we tried and failed she might have time to dive even if we damaged her. And that would mean we should lose the advantage of surprise. Our disguise would be useless, and the British would know we're out and at least what size we are. It seems quite certain too that the British captain really takes us for the Russian we're supposed to be. He'd never have surfaced if he suspected we were an auxiliary cruiser. What do you think, Michaelsen?"

"I think you're right, sir. Not worth risking discovery for a problematical success."

"Right then. Let everyone know over the loudspeakers what we've decided and why. I like to let the men know what it's all about where possible."

In the meantime, the British submarine was doing her utmost to overhaul her quarry, but without success. If her captain had but known it, he hadn't a chance.

"Enemy making signals, sir: 'What ship? What ship?' "

HK-33 made no answer.

"Tell him to put his glasses on," someone joked. "It's plain enough for anyone to see."

"As Bolshevists we ought to be disagreeable as a matter of course," put in Lieutenant Bach. "He must recognize us from his shipping table."

"You're right," said the captain gleefully. "We'll give him the cold shoulder in Russian." It was clear that he was enjoying himself; if he couldn't sink the fellow at least he could pull his leg.

But now the submarine captain was losing his temper.

"Heave to or we open fire!" came the signaled warning.

HK-33 went on her way without bothering to reply. By this time the Britisher was dropping astern.

A messenger ran to the bridge.

"Two underwater explosions heard between decks, sir. As though someone had hammered on the hull with a pile driver."

The sailor was still reporting details when Lieutenant Hanefeld appeared on the bridge and reported a third explosion.

It sounded as though the submarine had fired three torpedoes. Either they had nosedived and exploded on the bottom or British torpedoes were now set to explode at the end of their run. Probably the latter, for it was unlikely that all three would have nosedived.

The pursuit continued for an hour and a half. Finally, as she dropped further and further astern, the submarine gave it up.

There were two courses open to *HK*-33 in her attempt to force the British naval blockade and reach the Atlantic. One was to steam between Iceland and the Hebrides; and the other, to steam through the narrow Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland. The reasonable supposition that at this time of the year there would be thick mist in the Denmark Strait caused Krüder to choose the latter way. Whichever way he went, he was, of course, well aware that he would have to reckon with a keen lookout on the part of the British.

It was also quite certain that the British submarine to which they had shown a clean pair of heels would have reported the matter in detail to the British Admiralty, which meant that, although the British would probably still be unaware of their real identity, all Allied vessels would have been warned. Krüder therefore temporarily altered course to the northward.

The weather had cleared and the sea was now calm. Krüder took advantage of the lull to pay a visit to his meteorological officer, popularly known as the frog in the jar. Lieutenant Roll, a former civil servant of Danzig, was so immersed in his charts that he noticed the captain's presence in his cabin only when the familiar deep voice sounded. He was about to spring up, but Krüder pressed him back into his seat.

"Don't disturb yourself," he said amiably, adding: "By God, if you can find your way about in that confusion you're a magician. Looks as though several spiders' webs had got entangled."

"Oh, it's all quite clear, sir," replied the lieutenant, finishing off the green curve he had been drawing.

"I'm glad to hear it," said Krüder cheerfully. "Looks anything but to me."

"Well, you see, sir, these lines here are the isobars, and these . . ."

"Right you are, right you are, Rolls. I'm not anxious for the details. All I want to know is what the weather's going to be like. Just as simple as that. I'm easily satisfied."

The earnest meteorological officer was already acquainted with the captain's little ways.

"There's not much hope for a change for the time being, I'm afraid, sir."

"In that case we'll have to wait a bit before we take our chance of slipping through. But you can probably tell me when there's the greatest likelihood of finding mist, rain, or dirty weather in the Denmark Strait and the North Sea area adjacent to it. Good weather for us means the worst possible weather for anyone else."

"Yes, I can certainly do that, sir. We'll get the supplementary reports from one or two weather ships, and that will enable me to forecast the possibilities in the area with a fair degree of probability."

"Fine! Then when it's likely to be dirty you report to me that it's going to be lovely."

In wartime weather forecasting takes on a new importance. An accurate weather forecast is often decisive for the success or otherwise of naval operations. In peacetime weather reports are issued on an international wave-length from various points, and at stated intervals. During the war, however, all the belligerent powers stopped issuing these reports. Meteorological stations on land and sea ceased to issue reports, or if they did issue any they used secret codes that couldn't be broken in time to make their messages of any use to the enemy.

There are innumerable examples of the enormous importance of "the frog in the jar" for the conduct of naval operations. To mention only one, as soon as he was out of German waters the commander of the *Admiral Scheer,* the German heavy cruiser that went out commerce raiding during the war, relied entirely on the forecasts of his meteorological officer. Before he risked his ship slipping through the British blockade, he was faced with exactly the same problem as *HK*-33. He managed to get through under cover of a long spell of bad weather, accurately forecast by his meteorological officer, Lieutenant Defant. And later on, Captain Krancke, the commander of the *Admiral Scheer,* had to make up his mind whether to attack an enemy convoy, which was reported by his reconnaissance plane to be 180 nautical miles distant, that evening in the failing light or wait until the following morning when his chances of sinking the greatest possible number of enemy ships would undoubtedly—other things being equal —be more favorable. On the other hand, if he waited till morning he would come dangerously close to the zone of operations of heavy British units. It was altogether a pretty problem. It was solved conclusively by Lieutenant Defant's weather forecast which announced that a heavy storm was beating up.

Captain Krancke therefore decided to attack in the evening. The storm forecast by Lieutenant Defant arrived punctually at midnight and with such violence that it was quite clear that there would have been very little likelihood of a successful attack the following morning. But the *Admiral Scheer* had attacked in the late evening hours and sunk an enemy auxiliary cruiser and seven freighters of 86,000 gross register tons.

Again, without an accurate weather forecast the success of the subsequent attack on convoy P.Q. 17 could never have been so great. In this attack German planes and submarines operating jointly sank almost all the ships of an arctic convoy from England to Russia.

And again, the success of the German battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* in slipping undamaged through the English Channel. This, too, was entirely due to the accuracy of a weather report which forecast a heavy mist in the Channel coming from Ireland. The Information Service of the German Foreign Office had a hand in this. Weather conditions in Ireland were regularly radioed from a contact man in Dublin. These reports, taken together with observations of their own, permitted German meteorologists to forecast fog in the Channel not only on the day but to the very hour.

Not very many people know even now that throughout the war German meteorologists guarded by German soldiers were at work in isolated spots in the loneliness of the Arctic ice in Greenland, Spitzbergen, and even Fritjof Nansen Land. These secret weather stations with their code names *Bassgeiger, Nussbaum, Schatzgräber, Zugvogel,* and so on, wrote a very important chapter in what became known as "The War below Zero."

The navigating officer grumbled and cursed.

"Did you ever know such weather?" he demanded rhetorically. "I've been backward and forward over the North At-

lantic more times that I can remember, and I've never known anything like it. Blasted sunshine all the time. Not a cloud to be seen anywhere."

And he followed up his disgruntled observations with a string of blistering curses that caused the rating who overheard them to turn his head away to grin. Childish perhaps, but it relieved a man's feelings. And as for the involuntary eavesdropping rating—well, it was good for a man to know that officers could curse, too, just like their men.

"Land right ahead!" shouted the lookout.

The navigating officer consulted his chart. 'He must be pulling our legs,' he thought. *HK*-33 was still something like seventy nautical miles from the island of Jan Mayen. Michaelsen checked the position on the chart and made a note in the margin. The position was correct. 'He must be seeing things,' he thought. 'A whale's back or something.' He left the chart house and went out on deck into the bright sunshine. "Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "The man's right. It must be Bear Mountain."

Above the mist a snow-capped peak reared into the sky as though it were floating in the air. It was obviously Bear Mountain, the highest point on the island.

Jan Mayen Island is an unimportant rocky point in the northernmost North Atlantic Ocean. Apart from the men of a weather station, it is uninhabited. It is just a point in the ocean used as a landmark by sailors. Bear Mountain is always snow-covered, but it is usually invisible on account of the swathes of mist clinging around it. There are very few days in the year when it can be seen. This was one of them.

'Is that a good presage or isn't it?' the navigating officer asked himself. Superstition or no, it seems to be a fact that seamen are closer to the riddle of the universe and to the workings of cosmic laws than those respectable citizens who spend their lives in the stone deserts that call themselves

towns. In any case, the crew of *HK*-33 took the unexpected appearance of Bear Mountain as a favorable sign—it was almost as though they had found a four-leaf clover.

Incidentally, the name Bear Mountain is in dispute; some maps call it Berry Mountain, but Bear or Berry, it was all the same to the men. There it was with its peak glistening in the sun, and the sight cheered them up.

"That bird isn't a bird," said the lookout with conviction, and with deliberate care he took out the piece of wash leather used for polishing the lenses and cleaned his glasses. Then he drew the attention of the port lookout to the speck and studied it again.

"It's a plane," confirmed his companion.

"That's what I thought, but where the devil should a plane come from here in the Arctic?"

"What's that got to do with us? Report it."

"Unidentified plane bearing 015 degrees flying low," sang out the first man.

"Friendly aircraft," came an answering shout from the bridge. They too had spotted the plane. The captain knew that it was a German reconnaissance machine. The *Luftwaffe* was cooperating with the navy to watch the route of *HK*-33.

"He's keeping his distance," muttered the lookout. "Does he think we'd bite him?"

The captain knew why, but he said nothing. All pilots had instructions to do just that: keep their distance when they spotted the pseudo-Russian ship and under no circumstances to take photographs.

From Krüder's point of view, the weather did not "improve." The sun continued to shine and the nights were so light that you could see for miles all around in this vast waste of water. At first, icebergs had been rare, but they were hourly becoming more frequent. A shining stretch of ice now came in sight

ahead, a sparkling band stretched across the horizon. The rays of the sun shone and flashed in the broken, jagged crystal of the great ice barrier, while the men on deck stared in wonder at the colorful play of light.

Slower now, and hampered in her movements, *HK*-33 forged into the ice mass. There was a noise of grinding, scraping, bumping, and clanging as she went forward. On the ice blocks were thousands of moving, tumbling birds. They were of the auk family, with straight, pointed beaks, black backs, white bellies, and white-tipped wings. Wondering what on earth they found to feed on in this desolate spot, an officer looked them up in the encyclopedia. He discovered—as he might have guessed—that they fed on the fish they snapped out of the water with their pointed beaks. He also discovered that their eggs were good to eat. Eggs? Thousands of them could be seen all over the place. 'And without a ration book!' he thought with sudden interest. He mentioned the matter to the captain in the hope that he might sanction the lowering of a boat. Why, you could collect enough eggs here to last the rest of the trip!

"Afraid not," said Krüder. "Another time perhaps."

The disappointed officer turned away. Natural history as such did not interest him. "Pity!" he muttered.

Crab-catchers showed no sign of timidity at the sight of the ship, and they continued their comic play on the ice at her approach. Gray shining seals grunted and yawned, moving slowly and deliberately, and obviously unwillingly, as *HK*-33 bore down on them, her stem shearing noisily through the ice.

If anyone wanted the captain and couldn't find him on the bridge, there was one place he was sure to be—in the cabin of the meteorological officer. Unfortunately the former civil servant from Danzig could only forecast the weather and not

influence it. He pored over his charts and calculations and did his best to wring a more favorable prognostication out of them, but the fine weather persisted and he could only shrug his shoulders. The assistant medico, Dr. Hasselmann, was using his spare time as Lieutenant Roll's unofficial assistant, but not even the combined efforts of the two scientists could produce anything hopeful.

Krüder was never particularly cheerful after he had paid one of his regular visits to the meteorological officer. On one occasion he met Boatswain Rauch on his way back to the bridge.

"What do you think of that, Boatswain?" he demanded, though without expecting an answer. "A captain's master of his ship, but still he can't do what he likes on board. He's got to wait for the weather."

Before the astonished boatswain could think of anything to say, the captain was gone. 'The Old Man's got the jumps,' he thought. A joke was Krüder's reaction to many an irritating situation.

But the next time the captain appeared in the meteorological officer's cabin there was better news for him.

"Unless I'm very much mistaken," said Lieutenant Roll, moving his pencil over the conglomeration of green, red, and blue lines on the chart before him, "there'll be a rare old northeaster on Friday night. We can also expect rain and heavy mist later on, in the rear of the front."

"How long's it likely to last?" demanded Krüder eagerly.

"Long enough to let us slip through, I think, sir."

"Ah, now you're earning your keep!" exclaimed Krüder with satisfaction. Before the meteorological officer could say anything the door of his cabin had slammed behind the hurriedly departing captain. With sprightly gait, taking steps two at a time, Krüder made for the chart house.

"Send the navigating officer to me at once," he ordered.

HK-33 was steaming on a southward course now. As Lieutenant Roll had prophesied, on Friday a black wall of cloud rolled up from the northeast. That evening it was blowing great guns, and the sea was rising. A sudden drop in the temperature made the men shiver. It was below freezing point now, and the thickest material seemed unable to keep out the cold. Heavy seas were breaking over the ship's bows, and icy spray lashed over the deck at bridge level. The water was icy now, and it seemed to soak through any kind of material. The men's faces were red as boiled lobsters as the needle-like salt spray whipped their bare skin.

Although at this time of the year it never grows really dark at such latitudes, the storm clouds were so low and dense that a passable imitation of darkness was obtained. In addition there was not the shimmer of a light to be seen anywhere, either on board *HK*-33 or on board the vessels keeping constant vigil for German blockade runners and hoping to bring them to action in the narrow straits.

The watch in *HK*-33 stood grimly at their posts and stared into the darkness ahead, their eyes burning with the salt spray. Now and again the bluish phosphorescent glow of a breaker heaved over the ship's rail, and now and again a wrack of cloud parted for a moment or two to reveal a faint glimmer of sky. Low storm clouds scudded over the ship like the smoke trails of racing destroyers. It was a wild millrace of clouds, rolling past funnel and mast. Sometimes the cloud forms looked like the demoniac faces of furies dashing on and on, urged forward by a fierce will to destruction. Or like the tortured faces of the damned fleeing over the sea. Lower and lower they lay in their flight, passing swiftly until they were one with sky and sea.

"Pity the poor sailor on a night like this," muttered Boatswain Rauch. "Fancy being out in this without a ship beneath you!"

"Yes, and with a suitcase in each hand," added the imperturbable Krüder. "Anything to report?"

"Yes, sir. Starboard bulkhead stove in below and a hatch tarpaulin carried away forward."

Despite the lifelines rigged up everywhere, it was impossible for anyone to remain on deck. Not a soul was to be seen, and the ship looked deserted as the waves broke over her and spume swept madly along her decks. It was impossible to tell whether it was sea water, rain, or mist that raced over and away astern. It might have been vast masses of birds settling swiftly on the deck for a moment and then taking off again in a wild flurry. Occasionally above the howling of the storm could be heard the deeper roar of the tossing seas below.

The old hands recognized the sounds from earlier voyages. They meant the presence of a tremendous sea, the father and mother of all seas. In a moment the ship would dip, slide into the vast trough, and then, as though defending herself and straining every plank, find herself heaved up and hurled into the midst of the raging sea. The whole ship rattled and shook as though gigantic hammers were testing every rivet and every joint. Then she found her keel again, straightened herself, and went on her way, while astern a fantastically writhing monster made up of vast quantities of tumbling water thrashed, pitched, and rolled away.

Young sailors who had never remotely experienced anything like an Arctic storm before were doing their best not to let the old hands notice anything. But none of them, either young or old, gave a thought to the harsh fact that just such storms had sent many a good ship to the bottom. You don't think of such things at sea; they're thoughts for the peaceable fireside, for respectable citizens who stay at home and spare a thought for those at sea.

To tell the plain unvarnished truth, no seaman ever experiences a storm in fact as it is subsequently described in litera-

ture. Not that there is any exaggeration about the description; it is just that the truth is so grimly sober that words will not altogether express it. From the seaman's standpoint, whatever happens is just his job—unromantic, harsh duty without frills.

Down in the mess the stewards were trying to serve a meal, while from the pantry came sounds of breaking and smashing. A man was lucky if he managed to get a fairly well-filled plate, and if he did, he ate it balancing as though he were an acrobat—plate in one hand, spoon in the other. A silver teapot that had seen better days was hopping from port to starboard and back again like a drunken rabbit. No one bothered to pick it up. They just looked at its almost human antics with amusement.

"When we've got through this we'll have the right to behave as privileged persons," said the navigating officer. "That's down in the book."

"What's down in the book?" demanded Lieutenant Rieche. And the others paused in their desperate attempts to eat and looked at Lieutenant Michaelsen.

"It's an old sea custom," he said earnestly. "When you've survived a storm around Cape Horn you're entitled to put one foot on the table, and when you've survived a storm like this in the Arctic Circle you're entitled to put both feet on the table, and nobody dare say a word."

"We haven't survived it yet," observed a pessimist.

Whoever has experienced an Arctic storm is never likely to forget it, even if he lives to be a hundred. It goes on for hours and hours without a break until you think it's never going to end.

HK-33 was now at the entrance to the Denmark Strait. The meteorological officer was seen more and more often on the bridge with the captain.

"I'm afraid it's not going to last long enough, sir," he said

dismally. He stared out into the gray sky and seemed as though he were turning the pages of a book.

"How much longer can we reckon on?" inquired the captain shortly.

"Two or three hours at the outside, and then it will die away."

Lieutenant Roll was right again. At midnight the clouds disappeared and the wind dropped. Nothing was left of the storm. Just a light breeze was blowing and all around was the half-light of the northern night. Half-light? It was almost like a dull day. And in the middle of it was a German auxiliary cruiser, her masts standing out like deep charcoal lines against a cold, gray background.

The hours passed slowly, damned slowly. When the watch was relieved, the men remained on deck. No one thought of sleep. They knew it was touch and go now, and they continued to stare anxiously at the horizon. The weather seemed to be thickening a little, but it was still clear and visibility was depressingly good.

In the early morning hours the sea grew even calmer. It was almost as flat as a billiard table. No one spoke above a whisper, and when men had to move they did so almost on tiptoe, as though they were afraid of waking up the enemy—who was in all probability wide awake anyhow. Incidentally, where was he? Had the storm driven him off the seas? It was too much to hope.

The air all around became stiller and stiller; even the slight breeze dropped until finally the air, wet and heavy with salt, seemed to enclose the ship almost like liquid.

5. HK-33 RUNS THE BLOCKADE

"07.15. FOGBANK BEARING S.S.E.," ENTERED THE BOATSWAIN'S mate in the log. The weather was merciful. At the critical moment, a soft protective cover of mist floated over the scene. Soon *HK*-33 was surrounded. Gradually it became thicker until, all around, every thing was white and milky. Visibility was very low. It was almost as though the ship were forging through loose cotton wool. Her course was southwesterly now. The men were still at action stations. On the bridge, Krüder stood huddled up in his thick coat. He was thoroughly enjoying the milk soup all around him. Although he had had little sleep for days, he was wide awake. Only the dark rings under his eyes and the obstinate little vertical lines between them indicated strain. But when he ordered the officer of the watch to reduce speed, his voice was as calm as though the ship were merely on maneuvers.

"Half speed ahead, Gabe."

"Very good, sir. Half speed ahead it is."

The engine-room telegraph rattled and the order was executed. But in Lieutenant Gabe's eyes there was an unspoken question: "I thought we wanted to get out into the Atlantic as quickly as possible? Why half speed then?"

"Icebergs, Gabe," said Krüder quietly as though he had read the young officer's thoughts. "Half speed means only half as many splinters, man." And, without changing the di-

rection of his glance, he ordered: "Lookouts to report any change in the color of the water immediately."

Before long, icebergs began to loom up out of the mist, sliding past like ghosts, or like some primitive creations from prehistoric times, uncanny wanderers of the polar seas. Some of them were huge monsters, fifty or sixty feet high. Then the mist became thicker, dropping lower and feeling its way with wraithlike fingers until finally it blotted out the surrounding ice world altogether. Only sudden waves of colder air would indicate the near presence of an iceberg. Then it would be gone again.

A sudden gust of wind tore away the mist for a moment and revealed another mountain of ice shimmering eerily blue and green as it sailed by. Fantastic to look at and dangerous to approach. A little carelessness, or a bit of bad luck, and an icy giant like that would crush in a ship's steel sides like matchwood.

A lookout reported a change of color in the water.

"Very good," returned the captain. "I've seen it." And then: "Slow ahead, both."

The water had taken on a milky appearance. It was obvious that *HK*-33 was passing over submerged ice, which meant that she was very close to a giant iceberg. As all sailors in the Arctic and Antarctic seas know, six-sevenths of an iceberg lie concealed beneath the surface. In this case it was impossible to tell just where the other seventh reared out of the sea. There was no wind and there were no waves to make even a tentative calculation possible. *HK*-33 kept on her old course. Experience has shown that, failing further indications, there is nothing else to be done. A little later the water turned darker again. They were through.

Water was dripping steadily and monotonously from the superstructure, from the rigging, and from the insulators of the radio aerials. The men on deck were in oilskins, and the

faint twilight of the misty day was reflected in their highly polished surfaces.

Toward evening, feeble gusts of wind stirred the surface of the water and swirled the mist around to let a pale sun break through. *HK-33* was already through the Denmark Strait.

Krüder unbuttoned his heavy leather coat with relief and stuck his hands into the outer pockets of his blue uniform jacket. Behind him, ready to receive orders, stood Felix Maul, a sailor from the unnautical province of Saxony.

"Felix," said Krüder cheerfully. "I think a cigar is indicated. Go to my cabin and get a whole box. This is no time for cheeseparing."

When the box of cigars arrived, Krüder handed them around to the men on watch on the bridge. The good Havanas were a treat for them, and they were soon all smiles.

"Cape Farewell on the starboard bow, sir," observed the navigating officer.

"And very well named, too," returned Krüder. "It's farewell to old Europe for a while. I've no doubt she'll get on quite well without us."

It was about time to fix the ship's position. First the storm with its impenetrable clouds and then the following bank of fog had made this impossible for days. "Old Baron," as German sailors call the fixed star Aldebaran, was the fellow to be shot. Hanefeld already had his sextant to his eye, holding the instrument in his left hand. Where was he? Ah, there! That is to say, he had been there; still was there no doubt, but invisible now; a cloud had temporarily blotted him from view. The game of heavenly hide and seek went on for a while. As soon as Aldebaran appeared again both Hanefeld and Bach would "shoot."

"Have you got him?" asked Hanefeld.

"Not quite, and not very clearly. What about you?"

"No better. He's playing up today."

Finally both of them had the star in the mirror of their sextants. They compared notes, found themselves in agreement, and then went to the chart house where complicated calculations in spherical trigonometry began, with much bandying around of technical terms confusing to the layman: hour angle, zenith distance, declination, and so on.

Both of them scribbled down figures on scraps of paper. Latitude and longitude were soon established. And then the exact position of the ship calculated to a minute was the final result. The ship had done 257 miles in twenty-four hours—not bad in all the circumstances, and at half speed.

Hanefeld entered the results of their calculations and one or two other observations concerning weather, temperature, and wind into the log.

"I wonder how much longer this complicated lark will go on," he speculated cheerfully. "I reckon it won't be long before someone turns up and proves the earth's flat after all. And where shall we be then?"

"As long as science keeps on correcting itself there's nothing to worry about," replied Bach. "But seriously," he went on after a short pause, "when you come to think of it, the learned doctors who gave old Copernicus such a time weren't fools either. Take Paracelsus, for example—I've just read a long book about him. The more you know, the more you realize how patchy our knowledge is. You can never tell when an established fact is going to be turned inside out. The nearer you come to solving the riddle of the universe, the more of a riddle it seems."

More than one fruitful observation has developed from such lonely night watches at sea. Perhaps that's why sailors are different from people who keep their feet firmly on the solid earth. One of the things that distinguishes them from landlubbers is that, by profession, they live nearer the frontier of the unknown, the ununderstandable, and the supernatural.

When the warm Gulf Stream meets the cold Labrador current, damp cold mists are the result, with many rainbows when the sun shines. But finally the barren coasts of Newfoundland were left behind too, and the next day was clear and sunny.

"Periscope on the port bow!"

The lookout was fluttering like an old hen at the sight of a hawk, waving his arms and pointing in the direction in which he believed he had seen it.

"Can't see a thing, man!" came an answering roar from the bridge, where the were straining their eyes to see the invisible; for where the lookout had seen, or thought to see, a periscope there was nothing. The sea was calm and level without a trace of periscope or wake. But there might have been one visible a moment before. There weren't any German U-boats in these waters, which meant that an unseen submarine there below the surface must be an enemy.

"Bridge! There it is again! To starboard this time."

'What the hell!' thought everybody. 'What's he up to? Getting into position for an attack?' All eyes followed the direction of the lookout's arm. Yes, there was something this time! It rose out of the water vertically, making the water bubble and boil around it. It was blue-black like the hull of a submarine, but to everyone's relief it was obviously the back of a whale, and laughter sounded at the expense of the lookout. A column of water spurted into the air like the steam of an Icelandic geyser. For a moment it seemed to stand there trembling in the sunshine, then it was carried away like an osprey feather in the wind.

"Might go in a bit closer, sir," suggested Warning. Krüder had no objection. The men who had never seen such a thing before stared eagerly at the whales—there were two of them—as *HK*-33 altered course in their direction. "Loving couple taking a Sunday afternoon stroll," said someone. Of course,

it *was* Sunday! Sundays and holidays were no different from any other days at sea.

Like underwater mountains with their summits showing, the two monsters wallowed through the sea. The presence of the ship did not disturb them in the least. The watchers on deck could clearly see the triangle of their tail fins now. They left a wake behind them like a ship in full sail. Now and again columns of water rose into the air as they spouted, dropping back into the sea like fountains whose water supply has suddenly been cut off. After a while they both submerged and disappeared, and the sea was empty again.

"Pity we couldn't hunt them," said the administrative officer, thinking of his stores. He had produced a pencil and paper from his pocket and was making busy calculations. "You've no idea what you can get out of such a beast. Some of them weigh as much as seventy tons."

"Never mind," said Krüder. And a moment or so later, as though to himself, he added: "Later."

Those who heard it pricked up their ears. Krüder was not accustomed to talk airily. What he said he meant, but none of them had any idea what he meant now. When the time came no doubt they would discover.

It was a long watch, but the midday meal had been ample and very good as usual, and the silence on board was almost digestive. Suddenly the alarm bells began to ring.

"Action stations!"

In the gray misty weather, a ship had unexpectedly appeared on the horizon. *HK-33* was far from the normal shipping lanes and she should therefore have had the sea to herself. Many pairs of binoculars were directed toward the stranger as her outline gradually became clearer and clearer. She was a bigger and much more powerful ship. At the first sight of her, Krüder had sounded the alarm, increased speed

and swung his ship off her course in order to give the stranger only a stern view and make recognition difficult. No one dared to express the hope that they might remain unseen altogether.

"What's that fellow up to, Michaelsen?" queried Krüder.

"Not difficult to guess, I should say, sir. First of all he's far off the usual shipping lanes; secondly he's going far too slowly for his size for him to be wanting to get anywhere; and thirdly his present course wouldn't take him toward any particular port."

"That's more or less what I've been thinking," said Krüder, and he scratched his nose in the familiar gesture that betokened he was thinking hard before coming to a decision.

Michaelsen and Warning were rapidly searching through their tables of British shipping silhouettes and consulting the confidential book in which possible British auxiliary cruisers were listed with their characteristic features. Michaelsen's broad finger stopped.

"Here we are, I think," he said. "Very similar. No fundamental difference."

"Have you got him?" asked Krüder impatiently and without taking his eyes off the stranger.

"Fairly certain, sir. British auxiliary cruiser *Carmania* by the look of her. Much faster than we are and probably more heavily armed."

"Very much as I thought. We'll keep quiet and try to get away."

The two officers of the watch, Levit and Küster, who had overheard the conversation, looked disappointed. There was no indication at all that the Britisher had seen them. He was still slowly steaming along the same course. If they ran up the flag and let him have a salvo unexpectedly then, provided the shooting was as good as it had been on their Baltic trials, why shouldn't they have a chance of sinking him, big as he was?

A damned good chance, in fact. The distance was nothing now. They were near enough to pelt him with rotten eggs.

But Krüder was of a different opinion. *HK*-33 turned away and increased the distance between herself and the British ship, until finally the enemy disappeared. A low rain squall scurrying across the Atlantic hid him as though a curtain had been lowered. The incident was closed, but the men on board *HK*-33 were dissatisfied. They felt they had been tricked out of a keenly desired consummation. Krüder was well aware of the atmosphere, and, as was his invariable custom when the circumstances warranted, he explained the situation to them over the loudspeaker system.

"It wasn't our job to attack, men. We've other fish to fry. The ship you've just seen was the British auxiliary cruiser *Carmania.*"

That was all he said and the rest they could work out for themselves, perhaps like this: "*HK*-33 has definite instructions to operate in certain zones, of which this isn't one. Until she reaches the zone allotted to her she must avoid belligerent action even in otherwise favorable circumstances, for unforeseen accidents can happen. For one thing, as soon as *HK*-33 ran up her flag and opened fire, the British ship would at once broadcast her position."

The men sighed disconsolately and admitted that their captain was right. But one question remained unanswered. Had the British ship seen them or not? If no one on board the *Carmania* had spotted the supposed Russian they must all have been taking a nap.

On the other hand, perhaps they were on the lookout for some particular ship and therefore interested in no other. Whatever the truth of the matter, the encounter had passed off harmlessly, but Krüder determined to take certain precautions. Further ships were sighted later, but *HK*-33 took

the same evasive action, and now and again she steamed for hours on different courses, in order to cover her tracks.

On July eighth she was on a level with the northernmost of the Azores Islands. According to a rumor going the rounds, the captain and the navigating officer were spending a lot of their time with ships' silhouettes.

There was something in the rumor, and on July tenth Lieutenant Schwinne fell in the whole of the watch below. Boatswain Rauch appeared with several pots of paint, white and cornflower blue.

" 'Kassos' is the name and Greece the country of registry, bo'sun," ordered Schwinne, handing over a piece of paper on which the words were written.

"Aye aye, sir." And Rauch led his men off to get on with the job. Shortly afterward, sailors were to starboard and port over the side in boatswain's chairs, painting busily away. The hammer-and-sickle emblems disappeared, and in their place appeared the Greek colors white and blue, with *Kassos* the new name of *HK*-33 and Greece the country of registry.

At the same time, work was going on to alter the appearance of the masts and the superstructure to make the silhouette of *HK*-33 correspond to that of the real *Kassos*.

"We're much too smart, sir. A real Greek's bound to have patches of rust on her hull and on the superstructure," observed Michaelsen.

"How right you are," agreed Krüder. "See to it."

And patches of rust were carefully painted in the appropriate spots.

When the work was finally completed, there was no question about it—to all observers, even the more than casual observers, *HK*-33 was a typical Greek.

Wonderful tropical days followed each other, and the trade winds piled great white clouds over the lonely German ship.

They were as white as snow, as though they had just risen from the crystal clear depths of the ocean. Seaweed floated by, sometimes in such vast quantities that it covered great patches of sea with floating islands. Seamen often fish up this golden gulf-weed with its delicate filigree structure and put in bottles with sea water to take home as a memento. With nothing else to do, the crew of *HK*-33 fished busily for it. Incidentally, this harmless-looking weed has played a not unimportant part in history. Without it Columbus might never have discovered America. His crew were down in the dumps and they wanted to go home. They were on the point of mutiny and angrily demanding that he should make for home. In this situation Columbus pointed to the gulf-weed floating by and assured them that it was a sign of the near presence of land.

Krüder watched this harmless activity of his men with a friendly twinkle in his eye.

"Do you know the true story of how Columbus first landed in America?" he asked one of the seamen.

The fellow sprang to attention at being addressed, thumbs to the seam of his trousers, still holding the golden weed he had fished out of the water.

"No, sir."

"Then listen. When he got ashore he found a group of peculiarly painted, brown-skinned men. He knew who they were, of course. 'Are you the Indians of America?' he asked. 'Yes,' they replied. 'Are you Columbus?' 'That's me,' replied Columbus. 'Thank God!' said the Indian chief. 'We've been discovered at last!' "

There was dead silence for a moment, and the seaman stared at his captain with a wooden face.

"For God's sake, man, grin at least," said the disappointed captain. "It's supposed to be funny. Do you think all your captain can do is bellow orders?"

Dolphins were sighted. From the bridge Lieutenant Neumeier and Lieutenant Gabe watched them disporting themselves in the water. They would shoot into the air like arrows, their black backs shining like highly polished leather as they skimmed elegantly over the waves. Then they would dive back again and reappear somewhere else. For hours these spirited creatures gamboled merrily alongside as though making the ship welcome, bobbing and bowing, flying through the air and disappearing beneath the surface. It seemed almost as though they had dressed themselves for the occasion: jet-black coats and snow-white waistcoats.

"An old captain I used to know—one of the old school who served on the tea clippers—always called these quaint little beasts 'sea swallows,'" said Neumeier. "It's a very good name for them. They look like swallows and they behave like them. He used to say they always reminded him of home."

"Bit sentimental, your old sea captain, wasn't he?" said Gabe brutally. "Do you know what they remind me of? Neptune's waiters." And then he added thoughtfully: "I've been told they're very good to eat. Like delicate veal cutlets. Makes my mouth water to think of it."

The more sensitive Neumeier was shocked.

"That's a horrible thought," he said indignantly.

"You're sentimental, too, Neumeier. I don't see what's so horrible about it. Surely it's the most natural thing in the world to put a good thing in the stewpot. When I see a fine fat goose waddling around I always imagine him roasted."

"A goose perhaps, yes, but not dolphins."

"I don't see why not. It's just superstition. Like the albatross. I wouldn't mind trying a nice dolphin cutlet or two," and the earthy Gabe licked his lips reflectively.

HK-33 had now passed the Tropic of Cancer and was approaching the equatorial zone. The trade winds died away and the air became still and heavy, and the glittering immen-

sity of the ocean surrounded the ship as far as the eye could see.

Communications officer Brunke went on to the bridge and handed Krüder a folded message. There was something in his look as he handed it over that suggested that it was no routine message. Krüder read it carefully and then called Lieutenant Michaelsen into the chart house. The two of them bent their heads over the chart table, and with the message in one hand the captain pointed, with the dividers, to a spot not far removed from the ship's position. Shortly afterward course was altered toward the point the captain had indicated, not far from the Cape Verde Islands.

As up to that moment *HK*-33 had been heading for the South Atlantic, this alteration of course caused a good deal of comment. The men discussed the matter eagerly and rumors began to fly. On every ship there is, of course, always one man who knows everything, and *HK*-33's know-it-all had worked it out: the *Carmania* had blown the gaff after all, and the British Navy was now after the auxiliary cruiser with battleships, heavy cruisers, and even an aircraft carrier. Hence the alteration of course. . . .

"Keep a sharp lookout," came an order from the bridge.

In the afternoon the vexing question was resolved when the lookout reported: "Floating object ahead." Those of the crew who were the fortunate possessors of binoculars gave a running commentary to those who had only their eyes to stare with. "Damned funny-looking thing," the former reported. "Like a flower vase." A quarter of an hour later they all knew what it was.

A German submarine. Her conning tower and bridge were crowded, hence the odd appearance of a flower vase against a blue silk tablecloth.

The U-boat captain had reported having fired the last of his torpedoes, and Admiral Doenitz, who was in command of

submarines, had ordered him to rendezvous with *HK*-33, which had supplies of torpedoes on board. The position of the latter was known approximately to the Naval Command in Berlin; and the whole operation was a tribute to the excellent cooperation between all the authorities concerned, to the careful planning which allowed all the cogwheels in the complicated appartus to intermesh, and to the improvising genius of the senior officers at home.

At that time the German submarines had no mother ships of their own, and, in any case, this submarine, whose captain reported both boat and crew in fine fettle, was the first to penetrate so far south. She had even crossed the Line. But now, if he was to keep his submarine in action, he had to have supplies. This was the purpose of the complicated arrangement with *HK*-33.

HK-33 lowered a boat which chugged away to the submarine, returning shortly afterward with the U-boat captain, Senior Lieutenant Cohaus, who climbed up the swaying jumping ladder and clambered over the side. Krüder came forward at once to greet his colleague, and they shook hands warmly. 'It's quite true,' thought Krüder. 'Every branch of the Service impresses its own character on its men.' Apart from all the outward signs that Cohaus was a submarine officer, there was something in his face that would have told Krüder in any case that he was one of those men of the underwater service whose acquaintance he had first made during the other war.

It was a joyful meeting, and when all the handshaking had been done the two men went to the captain's cabin; but before Cohaus had a chance of discussing the important matter they had to settle between them Krüder had impulsively forestalled him.

"Before we get down to business, my dear Cohaus, is there anything I can do for your men? Do you think they'd care to stretch their legs on my bigger deck? There's a bath ready for

you, and your men can splash around in our open-air canvas bath on the upper deck. And at last our cook will understand why I ordered an extra supply of fresh rolls this morning. I've already sent a basketful over to you, and on deck there are bottles of fruit juice for your fellows and deck chairs for them to rest in for a while."

After which the two captains got down to business. Cohaus was puzzled as to how they were to hoist the heavy torpedoes inboard without a crane. He had thought the matter over from all angles without coming to any satisfactory conclusion.

"We'll manage it all right," said Krüder jovially. "We haven't a crane on board, as you say, but we can soon rig one up. My engineer officer, Lieutenant Schmidt, is a genius for solving awkward problems like that."

Lieutenant Schmidt was told what was required, and before long he and his men were working away, forging and welding a crane to lift, and a cradle to carry, the torpedoes. There was a heavy swell now, and it greatly complicated the job of transferring the torpedoes; but one by one they disappeared safely into the submarine's hatches. Oil, water, and other supplies were also ferried over from *HK*-33 with the assistance of her motor pinnace.

"Don't fall over the side, any of you," Krüder warned its crew, and the warning was fully justified. The sea in these parts was full of sharks. Food flung over the side caused the water to boil as half a dozen of the voracious brutes darted for it. The men of *HK*-33 and the submarine's crew caught a number of them. Cohaus fixed up a triangular tail fin to the front of his conning tower, declaring it would bring good luck.

In return for the hospitality extended to himself and his men—a third of his crew at a time had stretched their legs on board *HK*-33 until every man was refreshed—Captain Cohaus invited a party of officers and men from the auxiliary cruiser to come on board his submarine and dive.

Lieutenant Neumeier was one of the party. He came back full of his experience and bubbling over with enthusiasm.

"As soon as I get back I'm going to apply for a transfer to submarines," he declared. And he subsequently kept his word.

Then the time came to part. The submarine took the first letters home from the men on board *HK*-33. Krüder made no attempt to censor them; he knew he could trust his men.

On July 18th, 1940, the submarine steamed away into the setting sun, using her surface diesels, finally disappearing into the gradually fading red glow.

6. *HK*-33 BECOMES THE *PINGUIN*

IN ACCORDANCE WITH IMMEMORIAL CUSTOM, THE CREW OF *HK*-33 prepared to celebrate the crossing of the Line. The veterans who had already been through their baptism now discussed in long and secret sessions what should be done with the rookies of the northern hemisphere to introduce them as ceremoniously as possible to the realm of King Neptune and cleanse them of all their supposed impurities. To assist in the arduous intellectual task of thinking up the initiatory rites the captain had authorized the issue of a little hard liquor, and it worked wonders.

" 'Stern but unjust' was the principle of the thing when I had my basinful," thundered Boatswain Rauch. "Why should these lubbers get off any easier?"

Roars of applause and approval followed this observation, and the men bent their minds gleefully to resurrecting all the terrors and the trials of their own initiations. "Stern but unjust!" that was the idea. There was plenty to do: the organization of the rites, the preparation of proclamations, and the manufacture of costumes for Neptune's ambassadors. Wild threats were heard over the loudspeaker system, warning the uninitiated of the dire consequences of anyone who dared to take the name of His Majesty King Neptune in vain or attempt to detract from the solemnity of the approaching occasion; and there was a special and blood-curdling curse on all sceptics.

The preparations were going splendidly, and the already baptised henchmen of Neptune were enjoying themselves tremendously. The uninitiated rest of the crew were not looking forward to the approaching ordeal at all. They would much rather have gone into action, but like so many before them, they consoled themselves with the thought that everyone had to go through it and it was a one-time torture only.

In the wardroom a lively discussion had started. Everyone was agreed that it was about time *HK*-33 had a name. She was about to cross the Line, and it was a very good idea for her to be christened at the same time. A number was all very well for reference purposes, but a real ship ought to have a name. The only point on which there was as yet no agreement was: what name? Various proposals were tabled, though, of course, everyone knew that in the last resort, the Old Man himself would have a word to say about it. Still, if he happened not to have made up his mind . . .

Any father who has ever thought of the perfect name for his child knows the enormous amount of energy and persuasive power that has to be generated to defend it against all and sundry, including the proud mother, who probably thinks she has rights, and all the uncles and aunts, who usually have their own ideas on the subject. It was something like that in the wardroom of *HK*-33, and the battle royal swung first this way and then that.

But there was just one thing the disputing officers did not know, and that was that their captain had settled the problem long before. One evening, some time before *HK*-33 had sailed on her mission, Krüder was enjoying a rare moment of relaxation by reading a book about whale fishing. It described the life of the men who penetrated into the polar ice on board small but eminently seaworthy vessels, partly for the love of the thing, partly to earn good money for themselves and their

families. Polar bears, seals, walruses, and penguins offered them entertainment and variety during the long months of their stay in the icy seas.

Krüder had already given some thought to the question of a name for his ship. But now the solution came to him in a flash. "Penguin." He liked the name. It sounded good. It was out of the ordinary. And it bore a definite relation to the secret mission for which *HK*-33 was being prepared. When the opportunity arose he mentioned the matter to his superiors. They approved of his choice and from then on the ship, which was known in the dockyard and in the various departments as *HK*-33, was listed in the secret files of the German Admiralty as the *Pinguin.*

One evening when he was in the wardroom, Krüder, who had got wind of the passionate discussion that was going on among his officers, casually flung a bombshell.

"Gentlemen," he said. "I'm sure you'll all be interested to hear that I've chosen a name for our ship. Henceforth she's the *Pinguin.* I shall be happy if you find the name to your taste—and still happier if by some good chance it happens to meet your secret wishes."

And with that he left, a little grin of friendly malice on his lips. He could see that he had flabbergasted them. Not a man could think of a word to say, but he knew they would have plenty to say as soon as his back was turned and, for that reason, he had taken his departure at once. "You've got to leave the wardroom to itself from time to time to give the fellows a chance to grumble about their captain," was one of the principles on which he ran his ships.

He had made it a rule to eat with his officers on Sundays only. At all other times he usually kept to his own cabin. This certainly did not mean that his officers saw little of him. On the contrary, not only the officers, but the men, too, saw him

daily. He walked around the ship regularly, talking to the men about whatever was uppermost in his mind and theirs, and sometimes in the afternoon when things were quiet he would appear in the wardroom for a quiet game with his officers.

"Penguin," said Küster when he had gone. "That's one of those comic headwaiter birds that tumble over the Antarctic icefloes by the thousands, isn't it?"

They all knew as much as that about penguins and they had all watched their antics, at least in zoos, but no one knew much more. They had never previously had any reason to think about them or any desire for more intimate knowledge. Now the thing was different.

"We'd better look the silly little beast up," someone suggested.

But the encyclopedia was kept in the Old Man's cabin. Lieutenant Warning was sent off to fetch the volume in question. He could manage the Old Man as well as anyone.

Just as Warning was leaving, with the borrowed volume under his arm, Krüder called him back and took the book.

"One moment, Warning. I'd like to help you and the rest of them." He turned up the entry. "Here you are. You'll find all you want to know about the little fellow here. And if there's anything else you'd like to know, I shall be very glad to oblige you."

Warning felt himself getting hot under the collar as though he were a schoolboy the master had just caught out at some prank.

"And by the way," Krüder went on in the same casual but amiable tone, "there's one variety that steals the eggs of the others. However, take the book. You can go into conclave on the matter."

With red ears, Warning quietly but hurriedly shut the door behind him, leaving Krüder grinning happily to himself.

In the wardroom, First Lieutenant Schwinne took the book and studied the entry.

"According to this the creature gets its name from the Latin 'Pinguines,' which means fat in German. Fat-seekers incapable of flight. Inhabit the Southern Hemisphere only. Most of them live in the Antarctic, but some of them follow cold currents as far as the southern coasts of Africa and America, though never farther north than the Galapagos Islands. The wings lack quills and are incapable of being flexed. The plumage, which is furlike, consists of small scalelike feathers. They can walk upright on the ice or go forward on their bellies, kicking with their feet."

Schwinne looked around the mess. "I can see that we shall have to practice this form of progression," he said solemnly. "I don't know that it's going to be easy." He referred to the encyclopedia again: "In the water they swim with their finlike wings, using their legs merely to steer with. They lay their eggs in holes or in rough nests on the ground. The larger varieties lay only one egg at a time, and this they carry between legs and belly.

"That's going to be difficult, too. However—if a female penguin is robbed of her eggs and observes that a neighbor is sitting on them, she immediately takes the offensive to recover them. Then there's one hell of a riot. No, it doesn't say that here, I happen to know it. Penguins feed on fish and crustacea. They have few enemies . . ."

"Not much of a name for this ship in that case," put in a brother officer.

"They are therefore quite tame," continued Schwinne, "and they can be met with in vast numbers. There are various kinds of penguin: the Emperor penguin, the King penguin, the Rock penguin, the little Adelie penguin—now isn't that nice! All we've got to do is pick ourselves out the right one."

"An ingenious bird is the penguin . . ." someone began.

"Not a particularly noble or heroic kind of name," complained another officer. "Not like the 'Thor,' the 'Orion' or the 'Atlantis,' but perhaps its very originality puts us under an obligation."

In their hearts they were all thinking, despite their disappointment, that with a captain like Krüder *HK*-33 would do just as well whether she were called the "Penguin" or the "Eagle."

"So we're to be called the 'Penguin,'" wrote one of the officers in his diary that night. "Typical of Krüder when you come to think of it. Always the unexpected."

The preparations for crossing the Line reached their culmination, and everything was ready for the great moment. Some of the old stagers declared that the equator was already in sight, though how they knew that was anybody's guess. The mounting excitement was just about to find its traditional release when fate took a hand in the game. Despite the festive atmosphere throughout the ship and the wildly painted and bedizened types to be met with all over the place, the normal ship's duties, and in particular the watch, had not been neglected for one moment. In fact, the men on watch knew that they must be more on the alert than ever, for at such times the whole crew relied on them absolutely.

The fact that Krüder was willingly prepared to allow the usual festivities and celebrations for crossing the Line even in wartime, although he was well aware that the equator represented the shortest sea stretch between Africa and South America and therefore the easiest to control, said something for his own assurance and the confidence he had in his crew, particularly in view of the familiarities which inevitably developed during such celebrations. He was quite determined,

of course, that they should remain confined to the one ceremony of crossing the Line and after that be forgotten. In the meantime the normal routine continued, with its customary watchfulness.

7. THE PINGUIN GOES INTO ACTION

SCHNEEKLOTH WAS ON WATCH AT THE FOREMAST HEAD. HE rubbed his eyes and had another good look before he decided that he was not mistaken. A small, thin column of smoke was threading its delicate way into the pale blue sky on the horizon. Only when he had convinced himself that there was no doubt about it and that he was seeing clearly did he report to the bridge:

"Smoke bearing 065 degrees!"

The officer of the watch dashed out of the chart house. In a moment Krüder was beside him.

"One column of smoke?" he queried, suppressing his excitement. "I should have said two."

"I think it only looks like one, sir."

Krüder studied the smoke for some time. It was becoming clearer now. He lowered his glasses and began to stride up and down the bridge with his hands behind his back. Then he put his glasses to his eyes and looked again. He was frowning when he lowered them.

"Send the communications officer on to the bridge with the signal log," he ordered.

Lieutenant Brunke appeared with his log, and Krüder carefully studied the reports of the positions of Germany's auxiliary cruisers. There was also a message according to which the British auxiliary cruiser *Alcantara* of 22,209 tons had been attacked and badly damaged by a German commerce raider.

The *Alcantara* had put into Rio de Janeiro for emergency repairs. The report added apologetically that the attacker could hardly have been an ordinary commerce raider. It was suspected that the much smaller German ship had, in reality, been a disguised heavy cruiser.

Krüder noted the exact position of the action from the secret German reports and entered it on the large chart of the Central Atlantic in the chart house.

"That can only have been the *Thor,* Michaelsen?" he said. And when Michaelsen nodded, he continued: "How long do you think it would take her to get to our present position?"

"Assuming that she immediately left the engagement area for here at full speed she could perhaps get here the day after tomorrow—or the day after that."

"Hm!" grunted Krüder and puffed at his cigar. The lines between his eyes grew closer. He was obviously grappling with a tough problem.

"I've got an idea," he said finally. "They'll lose no time in going after her, you can bet your life on that. Now it seems to me we've got a chance of lending her a hand and misleading the British about her speed. If we attack this fellow coming up now and he starts making signals, which we probably shan't be able to prevent, then the British will almost certainly assume that the *Thor* is up to her tricks again. And when they work it out they must come to the conclusion that she can do at least twenty-four knots, otherwise she couldn't be here on this job. Their very natural error will help not only the *Thor,* but us and all other auxiliary cruisers. At the same time we'll draw the hunt away from the *Thor.*"

"Sounds good, sir. Does that mean you think we should be justified in going into action before we actually reach our proper zone of operations?"

"You've said it, Michaelsen. You've said it."

On deck, groups of men were staring first at the smoke in

the distance and then at the bridge, where they could see their captain going about his affairs as though they were on maneuvers in the Baltic. Then somehow the news spread like lightning that the *Pinguin* was going into action.

Krüder altered course toward the British merchantman, whose hull could now be seen above the horizon. The *Pinguin* had been sighted, and the merchantman turned away.

A messenger arrived from the communications officer with the report that the British ship was transmitting her position and the message Q—Q—Q, which meant: "Am being attacked."

Krüder grinned. "He's crying before he's hurt," he said with satisfaction, and then to the radio operator: "What's the matter with you, Lindener? You look as though you'd stepped in something. Cheer up! Everything's fine."

"We're already trying to jam him, sir," said Lindener.

Krüder nodded his approval and turned away.

"Full speed ahead, both," he ordered.

The *Pinguin* responded at once, and the bow waves leaped up on either side as she sheared through the water at increased speed. A powerful, rushing noise sounded in the men's ears as the ship swept them toward their first action and the wind rushed past the faces of the sailors on deck and on the bridge.

Slowly the *Pinguin* overhauled the enemy ship. The distance between the two ships was no longer very great now. "Forty hundred!" came the range report to the bridge. The British ship was still sending out calls for assistance. Her identity was established now. She was the 6,000-ton freighter *Domingo de Larrinaga,* though that had not been easy to discover. Her red funnel, the placing of her masts, and the shape of her superstructure made it difficult to discover her name, nationality, and company from the shipping silhouettes because the type was very common, bearing marked similarities to about three thousand other British ships of a similar tonnage.

Whatever she was carrying there was a lot of it, for she lay in the water well below the normal load line.

"Warning shot over her bows," ordered Krüder.

Boatswain Rauch and his men were already manning the forward gun.

"Range thirty-six hundred and a trifle, boatswain."

"Aye aye, sir."

The boatswain laid his gun, took aim, and fired. There was a flash, a loud report, and a whistling sound. Then a sudden smell of sulphur and hot metal. The boatswain drew it into his wide open nostrils with satisfaction and kept his eyes glued on the enemy ship. A water spout rose just ahead of the *Larrinaga's* bows. It was a well-placed shot, but the boatswain shook his head in disgust.

"Blast it!" he said. "A good couple of feet too far to the left."

Another message arrived on the bridge from the communications officer: "Enemy still making her position known and now describing our appearance and silhouette."

"He's being a little too saucy," said Krüder. "Another warning shot, boatswain."

"Aye aye, sir."

A second and then a third warning shot was fired. The shells burst so near the *Larrinaga* that fragments must have whistled over her deck. On board her the communications officer continued to send out his messages, and now her stern gun was manned.

"Tough baby," said Krüder, and there was the admiration of one brave man for another in his tone. But there was a job of work to be done, and there were three grim lines in his forehead. He turned to the gunnery officer:

"Guns clear for action. Salvoes. Aim at her bridge."

And then to the signalman: "Hoist war flag!"

The screens fell away from the guns. They were already manned, and their crews were standing by ready to fire.

Swiftly they trained the gun barrels onto their target. Simultaneously, the war flag ran up the mast and a sheet of canvas was lowered over the side to cover the Greek flag and the name *Kassos.*

The *Kassos* was now the *Pinguin.* Suddenly the whole ship shuddered, as her guns fired. Pencils sprang off the table of the chart house as though they were alive. A coffee cup and saucer which had been standing on a ledge jumped high into the air and fell to the teak deck of the bridge, where they broke into a score of fragments. Then, for a moment or two, there was an ominous silence. The first salvo was on its way.

"Hit amidships!" someone shouted excitedly.

A sheet of yellow flame arose from the bridge of the *Larrinaga,* followed by a cloud of smoke. Planks, beams, and other debris flew out of it in all directions. And then, as though kicked by some giant's toe, two figures sailed through the air and dropped into the sea. It looked as though two souls had suddenly been shot out of the depths of hell. To the astonishment of those who were watching the effect of the salvo—was it one hit, or several together?—they were still alive, for as soon as they came to the surface they began to swim.

The wooden structure of the British ship, dried out in the tropic sun, had caught fire and was burning almost without smoke, like kindling wood.

The devastating effect of the first salvo from the *Pinguin* had brought the British captain to his senses, and now he stopped his engines. Before the *Larrinaga* had stopped moving through the water, a cutter lowered from the *Pinguin* was alongside her and a boarding party led by Lieutenant Warning clambered up on to her deck. Behind the lieutenant was the ship's surgeon of the *Pinguin,* Dr. Wenzel, with two sick-bay attendants. Krüder had sent them off with the boarding party at the last moment to aid the wounded on board the Britisher. After them came the men of the boarding party carrying heavy

cases with bright red inscriptions. They contained high explosives.

The crew of the *Larrinaga* had fled from amidships to the bows and stern of their ship for safety. There were many colored men among them, men with yellow faces and wild eyes, and they all crowded as far away from the crackling flames, now growing fiercer and fiercer, as they could. The captain of the *Larrinaga* stood there with his pipe between his teeth and looked at his panic-stricken men with a cold grin.

Lieutenant Warning directed the search of the ship and had the crew lined up and a roll call taken while Dr. Wenzel and his two assistants attended to the wounded, who had been laid out on the hatches.

In the meantime, the fire grew fiercer, pressing back both friend and enemy. When his job was done Warning signaled a message back to the *Pinguin*. He received a reply at once: "Remove all prisoners from the ship, set charges, and abandon."

As soon as the orders were given a wild scramble for the boats started: Malays, Negroes, Chinese, Indians, and Britishers shoved and jostled at the boat stations. With some difficulty the few German sailors on board managed to get some order into the proceedings. The boats swung out and were lowered into the water. Lieutenant Warning and Dr. Wenzel were the last to leave the ship. Before they left, the former noted that the fuses of the explosive charges were burning merrily.

"How much time have we got?" asked the doctor as he put his leg over the rail.

"Nine minutes," answered Warning coolly. "Plenty of time." And, after a last look around, he followed the doctor into their cutter.

"Only five minutes now," observed the doctor as he sat in the boat a little later and looked at his watch. He pushed back

the sleeve of his white tropical jacket to watch the second hand ticking around. An impatient remark of Warning's addressed to the boatswain made him look up. Something seemed to have gone wrong.

"Don't behave as though you'd never seen a boat's engine before," Warning snapped. "Get a move on."

But the boatswain and his assistants continued to fiddle about under the cover of the engine of the cutter. Nothing happened. The engine refused to start. By this time the men were beginning to get jumpy.

"Four minutes to go, gentlemen," said the doctor, still looking at his watch. He was beginning to enjoy himself. The men of the *Pinguin* had all been picked, among other things, for their first-rate physical condition, and so far he had had very little to do. His leg had been pulled a little vigorously in consequence. It was his turn to do a little mild leg-pulling now: "At the third stroke it will be . . ."

Warning had been third officer on board the *Bremen*. This wretched cutter came originally from her sister ship the *Europa*. The reproachful look of the anxious boatswain seemed to say: "You ought to know something about the engine, sir." Warning took off his jacket and got to work, but he had no more success than the boatswain and his men.

"It went all right just now, sir," was all the wretched boatswain could say.

"D'you think I didn't notice that?" snarled Warning. "Why the hell won't it go now is the point."

As the minutes ticked relentlessly on, the doctor began to find his little joke not quite so funny, but he kept up the patter.

The motor just wouldn't go. It was as though it had a will of its own and had decided to join the enemy. Only a few feet away cases of powerful explosives were resting against the ship's hull while their fuses burned steadily away. Those explosive charges were made to tear the steel plates apart as

though they were made of sheets of newspaper. Warning, the doctor, and the others in their boat were not protected even by steel plating. They were sitting in an open boat, and a wooden one at that. The doctor felt a cold shiver go down his spine. The nine minutes was very nearly up now.

Warning and his men had been trained in this business, and they had practiced it at home; but none of them had ever done it seriously before and no one quite knew what happened in real life. Warning ordered the men to push the cutter away from the side of the burning ship, but the lifeboat of an ocean-going liner like the *Europa* is no cockleshell, and although they managed to push her away a few feet or so, that was all. They might just as well have stayed where they were.

The men sat there and sweated. No one said a word, and there was no cursing, but all around there were pale faces which grew tauter as the ninth minute arrived.

Nothing happened. The seconds ticked on and still nothing happened. Ten minutes, eleven minutes, twelve minutes. The tension relaxed. In his relief Warning bit the head off the P.O. in charge of the explosives.

"What the devil have you been up to?" he demanded angrily. "Think you're Father Christmas or something? What's the matter with those damned charges?"

"All the fuses were burning properly, sir. I checked them all myself before we left."

"So did I, so what's happened to them? Can you have set them double by mistake so that the delay is eighteen minutes instead of nine?"

The man swore that he had done everything according to the book; he hadn't the faintest idea what had gone wrong.

"Wrong!" somebody muttered incredulously under his breath. Everyone else was too glad something had gone wrong. They'd have been in kingdom come by now.

There was only one provisional explanation; in the humid

tropical air the fuses must have got damp. They had spluttered merrily enough at first, but then gone out like damp squibs.

At that moment—having had its little lark with them—the motor started up as though it had never had the slightest intention of doing anything else, and the boarding party returned to the *Pinguin* where everyone was already wondering why the *Larrinaga* had not been blown into the air already.

Warning made his report. Krüder was in a hurry to sink his capture now; they were unpleasantly close to the British naval base at Freetown. To sink her by gunfire might take some time, and so he decided to spare a torpedo. The crew of the *Pinguin* watched it as it ran straight toward the *Larrinaga.* It struck amidships and there was a tremendous explosion. Slowly at first, but then more quickly, the ship began to settle. The hiss and whistle of escaping steam sounded like the despairing snorting of a dying beast. Then suddenly, almost as though bowing to her conqueror, the *Domingo de Larrinaga* heeled over and slid beneath the surface. Not a breath of wind was stirring and a cloud of smoke and steam hung for a long time over the spot where she had disappeared.

"Requiescat in pace," said Dr. Wenzel piously.

"Were you asking for anybody, doctor?" inquired Krüder.

"No, sir. Just Latin for rest in peace."

"Latin eh? Think of what a man's got to learn before they let him paint a fellow's throat with iodine!"

Krüder grinned. He was in a good mood, and he remembered his own disapproving Latin master. The only fly in the ointment was that the line-crossing ceremony had been ruined. No further reference was made to that.

The radio was chattering now, and there was great excitement, with message following message. It was impossible to discover whether British naval units had actually put to sea, but in any case it was time to move. From what they subsequently learned from the captains of Norwegian whalers,

Krüder's conclusions had been very shrewd indeed; the British naval authorities grossly overestimated the speed of Germany's auxiliary cruisers, putting it as high as twenty-five knots, which meant in practice that their plans for chasing and engaging the enemy were based on quite false calculations.

Krüder's decision to go into action before arriving in the zone of operations allotted to him was taken as the result of the situation as he found it, and he was quite prepared to justify himself in Berlin if the need ever arose. According to his instructions, he was to keep out of trouble until he arrived in the Indian Ocean; but the captain of an auxiliary cruiser must act on his own initiative and take the responsibility for it, too. Apart from his own success, Krüder had the satisfaction of knowing that he had done his colleague Captain Kähler of the *Thor* a good turn by drawing away his pursuers and sending them off on a wild goose chase.

Yes, all in all it had been a good day's work.

8. THE "ROARING FORTIES"

THE RADIO CARNIVAL CONTINUED. SHIPS ALTERED THEIR COURSES. Ships that were about to sail postponed their departure.

The South Atlantic seemed to have been swept clean. As the *Pinguin* steamed steadily southward, her lookouts should have spotted an occasional column of smoke from some vessel or other, but they did not. It seemed likely that the British had temporarily suspended all shipping movements in the Central and South Atlantic. This meant that many thousands of tons of cargo space were temporarily lost to Britain's supply lines because they were lying idle in various ports. Results such as this, while not dramatic or spectacular, are of even more importance than actual sinkings in any estimate of the service rendered by commerce raiders.

As far as Krüder could judge, the next few weeks promised very little excitement. The duties on board an auxiliary cruiser are strict and, when there is no action to take the men's attention away from the daily routine, they are rather monotonous. Krüder was well aware that he had something more than three hundred good sailormen on board; they were three hundred individuals with their own thoughts and feelings, their moods, their troubles, and their weaknesses, as well as their strength.

In his spare time, of which he had much more now, Krüder was all over the ship, and he could be met with in the most unlikely places—in the ship's laundry, for example, where the

tough sailorman washed out his smalls. Krüder was always in the offing with a friendly word and good advice, and he never hesitated to take a hand himself and demonstrate his suggestions by practical example. On one occasion he was in the laundry.

"Phew! It's hot in here, lads," he exclaimed, and he peeled off his jacket and got down to it.

At that moment a cheerful sailor galloped into the room and, seeing a bending form, he gave it a man-sized slap over the haunches, to the horror of everyone else who knew that it belonged to their captain.

"God Almighty!" breathed someone. It was all that was said, and hot as it was in the laundry, the atmosphere froze. The practical joker turned green when he found himself looking into the face of his captain. He began to stutter his apologies.

"All right, all right, man," said Krüder. "Lend a hand; don't stand there gaping like a codfish."

And he added: "With all that energy to spare you must be well fed on this ship."

"Captain expressed approval of the men's food," the duty officer entered in the log.

Another part of the ship where one would not normally expect to find the captain was the ship's piggery, but, in fact, Krüder was a regular visitor. He liked to keep an eye on everything and he was well aware of the importance of his bristly pensioners. He would push open the wooden door to release the usual typical smell of pigs.

"Good morning, Eumaeus. How's things this morning?"

"Morning, sir. Everything in order. All pigs in the pink."

The pig-keeper's name was actually Schneekloth, and he often wondered why the Old Man had given him the fancy one. He was a farmer's son from Flensburg and he knew a thing or two about pigs, hence his appointment by Krüder to

tend the swine on board the *Pinguin.* He knew nothing whatever about the faithful swineherd of Odysseus, but he was so keen on his job that of late he had taken to sleeping in the piggery, thereby unconsciously heightening the aptness of the captain's name for him. Krüder had been very tickled on entering the place one day to find the man's kit hanging on the wall; perhaps the low grunting of his satisfied charges helped him to sleep.

"Taken up your quarters here, Eumaeus?" he asked with a nod of the head to the man's tunic hanging there.

"Oh, no, sir," Schneekloth hastened to reply, well aware of the irregularity of his new sleeping quarters. "Just giving my duds an airing."

Krüder laughed heartily and continued his inspection of the pigs. They were obviously well content with their lot, and they were waxing fat on the plentiful waste from the cookhouse and under the expert attention of the farmer's son from Flensburg.

"We'll have to invent a non-substantive badge for you, Eumaeus," he said. "What about a couple of intertwined pigs' tails surrounded by a laurel wreath?"

Schneekloth didn't always understand the captain's little jokes, but he knew a real good 'un when he met him and for a long time now the unofficial pig-man had been amongst Krüder's most devoted slaves. In addition, his odd position and the interest Krüder showed in his charges gave him a certain unofficial standing on board the *Pinguin.* With his "connections," no one cared to rub him up the wrong way—not even the petty officers.

One midday, smoke was spotted on the horizon. It was the first time for days. The alarm bells rang furiously, and the men hurried to action stations. Krüder maneuvered his ship into a favorable position and let the stranger come closer. It

was immediately recognizable as a Japanese freighter, and the first lieutenant soon identified it as the *Hawai Maru*. She was obviously on her way to Buenos Aires. Krüder let her pass.

In the meantime, a minor tragedy had occurred on board. Lieutenant Gabe, the party chiefly interested, apart from the victim, noted down the circumstances in his diary:

"I let Max and Moritz out of their cage for a little exercise, and they were flying around happily when Reiche came in with Jim, one of the ship's dogs. Everything seemed all right. Moritz was out of reach, but Max was perched on a flower pot trying out the leaves when Jim suddenly made a snap at him. I thought it was the end of Max, but it was only the end of his tail feathers. He's got a bare behind now, but apart from that he seems all right, except that he doesn't sing any more. What a shame!"

Krüder informed the men that although there had been no further opportunity of sending letters home, and, of course, none at all of receiving any, their dependents were not being kept in ignorance of their fate. The authorities were keeping in regular touch with them. Of course, they were short communications only; no details; just an intimation that father, son, husband, or whatever it was, was alive and in good health, though with no immediate prospect of leave.

It was a shrewd as well as a kindly move; men do worry about that sort of thing when they're away for long in time of war. The captain's announcement was a great relief to many of them, and no one now had to feel that his family was worrying about him unduly.

The *Pinguin* passed the fortieth degree of latitude and continued her way south. Going south usually means warmth to men of the northern hemisphere, but here it meant increasing cold. In addition, winter was beginning. In the old sailing days they christened these parts the "Roaring Forties," and the name was an apt one for a zone that remains forever

in a seaman's memory once he has experienced it at its dirtiest. The crew of the *Pinguin* were experiencing it now at just that, and they saw no reason to quarrel with the old seamen's choice of a name.

This was the moment at which Lieutenant Lewit began to complain of terrible pains in his side. It did not take Dr. Hasselmann long to diagnose appendicitis. And what was more, there was no time to lose: the appendix had to come out at once. The ship's surgeon, Dr. Wenzel, went to the bridge to ask Krüder if the ship could be turned head on into the sea during the operation, to give them as steady a platform as possible.

"When you're quite ready just give the word," said Krüder at once.

It wasn't the first time that a ship's doctor had altered a ship's course.

"We could hardly keep our feet in the operating room," noted Dr. Hasselmann in his diary. "I had to get one of the sick-bay attendants to sit behind me all the time and keep me pressed up against the operating table as I worked. Dr. Wenzel assisted and a sick-bay petty officer acted as anaesthetist. Every instrument had to be held in the hand; nothing could be put down. The knife had to be used with the utmost care for fear the constant movement of the ship should make it slip. It meant a great deal of effort and a double dose of concentration, and although it wasn't too warm I was soon sweating like a bull."

However, they pulled it off. The operation was successful and Lewit was soon on his feet again.

All around the *Pinguin* the storm raged and howled like a pack of wild beasts. Great waves roared and crashed over her with a noise like a thousand crocks breaking while a thousand pots clattered wildly. And there was no sign of a let-up. On the contrary, the storm had apparently not reached its height.

Something elemental and tremendous seemed to have been let loose in air and sea.

During the storm Krüder spent all his time on the bridge, but he was as calm and deliberate as ever. Lieutenant Roll had just presented him with the weather report. And before that Boatswain Rauch had reported damage on board; one man had been injured below decks. Further, he, the boatswain, had advised Schneekloth to leave the piggery. "Advised" he had said, not "ordered," and Krüder had grinned.

Eumaeus had proved unwilling to leave his pigs. They needed him, he had said, adding that it was warmer down below. And in any case . . . just for a bit of a blow like that? It would have to get a good deal worse before he moved.

"Perhaps we'll be able to oblige him," was Krüder's comment.

Then the cook reported.

"Can't keep a fire going, sir. Can't keep a pot in its place. Impossible to cook."

"Impossible, eh?" said Krüder. "Don't like the word. Get busy, man. Just cook."

"Aye aye, sir," said the cook, and just as he saluted the ship gave a lurch and pitched him on his vast behind as though his legs had been swept from under him.

"Aye aye, sir," he said again, finishing his salute on the deck. Then he staggered back to let his buddies know what the captain had said.

It's an old story that the calmest and most capable man in a crisis is the man who immediately starts doing something about it. Krüder was a man who had become as hard as nails and as cool as a cucumber in every form of adversity a sailor is likely to meet with, and he had learned that you don't just fold your hands and say "impossible"; you have a try at it. His own supreme confidence and his complete control of every

situation, even the dirtiest, was a source of confidence and strength to the men under him.

"Old Man says there's going to be cooking," the cook informed his galley.

His right-hand man staggered out from the corner where he had been holding on tight.

"In that case," he said, "cooking I suppose there'll be. Well, here goes."

Under the circumstances there might have been curses, grumbles and resentment, but not with Krüder. When he gave orders they were carried out without question or ill-will. The men realized that they might have to do the cooking two or three times over, but they got down to it. It was impossible to use more than half a potful of water at a time—and a good deal of that slopped over the galley as the ship lurched and rolled, or it swamped the fires with a vast hissing and great clouds of steam and smoke.

Biscuits and chocolate were distributed to the hungry crew to keep them quiet.

Night fell and it seemed almost as though the very heavens themselves were falling in. Sometimes it felt as though the *Pinguin* were about to take a dive for the bottom, but each time she reared up again and rode out the waves, towering for a moment or two over the tossing gray waters, only to lurch down again.

Gradually the long night passed, and the dawn began to wrestle with the grim, dark furies of the night. Toward midday the weather improved, and blue sky was visible here and there between the cloud wracks. By evening the clouds were rising away from the sea. The storm was over. Krüder took a rest.

He just took off his top clothes and lay down; otherwise he was fully dressed. The rest of an auxiliary cruiser commander seldom lasts long, and he must be prepared to jump up and

be ready for immediate action without stopping to bother about dressing or making his toilet. He had not been resting for long when the sound of hurried steps approaching woke him. The door of his cabin was torn open.

"Captain!"

"What is it?" demanded Krüder. He was already fully awake.

"Ship to port, sir."

Krüder was on the bridge and studying the stranger in no time. Her silhouette could be seen clearly in the starry night.

A ship in this latitude! Its presence was suspicious. Krüder knew that he had every reason to keep quiet. He wanted to reach the Indian Ocean—his assigned zone of operations—without attracting attention. Once there he hoped to attract a good deal.

His officers were all in favor of tackling the stranger. It would be dead easy, they argued. Everyone on board was probably asleep except the helmsman, the lookout, and the engine-room watch. Krüder listened to their urgent discussion. Now Lieutenant Michaelsen was pouring cold water on their ardor; first of all, the stranger might easily be a British auxiliary cruiser, which meant a fight. That was all right and they might well gain the upper hand, but the enemy would have ample time to use his wireless and that meant betraying the *Pinguin's* position, and that was the last thing they wanted. Secondly, there was a possibility that the stranger was a German blockade runner from Japan, or a German prize. Whatever she was, it seemed very unlikely that she was an ordinary freighter. An ordinary freighter would never be on such a course.

Krüder listened to the discussion with interest, but made no attempt to join in. Finally, without comment, he gave the order to turn away, leaving the other ship to go on her way unmolested.

Apart from Michaelsen, Krüder's officers were disappointed at his decision, but later on it was seen to have been correct. The commander of another auxiliary cruiser subsequently informed them that the strange ship was the *Tirana*, a German prize carrying a large number of British prisoners on board. She never reached home. When only a few miles from the French Atlantic coast, she was torpedoed by a British submarine and sunk. At least the crew and their unwilling guests were saved, and that was something. But to be so near safety, to have negotiated the blockade successfully and overcome a variety of other difficulties and dangers, and then to be sunk at the last moment—it was disappointing.

9. THE INDIAN OCEAN

THEY HAD ROUNDED CAPE OF GOOD HOPE. IT WAS A NICE NAME and the men of the *Pinguin* hoped that it would prove prophetic.

Almost parallel to the meridian, the *Pinguin* turned northward to sunnier climes. The ugly, threatening Roaring Forties were behind them now, and warmer weather came with the first appearance of the southeast monsoon. The men's oilskins, hard, harsh, and evil-smelling, were hanging unwanted in the shrouds. The sea was calm, too, and there was a long, deliberate swell.

One night the men on watch saw an extraordinary sight, and for those men alone on a strange sea far away from their homes and their friends it was like a glimpse of a disbelieved fairyland. The sea literally glowed, and the light was so strong as almost to be dazzling. It was as though powerful underwater searchlights were at work.

The scientific meteorological officer from Danzig was awakened and brought to the bridge to inspect the phenomenon.

"Sea glow is nothing unusual in these latitudes," he said. "It happens to be very strong at the moment, and that is probably connected with the currents blown here by the monsoon. The great variety of life forms in the sea and the never-ending struggle between them is carried nearer to the surface at this time of the year."

Among the glowing bodies in the sea was almost every kind of aquatic fauna and flora. There were wheel animalcules, molluscs, jellyfish and squids, sea-worms, crabs, octopuses, and infusoria galore. And the water was laced with a tremendous number of shining bacteria. Many of these living things were provided with lights to find their prey and spot their enemies. They were the glow-worms of the sea.

Lieutenant Bach recalled that on board the liner *Bremen* a scientist had once told him that the denizens of the ocean abysses would often come up to the surface at nights. Apart from their skeleton structure of bone and horneous tissue, these creatures consisted of nothing but cells of a transparent jelly-like substance filled with a watery matter to enable them to resist the enormous pressure set up at depths of twelve thousand feet and more. In appearance they were reminiscent of the devil's masks of Chinese mummers.

"Water is the principle, or element, of all things," said Krüder. It was a reference to Thales of Miletus who only a few days before had been the subject of a long discussion in the wardroom.

The discussion began again now in the shining night. Toward morning they had got as far as the discovery of the irrational, and returned to the sea as the origin of all life. Someone quoted a commentary on the tenth book of Euclid:

"It is said that the man who first dragged the irrational from the hidden depths into the light of day was punished for his temerity by suffering shipwreck. The inexpressible should have remained a secret for ever. The culprit who touched sacrilegiously on the origin of life was hurled into the depths whence life had come and where his body would be rolled around by the waves for all eternity."

Lieutenant Gabe noted in his diary: "It makes a very pleasant change to watch motion pictures occasionally. The film

department at home has provided us with a number of very good films and we see one almost every week—the war permitting. As we have only one projector there is always a pause between the reels. It takes me back to my schooldays when, just at the critical moment, the picture would be cut off with the laconic announcement: 'End of Reel 5.'

"There's not much room and there's always a good deal of jostling and craning of necks in order to get a glimpse of the very small screen, but I've developed such a technique that my pleasure is no longer ruined by the crush. I had already seen a good many of the pictures, but it's always fun to see them again. Owing to the small space available and the fact that part of the crew must necessarily be on duty the first time they are shown, they always have to be shown again anyhow. In one of the recent films there was a floozie doing a strip tease. The Old Man, who was present, indignantly ordered her to put her clothes on again, which was quite simply arranged; all the projectionist had to do was to run it through backward.

"The general opinion is that the Old Man—who isn't as old as all that!—just wanted to see it all over again."

The *Pinguin* arrived safely in the Indian Ocean. A vast canopy of blue covered the sea, and all day long a warm sun shone down. It greatly heartened the men after the cold of the southern latitudes, and the general atmosphere grew even more cheerful.

"I can well understand why so many people like to go south for their holidays," said a sailor, and he added lyrically: "Everything's lighter, warmer, happier and more hopeful. It makes you open up like a flower."

"It's north we've just come, not south," a more earthbound soul reminded him.

Having arrived in her proper zone of operations, the *Pinguin*

began to quarter the sea in the hope of coming across enemy ships. At first there was no sign of shipping. Were they going to draw a blank? Had the British got wind of the *Pinguin's* presence after all? And had they re-routed their shipping in consequence? They weren't dumbbells, and they had had a good deal of experience of this sort of thing. It was never wise to underestimate an enemy.

On one such magnificent day, the pilot of the *Pinguin's* reconnaissance plane was summoned to the bridge.

"Well?" asked Krüder. "Can we let you go?"

"I think so, sir."

"Right then," and orders were given to hoist the plane, an Arado, out of the ship's hold and lower her over the side. Almost the entire crew were assembled on deck to watch the operation. Her engine started up and the water below began to froth in the tremendous wind created by the propeller. A hand was raised under the cupola. The motor went into a crescendo roar, the slipstream whipped up a torrent of water, and the sunlight broke in a thousand rainbows in it. Then on the next swell the plane rose into the air, and the watchers on deck broke into a cheer.

But so far the Arado had no height. Just a slight loss in altitude and the floats would touch the waves and over she would go, nose down into the sea. There was not a sound from the deck now apart from a deep sigh as someone gasped for breath in his excitement. Then the plane gained height.

An Arado over the Indian Ocean, got into the air without a catapult; just from the surface of the ocean, like a duck off a pond. The silence was broken now as the men cheered again and shouted enthusiastically, each one trying to make himself heard above the other.

The Arado flew round in circles while Lieutenant Müller, the observer, exchanged Morse signals with the *Pinguin*. The ship immediately altered her course, and the plane's compass

was tested and adjusted. After the long wait inside the iron belly of the *Pinguin,* the magnets were a trifle out and that had first to be compensated for. In that enormous waste of water nothing but absolutely accurate navigation could ever bring the plane back to that little dot in the ocean which was the *Pinguin.* It was nothing extraordinary for such reconnaissance planes to get lost. One auxiliary cruiser never recovered her reconnaissance plane at all, and, later on, the heavy cruiser *Admiral Scheer* lost hers, though fortunately she managed to find it again after a day-and-a-half search.

The observer in the Arado and the navigating officer on the *Pinguin* had agreed on a code: certain colored stars would indicate that an enemy warship had been spotted; other colored stars meant an enemy merchantman. But first catch your hare. . . .

In the Arado the pilot flew with the chart on his knees. Down below the long gaps between one curling swell and the next had shrunk to next to nothing. The sea looked like a pond with little wavelets just being stirred by a gentle breeze. The pilot was not deceived. 'Wait till we want to get down on it,' he thought. 'It'll look different then.'

The air was beginning to grow a little misty from the haze rising from the sea. At this height the *Pinguin* was out of sight. It is an error to suppose that great heights always give longer visibility. Mist often makes visibility poor. On the other hand, the small, speedy machine could fly rapidly over many hundreds of miles of sea, searching as it went.

They had been flying for about an hour and they had seen nothing at all. Nothing—except the sky and the sea. The plane described a steep curve, and the horizon, more felt than seen, owing to the haze, swung out of line. Lieutenant Müller looked at his chart and then at the pilot for some explanation. The latter raised his hand in the air and then

pointed forward and downward. A grinning face turned around and a piece of paper was handed over. Lieutenant Müller looked at the scrap of paper torn out of the pilot's notebook. It was none too clean, and on it in big, clumsily printed letters were the words: "Something down below. Am taking a look!"

The observer stared in the direction indicated. Yes, there was something there. He was annoyed at not having seen it first. After all, it was his job. It was a very small speck, like a grain of rice dropped among sand. And a heat haze over it into the bargain. Damned good eyes the fellow had!

"Looks like a tanker," he shrieked.

"How right you are," bawled back the pilot, releasing the stick and drying his hands which had gone damp with excitement.

The spot grew larger and the black turned to gray. They could see now that the stern structure was higher than the rest of the ship. In the center was the bridge. The usual construction. It was a tanker all right. Was it moving, or just drifting? It was moving; there was a white froth under the stern and silver ripples running away from the bows.

The observer calculated how far away the *Pinguin* was. One hundred and fifty miles! That was a heck of a distance. It was two o'clock. If only those fellows hadn't taken so long to lower the old kite into the water! They'd treated her as though she were porcelain! The good old Arado wasn't as delicate as that. She could stand a bit of knocking about. And fly in a storm if need be, just like the albatross they had stared at only a few weeks before.

As things stood, it would take the *Pinguin* all her time to reach the spot before sundown. At the moment she was even steaming a course taking her gradually farther and farther away from the tanker. It was also quite possible that, with dusk, the tanker would alter course. The night would be

dark, even in the Indian Ocean. Dark and moonless earlier on. The moon didn't rise until midnight.

"Damned nuisance," he shrieked to inform his colleague of the results of his calculations. The other nodded and shouted back something the observer failed to understand. Taking his own notebook he scribbled a message and handed it to the pilot, who read it and nodded.

"Keep clear. Don't want to be seen."

The Arado turned for "home" and found her way safely back to the *Pinguin*. When Krüder had listened to the observer's report and plotted the tanker's position on the chart, he began silent calculations with parallel ruler and dividers. It was obvious from the look on his face that there was very little hope of intercepting the tanker before sunset, and there was disappointed silence in the chart house, broken only by the slight clatter as he let his instruments drop.

Krüder still said nothing, but the watching officers saw the telltale lines between his eyes. Suddenly he picked up his instruments again, made further calculations and scribbled down a few figures on a piece of paper.

"There's nothing for it," he said finally. "We'll have to persuade them to cooperate. Müller, drop them this message."

Krüder had scribbled a short message in English: "Steer 230 degrees. S.W.½W. German commerce raider operating ahead of you. (Sig.) Hopkins. Commander H.M.S. *Cumberland.*"

"But . . ." Müeller was about to make an objection.

"I know that perfectly well," Krüder interrupted. "But just try it. The gentleman over there may not know the difference between an Arado and a Swordfish. It's a chance."

The superstructure of the tanker grew larger and larger. The Arado flew very low to give the watchers on board the least possible opportunity of seeing the German markings on the plane's wings. Suddenly they were spotted on board the

tanker, and little figures began running around like chickens when a hawk hovers overhead. Some of them were pointing upward excitedly. On the bridge was a man in a white cap, the captain or officer of the watch: it didn't matter.

There was a sudden sharp report, something like a cork being released from a champagne bottle, as the observer fired his signal pistol. Leaving trails of smoke behind them, the little balls of light shot out, glowing bright red even in the daylight. They shot ahead of the plane to the other side of the tanker. With one accord everyone on board watched their flight—and turned their heads away from the plane, which was exactly the idea! For a precious moment or two they watched the fireworks instead of the plane.

The observer had to bend far out of the cockpit. The fierce wind of their flight took his breath away and closed his nostrils almost as though a strong hand had been laid roughly over his face. In his right hand he clutched the weighted message bag, and his whole body was tensed. It was not more than 300 feet to the tanker now.

'My God!' he thought. 'We're going to take the mast with us! Damn it, can't that fellow see? Or has he gone mad? Lift her, you clot, lift her!' The observer forgot the danger as the split second in which he had to drop his message arrived. The tanker was not more than fifty or sixty feet below them now. They had calculated everything so carefully—the height, the wind speed, their own speed, the speed of the tanker, the parabola of the message bag in falling—and now this hedge-hopping lunatic was upsetting the whole apple-cart and going down like a bull at a gate! With a sudden swing of his arm, the observer hurled the bag to the deck. It was only a few feet below them. He could see men throwing themselves down for safety. For a fraction of a second he saw the bag falling. Then the sound changed as they hurtled over the tanker and zoomed up into the air again. Exhausted, he sank back into his

seat and pulled forward the cockpit lid. With the back of his hand he wiped the sweat from his forehead. When he looked down again the tanker was far away, once again a black speck on the blue cloth of the Indian Ocean. They circled around at a respectful distance. A red flag with a blue cross on it had been spread out on the deck of the tanker now. As they had thought, she was a Norwegian.

Anxiously both pilot and observer studied their own instruments and then the course of the tanker.

"It's worked!" shouted the pilot. Once again he had noticed it first; the tanker had altered course. As they watched eagerly, she turned steadily onto the course which would take her into the expectant arms of the *Pinguin.*

Krüder's luck was holding. All was fair in love and war—particularly where the British were concerned. They were as artful as a wagonload of monkeys themselves. And the pro-British Norwegians must take what was coming to them. They should have kept their eyes peeled. The black German cross was plain enough to be seen. That idea with the red signal lights had been a touch of Krüder's genius. A very simple trick, but it had served to distract their attention at the critical moment.

The Arado returned to the *Pinguin* and touched down on the water as lightly and easily as a gull. It was only then that the pilot remembered his previous anxiety about just that. The commander was right: don't worry; get the job done.

"Check up whether the fellow is still maintaining his new course," shouted Krüder from the bridge.

"Got to fuel first, sir."

"Get on with it then. Everything's ready."

While the *Pinguin* steamed on her way to meet the tanker, the two airmen filled up their tank with the cans that had been handed over the side, filled up until the tank was running over. Then they started off again.

By the time they arrived back where the tanker should have been, a couple of hours had passed since they had last seen her, but now the sea seemed empty. Hastily they checked their course and compared times. No, there had been no mistake in their calculations. A compass error? Out of the question. Well, where the devil was she?

"There she is!"

And there she was, far away to the left. Rapid calculations indicated that she must have been steaming on her old course for at least half an hour. What had happened? Perhaps the captain had grown suspicious when there was no sign of H.M.S. *Cumberland.* Or perhaps he was a hardboiled Viking who resented outsiders setting his course for him. Or had they recognized the German markings on the Arado after all? Whatever the truth was, something had to be done. But what?

They flew nearer to the tanker. Her captain had obviously not the slightest intention of taking the new course he had been ordered to take. 'Obstinate old so-and-so,' thought the observer. He wasn't even on the bridge now. It was as though he had turned his back indifferently. "Go and take a running jump at yourself," his absence seemed to say.

Altogether, the men on board the tanker seemed strangely indifferent to the presence of the plane. Now and again a man would stop and take a squint at her, his hands stuck in his trousers pockets, and then go on with whatever he was doing. 'If they really suspect the message from the *Cumberland* was a trick, they're pretty cool about it,' thought the observer. 'A damned fine comedy they're putting up. On the other hand, if they don't suspect, then their attitude doesn't say much for the harmonious relationship between the British and the Norwegians.'

But that didn't matter either at the moment. It was a stupid situation. The observer had a picture of himself standing before Krüder with empty hands. No tanker! He didn't like

the picture at all. They could compel the obstinate old Norwegian sea-dog to turn onto the ordered course, but then the tanker would have to be kept in view. Evening was drawing in now, and a pitch-dark night would follow, without a moon until very much later. In any case, they hadn't enough fuel to keep in the air and wait for the arrival of the *Pinguin*.

The Arado swept around close to the tanker and—lo and behold!—the tanker moved onto the appointed course. But no sooner had they congratulated themselves gleefully than the tanker turned back again to the old one. This cat and mouse game went on for a while until Müller got fed up—being well aware of the state of the fuel in the tank.

The Arado dropped a bomb ahead of the tanker's bows, ordered the captain to stop his engines and reinforced the order with a machine-gun burst hard by the bridge.

The signal lamp on board got to work.

"I'm stopping," they read, "but I'll report this to the Admiralty."

The Norwegian captain was growing indignant. The Arado touched down near the tanker. There was no more fuel in the tanks to keep her in the air—but the Norwegian did not know that.

In the meantime, the *Pinguin* was racing at full speed toward the tanker. Apart from the men actually on duty, the crew were resting at the captain's instructions, but "Action stations!" would bring about a sudden change in the silent ship.

At five o'clock the lookout could see nothing ahead. At six o'clock it was the same. Then evening fell, and by 1900 it was pitch dark. At 1945 the lookout reported: "Navigation lights of a ship hove to on the starboard bow." Almost immediately after that they spotted smaller lights almost level with the sea near the ship; they were dancing up and down madly. That could only be the Arado. A searchlight cut

through the darkness. Yes, there they were: the Arado and the Norwegian tanker. The searchlight picked its way along the tanker and back again. As far as the men on the *Pinguin* could see, the tanker was unarmed.

With a great shrieking and rolling of davits, two boats loaded with the boarding party were lowered. Two splashes announced their safe arrival on the water. An operation which had been practiced until it had become second nature now proceeded smoothly despite the heavy swell running. Every movement had become automatic; it had to be if the two boats and their crews were not to be pitched into the water.

Lieutenant Warning was in the first boat. As he climbed the rope ladder lowered over the side of the tanker the first thing he spotted was a peaked cap with gold braid. The Norwegian captain was waiting for him. When Warning climbed over the rail and the Norwegian captain saw a German naval officer, instead of the British naval officer he had been expecting, he started back a step or two in astonishment.

"God damn," he gasped. "I suspected something was wrong, but I never thought of Germans in these waters."

Without further orders—they had their instructions already—the prize crew swarmed over the tanker. Most of the men had served in the merchant marine before the war and it was not difficult for them to find their way about. The communications men seized the ship's radio, engine-room ratings seized the engine room, and sailors seized the bridge. Everything went so quickly that the surprised Norwegians had no time even to think of resistance. The bridge personnel did not even have enough time to destroy the ship's confidential papers.

Just fifteen minutes after he had flung his leg over the tanker's rail Warning signaled back to the *Pinguin:*

"Ship safely in our hands. Norwegian tanker *Filefjell.* Cargo: 10,000 tons of gasoline; 500 tons of fuel oil. Ship's papers safe."

Still on board the Arado, the observer Müller had read Warning's message. "Ten thousand tons of gasoline," he muttered. "No wonder they were such good boys after we dropped that bomb!"

Krüder had already decided to take over as much as possible of the fresh provisions on board the *Filefjell,* when the experts sent on board the prize reported that the 500 tons of oil fuel was suitable for use in the *Pinguin.* That was good luck. The crude oil carried by tankers was not always suitable for use by modern marine engines. Krüder then decided to take the tanker into quieter waters and there transfer the oil fuel to the *Pinguin.*

While the two ships were on their way to the area Krüder had chosen, the lookout spotted two faint lights to starboard, the one ruby red, the other poisonous green. They were undoubtedly the partly blacked-out navigation lights of a fairly big ship. It was midnight and the moon was just rising. From the bridge of the *Pinguin* they could make out the shadowy shape of the new ship.

Krüder ordered his men to action stations and set a parrallel course. At the same time he instructed the German prize crew on board the *Filefjell* to take station astern. Once abeam of the stranger, Krüder signaled:

"Heave to at once. Maintain radio silence or we open fire."

Krüder reinforced these instructions by ordering a warning shot to be fired across the stranger's bows. Communications officer Brunke appeared on the bridge.

"Enemy using her radio, sir."

Krüder ordered the searchlight to be switched on. In its brilliant light they could observe a gun crew hastily manning

a typical long-barrelled British gun. Through his night glasses Krüder closely followed every movement on board the enemy vessel. She was also a tanker. He still hesitated to open fire, hoping that the enemy would come to his senses. It was quite absurd for them to attempt to defend themselves against the *Pinguin* with that one gun.

"The captain was probably in his cabin fast asleep," he said. "His men are just doing what they've been instructed to do in case of emergency."

"Enemy still using her radio," reported the communications officer.

Krüder ordered his port guns to open fire. It was just as the gun crew on board the British tanker were sighting their gun. The *Pinguin's* guns fired salvoes, some of which found their mark. The tanker stopped, and the gun crew hurriedly abandoned their gun.

The order to cease fire was given; and Krüder had a message flashed to the tanker, allowing the crew ten minutes in which to abandon ship. Men could be seen running to the boats. Before long they were rowing away from the British tanker's stern in the light of the *Pinguin's* searchlight.

"To judge from the numbers there's pretty well the whole crew in the boats, sir," remarked the navigating officer.

"Looks like it," agreed Krüder. "They've got wounded with them. Have Dr. Wenzel and Dr. Hasselmann get the operating room ready. . . ."

"Cape Town has acknowledged receipt of radio messages," came a message from the radio cabin.

"Singapore has acknowledged receipt and relayed appeal for help. . . ."

The ether was alive now.

When the lifeboats were well clear of the tanker's starboard side, the *Pinguin* approached close to her port side

and fired a torpedo in the hope of finishing her off. The torpedo struck amidships and brought down the foremast; but the tanker, although listing to port, remained afloat.

Krüder turned his attention to the survivors, going alongside each boat in turn and picking up the occupants.

The ship was the 7,000-ton tanker *British Commander.*

The last man climbed up the *Pinguin's* side and stood on the deck. It was the tanker's captain, Thornton, a fine-looking man, tall and slim with sharply chiseled features. He stood there calmly and with dignity until he was instructed to go to the prison quarters of the *Pinguin.* At this he showed some annoyance.

"What nonsense," he grumbled. "You'll have a British cruiser along any moment now to take us off."

But he was mistaken.

When he joined his men he was received with enthusiasm. Apparently he had been a popular commander.

Lieutenant Brunke appeared on the bridge again: "Enemy radio still transmitting sir," he reported.

A British communications man was apparently still on board. In the face of certain death, he was doing his duty to the last. If so, he could be in no possible doubt as to what would happen next. The *Pinguin* had already fired several salvoes and a torpedo. Krüder now gave the order to destroy the *British Commander* by gunfire and the salvoes crashed out once again. While the German officers stood at the salute, the vessel slowly heeled over and slid out of sight.

"It goes against the grain to blow a brave man to hell like that," said Krüder quietly, "but war's war. Guts that fellow had."

"I've always said the British were very different from the picture our propaganda paints," said Michaelsen. It was just as well that it was Michaelsen who dared to be so frank. Krüder had a high opinion of his navigating officer and valued

his cool and calculating efficiency; it formed a useful contrast to his own more impulsive nature. Such talk was bad for morale and was definitely discouraged, yet Krüder suppressed the sharp rebuke any other man would have received and turned away to give an order. He sent a message to the British radio operator to be good enough to come to the bridge.

Escorted by two sailors, the radio operator appeared before Krüder, who immediately asked him whether anyone had been left behind to continue sending messages after the *British Commander* had been abandoned.

"No," was the emphatic reply.

"Then had you a device which would send out a delayed distress call after the crew had taken to the boats?"

Again the radio operator shook his head.

Krüder realized that he was not going to get to the bottom of the mystery and he allowed the man to be taken below. Nor did he refer to the matter when he interviewed Captain Thornton on the following day. Perhaps the key of the transmitter, jarred by an explosion, had sent out what appeared to be a signal. The transmission generators must have been left in operation when the ship was abandoned.

Below in the operating room, the German doctors and their assistants were attending to the British wounded. It was six o'clock before the two doctors put down their bloodstained instruments and began to clear up. All the wounded men were now comfortably bunked down in the sick-bay. The two sick-bay attendants, Schilhabel and Poeten, were silent and a little depressed. This was their first experience of the real thing. They had never seen human beings torn and maimed before. They washed their bloodstained hands and arms with medicated soap.

"They've got wives and kids at home, too," said Poeten slowly. "It makes you think."

At about ten o'clock in the morning the captured tanker *Filefjell* hove in sight astern, and the prize crew reported that they had spotted smoke on the horizon. The *Pinguin* immediately turned and steamed in the direction indicated.

Strangely enough, when they came in sight of the ship she made no attempt to turn away in accordance with the general instructions issued to all Allied shipping. She did not alter her course even when the *Pinguin* overhauled her on a converging course from the port side.

Krüder and Michaelsen were on the bridge carefully studying the shipping recognition tables.

"Looks too elegant for a British freighter," said Krüder. "Shouldn't be surprised if it was American."

"That'd be a pity, but I don't think she is," commented Michaelsen, and he thumbed through the section devoted to Norwegian shipping.

The indifference of the stranger suggested that Allied shipping in the Indian Ocean felt very safe. The nearness of Madagascar was Krüder's trump card.

The stranger turned out to be the Norwegian ship *Morviken*, a splendid modern freighter with almost elegant lines, built at Bremen to the specification of the Norwegians. As Michaelsen identified her he experienced an unpleasant thrill he did not mention to Krüder.

The *Pinguin* drew level with the *Morviken* to starboard, and Krüder ordered a warning shot to be fired across her bow. The shell sent a column of water into the air ahead of the Norwegian, whose captain stopped his engines at once, spread out a huge Norwegian flag, maintained radio silence, and waited silently for the arrival of the boarding party. It was once again in charge of Lieutenant Warning, but this time the men set off in rubber boats. After the unfortunate experience with the *Domingo de Larrinaga*, Krüder had decided to send his boarding parties off in canoes, like Indians on the

warpath, so that when they had to blow up a ship they need have no fear that a motorboat might let them down at the last moment.

On board the *Morviken* the Norwegian captain begged Warning not to sink his ship.

"Look at her!" he exclaimed desperately. "She's the finest ship in the Norwegian mercantile marine. If you like I'll take her to Germany myself. You can trust me. I'll give you my word of honor as a Norwegian."

Lieutenant Warning had naturally no authority to deal with a matter like that, and he signaled back the Norwegian captain's proposal to the *Pinguin*.

It was tempting, and Krüder had no doubt that the Norwegian captain would be as good as his word. However, he felt that in the circumstances it was impossible for him to agree. The Norwegian was probably honest enough; but the desperate wireless calls sent out by the British tanker had set the whole western Indian Ocean in an uproar, and the chances of getting the *Morviken* to safety if they made her a prize were too slender. Regretfully, therefore, he gave the order to sink her by torpedo. The crew and the boarding party left the *Morviken*. In the meantime all the men of the *Pinguin* who were not elsewhere on duty had gathered along the rail to watch the show. Suddenly a shout of delight went up and turned into cheering: one of the lifeboats of the *Morviken* had started up an engine and begun to sail merrily toward the *Pinguin*. The motorboat was taken on board with the utmost care. It was just what the *Pinguin* needed. Later on she was to capture a second one.

When the Norwegian captain came on board he immediately addressed Boatswain Rauch in fluent German:

"Didn't we behave correctly?" he demanded.

"You certainly did, sir," replied Rauch. "Very correctly, in fact. By stopping at once and not using your radio you saved

yourself and your crew a lot of trouble and made it less awkward for us."

The Norwegian, obviously an educated and widely traveled man, gave a short bow. The boatswain collected the Norwegian crew and took them to their quarters. Like all the other prisoners, they were immediately given a hot meal.

Meanwhile, their ship ended her career. The torpedo struck her amidships with a tremendous explosion. Slowly the splendid ship sank by the stern, her bows rising in the air like a tower. For a moment or so she remained in an almost vertical position, her bridge structure half out of the water. Then she slid silently backward under the blue surface of the sea. There was no cheering on board the *Pinguin* as she went. No one felt particularly happy at this new success. The death of a ship is a sad occasion for a sailor, and the *Morviken* died nobly and impressively.

Lieutenant Michaelsen had said nothing about it to Krüder, but he knew the Norwegian captain very well indeed; in fact they had been good friends for years. A day or so later he asked Krüder for permission to receive the Norwegian in his cabin.

But when the Norwegian spotted Michaelsen he stopped and turned pale.

"You did it," he stammered. "You of all people!"

"No, not me," said Michaelsen. "I'm not the captain. Actually I tried to persuade him to accept your offer, but it was no good. Not that he mistrusted you, but it wouldn't have worked. He was right, you know. I couldn't stand out."

"Couldn't stand out! Yes, I know. The usual story; orders are orders. You had to obey. Discipline and all that. Like a gramophone record."

The Norwegian was disgusted.

"Don't take it too hard, old man," said Michaelsen. "What

would you say if your chief engineer suddenly raked the fires out and said he wasn't going to play any more? You'd call that mutiny on the high seas, wouldn't you now?"

"I suppose so."

"Well, there you are. My position wasn't any different. At sea you've got to obey orders, whether you like it or not. You know that. Don't bear me any ill will, man. Shake hands."

10. THE BAG INCREASES

KRÜDER STEERED A SOUTHERLY COURSE IN ORDER TO GET OUT of the danger area as quickly as possible. The captured tanker *Filefjell* followed at some distance. Twice on that eventful day smoke was spotted on the horizon. In the discussions that followed, the cautious Michaelsen was against attacking. His prudence was well founded; the *Pinguin* was no more than 400 miles from land.

Night fell and the sky was spangled with unfamiliar stars, brighter and more beautiful stars than those of the northern hemisphere, with the magnificent Southern Cross, the constellation the Australians have symbolically incorporated in their national flag, as the showpiece.

Communications Officer Brunke appeared on the bridge. Krüder turned to him at once, afraid that he might be bringing bad news. Krüder read his message, laughed with satisfaction, and handed it to Michaelsen. The Naval Command had sent congratulations on the sinking of the British tanker. Obviously they had picked up the desperate appeals of the *British Commander* and, putting two and two together, rightly concluded that the *Pinguin* had been responsible.

At eight o'clock that evening Krüder gave orders to sink the *Filefjell.* This time the scuttling party used the new motor cutter. Krüder took the *Pinguin* some distance away; he wanted to run no unnecessary risks. Exploding masses of gasoline could be very dangerous. The explosive charges went

off dully and a series of reports sounded from the engine room. But the expected result did not take place; the gasoline neither exploded nor caught fire. The *Filefjell* settled slowly by the stern, but five hours later, at one o'clock in the morning, she was still afloat.

Krüder ordered her to be finished off by gunfire, and the 3.7 opened up. But the *Filefjell* still remained obstinately afloat. Krüder then decided to sink her with one of the big guns. The second shell hit the tanker toward the stern, and immediately a spurt of flame shot out of a gaping hole in her hull. Her gasoline was running out of the tanks now and flaming high into the sky. The whole ship and the sea around the tanker were soon in flames. Now and again the flames shot 150 feet into the air and more as one after the other the tanks exploded.

It was a dramatic scene, but Krüder was far from pleased; he had no desire to attract attention, and once he was satisfied that the tanker was doomed he left the neighborhood at full speed. By dawn the *Pinguin* was fifty nautical miles away, but on board they could still see the glow of the fire.

The communications officer reported that the ether was silent.

The day was bright and sunny and, encouraged by the success of his plane with the *Filefjell,* Krüder decided to send her out on another reconnaissance flight. All the crew who were not otherwise engaged assembled on the upper deck to watch the take-off, which was always difficult and dangerous. It was odd, but with all the technical progress made in recent years very little advance had been made in this particular matter; they were hardly any farther forward than during the First World War.

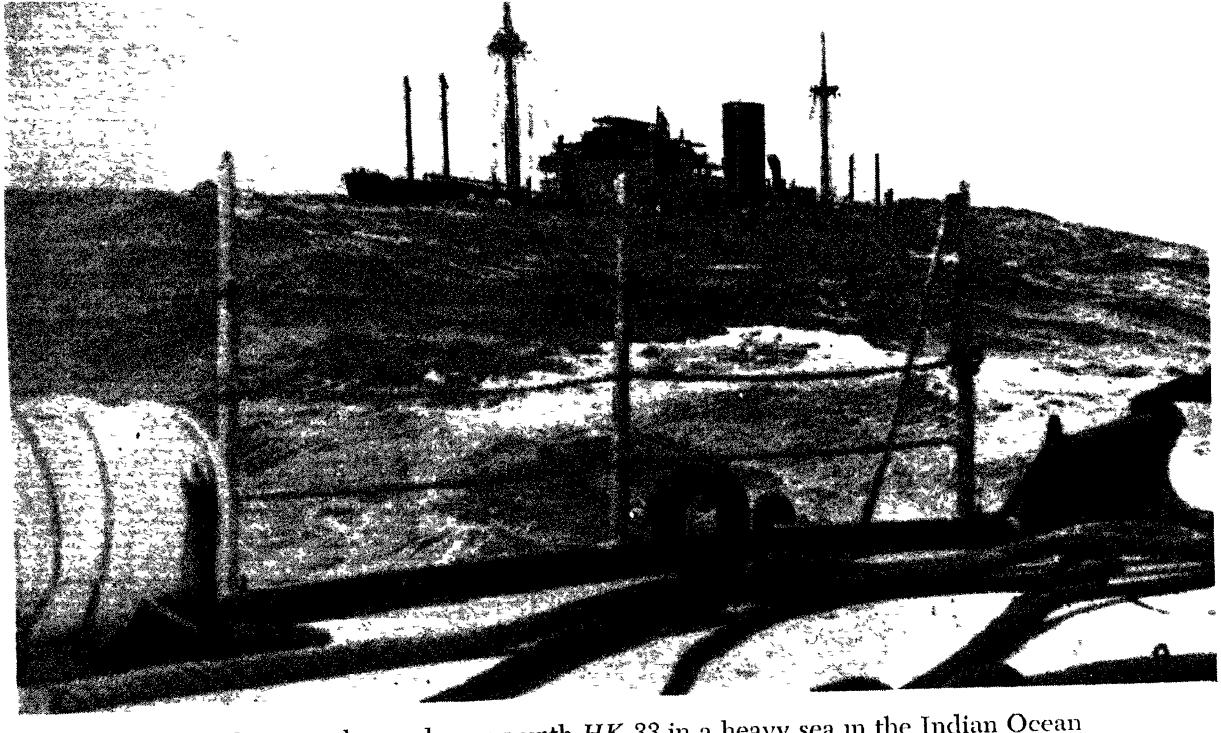
Lieutenant Schwinne and Boatswain Ahlendorf studied the restless sea anxiously, wondering whether the take-off would go smoothly this time. However they made no objection and preparations went forward for hoisting out the Arado. Sailors

Captain Ernst-Felix Kruder, captain of *HK*-33

Lieutenant Helmut Hanefeld

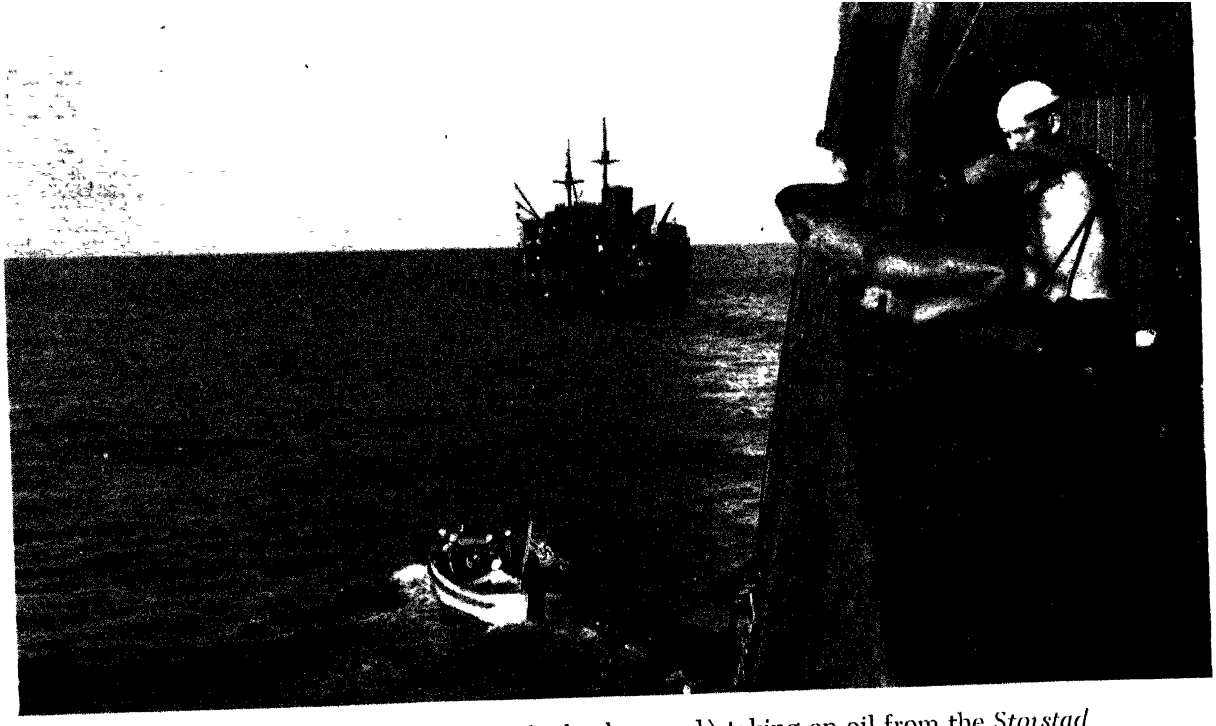
Prisoners on the forcdeck of the *Storstad*

Rendezvous in the South Atlantic



HK Atlantis at the rendezvous with *HK*-33 in a heavy sea in the Indian Ocean

Operation in tropical heat on the supply ship *Nordmark*



The supply ship *Nordmark* (in the background) taking on oil from the *Storstad*

Operator Jacobs at the flak machine gun on the *Storstad*

uncovered No. 2 hatch, just before the bridge, and then a derrick was used to hoist the plane, which was on a platform, out on to the deck. The wings had been folded back for storage, and now several men fixed them into place. The pilot, P.O. Werner, carefully checked each operation and then climbed into the machine to warm up the engine.

He let it run for about fifteen minutes and then gave the signal for the difficult maneuver of hoisting the machine out into the water. The purchase was hooked to the Arado at the center of gravity between the wings, and as the electric motor began to hum the Arado was slowly and gently lifted, swung over the side clear of the hull, and then lowered to the water. A number of sailors, experienced men, most of them from the mercantile marine, assisted the process with steadying lines and bamboo poles with padded ends.

When the plane had almost touched the water the pilot started up the engine. This was the critical moment, the moment when the plane was actually lowered on to the surface of the rolling sea and the purchase had to be released. If the hook were disengaged too soon the plane would drop heavily; if it were released too late the plane would capsize, for the sea was in constant movement.

The hook came away, the plane sat lightly on the water and moved away under its own power from the dangerous proximity of the *Pinguin's* hull. An audible sigh of relief went up from the spectators.

Krüder was no less relieved. He pushed up his gold-peaked cap a trifle. "Thank God!"

The *Pinguin* steamed around the Arado at a little distance to create a "duck pond" and then stopped on its weather side.

The pilot started his run, but he was unable to get the Arado into the air before leaving the area of still water the *Pinguin* had made for him, and the plane crashed into a heavy sea nose first. The engine broke adrift and those on board could

see smoke beginning to pour out. It was followed immediately by flames. The pilot and the observer hastily clambered out of the cockpit and crawled out on to the wings. To crown the disaster, the ammunition of their automatic cannon began to explode, and shells began to whizz and crack in all directions. The two airmen dived neatly into the water. They would have been better advised to make a landlubber's jump, feet first, because as they hit the water the automatically inflated life jackets were dragged down to their waists and both of them had considerable difficulty in keeping their heads above water. Owing to the unfortunate position of their life jackets, their rumps were forced upward and their heads correspondingly forced downward.

As the burning Arado began to sink, a hurriedly lowered boat fished the two unfortunates out of the water.

There was a spare plane on board, but even that comforting knowledge was not enough to prevent the depression the disaster caused. Things had gone too well for the *Pinguin;* she had had all the luck so far. This incident was a reminder that, no matter how hard you try and how skilfully and courageously you go to work, there are days when fate takes a hand and nothing goes right.

Wind and sea began to rise. The upper lookout reported the masts and funnel of an almost 12,000-ton tanker not too far away. As soon as the *Pinguin* came in sight the tanker turned away sharply and then, probably on the assumption that the stranger had also followed the standing Allied instructions for altering away when sighting other vessels, altered course yet again. In the meantime, her radio was sending out urgent messages.

"They've got a cunning old fox on board," commented Krüder, who immediately realized that the alterations of course by the British captain were being carried out to dis-

cover whether the stranger knew the secret instructions or not.

He was not long left in doubt.

A little later the communications officer reported that the nearby Mauritius station had answered. After a while Durban and Port Elizabeth came in. Then the ether, previously so silent, was full of signals. Some hours later the *Pinguin's* radio picked up the quick rhythm of a warship's message. For an experienced communications man, a warship's transmissions are easily recognizable by their speed and the manner in which they are sent out.

"It's a fair assumption that after a general alarm like that a raider would make for quieter waters, perhaps even vanishing into the Antarctic," said Krüder. "They'll hardly credit us with sufficient cheek to stay here. What do you think, Michaelsen?"

It was a moment or two before Michaelsen answered. His was not an impulsive nature; he thought things out carefully before he came to a decision, almost like a businessman calculating risks.

"That's fair enough, sir," he answered slowly. "But only on the assumption that they don't know who's captain of this ship. You know the British; they don't leave anything to chance, and they've got a psychological character sketch of every senior officer in the German Navy for ready reference. They know perfectly well that you're a different kettle of fish from, say, Rogge, Kähler, or Eysson. If the British happen to know you're in command, then we're probably steaming straight into the arms of waiting cruisers."

Krüder laughed and made a movement of his hand as much as to say that risks had to be taken.

"We'll stay put," he said, "and what's more, we'll have a go at the main shipping lines in the Madagascar area."

An armchair strategist would no doubt have come to a different decision, but Krüder was a seaman and accustomed

to take imponderables into account—and he was no bad psychologist.

A few days later, camouflaged as a harmless Dutchman, they came across the 5,870-ton British freighter *Benavon*. The *Pinguin* steered a converging course and came so close to the British ship that the latter gave a blast or two on her whistle as much as to say, "What the devil's the matter with you? You're not alone in the sea."

Then something seemed to dawn on them, and abruptly the ship turned away, showing their armed hindquarters. These were the tactics always adopted in such circumstances; they gave an enemy the smallest possible mark. On board the *Pinguin* they could see the *Benavon's* gun crew hurrying to action stations.

"Full speed ahead," ordered Krüder.

The *Pinguin* began to throb as she raced forward, and everyone on board knew what was happening. Two minutes passed, three minutes. Who would open fire first?

"Run up the war flag. Clear for action. Warning shot ahead of her." Krüder gave his orders calmly. In view of the preparations on board the *Benavon*, Krüder was under no obligation to fire a warning shot, but in this case too he stuck to the much-disputed rules of the game.

Hardly had the warning shot left the *Pinguin's* forward gun when the *Benavon* opened fire with her long-barrelled gun, and their shooting wasn't bad at all. Shells hit the water very close to the *Pinguin*, but oddly enough they did not explode. One shell ricocheted off the surface and penetrated the *Pinguin's* side near hatch No. 5, just a little above the mine compartment. The shell hit a ventilator and was deflected, ending up in a stoker's locker. Several men were flat on their bellies in the compartment; others had fled through the bulkhead, but P.O. Streil was still on his feet. He scratched his head and went toward the smashed door of the locker, took

off his cap, and picked up the still smoking shell with all the coolness of a fictional hero who knows perfectly well it won't go off. He examined it carefully and then threw it into the sea through the hole it had made.

The shell had no fuse cap. None of the *Benavon's* shells exploded; in their excitement the gun crew had forgotten to screw on the caps.

When the *Benavon* opened fire, Krüder gave orders to open fire with the *Pinguin's* main armament. The enemy's mast flew into the air like a tree stump and the funnel crumpled up. Two men of the gun crew were blown overboard. Other men ran to take their places. Krüder's guns fired again. Ready ammunition in the *Benavon* exploded.

There was no need for Krüder to use his glasses. "Useless heroism," he said. "They haven't got a chance."

When the smoke cleared away, the gun and gun crew of the *Benavon* had disappeared.

"Cease fire," he ordered.

The remainder of the *Benavon's* crew were now taking to the boats or diving overboard and swimming toward the liferafts which had been flung over the side. Such rafts were always in readiness on all British ships.

Krüder sent off a boarding party together with Dr. Wenzel and several assistants. Fire had broken out on board the British ship now and it was spreading rapidly. As they discovered later, the cargo consisted of rubber, jute, and hemp. The boarding party climbed onto the deck of the *Benavon*, where they found three men attending as best they could to two of their wounded comrades. Dr. Wenzel bandaged the men and gave them morphia injections.

The second officer of the *Benavon* was reported missing. He had been on the bridge, they were told. Dr. Wenzel and the officer in charge of the party made their way through the acrid smoke to the burning bridge, where they found the

second officer lying in a pool of blood. Dr. Wenzel opened his jacket and made a quick examination.

"He's still alive," he said. "Let's get him out of here."

With difficulty, they managed to get him down to the upper deck. Their tropical jackets began to smolder and their hair was singed by the flames, but they got the wounded man into the boat.

"A few photographs of this sort of thing would do those people good who cause wars," said the German officer as he watched the groaning man.

"And who might you be thinking of in particular?" inquired the doctor dryly.

The disconcerted officer withdrew his bloodstained hands from the side of the boat and made no reply.

"What did you start that senseless stink with your pop-gun for?" demanded Krüder of the British captain later. "What good did it do? You must have seen at once that our ship was much more heavily armed."

"It wasn't me, as a matter of fact," replied the Britisher. "It was my first officer. A few weeks ago our sister ship, the *Benarty*, was caught by another German raider and my first officer swore that if you ever came near him he'd show you a thing or two. You never know, if he'd had a bit of luck he might have done so. I admire him for it anyway."

"So do I, as far as that goes, but if he was so keen on a scrap he ought to have trained his gun crew better. There wasn't a fuse cap on any of the shells they fired."

The British captain looked dismayed.

"Good God!" was all he could say.

The *Benavon* was burning from stem to stern now, and a great cloud of smoke was slowly rolling over the Indian Ocean. September 12th, 1940, said the calendar.

From the British captain Krüder learned that the *Benavon*

had been on her way from Singapore to London, and that during the past few days she had been repeatedly warned of the presence of German raiders in the neighborhood. However, he had trusted to luck and hoped that after her first unexpected successes the German raider would have cleared out of the area.

"If you don't mind my saying so, Captain, you're taking a big risk, too. It's a bit of a nerve on your part staying around here after what's happened. Still, if you want to be reckless, that's your business."

"If you always do the opposite of what your enemy expects you to do, then it's not quite so reckless as it looks," replied Krüder with a smile. "Set your mind at rest, Captain; you'll be quite safe with us."

Despite the efforts of the German naval doctors, three of the badly wounded British seamen died. The *Pinguin* hove to and their bodies were consigned to the sea with full military honors and under their own flag.

The crew of the *Pinguin* and their prisoners were fallen in on deck, and they listened in silence as Lieutenant Michaelsen said a few words before the three bodies went over the side; a few words from a seaman to seamen, innocent comrades who had been the victims of a historical crisis in men's affairs. The lugubrious hooting of the *Pinguin's* whistle took the place of the firing party and its notes died away sadly over the empty sea.

The weather was perfect. They might have been on a holiday cruise. The sun shone down and the tropical air was warm. At nights the clear sky was covered with the stars of the southern hemisphere. Sunday was, as far as possible, a day of rest, and life on board was rather like life in a small country town where everyone knew everyone else. The men appeared

on the upper deck somewhat later than on weekdays; and just as people put on their Sunday best on land, so the crew of the *Pinguin* put on their best bib and tucker before they appeared on deck to take a Sunday stroll. Some of them spun yarns, others rested quietly in deck chairs. Now and again a man would play his accordion and sing folk songs or old sea chanties, and the others would join in.

Even Schneekloth, alias Eumaeus, would emerge from his piggery on Sundays, dressed in his best, as a living witness that man can rise superior to his environment if he's got what it takes.

The pleasant air on deck made him feel that his own charges would be the better for it. They were doing very well indeed, and growing fatter and fatter on the galley waste, but a little fresh air is good for man and beast. Schneekloth determined to raise the question—not with a petty officer or any of the officers. Oh, no! This was a matter between him and the captain himself.

"The after-battery deck?" repeated Krüder doubtfully. "But my dear Eumaeus, don't you think they'll break their legs sliding around there when we roll? We're not on land, you know."

"I've thought of that, sir. If we could have little nobbles welded on to the plates I think they'd be able to keep their feet."

"We'll try it," agreed the good-natured captain. "Nobody shall say we don't do the best we can for man and beast."

But it didn't help much, and when the *Pinguin* began to roll the pigs rolled, too; they were getting heavy by now, and, as Krüder had feared, they did break their legs—which meant work for the butcher and pork for the men, after Dr. Hasselmann had vetted the carcasses.

They had taken eight pigs on board in Kiel, but one after the other they ended their lives on the voyage. Not that the pig

population declined; on the contrary. The boarding parties found live pigs on board one or two of the prizes, and these were added to the *Pinguin's* piggery. The British pigs had very long snouts and were rather darker in coloring, but despite the difference they got on very well with their German colleagues. There seemed to be no racial laws among pigs.

The *Pinguin* was now in more easterly waters, but there wasn't a smudge of smoke to be seen anywhere. The swift disappearance of a number of freighters with valuable cargoes and the various calls for assistance that had gone out seemed to have put a stop to individual shipping traffic throughout the Indian Ocean. However, after a few days they came across the Norwegian ship *Nordvard,* a 4,110-ton freighter on her way from Australia to South Africa.

The *Pinguin* took her easily. A warning shot over the bows. Signaled orders. No attempt at resistance.

Krüder held a conference with his senior officers.

"We're getting a bit crowded on board," he said. "I don't like keeping all these men in such cramped quarters. And now there's the crew of the *Nordvard.* That will make 150 prisoners in all. For a variety of reasons, I'd like to get rid of some of them. There's the feeding problem, for one thing. A nice leg of pork's a good meal for you and me, gentlemen, but it's nothing for a lascar."

In the end it was decided to transfer prisoners to the *Nordvard,* put a prize crew on board, and send her back to Germany. After all, she had a very valuable cargo of 7,500 tons of grain. Lieutenant Hans Neumeier, a former mercantile marine officer, was put in command of the prize crew, and when everything was ready they sailed for home with the good wishes of the crew of the *Pinguin,* who lined the rails to watch them go—hoping that their own letters home would arrive safely, which, after many adventures, they actually did.

The *Pinguin* remained on her easterly course. It would bring her to Christmas Island and then to Sunda Strait. They were now on the main shipping routes from India to South Australia, and Krüder proposed to quarter the area for likely victims.

In the course of everyday life on board a ship at sea for many months on such a mission a certain amount of tension inevitably arises from sheer boredom, even with the best possible crew. Krüder was well aware of the problem, and he had already done a great deal to keep the men amused and out of mischief. There were all sorts of games on board including table tennis, and, in addition, there was a carefully chosen library. There were loudspeakers on every deck and in all compartments. Their main use was, of course, for disseminating orders, but in quiet periods they broadcast entertainment. And, above all, there were the motion pictures—a stock of sixty full-length films and a great number of newsreels and educational films.

The seats in the improvised auditorium were made of old boxes and upholstered with woolen blankets. The "architects" even made the rows rise in tiers as in a real theater. And, to heighten the impression of reality, the man in charge of the canteen would close down during performances and appear in the auditorium with a tray suspended round his neck selling cigarettes, chocolate and so on.

A special feature of life on board had been introduced by Krüder himself. Shore leave was, of course, out of the question, and so he had thought up another way of giving his men a real rest and a change from their ordinary duties. He had caused a special room to be comfortably equipped, with pictures on the wall, easy chairs to sprawl in, and so on, and provided with various amenities not normally belonging to the seaman's day. Eight members of the crew at a time were then given a week's "leave on board," which meant that they were

freed from all duties. The recreation room was there for them to do as they liked in, shout, sing, play games, and so on, and their daily beer ration was doubled. As far as the ship's routine was concerned these "leave men" were nonexistent—unless, of course, "Action stations!" sounded. In such circumstances Krüder needed all hands.

The *Pinguin* steamed around for days at half speed through the cornflower-blue sea. Each day passed as uneventfully as the one before and as the following day would pass—or would it? Unknown to the crew, unusual plans were being laid in the course of conferences on the bridge between Krüder and his officers.

11. TANKER INTO MINELAYER

THE MEN SAW THEIR CAPTAIN LESS AND LESS FREQUENTLY. MOST of the time he was in his cabin studying special charts of the neighborhood of Australian and New Zealand ports with his right-hand man, Michaelsen.

"It's about time our mines earned their passage, Michaelsen," said Krüder one day. "You know that, as an old minesweeping hand, I've got a soft spot in my heart for them."

And that was the beginning of it. Between them they worked out a project. But they needed another ship for it, a ship of a certain kind; nothing very special—a tanker would do.

The first yellow rays of the sun were just above the horizon, promising another fine day. The sea was calm, and the *Pinguin* rose and fell slowly in a gentle swell. The water was green, like a cloth with a dull finish. It was still rather chilly, and the men on watch shivered. Now and again a block creaked, but that was the only sound to break the silence. They did not talk to each other, even in whispers. In some respects Krüder was a strict captain. He wouldn't have chatter among the men on watch; while they were on duty their attention had to be concentrated on nothing but their job. To their relief the sun was suddenly there in all its glory, red and glowing; a magnificent display of colors, almost a waste

It was then that a ship hove in sight. She was quickly identified as the Norwegian 8,998-ton motor-tanker *Storstad,* and she stopped at once when ordered to do so and made no use of her radio. Lieutenant Hanefeld led the boarding party. On deck he was formally saluted by the first officer of the tanker, a tall, slim, good-looking man of perhaps thirty, who led the German officer to his captain's cabin.

The captain was a big, broad-shouldered man, named Williamsen, who accepted the situation calmly and handed over the ship's papers readily.

"So you're carrying diesel oil?"

"That's right. Fourteen thousand tons of it."

"You are coming from Miri, I see. Where's that? Borneo, isn't it?"

"That's right."

"And you're on your way to Melbourne?"

"Yes, I was to receive instructions there about my subsequent movements."

"On our account, eh?" asked Hanefeld, nodding toward the porthole, through which the *Pinguin* was visible.

"On your account as well," admitted the captain with the ghost of a smile. "Looks as though it's unnecessary now."

The tanker's crew assembled amidships. They were almost all big, strong fellows.

On board the *Pinguin* Krüder had summoned the mine officer to the bridge.

"What do you think, Schmidt? Isn't that just the ticket?"

"A tanker's a little obvious, isn't it, sir?"

"Just because, my dear fellow. Just because. You don't realize the advantages of the old tub. Come along with me. We'll go over her together."

And Krüder left the *Pinguin* for the first and only time throughout her voyage. With astonishment the men on deck watched their captain being put across to the Norwegian

tanker, accompanied by Lieutenant Schmidt; Cramer, the chief engineer; and Lieutenant Warning. 'There must be something in the wind!' they thought. And they were right.

"This is just the sort of tub I had in mind," said Krüder, pointing to the reddish-brown hull of the Norwegian tanker where the original black paint had peeled off in patches. When the sea subsided between swells the underwater hull looked as though it were smothered with cinders. Barnacles and all sorts of fauna and flora were clinging to the plates. "I wonder when they were last in dock for a scrape."

On board the tanker Lieutenant Vossloh reported the result of the search. The tanker had somewhat more than 14,000 tons of diesel oil on board. Analysis showed that it was of good quality and quite suitable for immediate use on board the *Pinguin.*

"Splendid!" exclaimed Krüder, who immediately decided to transfer some of the oil from the tanker to the *Pinguin.* "We've just about got room for another 2,000 tons, haven't we, Chief?"

"That's right, sir. Two thousand tons would just about fill us up."

Krüder made his way aft.

"What more do you want, gentlemen?" he cried. "This is just the place for mines."

He pointed to the superstructure housing the cabins of the engineer officers and other technical personnel and explained his ideas to his companions. It was quite obvious that he had already thought the whole matter out carefully; the entrance to the mine room would be across the front of the deckhouse facing aft. When not in use, it could be covered up with a tarpaulin. On a dilapidated old ship like this a tarpaulin or two would hardly attract any attention. The cabins and the corridor partitions would come out altogether to leave a big, hall-like space for the mines. Rails would be laid to get the

mines out, together with a runway, which could be unshipped easily when not in use, over the deck to the stern.

"No real problem at all," Krüder concluded. "And when the mines have been laid there'll be room for the lascars. They can live on their own and prepare their own tucker."

Then he addressed the chief engineer in particular.

"How long will it take to complete the transformation scene, Cramer?"

"If we had it done at home in a shipyard, then three weeks. If we do it ourselves, three days—provided everyone lends a hand."

"Come, come, Chief," said Krüder with a tolerant laugh. "That's a bit of an exaggeration. Even the old imperial yards weren't as bad as that. Of course everyone will lend a hand, officers and men together. Right, three days, then!"

Krüder took the captured *Storstad* to the northwest of North West Cape out of the main shipping routes and started the work of transforming the tanker into a minelayer. For the three days the chief engineer had specified the welders worked around the clock, and their blue-white tongues of flame bit steadily through girder after girder, while hammers rang and riveting machines rattled.

The men worked in shifts in order that no time at all should be lost. Three days was very little for the work involved and the chief engineer soon realized that he had cut it rather fine, but he had given Krüder his word that the work would be finished in that time and now he was determined to keep it. Thanks to the enthusiastic support of his men, who had worked like galley slaves to back him up, on the third day, approaching midnight, it was possible for him to go to the bridge to report proudly that the work of turning the *Storstad* into a minelayer was finished. The room for the mines was ready and the rails were laid. In the meantime, too, the 2,000

tons of fuel oil had been transferred without difficulty, and the *Pinguin* now rode deeper in the water than before.

That same night the work of transferring the mines began. Krüder had been quite prepared to leave this until daylight in order to give his men a little rest, but the boatswain in charge had arrived to say that they would sooner get on with the job; they were in good working form and sooner it was done the better. With a feeling of pride and warmth in his heart Krüder agreed.

The first idea had been to transfer the mines to the *Storstad* in the *Pinguin's* rubber boats, but it soon became clear that this was impossible and so the motor cutter had to be pressed into service. The bottom was padded with mattresses in order to prevent the bottom boards from being broken through, and then the mines were lifted out of their hold on a derrick and carefully maneuvered over the ship's side and lowered into the cutter. It was no easy task because the cutter was bobbing up and down in a lively swell. The critical moment was when the mine was released from the purchase. A moment too soon and the heavy monster would smash right through the bottom of the cutter. One of the engine-room artificers had contrived a release mechanism for dropping the Arado into the water and this was now used successfully for the mines. The inventive fellow had constructed a slip-device that could be released instantly by means of a simple lanyard.

In the end all the mines were transferred safely to the deck of the *Storstad.* This was no mean performance, and by the time the men had finished they were dripping with sweat. Something of a ceremony marked the departure of the last mine. Flags decorated the rails, and on the black metal hull of the last squat ugly brute in the cutter one of the men had pasted a sheet of paper on which the ship's poet had written a few touching "l'envoi" lines to the enemy.

All the work was completed, but Krüder now had a problem

of his own to settle. The *Storstad* needed a captain, an experienced sailor, a man who was accustomed to handling merchant ships. Warning was an obvious choice, but the thing wasn't as simple as that. Krüder began to rub his nose thoughtfully. Warning had experience; he had dash and initiative and at the same time he was not reckless. But there were one or two difficulties. Although he held his master mariner's certificate, Warning was only a sub-lieutenant, whereas Schmidt was a full lieutenant. In addition, Schmidt was their mine specialist. On the other hand, he was not a sailor. What about Michaelsen? Krüder dismissed that thought at once: impossible to do without him. No, it would have to be Warning.

Krüder could do with impunity things that would have caused resentment and mortification on any other ship. He called Warning to the bridge.

"We've now turned the Norwegian tanker *Storstad* into the auxiliary minelayer *Passat*, and you're going to take command of her, Warning. For the period of your command I am appointing you senior lieutenant with full authority."

Warning did not show by any sign how delighted he was at this demonstration of Krüder's confidence in him.

"Very good, sir," was all he said.

Krüder looked at him sharply for a moment or two, and he was not deceived. He grinned.

"But when the job's over you'll have to unship that extra ring, you know."

"I understand, sir."

"But I'd keep the braid handy, if I were you. You never know."

The following night, Lieutenant Warning boarded the *Passat* with two officers and thirty-five men. Before they went Krüder shook hands with them all and said a friendly word or two to each man.

"Well, good luck, lads," he said finally. "We'll be seeing you again soon."

"Aye aye, sir," came the cheerful chorus.

Before the two ships parted company, the *Passat* carried out a few trial maneuvers under her new captain. Although everything seemed in order and the engines ran sweetly, Warning suggested that they should take along one or two experienced Norwegians, and Krüder agreed. Six of the Norwegians, including an ancient and invariably cheerful carpenter, were transferred to the *Passat*.

These men proved entirely reliable, even when they began to suspect the purpose of the ship's mission, and their assistance was particularly valuable in the engine room. They knew every corner of the ship and, above all, they knew the whims and quirks of the engines.

It was three o'clock in the morning. The crews of both ships were assembled for the parting of the ways. The tropical sky was studded with glittering gemlike stars. It was warm and the night was still. In the silence, as they waited, more than one of the men thought longingly of home. Then short flashes of light came from the *Pinguin*.

"Auxiliary minelayer *Passat* proceed in execution of previous orders. Best of luck. *Auf Wiedersehen!*"

Three rousing cheers broke the silence of the night and echoed over the empty sea. Flashes of light stabbed out from the *Passat*.

"Message received. Thanks! Good luck to you, too. Orders will be carried out as instructed."

The metallic clang of the engine-room telegraph sounded above the cheering.

"Half speed ahead both!"

Auxiliary Minelayer *Passat*, the creation of Captain Krüder, set off on her mission. The two ships, between them, were to

mine all the important shipping routes to Australia and New Zealand and the waters around all the big ports of South Australia.

Krüder congratulated himself. The *Passat* was unlikely to arouse suspicion. The adaptation of a tanker to serve as a minelayer was something unique in the history of naval warfare. The *Storstad* was, in any case, cleared for Melbourne; and her presence in Australian waters was therefore expected. All her papers were in order, and there was every reason to hope that she would get past the controls without a soul suspecting for one moment that she was anything but what she looked and pretended to be. The fuses of the mines had been set to various dates in accordance with a carefully worked out joint plan of operations so that they would be alive and ready to do their work only after both ships had done theirs and were well out of the danger zone.

The *Pinguin* was on her way alone again when a signal was received from the Naval Command in Berlin. It was as though all the work and the planning of the past few days was to receive a little recognition and appreciation in advance. The message declared that Captain Krüder had been awarded the Iron Cross (First Class) and that, at his discretion, a number of Iron Crosses (Second Class) were to be awarded to selected members of the crew.Which meant another problem for Krüder. One of the Iron Crosses would certainly be for Lieutenant Brunke, his communications officer. But what about the others? There wasn't a man, whatever his rank or rating, who hadn't done his duty with devotion and enthusiasm. Krüder sighed. Such problems were the prerogative of his rank.

The following day there was another pleasant incident. Since leaving her home port, the *Pinguin* had steered 21,600

nautical miles, or exactly the length of the equator. Lieutenant Küster had worked out the exact spot and the exact time. At 1800 the *Pinguin* completed her trip once around the circumference of the earth.

"So there we are," said Krüder with satisfaction, and his forefinger described a circle on the map. "The first time around. Seems to call for a little celebration."

And the order to splice the mainbrace was given.

12. "MINES AWAY!"

ALTHOUGH THE MAIN WORK OF TRANSFORMING THE TANKER *Storstad* into the auxiliary minelayer *Passat* had been completed, there were many supplementary details to be attended to, which was just as well because it kept the crew so busy that the days passed swiftly.

Then a storm blew up, and the *Passat* plowed straight into it. Soon she was pitching heavily, and the mines had to be firmly lashed to prevent their breaking loose. The nearer the *Passat* came to her first objective the worse the storm became. "Wind strength 8," the officer of the watch entered in the log.

The growing hurricane howled through the ship's rigging and whipped the sea into a white froth until it seemed almost as though the *Passat* were plunging through boiling milk. When from time to time patches of sea could be spotted, the water was glassy green in color, cold, poisonous, and depressing to look at. The ex-tanker began to labor heavily as sea after sea broke against her hull and swept over her deck. The best and most experienced quartermaster on board was at the wheel, but there was little he could do. In such a wind the flying spume and spray were like fine sand slashing along the deck, and the men's faces were lashed raw. The men on watch were unable to take cover; they had to keep staring ahead into the storm. Somewhere ahead of them was the enemy. At any moment he could come upon them unexpectedly, and the *Passat* must not be taken by surprise. Their eyes

were inflamed and their faces were raw, and before long they were wet to the skin. But they were still cheerful; they had a job to do, and hurricane or no hurricane it had to be done.

In such dirty weather a captain would normally have slowed down; in fact, a cautious man would have turned his ship and hove to. But these were far from ordinary circumstances, and Warning had not the slightest intention of doing either. Krüder had drawn up his plans, and nothing must be allowed to interfere with them. The *Passat* was steaming to a timetable.

In the column "Wind strength and state of sea" was the figure "11" now. And below it in small writing was the brief comment: "12 in squall." Logbooks contain no fictional matter and only a seaman with some experience of dirty weather on the high seas can have any idea of the state of affairs conveyed by the sober figure "11."

The roaring of the wind was like an army of poltergeists fleeing before the storm. Like furies, they swept through the ship, whistling and shrieking in every hole and corner, while down below the sea crashed and thundered. The Old Man of the Sea was at large with his phosphorescent glare and his shaggy beard. Long and twisted, longer than himself it is, say seamen. And he sits on the bowsprit of the ship he has chosen to harass. According to tradition, his presence means disaster for a ship and death for her crew. No one has ever seen him and survived to tell the tale, but very little imagination was necessary in that storm to see him crouching there in the bows at his favorite spot, rising sometimes to his full height, his snow-white hair streaming out in the wind like a cerement, and then sinking back into the sea with a howl of glee. The next moment he would be peering over the ship's side amidships, while water and spume thrashed along the decks.

A day, a night, another day and another night, and still

the eerie spirit haunted the ship. On the bridge throughout the storm, Warning began to wonder anxiously whether the old tanker would come through. He had the feeling that when the ship reared up on the crest of a wave every joint and plank strained and groaned. No rivets and no steel could stand that for long, and certainly not in an old tub like the *Passat*. When he did try to get a little rest, he stretched out fully dressed and covered only with a blanket. And all the time he was listening to the howling of the storm and the roaring of the sea and to all the noises a laboring ship makes as she fights her way through. Then he would get up again and stagger to the table, where the chart was fastened with drawing pins. Not a pencil or a book was in its accustomed place. They had long ago been thrown all over the place.

Warning studied his chart. The *Passat* was still a long way from her objective—400 nautical miles. He consulted some old sailing manuals. According to their lore, such weather was normal in these latitudes and could last a long time. It was the devil's own weather, but considered objectively, it was good weather for them—if they could make it. Warning was unable to remember ever having experinced such weather in all his life at sea.

It would take the *Passat* much longer to reach her objective, but that couldn't be helped. It was only to be hoped that the *Pinguin* was having to cope with similar weather and would be equally delayed.

When day finally dawned it was gray, overcast, and cold. The clouds were scudding along, almost touching the sea; and there was not a rent, not a crack, anywhere through which the sun could have shown its face.

Life in the rolling, pitching tanker became difficult. The decks reared up and then slid down, tipped up on one side and then dipped wildly down on the other. To move about

on deck was a major undertaking requiring the surefootedness of a mountain goat. At any moment heavy seas could break over the deck and sweep the intrepid sailorman from his hold. A man who had no more than broken bones to regret after tons of water had flung him to the deck was a lucky man indeed.

Hot meals had become a thing of the past.

"What about an extra tot of rum to give the men heart, sir?" suggested one of the officers.

"A good idea. Two fingers for each man, not forgetting ourselves."

The rum went down well, and warmth coursed through the men's veins. Not that the spirit on board was depressed; on the contrary. Warning was lost in admiration, for most of them were only youngsters. He could remember his first experience of dirty weather at their age. . . . Well, he hadn't actually been frightened, but somehow he had remembered all the stories he had ever heard of ships that had foundered in just such weather. It was funny, in wartime even a hurricane like this seemed a bit ridiculous. It had lost its power to awe.

That morning they passed a freighter. They only just sighted her. Take evasive action? What for? And the *Passat* plowed steadily and obstinately on her way. They could see the other ship reeling in the heavy seas like a drunk, now and again showing the red protective paint below her water line as she heeled over. Sometimes she almost disappeared in the heavy seas and only her masts and funnel were still visible. Giant waves were rolling over the sea, monstrous masses of water riding over from the Roaring Forties where they were born and where they were at home. It was a scene to take a man by the throat.

Poor devils! Warning found himself thinking, only to remember that he and his men were no better off than the

other captain and his crew. It was often like that; to the man in the thick of it with plenty to keep his mind occupied, it often looked worse for the other fellow.

At midday the storm began to abate at last. The wind dropped, and although the sea was still surging heavily, the aneroid needle began to climb back toward "Set Fair."

That night they saw shore lights. They were on the southernmost point of the Australian continent, and along the coasts were dangerous reefs on which more than one good ship had foundered. A Dutch explorer named Tasman had first set foot there, and the land and the neighboring sea were still called after him. The Bass Strait, so-called because an Englishman of that name had first surveyed the arm of sea between Tasmania and the Australian mainland, was the *Passat's* first objective. It was the main seaway for all vessels approaching Sydney or New Zealand and the other eastern islands from the south, or leaving them on a southwesterly course. At the western end of Bass Strait were Port Phillip and Melbourne, where according to statistics, every sixth and every seventh Australian lives respectively. The approaches to Melbourne and Port Phillip were the *Passat's* second objective.

In the night the lights of Tasmania disappeared astern, and ahead of the *Passat,* which was again beginning to labor in a rising sea, new lights began to show through the darkness. They were on the mainland, the home of the kangaroo, the symbol of a continent not much smaller than Europe and twenty-five times as big as the British Isles.

Warning spent all his time on the bridge now. These were difficult waters with many small groups of islands, dangerous reefs, and rocks, and they demanded the constant attention of an experienced navigator. In the Bass Strait the *Passat* passed many British ships and Australian fishing boats, and no one dreamed that the old tanker was anything but what

she seemed to be, and no one dreamed that behind the scuttles of the after deckhouse were not tired seamen taking a well-earned rest. Like all the other ships, the *Passat* flew no flag and she paid no attention to what was going on around her.

On the bridge Warning played his role as an authentic Norwegian seadog, capable of standing up to inspection through the sharpest glasses. He was wearing a peaked uniform cap of the Norwegian shipping company he had found on board and on his sleeves was the insignia of a Norwegian sea captain. He was a well-built man, and the role of Viking suited him very well.

But in the stern, invisible to even the sharpest glasses, were the steel hulls of many mines, and out of sight inside the deckhouse Lieutenant Schmidt and his men were busy preparing the mines for laying. In the dim light of bluish lamps, practiced hands were being thrust up to the wrists into the mines to screw the fuses into place. After that the "asparagus," as German seamen call the long, sensitive strikers, were attached, and before long the mines resembled hedgehogs.

That night the first mine barrier was laid, a long chain of mines extending across the Strait.

The *Passat* now set course for Melbourne. As they passed Wilson's Promontory they received a signal from the shore:

"What ship? What ship?"

"Should we answer, sir?" asked the officer of the watch, Lieutenant Lewit.

"Of course," said Warning. "Politeness always pays."

"Tanker *Storstad*, Norwegian, from Miri to Melbourne," the morse lamp blinked back.

There was no answer from the lighthouse for a while.No doubt they were busy looking up their list; then it came:

"You must have had dirty weather."

No doubt the station was manned by Australian navy men, and the officer in command was astonished to discover that a ship due in very much earlier according to his information was in fact so very late.

"We did," replied the *Passat*. "Very dirty weather."

"All's well that ends well. Good luck and keep your eyes skinned for German raiders."

"Thanks, we will," blinked back the *Passat*. "All the best to you, too. Happy dreams!"

Just before daylight the *Passat* became very much the innocent again; the runway was taken up and the entrance to the mine room closed. And to make doubly sure and deceive all prying eyes Warning had camouflage in the shape of colored bed covers, underpants, tablecloths, and towels hung out to distract attention from the odd shape of the *Passat's* structure aft.

That night the second mine field was laid; this time across the narrow entrance to Port Phillip Bay, the only entry into the harbor of Austrialia's second biggest city. When this task was completed, the *Passat* turned southwest and rounded Cape Otway to sail up the coast. During the following night they went close enough inshore to see clearly the bright windows of houses, but whether they were poor shacks or the villas of well-to-do Australians it was impossible to tell.

The sight of those lighted windows made both Warning and his men think longingly of home and domestic comfort by contrast with their present harsh, piratic existence. Two lights close together were moving. They seemed to be the headlights of a car. It didn't require a great deal of imagination to transfer the scene back to home. . . . Warning was therefore not altogether astonished to find that the spirits of his men were rather low. They were homesick. The helmsman

had discovered from the chart of the area that the strip of land to starboard was called "Young Husband Pen." There was more than one young husband on board.

"Lousy job when you come to think of it," said Lieutenant Hanefeld.

"And do you think I haven't?" grunted Warning and retired to the chart house to study the sea around Adelaide.

Three red lines had been drawn on the chart from Kangaroo Island across Backstairs Passage to the mainland. Dotted along each line were little blue crosses. They represented the mine field to be laid in the southern shipping lane to and from Adelaide. Backstairs Passage was hardly ten miles wide and therefore very easy to mine.

Two hours later the *Passat* was in position, and in the constantly revolving beams of the lighthouses on Cape Willoughby and Cape Jervis the first mines were slid into the water. Warning's camouflage line of washing proved very useful now.

While the men were at work behind this improvised cover, the bridge reported a vessel approaching. Her shadowy outline could be seen distinctly; it was obviously a coastguard vessel of some sort, and was passing through the narrowest part of the channel where the mines were to be laid. The stranger steered toward the *Passat*, which contined on her way serenely. On board they could see the bow wave of the enemy vessel rising as she increased speed. Whatever happened, it was impossible to turn back now.

"Action stations!" ordered Warning.

Protected from sight by the ship's rails, the men ran bent double to their stations. One of them got the war flag ready to be run up at a moment's notice. The Australian was right ahead of the *Passat* now, crossing her bows. Despite the desperate situation, Warning had not yet ordered minelaying to stop. He was afraid that only extraordinary luck could save

him from discovery now, and he was anxious not to waste a moment. In any case, if there was to be any shooting, he preferred to have as many mines overboard as possible.

"Jacobs," he shouted, "signal them: 'Keep clear of my bows!' "

Jacobs flashed a signal to the Australian, who replied with the received sign. Jacobs then flashed Warning's curt demand. To underline this insolent signal to a British naval unit, Warning seized the lanyard of the ship's siren and let off a long echoing blast.

The Australian then turned away and came around onto a parallel course. On board the *Passat*, Warning also altered course in order to lay the mines as effectively as possible. He was now moving directly along the red line marked on the chart by Krüder.

The Australian described a half-circle and came around as though to pass close under the *Passat's* stern. It began to look as though his suspicions had been aroused. Or perhaps he was carrying out this maneuver from sheer boredom. At the very last moment Warning stopped the minelaying, and a few sheets were quickly lowered over the port out of which the mines were rolled. There was no time to unship the rails along the deck.

"God damn and blast!" swore Warning. "What the devil are they up to? They're going smack into our stern!"

The overtaking light of the *Passat* was not actually on her stern, but on the after funnel, so that abaft the light there was about eighty feet of ship lost in the darkness. The Australian had apparently assumed that the light represented the stern of the stranger, and he was now carrying out a dashing, destroyer-like movement to come up under her stern. The intense darkness gave him no opportunity of recognizing his error.

"Let him," exclaimed Lieutenant Lewit. "We've had it anyhow."

Warning had no time to reply. He dashed into the wheelhouse and swung the helm desperately hard a-starboard. The *Passat* answered instantly, and a collision was just avoided. The Australian passed so close under the stern that a man could have sprung down on to his deck. In all probability the men on watch on his bridge had also noticed the danger at the last moment and hurriedly altered course. In the excitement the Australians obviously overlooked the rails on board the *Passat*, or, if they saw them, they did not realize their significance. After all, a tanker as a minelayer? Too unlikely!

At the *Passat's* stern one or two of the minelaying crew had dragged down towels, and with these they waved to the Australian coastguard vessel, now fast disappearing in the distance.

By a strange coincidence, Australia's Premier chose that very evening to broadcast a speech of warning. Australians must congratulate themselves on having escaped the rigors of war so far, he declared, but a word of caution was now necessary; Australian waters could become the scene of hostilities at any time, even that very night.

The captain of the Australian coastguard vessel could have confirmed the warning at once if his bridge personnel had not been asleep. In addition, the supposed Norwegian tanker was allegedly making for Melbourne harbor. She did not arrive there. What happened to her after her encounter with the coastguard vessel? It was an interesting question, but no one seemed to have asked it.

Warning's drawn face was pale—except for the eyelids; they had been stung and reddened by the storm, which had sprung up again.

"With all due respect, sir," observed the helmsman, "may I say something?"

"Go ahead," said Warning.

"You ought to get a bit of rest, sir."

"Oh, yes? That would be nice. By the way, when did you last get any? I mean when did you last get down to it properly in your bunk?"

"Me? Oh, that was . . . let me see. Well, I suppose it was just before we started this job, sir."

"I see. How interesting! Well, go and get some sleep now then."

The man hesitated and looked his puzzlement.

"Well?" demanded Warning. "Aren't you going to?"

"I can't very well leave my post, sir."

"Neither can I, so here we are."

It was dirty weather again. The storm was blowing hard, and the *Passat's* course took her straight into it. Hurricane blasts were sending great waves over her bows, and she was not making much progress. The propellers thrashed gallantly, but she was hardly making good one knot.

Warning was none too pleased at the further delay. Now that he had laid his mine fields, he was anxious to get as far away from them as possible before trouble started. He therefore had two big hoses brought up on deck to pump precious oil onto the boiling sea. The oil spread out over the surface of the water in all colors of the rainbow. It was only a thin layer, but it lowered the crests of the great waves.

The next morning the clouds opened and the sun shone through. By evening there was no more than a breeze blowing. The storm had passed again.

The *Passat* now steered toward the spot at which she was to rejoin the *Pinguin.*

13. "UNEXPLAINED UNDERWATER EXPLOSIONS"

THE WEATHER HAD NOT BEEN BAD ENOUGH TO DELAY THE *Pinguin* on her way into the zone of operations Krüder had chosen for her. In the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand there was no more than a light, almost imperceptible, breeze. Toward evening the Australian coastline loomed up more and more clearly as they approached the shore.

Apart from the usual harbor lights and the lighthouse beams, the sky suddenly became alive with hundreds of searchlights moving this way and that, crossing and recrossing each other, and now and again concentrating in one spot. At the same time there was the sound of heavy ack-ack fire, and when that ceased the throb of airplane engines was heard. Australia's air force and antiaircraft batteries were obviously carrying out wide-scale maneuvers.

The *Pinguin* was off the coast between Newcastle and Sydney now, steering toward the latter town at a distance of not more than about four miles from the shore. From the deck they could see a bright line of lights that indicated a broad coastal promenade.

The searchlights around Port Jackson were shining out to sea. For a moment or two they caught the mast tops of the *Pinguin* in their beams, and then her funnel.

The communications officer reported to the bridge: "Last

plane just announced its safe landing. Air maneuvers over."

"Right," said Krüder. "Now's the time. Lay the mines."

The *Pinguin* stole up to the harbor mouth. The blinding white pencils of light were now sweeping over her bridge structure.

"Mines away!"

The first of the *Pinguin's* mines rolled out of the ports specially built for them aft on both port and starboard sides and dropped into the boiling water being churned up by her propellers. During the operation the sea began to rise, making the work of the minelaying party not only more difficult, but also dangerous. As the ports from which the mines were dropped were only just above water level, a heavy sea meant that every time the *Pinguin's* stern dipped, water flooded into the mine room, sometimes with the force of breakers beating on the shore.

Lieutenant Küster was in charge. He was a careful and conscientious man, and beads of sweat were standing out on his forehead. Right from the start, he had experienced difficulty in releasing the mines from their securing chains and getting them onto the rails, setting the fuses, and running them aft to the dropping platform. He had been cautious enough to have the men working at the platform roped, and this was just as well, for the first heavy sea that crashed into the mine room knocked one of them off his feet and then swept him back toward the sea. But for the rope around his middle the man would have gone after the mines and been lost.

From the bridge everything looked easy enough, and the minelaying appeared to be proceeding smoothly. On the bridge they could hear the bell ring at intervals, and each time they knew that another mine had been dropped to float away in the ship's wake.

By two o'clock in the morning the last of the mines had been laid. A German auxiliary cruiser disguised as a tanker had

mined the fairway into Australia's largest port, and she had done it in full view of the coastal batteries.

When the job was over the men of the minelaying party returned to their quarters. Their comrades were astonished to see them covered with sweat and apparently all in. But Krüder, when he came to congratulate them, was not; he knew a thing or two about minelaying. At his orders a stiff tot of rum was waiting for each man.

The *Pinguin* sailed away from the scene on a southerly course. The weather was fine the next day, with much sun and no wind, though a long swell indicated bad weather elsewhere. If the international weather reporting system had still been in operation Krüder would have known that the *Passat* was in the thick of it, being tossed up and down like a cockleshell, with no hot meals or hot drinks for the crew for days.

"Very nice," said Lieutenant Schwinne as he stood on deck with his men after the first inspection of the day. "Gently up and then gently down; that's how my wife imagines a sailor's life."

"Dolphins in sight," came a shout from the bridge, and those who had nothing else to do came on deck to watch the agile fish disporting themselves. A whole shoal of dolphins, perhaps 120 of them, were going through their maneuvers in the ship's path, springing out of the water like well-trained athletes, sometimes in pairs and sometimes in whole groups. Their performance was made even more like a gymnastic display because of the uniform flash of their white bellies from time to time. According to the naturalists, dolphins can swim at about nine knots, but the *Pinguin* was going at full speed now, which meant about seventeen knots, and she came rapidly closer to the shoal until her stem drove between them. Indignantly they broke away to right and left, leaping out of the water and performing wild caprioles. There was no

uniformity in their movements now but panic; when man arrives the harmony of nature is invariably disturbed.

Night began to fall. The *Pinguin* was very near her next objective now, the southernmost tip of Tasmania, where she proposed to lay mines in the approaches to Port Hobart.

Dr. Hasselmann made an entry in his diary:

"We approached from the south to the west of the western entrance. The sky was a little misty, but more colorful than we had ever seen it before on our voyage.

"Flashes lit up the horizon, and a blood-red sunset was reflected under thin white layers of cloud. The flashes of lightning seemed to conjure up arches, domes, and dizzy towers in the twilight.

"When the sun finally sank, the horizon turned green. The sea was glowing in the distance, and the remains of the clouds caught the light and turned purple and violet.

"No artist in the world could reproduce that coloring; the paints on his palette could not compete with such brilliance . . ."

The equipping of the *Passat* with a prize crew had reduced the numbers on board the *Pinguin* and as the two doctors and their assistants were now doing their turn on watch, Dr. Hasselmann was allotted to Lieutenant Gabe's watch. Gabe was a cheerful young fellow who had grown himself a little pointed beard on the voyage, and he was inordinately proud of it. In addition, the sun had bronzed his skin and the hard days at sea had given his features more mature lines. Hasselman had known what was coming in the way of extra watch duties, and he had worked hard in order to be as free as possible for his new task, for he was not only ship's surgeon, but also ship's dentist.

From the beginning to the dramatic end of the *Pinguin's*

voyage, the health of the crew had left very little to be desired. Not one man was lost by sickness. The only work Hasselmann had—apart from attention to the wounded prisoners—consisted of one or two accidents, a few cases of relatively harmless sickness, Lieutenant Lewit's appendix, and a couple of nasty burn cases.

"In the ordinary way the extra watch duties might have been onerous," wrote Dr. Hasselmann in his diary, "but the surroundings made up for a good deal. My interest in everything around us helped me over a good many difficulties. When in my life am I likely to see the southern lights again?"

High, bare, almost polished reefs announced the neighborhood of Port Hobart. The *Pinguin* reduced speed in order to approach her objective on a northeast arc just as night was falling. Black clouds rolled up to make her task even easier, and during the night mine fields were laid without incident across the two entrances to Port Hobart.

The interest of the crew in minelaying had greatly diminished now, and the first tension had given way to a reaction. Those men who were not actually engaged on the work ignored it altogether and sat around in the mess and the canteen playing endless games of cards. The avid card players on board were in their element. Apart from the fact that they were now in uniform, the only thing that had changed for some of them was the place where they played their cards; their free time they spent as they had always spent it—playing cards.

As the *Pinguin* steamed westward around the southernmost point of Tasmania, the dark harbingers of the storm fulfilled their gloomy promise. The weather broke loose at typhoon strength and, under the raging pressure of the wind, the sea on the edge of the Antarctic was soon like a boiling cauldron. Krüder had to sail westward, which meant sailing right into it. He was unable to take evasive action or turn

about and run before it; and he was, of course, unable to seek the protection of a harbor. The fury of the storm lasted three days, with tremendous winds and enormous seas. The *Pinguin* tried to make headway against it at half speed, and she succeeded in covering just forty-five miles. Normally she could have done the distance in three hours; it took her three days.

Another man on board who was enjoying himself was the meteorological officer, Lieutenant Roll. For him the zone on the edge of the Antarctic through which the *Pinguin* was battling her way was a mine of new discoveries and valuable observations. It was the home of those tremendous waves British sailors call "monarchs of the deep," and one trough of low pressure follows the other rapidly. Storms lasting 50, 100, even 160 hours are nothing out of the ordinary, and high winds thresh along at between 60 and 90 feet per second and more, almost as fast as a projectile. It was new and altogether fascinating for Lieutenant Roll.

Dr. Hasselmann was also keenly interested in the weather, but as an artist rather than a scientist.

"A hurricane is an unforgettable experience for me," he noted in his diary, "and during a storm I spend all my free time on deck watching the tremendous force being expended. There are, of course, lifelines stretched across the deck at every possible spot, and our crew have got their sea legs now so they manage very well even in the dirtiest weather. However, I must confess it *is* a bit difficult to get any sleep when the wind is blowing a hurricane and the seas are mountains high. In consequence, hammocks have been at a premium. We all have fixed bunks, but I have slung a hammock in my cabin from the scuttle to the door and now I sleep excellently.

"Sometimes the ship heels over as much as twenty-four degrees and, if you happen to be eating, the plates and dishes

all slide to the raised edge at the side of the table—and sometimes over the edge."

The bad weather finally abated and the *Pinguin* set course for Spencer Gulf to the west of Adelaide. She approached from the southwest. Shortly before midnight, Charlie Brunke reported that the radioman on board the guard ship had just finished his nightly chat with his colleague of the land station.

"They've said good night to each other, and I've no doubt they've turned in," he reported.

In any case, neither of them could have heard the sound of the bell on board the *Pinguin* as it recorded the dropping at fixed intervals of mine after mine over the stern. The minefields laid by the *Passat* and the *Pinguin* between them extended not only from Cape Catastrophe on the west of Spencer Gulf to West Cape on Yorke Peninsula, through which shipping passed to Port Pirie and Port Augusta, but also across Investigator Strait and Backstairs Passage, the two shipping lanes that led into the harbor of Port Adelaide.

Day dawned. A streak of light spread across the eastern horizon and gradually grew broader and brighter, finally becoming a cataract of glowing red light as the sun rose above the horizon. To starboard there was a dark shadow like the back of a whale. It was land along Spencer Gulf, once the objective of the old windjammers: *Privale, Padua, Passat,* and *Pinnas,* the wheat-ships that fought out the longest race on earth.

The *Pinguin* turned away. Her task was done. Her engines began to hum as she steered for the spot where the *Passat* was to rejoin her.

On November eighth Charlie Brunke wordlessly laid a deciphered radio message before Krüder:

"'Ship, unidentified, transmitting SOS signals after unex-

plained underwater explosion off Promontory Point at the east inlet of Bass Strait."

On November ninth appeals for assistance once again filled the ether and were picked up by the *Pinguin*. The 5,800-ton *City of Bayville* sending out SOS signals at the west inlet to Bass Strait off Cape Otway. "Ship sinking." Cause: unexplained explosion in hold or below waterline.

The *City of Bayville* was the first United States ship to be sunk during the war as the result of belligerent action.

At the end of November an Australian minesweeper struck a mine and sank off Port Phillip.

On November twenty-third all Australian radio stations warned shipping against the zone between Sydney and Newcastle. On December sixth the zone south of the entrance to Newcastle was declared dangerous. On December seventh the Spencer Gulf was closed to all shipping.

Then came SOS messages from the approaches to Port Hobart.

After that appeal followed appeal; they did not finally cease until the end of 1941, by which time Australia had greatly strengthened her minesweeping fleet. In the meantime, those responsible for the minelaying had shown their pursuers a clean pair of heels.

"The commerce raider and minelayer must be under Lückner's command," was the only explanation—or excuse—the Australian press could think of for the failure of British and Australian warships to seek out and destroy the dangerous enemy. Who else could have the daring and the skill to operate right on Australia's doorstep and to lay mines in the approaches to her very naval bases? During the First World War Lückner had made himself a name not easily forgotten in this part of the world. His fame was such that to appeal to it was by way of being some explanation for the failure of all the present countermeasures.

The *Passat* arrived at the agreed rendezvous and stopped her engines. There was no sign of the *Pinguin,* but no one was worried; after all, the *Pinguin* had farther to travel. Krüder's prestige amongst his men was so great that it never even occurred to them that his part of the scheme could have gone awry. In any case, no one had any time to worry; the men wanted a celebration, the sort that always takes place after any successful minelaying operation. Warning had no particular affection for such harmless festivities; he was much too serious and reserved a character for that, but he did not care to say no to his men; they would enjoy it, so permission was given.

The one-time mine room was speedily turned into a banqueting hall. Signal flags decorated the bulkheads and seating accommodation was rigged up, and that evening the whole crew, with the exception of the men on duty, celebrated their success. It was already known that the cook had a secret, and everyone was trying to guess what it was. It turned out to be great quantities of snow-white creamed potatoes—which were served with equally vast quantities of broiled sausage. The appearance of the potatoes produced a cheer, as though the men had been served with the most precious and rare of titbits.

"Where on earth did you get these potatoes from?" Warning asked the cook.

"Saved them up for the celebration, sir. Served with minelayers before. The cook always has to have something up his sleeve to do the thing right, you know."

Warning laughed. He could not bring himself to rebuke the man, though an occasional change from the dried potatoes they had been eating all the time would have been pleasant. In any case, the real potatoes tasted good now, and he consumed his share with the greatest enjoyment.

Despite himself, Warning was carried away to some extent

by the spirit of the thing, and he could not help feeling that it was up to him to add his mite.

"Two bottles of beer per man," he ordered.

He felt that they had certainly earned their little bit of relaxation.

Two days later the *Pinguin* arrived and was greeted by the crew of the *Passat* with round after round of cheers.

Krüder was a man who possessed in the highest degree the facility for improvisation and making the most of things. Not only was he ingenious by nature, but he had a great fund of energy to carry out his ideas. He was never satisfied merely to do—even superlatively well—what others had already done before him.

Following on his minelaying operations, he now introduced an innovation that had not been thought of by the Naval Command in Berlin and which now led to an extension of the *Pinguin's* operations as an auxiliary cruiser.

The essence of Krüder's new plan might be termed "the second eye." Now that the *Passat* or ex-*Storstad* had proved so useful, he was unwilling to give her up. Her minelaying operations had demonstrated how valuable her harmless appearance was, and the enemy had certainly not yet learned of her new role as a German prize. Krüder therefore proposed to use her for long-range reconnaissance, operating between 50 and 150 miles away from the *Pinguin.* An encounter with the *Storstad* would make no one suspicious. In addition, there was no precedent in the history of sea warfare for the transformation of a tanker into an auxiliary cruiser.

Krüder's calculations turned out to be correct, and the old fox in him outwitted the pack of British and Australian naval units on the hunt for the *Pinguin.*

Warning had definitely given up the command of the *Stor-*

stad. He had been summoned to Krüder's cabin in his temporary rank of lieutenant, and after a long conversation he emerged, apparently in the best of spirits, in his former rank of sub-lieutenant. The *Storstad,* as she was again called, was now under the command of Lieutenant Lewit, who had directed the mining operations under Krüder's command and had satisfied the latter of his nautical abilities. Lewit and Charlie Brunke arranged a special operational code for the exchange of messages between the two ships, and the *Storstad* set off on her new task. Incidentally, Charlie Brunke was now one of the busiest men in the *Pinguin;* he was engaged night after night in breaking the new secret code of the British Admiralty for use by Allied shipping.

14. THE HARVEST CONTINUES

SEVERAL DAYS PASSED AND STILL THERE WAS NO SIGN OF A smudge of smoke or of mastheads on the horizon. Further days passed slowly, and once again came an evening displaying one of those dreamlike, almost unbelievably beautiful, and unreal sunsets typical of that latitude. Groups of large and small fleecy clouds, with golden edges gradually changing to glowing pink toward the center, moved across the sky like a transformation scene against a painted background. The horizon was almost lost in all this pageantry, but despite the doubtful visibility Lieutenant Bach believed that for a moment or two he had seen the longed-for smudge of smoke. None of the men actually on watch, not even the aloft lookouts, could confirm his belief.

One of Bach's comrades began to pull his leg.

"Shore leave is what you need, my lad. You've been too long at sea. You're seeing things. It was only a cloud."

"It wasn't a cloud. All the same, I could do with the shore leave."

Krüder did not take the matter as a joke. He knew Bach better. He discussed the matter with his navigating officer, Michaelsen.

"Let's assume Bach did see smoke—and I shouldn't be in the least surprised—then the ship was about fifteen miles away," said Michaelsen. "And let's assume she's steaming on westerly course; that means, if she makes good the usual

twelve knots, that we could get her in sight about midnight."

Krüder agreed with him and ordered full speed ahead on the necessary course.

By midnight, when the watch was relieved, nothing had been sighted, although the men had almost stared the eyes out of their heads. The two officers went below and restored their spirits with the notoriously strong "middle-watch" coffee laced with rum.

It was muggy weather and the night breeze was blowing from the sun-baked plains of India, bringing no freshness to the men on watch or those trying to get a little sleep down below. Steadily and monotonously, the bow wave scoured the stem and fell back into the water. The ship's engines and the sound of the wind in the rigging joined in the sullen melody. Now and again there was a footfall, a sharp command, or the distant slam of a door.

The men of the previous watch were unable to sleep. They lay in their bunks and listened irritably to the only sounds of life they could hear, turning from side to side restlessly.

Then suddenly, at 0032, alarm bells shrilled angrily and there was the sound of many hurrying feet as the crew rushed to action stations.

On the bridge, Krüder could see the long hull of a ship very plainly through his night glasses. It seemed very close and enormously long. The *Pinguin's* gun crews were ready for action, but he was unwilling to waste ammunition. By signal lamp he ordered the stranger to stop.

"Don't use your radio or we'll open fire," he added.

The ship replied immediately:

"I am stopping."

The enemy's large and readily visible gun at the stern remained unmanned.

"Well, well," said Krüder doubtfully. "That's difficult to believe. Is this some sort of a trap?"

It seemed not; the other ship hove to, and there was no sign of any suspicious activity on board. There she lay rising and falling slowly in the swell and waiting obediently for the German boarding party.

Krüder was not altogether satisfied.

"Keep well aft," he ordered the boarding party. "Give us room to shoot if they get up to any tricks."

The boarding party obeyed his instructions, but nothing happened. They reached the ship in safety and clambered up the rope ladder which was lowered over the side for them. Bach and Warning were in charge. The steps of the boarders rang hollow on the deck as they ran to their positions. A tall officer with a lantern in his hand waited silently for the invaders to come up.

"That's not the skipper," said Bach, and he had a closer look at him. Was it his pockmarked face that made the night meeting with him so eerie?

"This way, gentlemen," the man said. "The captain is expecting you in his cabin."

The man with the pockmarked face, who showed no sign of any emotion, either astonishment, concern, fear, or dismay, showed them the way to the captain's cabin. On the way they passed figures coming out of the shadows, mostly lascars. They huddled together like cattle in a storm, and there was fear in their great brown eyes. An old white seaman made his way through them and looked at the German sailors with interested, almost childlike, eyes. His hands were thrust deep into the pockets of his baggy trousers, and there he kept them.

The captain received his uninvited visitors standing up. His name, it appeared, was Collins. He was a slim, wiry man, rather on the small side, with a serious face, but Warning judged him not humorless. He wore a little white goatee which he had a tendency to pull when answering questions.

The 8,000-ton British freighter *Nowshera* with 4,000 tons

of zinc ore on board, 3,000 tons of wheat, 2,000 tons of wool, and a certain amount of piece goods. Armed with a 15-cm. gun of Japanese manufacture. Crew: 25 whites and 120 lascars. One passenger, a British merchant-marine captain named Dudley Crowther.

Bach left the captain's cabin and turned his attention to the crew. He had a cyclostyled form distributed to everyone on board with instructions in English:

"Don't forget to take with you: toilet articles, warm clothing, blankets, and any valuables you possess . . ." A list of permissible articles followed.

The drawing up and distribution of these instructions was Krüder's idea. Experience had shown that, in the hurry and excitement, prisoners often forgot to take essential articles with them; and the *Pinguin* was not so well provided with reserve stores that he was in a position to issue soap, towels, and so on to his prisoners. Let them therefore bring their own, and everybody would be happy.

From the bridge of the *Pinguin* Krüder watched the 120 lascars coming on board and scratched his ear reflectively.

"How on earth are we going to feed those lascars?" he asked. "They won't eat pork and we haven't enough rice on board to feed them on that for long."

"There are sheep on board the *Nowshera,* sir," reported Bach. "I expect that's what they're for."

"Good, then let's have them over before we blow her up."

Eumaeus was ordered to the bridge. As a farmer's son presumably he knew something about sheep.

"What do sheep feed on, Eumaeus?"

"Grass, sir."

"Grass! We haven't got any of that on board. What about sea-grass?"

"We could try it, sir."

"Very well, take charge of the beasts."

And Scheekloth, alias Eumaeus, added the sheep to his pigs.

In the night, the work of unloading supplies for the *Nowshera* proceeded rapidly. There was food, including smoked meats, drinks, and a consignment of Australian Christmas parcels. The members of the crew not actually engaged in the work stood around silently and watched the unexpected windfall being transferred to their own ship. Christmas was not far off now; they would celebrate it without mail, without a word from home, without being able to send a word home. At least they would now have Christmas fare.

Some of the cases contained woolen goods, first-class pullovers, warm scarves, warm gloves, warm underwear. Many of the men began to grumble.

"What the hell do we want with this stuff in the tropics?" they demanded disconsolately.

Krüder overheard their complaints and grinned to himself. He was the only man on board who knew that before long they would be very glad to have extra-warm things.

To save ammunition Krüder decided to sink the *Nowshera* by means of aircraft bombs hung against her hull. The men of the scuttling party were to remain on board in order to set further charges if necessary.

As the explosions sounded the ship started as though she were a living thing, as though a mettlesome horse had reared up under a sudden whiplash. The men of the scuttling party felt as if the ground had suddenly been dragged away from under their feet, as if every bone in their bodies had received a violent jolt. Glass was shattered. Pieces of wood and other debris showered down on to the deck. Then there was silence almost like that in a graveyard. The men rushed to the ship's side; their one idea to get off this sinking coffin which threatened to take them down with it.

But the *Nowshera* was not sinking. The 8,000-ton ship had

dropped like a stone, but only for a certain distance. She was now probably floating on the accumulated air under her hatches. From her deck it was now an easy matter to step into the cutter waiting alongside. The men did so without waiting for further orders.

It was November twentieth. The tropic night fled as swiftly as it had come, and the rays of the early morning sun were falling warmly on the deck of the *Pinguin* where groups of lascars were taking the air. They were being accommodated in the one-time mine room, and when there was a stern wind it was not altogether a joy for the crew. With 120 lascars cooped up below the smell rose through the ventilators and was wafted over the deck. There wasn't much to be done about it, but Krüder ordered the lascars to be allowed on deck in the fresh air as much as possible.

Dr. Hasselmann found his work greatly increased with the coming of these lascars. They were hypochondriacs and "ran to the doctor" for the slightest thing, even for a scratched finger. *"Para darant,"* they would complain—big pain here! Hasselmann roped in the services of their serang, who spoke a certain amount of English, to act as interpreter. Even then it was no easy job, but it was often amusing.

Through the serang Hasselmann also did his best, at Krüder's instructions, to keep the lascars calm whenever there was the likelihood of action, in order to avoid panic among the highly strung brown-skinned men.

The peaceable scene did not last long. The groups of prisoners taking the air were suddenly disturbed by the insistent ringing of the alarm bells. In a moment or two the decks were cleared.

Two mastheads had been sighted on the horizon. Then the hull became visible. Obviously the *Pinguin*, too, had been sighted, for the ship turned away, came in sight again, and

once more altered her course. However, she did not use her radio.

Radio contact between Australian land stations and naval units at sea was particularly lively that day. Krüder let the stranger disappear below the horizon again, then he studied what information the radio messages gave him. After that he discussed the matter with Michaelsen, as usual, and then ordered the reconnaissance plane to take off. As it happened, the *Pinguin's* engines were undergoing a self-refit, and she was not fully prepared for action at the moment.

The plane rose into the air and flew off toward the other ship, a 10,000-ton British freighter, which was now out of sight of the *Pinguin.* On coming within range, the plane signaled an order for the ship to heave to. The only reply was machine-gun fire. Lieutenant Müller, the observer and bombardier, dropped a bomb just ahead of the ship's bows. Even this was not sufficient to intimidate the captain and now his radio opened up furiously.

Müller handed his pilot a message. "Carry away his aerials" it said bluntly.

They reeled out their own aerial and raced down toward the freighter. The masts and the funnel rushed up to meet them, and they could see men running for cover under the impression that the plane was carrying out a low-flying attack. Only the captain stood just where he was, with his legs firmly apart, on the bridge. From the movement of his arms they could see that he was giving orders. The approaching Arado offered a fine target to the British machine-gun crew, and they took full advantage of it. Though they didn't know it, the Arado was not in a position to reply; her guns had been dismantled for an overhaul just previously and she was unarmed.

Suddenly there was a hard jolt, and both Werner and Müller were jerked forward in their safety belts. At that moment

the radio messages ceased. They had torn away the freighter's aerials.

But at the same time there was a penetrating smell of gasoline which grew stronger and stronger. Machine-gun fire must have riddled one or more of the gasoline tanks. The engine stopped. The propeller went on swinging for a while, but its force was gone. The pilot brought the Arado down skilfully in the rolling sea.

"We've had it, Werner," shouted Müller. "We're sitting ducks. They'll just shoot us up at their leisure."

But in fact, the firing had ceased, and the British freighter went past them at full speed, with great white waves pouring away from her bows. The two helpless Germans could clearly see the officers on the bridge and the crew lining the rails. Someone on the bridge raised his arm and waved as though in salute.

Apart from her antiaircraft armament, the freighter had a powerful long-barrelled gun in her stern. She could have blown the German plane out of the water with the greatest of ease.

"Well I must say that's extraordinarily civil of them," said Müller, and he answered the wave. At that the freighter sounded her siren.

"What would you have done in their place?" asked the pilot. "Would you have acted differently?"

"No, I don't think I should," replied Müller, "but after all the propaganda you read in the papers you don't expect it."

"Propaganda!" grunted Werner. "Not that theirs is any better than ours; bit more experienced perhaps. But those fellows there are seamen."

In the meantime the *Pinguin* had got her engines ready, and she was now racing at full speed toward her plane. Krüder

was not the man to leave his subordinates in the lurch, and, in addition, he had no time to lose if he was to catch up with the enemy.

"Küster, get a boat ready with blankets, bandages, schnapps, and food for two days. Take three men with you and get moving."

"Bit of a risk to launch a boat at this speed, sir," put in Warning.

"Not at full speed, of course, man, but we can't slow down much."

"If we put the right men in the boat and at the davits, I reckon we could do it all right at, say, half speed, sir," said Michaelsen.

"Carry on then. We can't afford to stop. If we do, it's good-by to our catch."

The *Pinguin* slowed down, though she was still going at a fair speed, and the men managed to lower the boat to sea level and slip her safely. With her helm hard over, the cutter swung away from the *Pinguin's* side. Krüder had been watching the operation anxiously. When the cutter was safely away his grip on the rail relaxed and with his right hand he pushed up the peak of his cap. There were little beads of sweat on his forehead. He hadn't liked the risk either, but he had been obliged to take it.

The machine-gun fire had riddled not only the gasoline tanks but also one of the floats, and when the boat arrived the Arado was already heeling over. But with the bandages they had brought they managed to make the float watertight again and prevent her from becoming a total loss.

The *Pinguin* was now going full speed after the British freighter, which was traveling astonishingly fast. The *Pinguin* was doing fifteen knots; the other ship perhaps fourteen. On the bridge of the *Pinguin* they calculated when the other vessel would be within range.

The communications officer reported that the freighter was using her radio again; obviously they had succeeded in rigging up a jury aerial. They were now systematically describing the appearance of the *Pinguin*—her size, her structure, her silhouette. Krüder listened to it with a frown. The whole Indian Ocean and all adjacent naval bases were being aroused against him, and there wasn't a thing he could do about it. Perhaps the British captain was hoping that the German raider would lay off and make good her escape in order to avoid such a detailed description being broadcast. If so, he was going to be disappointed. The *Pinguin* drew gradually nearer and nearer. The British ship now tried to lay down a smoke screen, but owing to her speed and unfavorable wind course it was blown away to one side as soon as it billowed out.

If she had opened fire with her 6-inch long-range gun before the *Pinguin's* own guns came into range she might have scored a hit or two and altered the situation. The *Pinguin's* own guns were practically obsolescent; they came from the scrapped warship *Schlesien.*

At last the *Pinguin* came within range. She then ran up the war flag and became German Auxiliary Cruiser No. 33. Krüder ordered a salvo from his 15-cm. guns. He was anxious to try out the system of centralized fire-control which had been worked out by the gunnery officer, Lieutenant Rieche, and his men from means available on board. When the *Pinguin* had left on her raiding voyage her guns were laid and trained independently at each mounting.

The first salvo left the *Pinguin* and roared away toward the enemy. Four columns of water rose close together beyond the British ship's stern. The second salvo was still closer, and it must have been perfectly clear to the British captain that the third salvo would be a hit.

"Enemy striking his flag!" came a joyful shout from the lookout.

Steam poured out of the enemy's funnel. It was an indication that her engines were being stopped and the surplus steam released from her boilers. She now turned off her course in a wide arc.

Hanefeld and Warning were in charge of the boarding party. British sailors standing around on deck drew back as the Germans clambered over the side and ran to their positions to take charge of the ship. One or two stokers were also on deck. They were glistening with sweat, and they looked exhausted. They had obviously been working like galley slaves to get the last ounce out of their ship.

"General cargo," said the British captain, whose name was Cox, in answer to a question as to what his ship was carrying. General cargo might have meant anything from shoelaces to eggs—or machine-guns.

From the ship's papers the German officers discovered that the 10,127-ton *Maimoa* was a refrigerator ship carrying 1,500 tons of Australian butter, 17,000 cases of eggs (over sixteen million eggs in all), 5,000 tons of frozen meat, and 1,500 tons of grain.

Krüder would have like to exchange some of the valuable cargo on board for some of his own less valuable provisions, but there was no time for that. The whole Indian Ocean had been stirred up, and the idea of taking the *Maimoa* into more remote waters and carrying out the operation, or of taking her over as a prize and sending her back to Germany, was out of the question. The British Admiralty was cautious enough to send out such valuable ships with only enough fuel to take them to the next port, so that they made their way to England by stages.

It was interesting to note that there was not a single lascar or colored seaman on board; the crew consisted exclusively of Britishers, with one or two Australian and Irish seamen. There were also no less than nine engineers on board, two of them refrigeration specialists.

Two propellers in the air and a slack rudder was the last they saw of the *Maimoa* as she slid below the surface with her valuable cargo. After the scuttling, the *Pinguin* steamed off to come to the rescue of the Arado and her crew and the four men in the lifeboat. Where exactly were they? It was true that the position at which the Arado had touched down was carefully marked on the chart, but there are winds and currents at sea and there had been sufficient time for either of them, or both together, to have swept the plane a long way out of her original position. In addition, it was now 0100 and dark.

The chief quartermaster, Neumeister, had calculated everything, including the possibility of drift, and he had discussed the matter in detail with the navigating officer; so, when Krüder asked him what time he reckoned to come up with the plane, he answered without hesitation:

"Three seventeen, sir."

No sooner had he spoken than he had a disagreeable feeling in the pit of his stomach. He had been overconfident. Finding a helpless plane down in the sea in the middle of the night with no radio directions to help was no joke. He could see the Old Man's look of mild astonishment at the precision of the reply. Krüder rubbed his chin thoughtfully, but turned away without a word.

At 0310 Krüder came into the chart house. The chief quartermaster thought he could feel eyes boring into his back, but nothing was said. Lieutenant Michaelsen looked encouraging. He seemed to be saying, never mind—if it isn't exactly three seventeen, we'll do the trick.

At 0315 the chief quartermaster could stand the strain no longer, and he went on to the bridge to help in keeping a lookout. He kept the glasses glued to his eyes, but behind him he could sense the shadowy form of his captain. Despite all his efforts, Neumeister could see nothing. In any case, it took

about half and hour for a man's eyes to get accustomed to darkness after the light.

At 0317 there was nothing at all to be seen. Apart from the hammering of the *Pinguin's* engines and the wash of the sea, there was the silence of the grave.

But at 0319 there was a shout: "Light right ahead!"

Eagerly they stared at it; it seemed to be quite a distance away. Suddenly Michaelsen shouted an order: "Hard a'port!"

The *Pinguin* answered her helm at once and it was just as well, for she almost rammed the Arado. With his lynx-like eyes, Michaelsen had spotted that the light was nearer than they had at first thought. The men on the Arado were showing a light with their half blacked-out signal lamp, and that made it easy to misjudge the distance.

Within a quarter of an hour the airmen and the crew of the lifeboat were on the deck of the *Pinguin* again.

"We were gradually making up our disconsolate minds that we weren't going to be found," said Müller, and they all found it easy to laugh at the thought now.

Krüder indicated the chief quartermaster.

"A clairvoyant is just nothing at all compared with Neumeister here," he said shortly.

Neumeister entered the incident in his diary, concluding his remarks with the words, "Although I say it myself, it *was* quite a performance."

With which modest claim no one is likely to disagree.

Dr Hasselmann also made a note of the incident in his diary:

"I must say I found it astonishing, and even a little uncanny, to find that we went straight for the very spot where the Arado and the cutter were waiting for us—so dead straight that we nearly ran them down!"

15. EMBARRASSING CAPTURE

THE "SECOND EYE" OF THE PINGUIN REPORTED HAVING SIGHTED the masts of a single ship on the horizon.

The chief engineer and his men cursed under their breath. Only yesterday the *Pinguin* had sunk the *Maimoa,* and they were anxious to uncouple the port engine and give it a thorough overhaul. "Blast!" said the chief. "There's nothing for it; we'll have to leave the job until later."

The *Pinguin* passed close enough to the *Storstad* for Krüder to shout across by megaphone.

"Thanks, Lewit! Nice work."

Before long the masts of the stranger came in sight. Krüder turned away and followed a parallel course, out of sight, but as the stokers in the other ship shoveled fuel into their furnaces smoke rose into the sky and became visible to the watchers on the *Pinguin.* In this way it was not long before Krüder was in a position to determine her course and speed. The next thing to discover was whether or not she was British.

"What do you reckon she is?" Krüder asked his navigating officer.

"Either British or Australian, sir. The Americans don't use steamships in these parts."

For a moment or two the funnels of the other ship came into view.

"She belongs to either the Blue Funnel or Port Line," said Warning. "We shall have to clear the prison quarters forward; she'll have at least fifty lascars on board."

"No question about it," Michaelsen then confirmed, "she belongs to the Port Line."

Krüder decided not to attack in daylight. The *Maimoa* had not only reported his position, but she had had time to describe the *Pinguin's* appearance; her superstructure and her speed. And the astonished naval bases around the Indian Ocean had also learned that the German raider was equipped with a fairly fast plane capable of dropping bombs.

At least the *Pinguin* was now steering a "reasonable" course. You can't steer what course you like in the Indian Ocean if you want to remain unobserved. If a ship is not steering either east or west she immediately becomes suspect, for to the south there is only the Antarctic and no ships on their lawful business are to be found either coming or going on such a course—except whalers.

The almost invisible chase, or rather, the stalking, went on throughout the day. Most of the crew were relieved of all duties in order that they should be fresh for the work before them that night.

Thanks to the fact that the British ship was a coal-burner, there was always a smudge of smoke in the sky to betray her presence and her position. The *Pinguin*, on the other hand, was an oil burner, and there was therefore no trace of smoke to betray her to her quarry. In addition, the mast was kept as short as possible—short enough not to be sighted in such circumstances and yet long enough not to attract curiosity on account of its stumpiness. And further, the watch and the officers of the *Pinguin* were equipped with first-rate glasses, and the lookouts were relieved every two hours to obviate exhaustion. Needless to say, only the men with the very keenest eyesight were chosen for such responsible duties, though

that was not the only criterion—a slacker on lookout would mean destruction sooner or later.

Darkness fell suddenly at 1802. One moment it was still light and the next moment it was practically dark, as is the way of the tropics. Then the *Pinguin* began the chase proper. She altered her course to come up with the other ship—provided, of course, that the unsuspecting quarry did not alter hers or change her speed; though, in fact, most freighter captains did not adhere very rigidly—probably from a sort of natural inertia—to the instructions of the British Admiralty for steaming at night.

The *Pinguin* herself was blacked out with particular care. Without any special instructions, the gun crews went to their stations to make sure that everything was ready. In the galley vast quantities of special "middle watch" coffee—hot and strong—were prepared, because between 1900 and daybreak 325 men on arduous duties can consume a great deal.

From 2000 on, the *Pinguin* was at action stations. It was possible that the British ship would alter course in the darkness, and if she did she might suddenly appear out of the darkness. If that happened the *Pinguin* must be ready to receive her.

The night was unusually dark. Not a light was to be seen anywhere on the water. The sky was overcast, and neither moon nor stars were visible. It was literally difficult for a man to see his hand before his face. The intense darkness seemed to add to the natural tension. The men relieved it by discussing the coming operation in their own inimitable fashion.

"Let's hope he caves in without shooting," said one man. "Once you start letting off things you never know who's going to get a black eye. And we've got enough stuff on board to make a lovely bonfire."

"Let's hope he doesn't use his radio," said another. "We don't want any vulgar publicity."

"And when it's all over, nice and quiet-like, let's hope she's got fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, tons of cigarettes, and barrels of Jamaica rum on board," added a third.

"Amen," said a fourth.

Fresh fruit and fresh vegetables! Both officers and men on board the *Pinguin* longed eagerly for both.

At 2330 the chief quartermaster went to the bridge. There was nothing further for him to do in the chart house; the probable point of meeting and the time had already been reckoned down to the inch and minute. Neumeister carefully made his way through the blackout into the open. There was no conversation on the bridge. Everyone, from the captain down to the youngest seamen, knew that the performance was due to begin in just seventeen minutes. On the bridge each officer had his night glasses to his eyes, and no one took any notice of anyone else. The minutes passed slowly.

Suddenly there was a shout from the flag deck: "Ship in sight on starboard bow!"

As though steaming to a timetable, the British ship appeared punctually at the one-sided rendezvous. Her course was the one they had estimated on board the *Pinguin*. The *Pinguin* reduced speed, ran up the war flag, and uncovered her guns. The British steamer crossed her bows at a distance of about eight hundred yards, showing no navigation lights. The *Pinguin* followed in her wake.

"Enemy altering course!"

The ship ahead had altered course to starboard. A few minutes later she returned to her old course.

"I'd say the helmsman had stopped to light his pipe," said Lieutenant Schwinne.

The *Pinguin* now hauled out to port in order to obtain a favorable firing angle. The men on watch on the bridge began

to get nervous. Surely the other fellow must have seen the *Pinguin* by now. Krüder stood there calmly with his legs apart and studied the enemy through his night glasses. Around him his officers conversed in whispers, almost as though they feared that the men on the other ship would hear them. Quietly, too, the range-takers passed their reports down to the bridge. Their range-finders were above the bridge and camouflaged to look like a harmless water tank. Even inquisitive eyes would suspect nothing when they examined it at a distance.

The *Pinguin* was very close to the stranger now. Down below, the gun crews were laying their guns in accordance with the information passed down to them from the range-finders. In such situations Krüder was calmness itself, and those around him felt completely confident that they could rely on him to do the right thing at the right moment, whether it was the result of mathematical calculations, of reason and experience, or of that hunch seamen know so well.

When he finally gave the order to attack every man on board sighed with relief:

"Switch on searchlight! Half speed ahead both! Open fire!"

The *Pinguin* opened fire without warning, and her first salvo hit the unsuspecting British merchant ship amidships, destroying the radio cabin at once and making it impossible for her to send out appeals for help. One salvo was enough. The merchant ship stopped at once and waited silently for the arrival of the German boarding party. Her bridge was on fire now, and the flames were spreading. Krüder ordered the searchlight to be switched off; the light of the flames was quite enough to guide the boarding party.

Part of the crew of the burning ship left in the boats before the boarding party came on deck, where they discovered that, despite the damage done, the firing had caused no casualties.

At this point it may be observed that it was not only after the war that interest in enemy timepieces arose. In fact, all *Pinguin* boarding parties always had a couple of men or so whose job it was to search rapidly in all likely places for them. However, their booty, when they came across it, did not consist of gold timepieces or modern Swiss wristwatches; no, they were much more modest. All they wanted was alarm clocks. Sometimes they found them in the sailors' quarters, sometimes in officers' cabins, and almost always in the stewards' and cooks' quarters. Krüder wanted those alarm clocks for use with his fuses. The usual issue of long-burning cord-fuse did not burn long enough, or went out, as happened in the case of the *Domingo de Larrinaga.*

A new batch of prisoners was now taken on board the *Pinguin.* To Krüder's astonishment and embarrassment, one of them was a woman. The guns of the *Pinguin* had awakened her from her beauty sleep most ungallantly, and she was still in her nightgown with a coat hurriedly pulled on over it. When the roll was called in cooperation with the British some of the men were found to be missing. The second officer assured Krüder that no one had been killed or wounded, and that everyone should have left the ship. Then a boat was discovered to be missing, and Krüder immediately ordered a search of the surrounding area, but without success. After sinking the British ship, which proved to be the *Port Brisbane* of the Port Line registered in London, an 8,700-ton refrigerator ship carrying frozen meat, butter, cheese and other goods, Krüder moved slowly around the area for a while with all available hands on deck to reinforce the lookout, but not a sign of the missing boat could be seen. In the end he abandoned the search.

Krüder congratulated himself on his decision not to attack the *Port Brisbane* during the day. Like the *Maimoa,* she was

armed with long-range guns that could have caused the *Pinguin* a good deal of trouble at a distance before she could get into range herself.

Almost another 9,000 tons of shipping had been destroyed and a valuable cargo sent to the bottom. In addition, she had been a refrigerator ship and that meant a supplementary loss to the enemy, for such a ship was worth vastly more than a freighter of the same tonnage. The list of the *Pinguin's* victims was beginning to look really impressive.

"One by one," said Krüder with deep satisfaction. "Like the industrious squirrel collects its nuts."

The remark was addressed to his navigating officer as they decided on the *Pinguin's* new course.

When they had finished the time was 0230. Krüder went first to port and sniffed the night air, and then to starboard, where he sniffed it again. Apparently the result was satisfactory, for after that he said, "Good night, all," and disappeared into his cabin.

Whoever felt in the mood went below and got himself a pair of hot *Würstchen* from the galley. Before long the whole crew, with the exception of the men on watch, had followed the example of their captain and retired.

A few days later the communications officer arrived on the bridge with a report from a British radio station, according to which an Australian cruiser had picked up a lifeboat in latitude 30 degrees south, longitude 95 degrees east, with men from the *Port Brisbane,* sunk in the night by a German commerce raider. A later message announced that naval units were on the track of the German vessel.

"Is that so?" said Krüder dryly.

On November twenty-eighth the *Buenos Aires Herald* printed a fuller account:

"R. F. Dingle, second engineer of the sunk refrigerator ship *Port Brisbane,* declares that her assailant was an armed merchant ship.

"Dingle, who took command of a lifeboat with twenty-seven survivors and was subsequently picked up by an Australian cruiser in the neighborhood of the sinking, reports that he was awakened on November twenty-first at 0052 hours by gunfire.

" 'I rushed on deck,' he says, 'and I saw the raider, an armed merchant ship, standing about a mile and a half off. The *Port Brisbane* was hit about eight times on upper deck level, but as far as I could discover none of the crew was killed or wounded.

" 'I persuaded the men in the boat with me to show no light. They agreed and declared they would sooner take a chance with me in the open boat than suffer the fate of the *Altmark* prisoners. I watched the raider torpedo the *Port Brisbane.* She was burning fiercely when she slid under water. That was at about two o'clock in the morning.

" 'When daylight came I fixed our position and proposed that we should make for Australia, although in the prevailing wind conditions we had not much hope of getting there. That afternoon we decided to take advantage of favorable winds and make for Mauritius instead. I warned the men to make up their minds to undertake a passage of about forty days, but at six o'clock that same day we were picked up by an Australian cruiser which had come out in search of the raider.' "

The newspaper suggested that the ghost ship responsible for all the damage must be commanded by Count Lückner. It did not seem to occur to anyone that Count Lückner, though still alive, had really reached an age which would effectively have prevented his taking on such an arduous command.

Krüder had attacked the *Port Brisbane* without warning because he had decided that ships showing no lights at night could properly be treated as auxiliary cruisers, particularly when they were heavily armed like the *Port Brisbane* and the *Maimoa.* In fact, in the case of the *Port Brisbane* he had felt quite certain that she was an auxiliary cruiser.

Right up to the outbreak of war, international lawyers were not in agreement about the exact legal status of armed merchant ships. Some authorities were even of the opinion that a ship's behavior determined whether it was a combatant or not, though this, of course, was an impossible decision and provided no clear legal status. When two armed merchant ships faced each other on the high seas it meant that one of them had the right to the first shot while the other was under an obligation to wait until it had been fired—perhaps scoring a deadly hit. The ordinary rules for taking prizes at sea obviously could not apply to armed merchantmen, and the logical conclusion was therefore that such ships could be sunk without warning.

During the First World War the German government held firm views on the question, but they were not generally accepted. It claimed that merchantmen should have no right to resist seizure as unarmed prizes, and that if they did they would place themselves in the position of illegal combatants and could be treated as pirates or sea-going *franc-tireurs.* On the other hand, it was generally agreed that if the arming of merchant ships were to be permitted then it must also be permissible to use force against such armed ships, and that in such cases the previously valid rules for the taking of prizes at sea could be waived.

Although the *Pinguin* had got rid of a number of her prisoners to the prize ship *Nordvard,* Krüder had decided to keep

all his captains on board. There were a quite a number of them now, and the most self-possessed and self-confident of them all was Captain Thornton of the *British Commander*. At first he had been perfectly convinced that before very long he would be released by his colleagues of the Senior Service; but, as his hopes of a speedy release faded, he began to feel that all was not as well as he had supposed.

"If I had any say in the matter this damned German raider would have been sent to the bottom long ago," he growled.

And quite by chance, Dr. Hasselmann made an interesting discovery. One of the British captains fell ill; and while attending him, Hasselmann spotted a piece of squared paper with letters and figures on it, the sort of thing he had noticed during his visits to the chart house. He confiscated it at once and showed it to Krüder. At the sight of it, Krüder allowed himself one of his infrequent curses.

"Who's been blabbing?" he exclaimed angrily. "That's an exact record of our position for the past week."

But no one had been blabbing. The British captains were all experienced master mariners who knew a thing or two about navigation. With the aid of their watches and the sun and the constant alteration of the ship's clock made necesary by the zig-zag cruise of the *Pinguin*, they had worked out her approximate position. As new prisoners were brought on board, so they were able to check up the accuracy of their calculations. It was as simple as that, and Krüder was much relieved to learn that his first suspicion was baseless.

For days the sinking of the *Port Brisbane* was the subject of conversation among the captured British captains.

"Just as well they caught us, perhaps," observed the captain of that ship. "If they'd caught the *Port Wellington* they'd have found seven women on board instead of one."

The captain spoke too soon. A week later the night of the

the new moon was made bright by a tremendous conflagration. Krüder stood on the bridge of the *Pinguin* and watched the *Port Wellington* burning furiously.

She, too, had been spotted in daylight by the *Pinguin's* innocent-looking "second eye." She had been stalked during the day in exactly the same fashion, and then at night the *Pinguin* had gone ahead and waited for her to come up. The *Port Wellington* had hove in sight at about midnight, steaming without navigation lights and in a complete blackout. Through their night glasses, the officers on the deck of the *Pinguin* could see that she was heavily armed. The observation confirmed Krüder's intention to treat her as an auxiliary cruiser.

The first salvo from the *Pinguin* hit her amidships, destroyed her radio cabin, and set her on fire.

As usual, Krüder sent medical assistance with his boarding party, but they found that no one had been killed or seriously wounded. One British seaman who happened to have been on deck had a shell splinter in his buttocks, but it was more painful than serious, and he was cursing rather than groaning.

The boarding party hurriedly searched the ship, trying to save what papers and so on were to be saved from the burning bridge. The *Pinguin* was interested above all in the ship's record of wireless messages received, any instructions as to her course, and any other documents of importance—including the mail that fast vessels such as the *Port Wellington* usually carried. But one thing they did look for eagerly was—apart from alarm-clocks—rubber erasers. There was more rubbing out to be done in the chart house than the supply depot at home could apparently conceive of. A chief quartermaster without an eraser is like a tailor without a basting iron.

New batches of prisoners came on board. In the middle of the proceedings the alarm bells sounded. The lookout had sighted a ship close at hand which he believed to be a warship.

The *Pinguin* raced off at top speed, turning on a wide arc. Where the lookout had thought he had seen a ship there was nothing but a bank of cloud. The man had been seeing things. For hours he had been staring into the darkness. In such circumstances it is easy to imagine things.

"Give the fellow twenty-four hours board leave," said Krüder irritably. "All right," he added almost immediately, "Forget it. We won't blame him. But the men should say when they need a break. Every man should know when he's coming near the limit. That's more necessary here than anywhere."

The *Pinguin* returned to the scene to pick up the remainder of the boats.

"Good lord!" exclaimed Krüder. "What's that? Are my eyes beginning to play *me* tricks, or are there women in that boat?"

They were women all right, the seven the captain of the *Port Brisbane* had mentioned to his colleagues previously. And they had very little on; some of them had hurriedly put on a coat or raincoat over their nightgowns. No one wears much when they go to sleep in a tropical zone; even thin silk is too much.

"Bach and Hanefeld, you're married men," said Krüder. "You ought to know something about what ladies wear underneath and so on. Go on board and see if you can find them something to wear. I don't suppose they've got much with them. Here, take Kötter with you; he used to be a traveler in ladies' undies if I'm not mistaken."

Krüder did his best for his unexpected guests. He had a cabin cleared for them, big enough to hold the eight ladies he now had on board, and when they were settled in he went to visit them. He apologized for the distress he was unfortunately compelled to cause them and assure them that he would do everything in his power to make them as comfortable as possible. On the whole, they took their troubles very well. One of them was a very pretty girl indeed. She seemed

to find the whole adventure highly diverting and when she laughed, as she often did, she revealed a set of teeth that many a film star might have envied. She was, it appeared, the daughter of a British general.

"You're on top for the moment," she said to Krüder cheerfully, "but you haven't won by a long chalk yet."

Krüder grinned at the high-spirited girl.

"I know," he said: "He laughs best who laughs last. Well, we'll see."

On the bridge a seaman arrived with a message from the officer in charge of the prisoners to say that there was a general among them.

"Army I've never heard of, sir. Something like Sal-vaht-se-ohns army."

Krüder laughed heartily.

"That's the good old *Heilsarmee,*" he said to the astonished seaman. "Salvation Army, it's called in English."

The general turned out to be a brigadier in "the Army," a serene and gentle creature of quite enlightened views.

"Even damned serious matters usually have their funny side if only you can see it," said Krüder.

In the short absence of the *Pinguin,* the boarding party which had been abandoned on board the *Port Wellington* contined its search of the ship, fetching various things up on deck from the holds, including post and parcels, to be taken on board the *Pinguin.*

The men on board who knew a fair amount of English—and there were quite a number—were set to the job of opening and reading the letters.

"Perhaps we'll find someone in Durban writing to his aunt Nelly in Sydney to tell her he's coming to see her on the *Queen Mary,*" said Krüder hopefully. "That would be a titbit."

The gift parcels were particularly welcome. To some extent

Krüder was able to use the clothing they contained to supplement the often very inadequate wardrobes of his prisoners, a very important matter indeed in view of the coming voyage of the *Pinguin* into the Antarctic. There were some very good things available, including woolen clothing, rubber boots, leather boots, fur-lined garments—and even baby clothes.

"Baby clothes," said the irrepressible Lieutenant Gabe with a wink and a gesture toward the ladies' cabin. "Perhaps our ship's sawbones will have something to do before the voyage is over. Can anyone imagine Able Seaman Poeten as a midwife?"

16. THE PINGUIN TURNS SOUTH

KRÜDER STEERED FOR THE WESTERN PART OF THE INDIAN OCEAN where he had arranged a rendezvous with Captain Rogge, who was in command of the auxiliary cruiser *Atlantis.*

One beautiful tropical day followed the other. There was no wind, and sea and sky merged into each other almost imperceptibly. Krüder was taking advantage of the fine weather and the quiet days to sit out in the sun on the bridge in a deck chair. On one such occasion, he was going through the lists and papers of the ships he had sunk.

"Here's a remarkably apt name, I must say," he observed, "fits like a fist to a black eye." And he handed a list containing the names of the non-British members of the crew of the *Nowshera* to Lieutenant Gabe, who happened to the officer of the watch at the time. Gabe read out the names:

"Li Hing, stoker, Canton; Pang Fung, stoker, Canton; Yung Chung, seaman, Onfei; Sambo Na Diage, stoker, Dakar; Ng Ah Ding, cook, Shanghai; Salamat Ali, serang, Calcutta; Tofazel Hosein, seaman, Bombay . . ."

"No," said Krüder. "This one," and his broad finger pointed to a name.

"Wong Sow, steward, Kwantung," read out Gabe.

"Just imagine ordering a dish of pig's feet from Steward Sow," said Krüder.

In the night Krüder left the Australian run. Until his appearance it had been untouched, but he had exploited it to the

limit. The ether was still being disturbed by wireless messages and appeals. In their nervousness, some of the freighters were sending out appeals for help as soon as they sighted another ship, usually a friend.

On December 1st, 1940, Charlie Brunke transmitted a coded message home:

"*HK*-33 to Naval Command: have sunk 79,000 gross register tons to date. Mining successes still uncertain. Am detaching prize *Storstad* on course with orders to make for point Andalusia in Atlantic."

Work then began on the ex-Norwegian tanker to provide accommodation for the many prisoners. A cabin amidships on the port side was prepared for the British captains, and another one on the starboard side for the women. They had formerly served as cabins for Norwegian officers, so the British captains would not be able to complain that they were not being given suitable accommodation. Apart from that, however, the arrangement had the advantage of keeping the captains away from their officers and men. Above them were the quarters of the German prize crew, and above them again were only bridge and wheelhouse. The British officers were accommodated in the former Norwegian crew's quarters, while the white members of the various captured crews had to live together in the forward holds. It was the best that could be done, particularly as the *Storstad* was, after all, only a tanker. The non-European prisoners were given the former mine room to make themselves comfortable in, and Krüder arranged that they should have cooking facilities of their own. Most of the Norwegian members of the crew were left in their old cabins aft. The Norwegian engine-room men were asked to look after the engines. At first they were doubtful, but finally they agreed. Once they had agreed Krüder knew that they could be trusted. Lieutenant Hanefeld was to take command.

"Do you think you can get along with ten men, Hanefeld?"

asked Krüder. "I really don't think I can spare you any more."

Except in an emergency, Krüder rarely gave orders without leaving his subordinates the possibility of raising reasonable objections.

"That'll be all right, sir. We'll manage."

"Very well, then consider yourself on board leave until the day you part company. Have a really good rest. You've got a long and difficult voyage ahead of you, and you probably won't get a great deal of sleep."

"Very good, sir."

The *Pinguin* took on another 3,000 tons of fuel oil from the *Storstad* before she left, and on December fifth Lieutenant Hanefeld set off to cover the 20,000 miles which separated him from home, a voyage likely to be beset with many dangers and difficulties. Krüder presented him with a captured bottle of "King George V" whisky for luck, and the good wishes of everyone on board the *Pinguin* went with him—if only because he was carrying their letters home.

A few days later the *Storstad* met the *Atlantis* and took further prisoners on board. As they now numbered no less than 623, Captain Rogge spared Hanefeld a few more German seamen to strengthen his crew. At the next meeting-point, "Andalusia" in the South Atlantic, the *Storstad* took on further prisoners from the heavy cruiser *Admiral Scheer,* and Hanefeld was given an officer to assist him in his arduous duties.

On two occasions the prisoners, and in particular the group of British captains, made an attempt to seize the ship, led, of course, by the intrepid Captain Thornton. In both cases Hanefeld found an amicable solution to the problem, coming to a gentlemen's agreement with Thornton. After that there was no further trouble. In Thornton's place Hanefeld would

have acted no differently—an appreciation of the other fellow's point of view helps.

Two of the British captains, Dudley Crowther, who had been a passenger on the *Nowshera*, and, of course, Thornton, swore by all the gods that no German prison camp should hold them and that as soon as they got ashore they would make their escape.

"I think you're talking very recklessly, gentlemen," was all Hanefeld could say. "How do you think you'll be guarded when I inform the German escort of your intentions?"

Thornton looked at the German keenly.

"But you won't," he said dryly.

"No," admitted Hanefeld. "I don't suppose I shall."

Incidentally, both captains were as good as their word: before the war was over they had escaped and made their way to England via Portugal.

Shortly before the *Storstad* reached the French Atlantic coast, which would have meant hazardous navigation because Hanefeld had no proper charts of the coastal area, a Sunderland spotted them and came down to have a closer look. Hanefeld had a bright red Turkish flag spread out on deck. The Sunderland was not altogether satisfied.

"What ship?" it blinked.

Hanefeld winked back a rude remark in German, but spelt backwards.

"I hope that sounds Turkish enough for them," he said thoughtfully. The situation was delicate.

"Don't understand. Repeat," said the Sunderland.

Hanefeld duly obliged, only to get the same message.

This sort of backchat went on for quite a while, until finally the men on board the Sunderland seemed to give it up as a bad job and the plane disappeared.

Hanefeld then made for the north Spanish coast, where at last he picked up the message from the German Naval Command he had been waiting for:

"Steer such and such a course. German naval and air units are expecting you."

By chance the alteration of course imposed on the *Storstad* as a result of her encounter with the Sunderland proved to be the correct one, and all Hanefeld had to do was to sneak up the French coast as far as the mouth of the Gironde. The weather was very bad indeed and the nights pitch dark, which was all the better. One night they suddenly found themselves in the middle of a fishing fleet. The following morning they sighted a narrow finger jutting into the sky on the horizon. It was the lighthouse off the Gironde estuary. The next day Hanefeld and his men were being personally congratulated by Admiral de la Perière. At a suitable moment Hanefeld asked for a favor for his men.

"If it's possible, sir, I should like to let my men have something for themselves out of the provision stocks on board the prize. They'll be going home on leave, you see," he said.

"A very good idea," agreed the admiral heartily. "They've certainly earned it."

"How much may they take, sir?"

"Well, say as much as a man can carry personally."

"Thank you, sir."

Hanefeld grinned to himself. He had a picture of Able Seaman Dittmann, a Hamburg docker in civilian life, carrying away his share. The man could almost pick up a rowboat under his arm and walk away with it.

A few days later the prisoners were taken ashore. Hanefeld watched them going down the gangway. When it was Captain Thornton's turn he turned toward Hanefeld and stuck out his hand with a friendly grin.

"So long," he said cheerfully. "All the best—but only for you, not for your side."

The two sailors shook hands warmly.

On December eighth the lookout on the *Pinguin* sighted mastheads on the horizon. Krüder sent a signalman with two flags into the top to exchange the agreed groups of code letters.

"Correct," he said when he received the reply. "All hands fall in on the starboard side of the upper deck. Dress—white uniform."

The *Pinguin* held her course toward the other ship. It was the German auxiliary cruiser *Atlantis* under the command of Captain Rogge. Krüder and Rogge were old friends, and their two commands were sister ships, both of the Hansa Line. Despite their camouflage, an expert would have spotted the similarity.

Dr. Hasselmann described the meeting in his diary:

"We fell in in white service uniform, but the parade discipline was not very strict. The two ships passed each other so closely that you could recognize this face and that aboard the other vessel, and soon old acquaintances were waving to each other and shouting friendly greetings. When we were actually opposite each other, the waving and cheering was tremendous. It was rather like a school reunion. . . . Then there were visits and return visits. The experts of the various branches of the service discussed their experiences and gave each other valuable tips. Both the old navy men and the former merchant service men found comrades on board the other ship. My opposite number on board the *Atlantis* was Georgie Reil, an old student colleague from Kiel."

The meeting sent the men's spirits rocketing, and there was a tremendous amount of joking and leg-pulling between the two crews, but the joy was all too short; two days later, on December tenth, the two ships went their respective ways.

Krüder was now steering a course which would take him between Crozet Island and Prince Edward Island into the Antarctic.

Reckoned by tonnage sunk, Krüder's ship was the most successful auxiliary cruiser in the Second World War, but Rogge's ship, the *Atlantis,* broke the world's record for the length of time spent at sea. For 622 days the *Atlantis* cruised through the seven seas as an auxiliary cruiser, ready for action the whole time and without ever putting into harbor. In the end she was caught at a rendezvous with her supply ship in the South Atlantic and sunk by the British cruiser H.M.S. *Devonshire.*

On board the *Pinguin* they all knew by this time where they were bound for and everyone consciously enjoyed the last warm tropical days before their ship penetrated into the bitter storms of the Antarctic. The wind was still velvety and the color of the sea was crystal blue and so transparent that a sinking object could be followed with the eye for a long time before it finally disappeared into the depths.

It seems odd that in the periods of relaxation following danger and excitement a man almost goes to pieces. The men of the *Pinguin* were feeling the reaction now. Those who sat around and had nothing to do ought to have been feeling happy, for they were drinking the very best Bremen export beer which enjoys a high reputation all over the world, but they were not. There was very little conversation. All they had to say to each other had been said long ago and no one had any inclination to philosophize—and if they had done so they would probably have come to the conclusion that war was just idiocy: "Fancy being here when we might be at home!"

The wind began to rise and the weather grew cold and raw as the *Pinguin* approached the great Antarctic Ocean, where

the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Indian Oceans join together to form one vast area of water. The color of the sea changed, too; from a transparent blue or green it became a dirty gray. The monarch of seabirds, the albatross, grew less and less frequent, and instead there were other birds of the storm and many, many gulls. Shrieking, croaking, and scolding, they flew around and around the unusual visitor.

In December sixteenth the *Pinguin* entered the polar sea proper and the next day there was almost as much excitement on board as though a whole British armada had been sighted —actually it was only the first iceberg. Deeply impressed, the men crowded on deck to watch the deep-blue glistening monster sail past. Krüder went as close in as was possible without taking unnecessary risks in order to give his men a good view of the miracle.

"I don't care for any sort of exaggeration," said the sober-minded Michaelsen. "And an iceberg's an exaggeration, if you like! They're going to give us a lot of trouble before we're through."

It was not long before his pessimistic prophecy was realized to the full. The icebergs soon floated along in shoals instead of one at a time. Lieutenant Hemmer, in particular, was beside himself, staring at them like a schoolboy at a football match.

"Anyone would think we were surrounded by 150 icebergs," joked Krüder.

The next morning when he came on to the bridge Hemmer was there to greet him.

"Report the presence of 150 icebergs, sir," he said solemnly.

Krüder laughed. "You'll put a hefty contribution into the wardroom Christmas box if that's not true," he said, and he began to count. There were exactly 150 icebergs in sight; not one more and not one less. He took the joke in good part, laughed again, and put the contribution in himself.

17. THE CAPTURE OF THE WHALING FLEET

KRÜDER GAVE THE MEN A REST FROM CHRISTMAS TO THE NEW Year, though after Christmas he did send out the Arado on a reconnaissance flight. The airmen returned without having sighted anything. The crew didn't bother their heads about this flight and merely regarded it as another example of Krüder's caution. But the *Pinguin* was not in the Antarctic merely in order to celebrate Christmas in peace, or even in order to evade the net the enemy was spreading for her. Krüder had a very definite plan. It was no less than to capture the entire Norwegian whaling fleet—without firing a shot if possible.

At the meeting of the *Atlantis* and the *Pinguin* Captain Rogge had handed over certain very valuable documentary material to Krüder for his project, including charts of the Antarctic and sailing directions. This material had been found on board the Norwegian tanker *Teddy* after her capture by the *Atlantis*. In the winter of 1939–40 the *Teddy* had been used as a supply ship for the Norwegian whaling fleet, and her course around the Bouvet Islands had been marked on the chart. The precaution of rubbing it out again had been taken, but thanks to the indentation of the paper it had proved quite easy to reconstruct.

Krüder knew that the Naval Command was considering sending the heavy cruiser *Admiral Scheer* to cooperate in the project, as she happened to be in the South Atlantic, but so far

no definite instructions had been issued for a joint operation, and he felt confident that he could do the job on his own. In that case the *Admiral Scheer* could be used for other tasks. He decided to take a chance and go ahead on his own. The first thing to do was to find out where the Norwegians were.

At first the situation looked pretty hopeless. It was difficult even to know where to start. A glance at the map of the Antarctic is enough to reveal what a task Krüder had set himself. However, a few days after the New Year the *Pinguin's* radio operators picked up radio conversations in Norwegian. Krüder now began to spend a great deal of his time in the radio cabin where the operator, Pastor, had taken up his quarters in order to be on the job all the time. Pastor's mother was a Norwegian, and he spoke Norwegian fluently. Finally they managed to work out the position of the Norwegian vessels from these conversations, but it was extremely difficult owing to the disturbances caused by the proximity of the magnetic South Pole.

Pastor translated every scrap of the conversations among the Norwegians, and the log began to grow thicker and thicker. Krüder studied it hour by hour. In this way an apparent confusion of lines gradually formed on the chart, but for the expert there was nothing confusing about the picture they presented. All the lines crossed at one particular point; that was the position of the Norwegian whale-factory ship, which was the first German objective.

From the conversations it was evident that the captain of the factory ship, which was called *Ole Wegger,* was expecting the arrival of a second factory ship, which was reported to be already on the way from South America to take over the already extracted whale oil and carry it home. This prospect was tempting enough to cause Krüder to postpone his attempt to surprise the Norwegians.

In the meantime, his information about the whaling fleet

grew more and more complete. He knew just how much whale oil was ready, how many whalers there were, the names of their captains, how many blue whales were still moored alongside the factory ship waiting to be worked, and so on. One of the captains was grumbling about excessive smoke from his furnace, pointing out that there was always a possibility that German raiders might penetrate even into these waters.

Krüder grinned, particularly at the message that went out from the factory ship in reply: "Don't get excited, Knud. There's nothing to worry about here."

The disgruntled captain was not so easily satisfied.

"There's no reason why a German auxiliary cruiser shouldn't pay us a visit. They're about, according to reports from London."

"Nonsense!" came the optimistic reply. "They've all been sunk, and their cruisers proper are all in Norwegian waters."

"What about submarines?" persisted the obstinate captain.

"Think again, Knud! Where would they get the fuel to pay us a visit in these parts? You'll be mistaking whales for U-boats soon. We're as safe here as in Abraham's bosom. Not so warm, though."

They were both wrong: the captain with his smoky funnel and the factory ship captain with his optimism. The German raider had quite different methods of finding their position.

On January thirteenth Krüder learned from his communications officer that the *Ole Wegger* had reported the arrival of the second factory ship, the *Polglimt*, to the whalers.

Krüder knew all he wanted to know about the position of the two ships now, and he decided to launch his attack in the first pale twilight which begins to fall around midnight. At 2000 the engines of the *Pinguin* were driving her shafts at their full revolutions. The weather was kind. On the way low-lying clouds reduced visibility to practically nil, and the *Pinguin* proceeded by dead reckoning. When, according to their

calculations, they were beginning to feel that they must be very near to the position of the factory ships, the clouds rose as though the curtain at a theater were going up on the performance. The pastel evening of the polar night—it lasted only for an hour—showed them the two unsuspecting Norwegian ships lying close together with their unworked whales moored between them. They obviously felt very safe, for they were actually moored together.

Krüder ordered his boarding parties, who had been standing by, to lower their boats; and at the same time he used his signal lamp to morse to the Norwegians: "Offer no resistance. It would be useless. And don't use your wireless or I fire."

But there was no one on board the Norwegian vessels in a position to read the warning, not even a lookout. There was not a soul to be seen and no movement of any kind. Only a few oil lamps were swinging on deck in the icy wind.

"The lads have probably been working hard since the second ship arrived," said Krüder. "They must be all asleep. So much the better."

In the meantime, two of the four boats were rapidly approaching the Norwegians. One made for the *Polglimt*, and a second for the *Ole Wegger*. The others went off toward the whalers in the hope of taking them by surprise, too.

The whole drama might have been unrolling in a prehistoric seascape; a gloomy misty atmosphere hung heavily over the strange scene.

The men in Lieutenant Bach's boat were almost jerked off their thwarts as their boat bumped into the soft, slippery belly of one of the whales moored against the side of the *Ole Wegger*. Hurriedly they clambered out on to the back of the whale, and immediately wished they had chosen some other method of approach. It was worse than being on ice; it was like walking on a highly polished floor covered with marbles. Mountaineering boots with spikes were needed here.

Lieutenant Bach was a man of fifty with hair growing gray, but he was wiry. He clambered up the side of the *Ole Wegger* by means of a jumping ladder which had conveniently been left over the side. At the top he paused a moment to get his breath and see all his men on board. 'It's like a motion picture,' he thought. "Right you are, lads," he said in an undertone. "Off you go."

The men ran as silently as possible to their prearranged stations while Bach himself ran toward the bridge and the captain's cabin. The door was, as he had expected, on the starboard side. Why should a whale-factory ship be any differently constructed in that respect? Making as little noise as possible, he pushed open the door. But the captain was a light sleeper, and with the instinct of the seaman he felt something was wrong before he knew it. He grabbed for his jacket, which was hanging over the back of a chair. But Bach was already in the cabin, and he kicked the chair over so that the jacket fell out of the captain's reach.

"Take it easy, cap'n," he said. "Leave your gun alone. Your ship has just been occupied by a German boarding party, but there needn't be any unpleasantness unless you insist."

The astonished Norwegian gradually grasped the situation and then asked permission to get up and dress. Bach removed a fat wallet and an automatic pistol from the captain's jacket and handed it to him.

"Andersen," said the captain when he had dressed. "Captain of this ship."

"Lieutenant Bach," said his captor with a short bow.

In the meantime, the other members of the boarding party had done their jobs. The radio cabin was occupied, and the Norwegian crew had been aroused and shepherded on deck. There were about three hundred of them and they stood around on deck with their hands in their pockets, giving the

Germans black looks. One or two of them were huge men with shoulders as broad as a barn door.

Warning signaled over from the *Polglimt.* Things had gone smoothly there, too. Both factory ships were safely in German hands. Krüder had been watching through his glasses from the bridge of the *Pinguin.*

"Working like a charm," he muttered. "Bringing in the sheep."

But three of the sheep were obstinate. They had realized what was going on, and now they began to move away toward the west. Through the radio of the *Ole Wegger* Kruder ordered them to return or be sunk.

"Something wrong with my engines," replied one of them. "I'll be back later."

"Damn his eyes and blast his soul!" cursed Kruder. "He's still moving."

"We can always blow him out of the water," said the waiting gunnery officer.

"Blow that cockleshell out of the water!" said Krüder irritably. "No, that would be a bit thick. They can't do anything with their radio, thank goodness; they haven't the range."

"Can't turn," reported the captain of the second fugitive. "Rope has fouled my rudder."

The third captain didn't bother to reply at all, and all three continued their flight.

There was nothing Krüder could do apart from turning his guns on them, and that he was unwilling to do. Those whalers could do their fourteen knots, and in any case the *Pinguin* was not in a position to chase them at the moment. When they came in sight of their quarry Krüder had put his engines from full speed ahead to full astern and the head of one of the engines had blown off. The *Pinguin* was helpless now until the damaged engine had been uncoupled. Krüder also knew that

there was another factory ship not far away, which meant that he would have to act quickly. He had no time to waste chasing little whalers around, so when their captains defied him he just put up with it.

He gave orders that his men should try to persuade the Norwegians to work the remaining whales, and as soon as the *Pinguin* was ready he set off to the eastward, leaving a handful of German sailors behind. The numerical relationship between them and the Norwegians was about twenty to one, and it was just as well that the latter did not realize that the *Pinguin* would be away for days. In addition, they did not know that the *Pinguin* was the only German vessel in the area. They felt fairly certain that a proper warship was somewhere in the offing; the behavior of their captors had been too daring and self-confident. In actual fact, the nearest German warship was the *Admiral Scheer* which was 600 miles away and still waiting for the radio message which would tell her commander, Captain Krancke, that Krüder was on the track of the Norwegian whaling fleet and that the joint operation could begin.

Once again the *Pinguin* was in luck. Fog and mist cut the visibility down to nil, and she was able to surprise the third Norwegian factory ship, the *Pelagos*, as she had surprised the others. The final approach was favored by the clouds of steam escaping from the factory ship, whose crew was hard at work on the whales. Here, too, there was no resistance, and this time Krüder, who was a man who learned quickly from experience, took precautions to see that none of the whalers escaped. As soon as the boarding party were in charge of the *Pelagos*, he stood off a little way in the *Pinguin* and got Pastor to send out a message in Norwegian telling the whalers to return to their base. There was no danger of the whaler captains noticing that a strange voice was talking to them because the radio distorts all voices.

The plan worked beautifully. The whaler captains were furious at being disturbed, but they all returned to the *Pelagos* dragging their whales behind them, and when they came on board to know what it was all about they found themselves face to face with armed German sailors. Their faces, when they realized what had happened and how neatly they had all been caught, were a study in consternation.

Within twenty-four hours the *Pinguin* had captured 40,000 gross registered tons—and it had all gone off as Krüder had planned, without firing a shot.

Dr. Hasselmann turned to his beloved diary as soon as things quieted down:

"Work continued without interruption on board the Norwegian factory ships. The *Pelagos* alone had thirty-five whales to deal with. It was all very interesting for us. None of us had ever seen a whale at close quarters. Now we saw them in every detail of their structure. They were bigger even than the biggest dinosaur of prehistoric times. The biggest of them was almost 100 feet long, and they weighed up to 160 tons, as much as 30 or more full-grown elephants, or perhaps a herd of 150 oxen. The great beasts—and beasts they are, not fish as is sometimes supposed—are hoisted on to the deck aft and flayed. The flesh is then cut into great slices and fed down through the deck into the tanks where the whale oil is extracted. After that the hulk is pulled forward to the bows where the remaining flesh is taken off the bones and immediately tinned.

"We all tried whale meat, though with some diffidence. Personally, I found that it tasted quite good, something like beef. The bones are not wasted; they are reduced to powder —after being sawed down to a suitable size—in grinding mills. The bristles of the great jaw bones are carefully collected, and, needless to say, particular attention is paid to the liver and the other vital organs on account of the concentrated

vitamins they contain. Nothing whatever is wasted. The whole whale—except the spout—is used.

"Once the Norwegians had got used to the idea, everything went on as though we were not there at all. They carried on their work as usual, and their attitude toward us was, if not friendly, at least not actively hostile. They took very little notice of us at all, and they made no attempt to turn the tables on us, which they could certainly have done with a well-planned *coup de main,* for in the absence of the *Pinguin* there were very few German seamen left behind as guards. I think the explanation of this passivity is that they believed a German warship to be not far away."

Krüder had thought of a new trick. While the factory ships were dealing with the remaining whales, he set off westward with the *Pinguin;* that is to say, precisely in the direction from which countermeasures were to be expected. No wireless messages had been picked up from the fleeing whalers, but it was assumed that they were making their way to the whaling base at St. George or to the factory ship *Thorshammer* which was somewhere in the west, and radio conversations picked up by the *Pinguin* confirmed this.

Krüder steamed at full speed on a northwesterly course past Bouvet Island halfway to the South Sandwich Islands, and then he deliberately sent a long code message home. It took three-quarters of an hour to send and the three radiomen took it in turns, cursing under their breath at its inordinate length. If Krüder had not been their captain, they would have thought him mad to send out such a fantastically long message into the expectantly waiting ether so near a British naval base. Every enemy radio station within range would have time enough to discover their position. But as it was Krüder, they knew that there was a very good reason for everything he did.

There certainly was this time, too. Krüder knew perfectly well what he was up to when he sent off this long message so

far to the west; usually messages were deliberately kept as short as possible, but this one was intended to mislead the enemy; he wanted them to discover his position. While the *Pinguin* was on her way back, her radio operators picked up the first messages after their own had been heard; and Krüder discovered with a grin that a battleship, an aircraft carrier, and various other British naval units had put to sea from the Falkland Islands and from Simonstown in search of the elusive German auxiliary cruiser.

Owing to bad visibility the *Pinguin* did not sight the captured whalers on the way back, and Krüder turned south where his men saw the pack-ice limit for the first time in their lives—and the last. Then the *Pinguin* raced back. The weather had improved now, and they easily made contact again with the whalers. The voyage to send the British on a wild goose chase had lasted ten days. Now Krüder and his captives set off eastward. The *Pinguin* was in the lead, followed by the whalers, and the rear of the little fleet was brought up by the three big factory ships with their enormous superstructures. The three factory ships represented 35,000 gross register tons of shipping space, and they carried 22,000 tons of whale oil on board. In addition, the *Pinguin* had captured eleven whalers. It was a unique feat in the history of sea warfare.

The crew of the *Pinguin* got a belated Christmas present out of it all. It came from the dark cellarlike holds of the *Ole Wegger*. It was not much to look at, being roundish and lumpy in shape and none too clean. Botanically it belonged to the deadly nightshade family. All in all, a not very promising description, but in fact it was the common—not so common in the Antarctic—potato. For months the men of the *Pinguin* had eaten nothing but the dried variety; and, owing to the climate and possibly the presence of salt in the humid air, they tasted like nothing on earth—certainly not like potatoes—with the result that many of the men did not eat them at all. But the potatoes which represented part of the booty on

the *Ole Wegger* were the real thing, and their appearance, white and steaming, in the mess was greeted with loud cheers.

The papers found in the wallet of Captain Andersen of the *Ole Wegger* proved to include valuable secret instructions from the British Admiralty and a report concerning the activities of Germany's auxiliary cruisers. Asked by Krüder what he reckoned to be the top speed of such ships, Captain Andersen replied without hesitation: "Around twenty-five knots." Krüder made no comment and suppressed the grin of satisfaction that threatened to steal over his face. This fantastically exaggerated estimate was in all probability due to his little independent operation off the Gold Coast.

As he was not in a position to provide prize crews for all the vessels he had captured, he decided to send only the *Pelagos* off, together with her 10,000 tons of whale oil, under the command of Lieutenant Küster, who brought her safely to Bordeaux. The other ships he decided to take to the secret meeting place, "Andalusia," in the South Atlantic and there get prize crews for them from the supply ship.

The Naval Command informed the heavy cruiser *Admiral Scheer* of the brilliant success obtained by the *Pinguin* with the capture of almost the entire Norwegian whaling fleet and instructed her captain to leave prize crews at "Andalusia" to take the ships back to Europe. This was done, and the *Admiral Scheer* then set sail for the Indian Ocean. In the Madagascar area the cruiser successfully captured a number of enemy vessels; and as her operations became known to the British through the appeals of the attacked freighters for assistance, this led to a still further diversion of enemy naval forces. The confusion among the enemy was so great that it was even suggested that the auxiliary cruiser that had been operating in the Antarctic was actually a disguised cruiser and that this vessel was now operating in the Indian Ocean.

18. PAUSE FOR REFRESHMENT

THE PINGUIN WAS NOW MAKING FOR "THE SUNNY NORTH." ON her way she experienced a sample of all sorts of weather; sometimes it grew hot, then it grew cold again and stayed cold for weeks. But after she had passed through vast fields—if that is the right word—of sea-grass, it became warm for good and grew warmer and warmer. The sky was blue and the sea was even bluer. Bonitos were seen, and sharks, and from time to time fantastic jelly fish. Once they had passed through the South Atlantic anticyclone belt, there was hardly a breath of wind and the sea looked like a rippled tablecloth, flat but with a ceaseless slow swell.

When they arrived at the rendezvous they found a strange-looking vessel awaiting them. The masts had been cut down to stumps and the usual bridge structure was missing. There was a long-barrelled gun in the stern, the type usually found on board British vessels, but over it floated the German naval flag.

"She looks a bit like the *Duquesa*," said Michaelsen as he studied the strange object with interest. "That was their biggest refrigerator ship; launched in 1920, I think."

At that moment a message winked over: "Prize ship *Duquesa* welcomes the captain and crew of the *Pinguin* and congratulates them on their successes. Glad to meet you, we're bored to death."

The boat crew that went over to the *Duquesa* found a party

of very well-fed sailormen waiting for them. They looked like men on leave, who spent their days living from meal to meal and playing cards in between. One or two of the *Pinguin* men found old friends among the prize ship's company.

As Michaelsen had said, the *Duquesa* was a refrigerator ship. She had been captured shortly before Christmas by the *Admiral Scheer* and taken into the "Andalusia" zone. Unfortunately Captain Krancke, the commander of the *Admiral Scheer,* was unable to send her back to Germany as a prize because she had only enough coal on board to take her to Freetown. At the same time he was unwilling to sink her and lose her valuable cargo, which consisted of 14.8 million eggs, 7,000 tons of frozen meat and many, many tons of canned food so she was re-christened the *Herzogin,* under which name she entered the naval files as a supply ship. A good many ships, including the *Admiral Scheer,* the supply ship *Nordmark,* the *Storstad,* the auxiliary cruiser *Thor, HK*-10, and others, had taken supplies from her, but there was still plenty left in her enormous holds.

Since her capture, the fuel on board had been used to keep the refrigerating machinery going; after that the prize crew had dismantled the wooden parts of her deck structure, torn up the teak decks, and, in general, taken everything dispensable that could be used as fuel. That was the reason why the vessel looked so odd.

"If you hadn't come we should have had to burn the chairs under our bottoms to keep the refrigeration going," they said. "Incidentally, you're to be the last. After you comes Davy Jones; we can't keep her going any longer."

Late that afternoon Krüder gave permisson for the off-duty men to be used to transfer provisions from the *Herzogin* to the *Pinguin.* Pinnace, motorboats, rubber boats, and cutters went over the side; and before long there was heavy traffic back and forth—empty boats going, boats full with cases coming.

A thousand cases each containing 360 eggs, or 360,000 in all, were taken over. The cook could no longer find room for all the cases in the storeroom, and some of them were piled up on deck.

"From today and as long as the stock lasts," ordered Krüder, "leave a basinful of boiled eggs and some salt ready. Anyone who feels like a boiled egg can help himself."

Dr. Hasselmann in his diary:

"Eggs, eggs, nothing but eggs: boiled eggs, fried eggs, scrambled eggs, raw eggs; and eggs in every possible dish, from omelets onwards. Eggs with sugar, eggs in red wine, eggs in brandy, eggs in gin. Egg mayonnaise with everything, scrambled eggs with tomato ketchup, and so on and on and on. The cook is even offering prizes for new egg recipes that don't taste like eggs, because we're all tired of them. A veritable Egyptian plague of eggs."

The chief quartermaster, Neumeister, made a particularly interesting entry in his diary:

"Took a liter of pure alcohol, the yolks of 150 eggs, and a tin of Australian condensed milk, and made myself some Advokaat. Not bad at all!"

The next day a freighter hove in sight. The necessary cautious identification procedure confirmed that she was the expected freighter *Alstertor* from Germany. She brought the crew of the *Pinguin* something they were looking forward to eagerly—several sacks of mail. Krüder arranged with her captain that they should make for the Kerguelen Islands and transfer supplies at Port Couvreux, where they could work in peace; so, after handing over the mailbags, the *Alstertor* sailed for Port Couvreux with one of the whalers. It was Krüder's intention to use this little vessel as a new "second eye," as he had used the tanker *Storstad*. He christened her the *Adjutant* and put a young lieutenant in command of her. She was probably the smallest German warship afloat.

Toward evening Krüder gave orders to blow up the *Duquesa.* The British already believed her lost, for the *Admiral Scheer* had thrown overboard various items of evidence to make them believe that she had been sunk, and this had no doubt been picked up. During the scuttling operations there was a serious accident. When the charges went off a sheet of flame shot from the bunkers to where two of the men were waiting and set their light tropical clothing on fire. Other sailors ran to their aid and with ropes they got the seriously injured men out on deck. The *Duquesa* was already sinking and heeling over, and they were able to pass their injured comrades into the boat over the ship's side.

On board the *Pinguin* Dr. Wenzel and Dr. Hasselmann took charge of them at once, and Krüder, from whom they expected a reprimand for their carelessness, spoke to them in their local dialect—a sure sign that he was not angry.

"The lads looked in a pretty bad state to me," he said to Dr. Hasselmann on a subsequent tour of inspection. "Are you going to pull them through?"

"I think so, sir. We've given them blood transfusions, and I reckon they'll be up and about in a few weeks."

"Good," said Krüder, and went on his way.

The whalers and the factory ships all arrived safely. The crew of the prize *Duquesa* were now at Krüder's disposal, including two former captains of the merchant service. Lieutenants Blau and Petersen, whom he placed in command of the two factory ships. He was also able to provide them with skeleton crews. Even now there weren't many men to spare, and the Norwegians still greatly outnumbered them; but at least the prize crews were picked men and knew their business.

The whalers and the factory ships were sent off, one after the other, at intervals of a few hours with much waving, shouts of encouragement, flag signals, and messages for home.

With the assistance of the Norwegians, all the factory ships and all the whalers except two managed to reach Bordeaux safely, and even the two that failed were not allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy. Shortage of fuel oil prevented their captains from following the route ordered, and they were intercepted by British naval units. But, before the British prize crews could get on board, the Germans had exploded their scuttling charges and abandoned ship in their boats.

Krüder was already steering for the Kerguelen Islands to meet the *Alstertor* and take aboard supplies when he received an order from the Naval Command to meet another auxiliary cruiser, *HK*-41, better known later as the *Kormoran*, which sank the Australian cruiser *Sydney*, a much more heavily armed and armored vessel. The *Kormoran* was just out from Germany; and she was to operate in the Indian Ocean, as the *Pinguin* had done previously. The German Naval Command assumed quite rightly that, with his experience, Krüder could give valuable information and useful tips to Commander Detmers of the *Kormoran* for his subsequent operations.

The meeting took place without incident, and the *Pinguin* sailed once again for the Kerguelen Islands.

19. SELF-REFIT

ONCE AGAIN TROPICAL KIT WAS PUT AWAY IN EXCHANGE FIRST for half-blues and then the full blues of winter, and once again Krüder was to be seen on the bridge wearing his fur cap and looking more like a polar explorer than the captain of an auxiliary cruiser. The *Pinguin* was perhaps 250 miles from the Kerguelen Islands, and her course took her past Prince Edward Island and Crozet Island to the southward.

Shortly before she arrived she met *HK*-45, better known as the *Comet*, which had already been at the new "naval base Kerguelen" for a few days. The *Comet* was the former 3,287-ton motor-ship *Ems* of the North German Lloyd, the dwarf among the German *HK*'s, and she kept to the high seas for 515 days without once entering a harbor, sailing a total of 87,000 miles, or four times around the world.

She also had a fine series of success to her credit, though the tonnage sunk was not as great as that sunk by the *Pinguin*, partly, no doubt, because the *Comet* operated in a less frequented area of the Pacific.

When the discussions between Admiral Eyssen and Krüder and between the various experts were over, the two ships sailed around the Kerguelen Islands and made for the entrance to Port Couvreux on the north side. The place had been abandoned for many years and to refer to it now as a port was no more than a joke. Eyssen anchored off Port Couvreux, but

Krüder took his ship on into the natural harbor of the island to take over his supplies from the *Alstertor* in peace, and, in particular, to take on board some of the fresh water which ran down from the mountains into the harbor.

The passage into the bay was narrow; and Krüder sent his navigating officer, Michaelsen, ahead in the *Adjutant* to take soundings so that the *Pinguin*, which was about 570 feet long, could make the passage safely. She did so without fouling any of the submerged rocks and anchored abreast of the *Alstertor*.

"Not a very prepossessing spot," said Krüder, taking his first look around the bay. There was not a tree nor even a bush to make the landscape a little more friendly to look at, not to speak of flowers. It occurred to Krüder that there was really not a great deal of difference between the latitude of this island in the southern hemisphere and that of Rügen Island in the Baltic. The comparison was enough to underline the great difference in conditions in the southern hemisphere. On Rügen at this time of the year there would be leafy trees, flowery meadows, and people enjoying themselves on the beach and swimming in the sea. But here conditions were harsh, and the water was cold even in summer.

There was only a strip of flat land around the bay and then the ground rose steeply to a rocky plateau. Farther away there were mountains and behind them, hidden in the mist, was the highest point of the islands, Ross Mountain.

The crew had often thought with pleasure and longing of the time when they would once again be able to go ashore; and now that they could, there was no pleasure in it. This inhospitable, storm-swept, God-forsaken spot offered them no solace. Until someone spotted rabbits. . . .

Eagerly the men ran to the side and watched a whole large family of rabbits racing across the landscape. When the rabbits had disappeared, the watchers turned hopefully to Krüder. He understood the silent question.

"Why not, gentlemen?" he said with a smile. "A little rough shooting won't do us any harm, and at least it'll stretch our legs."

After that the men cheered up, and even the island looked less inhospitable.

The next day Eyssen left with the *Comet,* and the men of the *Pinguin* had too much to do to find time to be depressed at the barrenness of the island. First Lieutenant Schwinne collected his working parties, the *Alstertor* opened her hatches, and provisions and munitions were swung up and over the side into the boats. To the great delight of the *Pinguin's* airmen, a crane even hoisted a new plane out of the bowels of the *Alstertor,* and they immediately began to check everything down to the smallest detail, finally obtaining Krüder's permission for a test flight or two.

Another job, and a hard one, was to get rid of the *Pinguin's* uninvited passengers, the barnacles, sea snails, and other fauna and flora of the underwater world which cling to ship's hulls. As there were no dry-dock facilities available, the only way to do the job was to careen the *Pinguin* first to one side and then to the other by trimming and cargo shifting. In this way a good deal of the hull below the waterline was exposed and scraped clean. It was an important job for a ship so long at sea and likely to stay still longer, because such accretions below the waterline reduce a ship's speed quite considerably.

The final job to be done was every bit as important—the creation of a new disguise. An auxiliary cruiser must appear suddenly and unexpectedly at the right spot at the right moment, and in the meantime she must constantly show herself in a different guise in order to deceive and confuse the enemy. Almost all British merchant ships and certainly all naval units had lists with details and silhouettes of all types of German ships, and of all captured ships likely to be used at sea. Such lists contain the length; the beam; the speed; the number,

thickness, and height of masts; the number, circumference, and height of funnels; and so on. For each ship there is also a silhouette for ready recognition, showing all the outline details of bridge structure, arrangement of the masts, and so on.

When enemy merchant ships were captured and searched some of these lists were found. On one occasion, for example, the men of the *Pinguin* had been delighted to come across all the details, including a silhouette, of their ship, once the *Kandelfels*. But not even the men who had built her, or the men who had subsequently sailed her, would have recognized her in any of her various guises. How much more difficult it was therefore for the captains of enemy ships! Even when their suspicions had already been aroused, it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, for them to discover whether the ship in sight was what she seemed to be or not.

To look at the same problem from another angle, this question of successful disguise is a matter of life and death for the crew of an auxiliary cruiser. Now, a captain cannot disguise his ship as he pleases; he is limited to certain fixed rules. His appearance and silhouette must be deceptively like those of some British, Norwegian, or, say, Greek ship. A critical observer in possession of all the details of the particular ship the A.C. captain has chosen must be taken in by the disguise, and that is no mean feat. And what is more, he must harbor no suspicion at all. Anything else would be fatal.

Further, the A.C. captain must be quite certain that the ship he has chosen to imitate is likely to sail along the routes which he proposes to appear in.

When it was decided to use the *Pinguin* as an auxiliary cruiser she was thoroughly reconstructed and provided with every possible facility for changing her appearance rapidly. For example, there was special winding apparatus to raise or lower her funnels rapidly, and with specially prepared sheets of metal their circumference could be increased. Both masts

were set in a well, and there was similar winding mechanism to raise or lower them according to requirements. The same could be done with the ship's guard rails, which could disappear altogether. With very little trouble, too, the *Pinguin* could imitate various types of deck, flat, sheltered, and so on. Big sunshades were carried to help give the appearance of a passenger ship if necessary. Empty cases could be piled up as deck cargo, and barrels welded to each other could easily be set up to represent large ventilating shafts.

A very important point is, of course, the question of paint. An auxiliary cruiser carries enough paint on board to make a wholesale dealer grow green with envy. And brushes galore! There is not merely one, but several for every member of the crew, and they are carried in all shapes and sizes. As soon as the captain has decided what type of ship he proposes to imitate, his ship becomes like a disturbed ant heap with men rushing in all directions on their various jobs. The first lieutenant and the chief boatswain's mate are then the two most important people on board, the one to direct operations, the other to see to their execution, and what was once gray now becomes blue; yellow becomes white and red becomes green, according to the model chosen by the captain.

And sometimes this work has to be done very quickly indeed. For example, a ship encountered that very morning may have broadcast a full description. The captain is taking no risks, so by the following morning his ship is sailing peacefully along in a totally different guise.

For once the *Pinguin* had plenty of time to carry out her change of appearance. Krüder had decided to sally forth into the world next as the Norwegian freighter *Tamerlan.* How well the job was done was subsequently confirmed by the evidence of British airmen who declared that although they were in possession of all the necessary details they never doubted for one moment that it was the *Tamerlan* below

them, and their impression was shared by British intelligence officers who examined their photographs.

While the others were busy on their various jobs, Dr. Wenzel took samples of the water flowing down into the harbor. He brought a glass of it with him when he came on the bridge to make his report.

"Quite potable, captain," he declared.

Krüder took a sip and then drank some of it.

"Nice earthy taste," he said. "Thoroughly drinkable."

The water supply was always a problem, for in the tropics a very considerable amount is used. The Naval Command was not in a postion to have tankers ready to hand with water and the idea of using Port Couvreux as a natural source had been thought of in Berlin. Rogge had also been there with the *Atlantis* to take fresh water on board.

The authorities at home had drawn attention to this water, but how it was to be got into a ship's fresh-water tanks they left to the captain and his chief engineer. There was no pier and no sort of port installation available, and the *Pinguin* was already as close inshore as she dared go without running aground. There was sufficient hose on board to reach from the ship to the water source but a pump was necessary to overcome the differences in gradient. Technically speaking, this was no problem at all for the chief and his men, but it was a question of time. Some other way had therefore to be found if the water were not to be carried in pails and buckets from the source.

Before the chief engineer had a chance to lay his plan before Krüder, the latter was explaining his:

"Look, Cramer, up there's a waterfall. You've seen it? Good. Now about a hundred yards lower down, where the stream starts to run into the bay, we'll build a dam. Then we'll put a barrel in the water with the end of a hose fixed in it. The water will fill the barrel and run into the hose, and there's suf-

ficient gradient to take it out to sea. I reckon we can run the pipe out at least a hundred yards into the bay, and the water will still have sufficient pressure to pour into the boats. Oh, yes, I forgot to mention that we'll use the boats as a sort of bathtub. If they're carefully scrubbed out nothing will happen to the water. Our motorboats can then tow them broadside onto the ship. After that there's no problem at all. What do you think of that?"

"Excellent, sir. Just my plan."

"Your plan, Cramer? Not mine?"

"Not even ours, sir."

"Ah, yes, you're right. I got mine from Rogge. He'd already solved the problem. And I've no doubt you got yours from his chief. Well, anyhow, that's it. It's the only quick solution of the problem."

During all this Chief Quartermaster Neumeister had been carrying out a special survey of the bay.

"It's a pity not to use the place more," Krüder had said to his officers. "It won't be long before the war's over. In the future I don't want to sink ships, but capture them and bring them here where they can lie at anchor and wait. Then, when the time comes, we'll sail home with a whole fleet of merchantmen behind us."

Krüder had given permission for any of the men who were not on duty to go ashore. Not all the men did so; there was land, the thing they had been dreaming about, and they couldn't be bothered to step out onto it. They were tired out after a heavy day's work and they preferred to turn in—needless to say, there were no bars on the Kerguelen Islands. Even apart from that, there was not much to be seen. All that seemed to grow was moss and a sort of rib grass. However, it seemed to suit the rabbits, of which there were great numbers.

There were seals in the bay, and Dr. Hasselmann reported that he had even seen a giant bottle-nosed seal lying on the

beach at low tide and dozing. There were also wild duck, stormy petrels, and a great variety of gulls wheeling over the bay or perching on the rocks around it. And the enthusiasm was simply tremendous when a party of "shore-leave" men returned with a couple of angrily scolding penguins.

Krüder immediately agreed to keep the diverting little fellows on board as living examples of the ship's namesake. Eumaeus, of course, was given the job of looking after them, and after a while, during which the relationship could best be described as armed neutrality, Struppi, the ship's dachshund, and the two penguins became fast friends.

Some of the men visited Port Couvreux—what there was of it. The whole facilities of the "port" consisted of a wooden jetty, now falling to pieces, and three wooden buildings in a similar state. A huge, rusty boiler was a reminder of the original purpose of the place: a station for dealing with captured seals, extracting their oil, and preparing their pelts for transport back to France. There was also a small cemetery with a few graves. Some of the men engaged at the station had died far away from their homeland, and on little wooden crosses were French names. There was nothing to indicate what they had died of.

But one thing there was not: Krüder had hoped to find a store, even a very small store, of coal left behind by the former settlers, but there was nothing. Either they had taken their coal with them or others had been there before him with the same bright idea.

After ten days of hard work the transfer of provisions and supplies from the *Alstertor* was completed. At the same time the engine-room personnel had been busy, and the *Pinguin's* engines had been given a thorough overhaul at long last. When everything was ready, Krüder was anxious to get back into circulation, but on the last day of their stay he let the men organize a large-scale rabbit hunt. By the afternoon

enormous quantities of rabbits had been brought on board, and the cook prepared a banquet for all.

The last man to leave the island was the first lieutenant, Schwinne. Shortly before the anchor was weighed he made a tour along the coastal strip as far as the little harbor. Then he returned to the *Pinguin.*

"Everything in order, sir," he reported to Krüder. "Nothing to be seen."

He had been looking for empty cigarette cartons and anything else the men might have carelessly thrown away. Subsequent visitors to the island must not find any evidence that German sailors had been there. But the men had carefully carried out Krüder's orders. Even while hunting they had collected all the cartridge cases. Incidentally, they had had to do their rabbit shooting with ordinary carbines; the Naval Command had not been farsighted enough to provide the *Pinguin* with sporting guns.

A group of prize officers joined the *Pinguin* from the *Alstertor,* including Lieutenant Grau, formerly captain of the S.S. *Antonio Delfino;* Lieutenant Böttcher, Grau's former first lieutenant; and Lieutenants Steppach, Nippe, and Hermann, all former merchant service officers of the Hapag Line. The large number of prize officers told off to join the *Pinguin* by the Naval Command was a hint to the *Pinguin* as to what was still expected of her.

20. LAST SUCCESSES

THE HOPES THAT THE RAPID SERIES OF SUCCESSES OBTAINED by the *Pinguin* would continue were not fulfilled. This was to some extent due to those very successes; the main shipping routes were hardly used any more, and a concentration of routes in the neighborhood of land, often close in to the coast, made the operations of Germany's auxiliary cruisers very much more difficult. It was a nuisance for the enemy to re-route his shipping by roundabout and devious ways, but he preferred to do that rather than lose even a single ship, for lost ships were very difficult to replace.

The British Navy also became more active. An arranged meeting between the *Pinguin* and the tanker *Ketty Brövig,* which had been captured by the *Atlantis* and sent to wait in a part of the Iindian Ocean very little, if at all, used by ordinary shipping, did not take place, and Krüder searched around for several days in vain. Later it was discovered that the tanker had been challenged by British cruisers and the prize crew on board had had to scuttle her.

It was suspected that British naval units were following German ships that had been forced to put to sea owing to the advance of the British forces in Italian Somaliland. One of these ships was the 8,000-ton *Coburg* of the North German Lloyd. She, too, had a redezvous with the *Ketty Brövig;* and the enemy knew it because the necessary instructions given

to the *Coburg* after she had sailed were in an Italian code which the enemy had already broken.

Instead of the *Ketty Brövig,* Krüder fell in with the supply tanker *Ole Jakob,* now under the command of Lieutenant Vossloh, one of the original members of the mess of the old Hansa ship.

Krüder was not too pleased at the change. The *Ketty Brövig* had good enemy fuel oil. The *Ole Jakob* had oil from Japan, which wasn't half so good. But he had to take what he could get and be glad of it, if his ship was to remain operational.

He continued to scour the seas, but never a mast came in sight. Day and night the binoculars were in use. During the day the men on watch stared and stared into the shimmering, sunbaked haze, but never a smudge of smoke did they see to indicate the presence of a ship. While steering a southeasterly course Krüder sent a long radio message home, and then shifted his area of operations to the neighborhood of the Maldive Islands off the southwest coast of India in order to try the shipping routes between Ceylon, Madagascar and Durban.

But, although a close watch was kept day and night, there was no sign of shipping. The *Pinguin's* reconnaissance plane went out again and again, but without result. The Indian Ocean had been swept bare.

The weather was unusually calm. A long, slow swell raised and lowered the surface of the sea as though it were breathing, rhythmically lifting the *Pinguin* up and down. On some days she did not move at all, but just lay there quietly on the transparent blue surface of the sea.

At such time ham bones were at a premium. The men wanted them as bait for sharks. There were many in the neighborhood, and shark after shark snapped at the bait and was taken—to be drawn on board and dispatched ruthlessly. Men who would have tended an injured albatross as though

it were a piece of Dresden china made no bones about beating the life out of the tough robbers of the deep with a marlinspike, and they were very quick to learn that you had to be careful with a shark even when you'd got him firmly on a hook; one blow from that threshing tail could easily break a man's leg.

Of course, every shark caught was carefully slit open to see what was in its stomach, but very little of interest was found. The dorsal and tail fins were cut away and cured. There were older men on board who knew how to do the trick, and after that there were sharks' fins in every likely and a good many unlikely places on board the *Pinguin*—according to seafaring tradition they were supposed to bring good luck.

Having combed the area and drawn a complete blank—the reconnaissance plane had made no less than thirty-five flights without result—the *Pinguin* turned westward. Krüder now hoped to find something on the Bombay-Mombasa route or on the route leading through the Mozambique Channel.

On April twentieth the *Adjutant,* the *Pinguin's* second eye, came racing up with water streaming in great waves from her bows. She had sighted a ship.

Shortly before sunset, the 6,800-ton *Empire Light* went to the bottom with ammunition she had been carrying to Bombay.

The surprise on board the *Empire Light* was so great that they even forgot to destroy the ship's secret papers, and among those captured was the day-to-day log of a British cruiser and a cable map of the Indian Ocean.

A few days later, at a time when the messes were usually deserted, there was something like a card party going on, a sort of tournament. Anyone not in the know might have thought the men were playing for some valuable prize. Actually they were playing only in order to pass the time and

reduce the tension of waiting. In the afternoon an enemy ship had been sighted, and Krüder was following his usual plan of drawing out of sight, steaming a parallel course during the day, and then altering to a converging course to intercept the enemy about midnight. The result was that no one on board the *Pinguin* had turned in; they were all waiting for the alarm bells and the order "Action stations!"

Suddenly a glass fell over, then another one and another, and beer, or the homemade tropical lemonade manufactured on board with "Kerguelen water," spilled over white trousers. There was no heavy sea to explain it.

"Sudden alteration of course. What for?"

The men were no longer interested in their game now. The cards lay there in pools of beer and lemonade.

Krüder had spotted another enemy ship steaming in the opposite direction—or, rather, the eyes of the unsleeping men on watch had.

"That ship is farther away from her destination than the one we've been chasing all the afternoon," said Michaelsen.

Krüder knew what he meant; if the second ship failed to reach harbor the inevitable investigation would start at a later date. He therefore put the helm hard over and began to hunt the second ship.

Before daybreak the 8,000-ton *Clan Buchanan* sank, taking a valuable cargo of leather, mica, tea, and military stores with her. As far as the radio operators of the *Pinguin* could make out, she had not had time to use her radio.

The *Pinguin* had once again a large number of prisoners on board, 180 in all. On board the *Clan Buchanan* there had been one or two wounded, who were attended to by the doctors and sick-bay stewards on board the *Pinguin.*

"We need another tanker," said Krüder thoughtfully. He had decided to repeat his success with the *Passat,* and mine

the waters around Karachi. A signal was sent off to the Naval Command: "Request use of *Ole Jakob* for proposed mining operation. Remember success of *Passat.*"

A few hours later the answer arrived. It was unfavorable. "Tanker *Ole Jakob* not available. Find yourself a British tanker."

"They've got some idea of what it looks like here now," grumbled Krüder. "Find a needle in a haystack."

Every day the reconnaissance plane went up and every day the airmen returned without news. As they came into sight the men on deck would watch intently to see what colored lights they fired. They were always white or red, never green. Green lights were the signal that a ship had been sighted. But on May sixth the green light was fired.

"Mastheads of a tanker in sight."

The *Pinguin* immediately took up the chase of what proved to be a small tanker steaming on a northeasterly course. Krüder followed, but not without anxiety. He was well aware that this course was leading him deeper and deeper into the lair of the British lion. Aden, Bombay, and Mombasa were none of them very far away, and they were all around him. But he needed his tanker. At dawn in the half light of May seventh they came up with her and fired a full salvo from the port guns, but deliberate near misses. Krüder was anxious to capture the tanker intact.

"So he's going to be awkward," said Krüder when it became clear that the tanker captain did not propose to let himself be intimidated by the columns of water shooting up in the air around him. Krüder ordered another salvo, again to miss. And again the British captain ignored it and went on his way. At least, he did not entirely ignore it; he kept on his course, but his radio began to chatter like mad. There was nothing else for Krüder to do now but to order firing in real earnest. Of the next salvo one shell at least struck the bridge, and

probably the wheelhouse, for the tanker immediately veered off her course and began to describe a circle. The ship was on fire now and trailing long clouds of black smoke. Astern of her, dotted around in the water, were men who had jumped overboard.

The cargo of the tanker was well alight, and sheets of flame began to shoot up into the misty day. Finally the burning ship came to a stop, and Krüder sent boats to take off the remainder of her crew. A few minutes later, there came a hasty report from the radio cabin of the *Pinguin*: "Enemy using his radio again, sending out our appearance and his position."

Krüder cursed. For once he had been caught napping.

"Where the devil are they?" he demanded. "They can't be in the radio cabin—it's in flames—unless they're wearing asbestos suits."

He was desperate, but as long as his own boats and his own men were alongside the tanker he was unable to shoot. Finally they hauled off, and the guns of the *Pinguin* opened up again. Shell after shell tore away the bridge structure, and at last the radio messages ceased.

"That fellow had guts," said Krüder with admiration. "Let's hope he's dead and not merely wounded and unable to move. I can't help him now, and I don't like to think of a man like that being burned alive."

By now the ether was alive. The heroic radio operator of the British tanker had warned everyone.

"Send her to the bottom quickly," ordered Krüder with determination. "That pall of smoke can betray us. Lieutenant Gabe, let her have a torpedo."

"Very good, sir."

Krüder was unwilling to waste a torpedo on a small tanker, but there was nothing else to do; speed was essential.

Lieutenant Gabe fired the torpedo. The men on deck

watched it shoot into the water, come to the surface, and turn left. It began to describe a circle, the center of which the *Pinguin* was now rapidly leaving. It did not take Krüder long to realize that when the torpedo completed its circle the *Pinguin* would stand a good chance of being precisely at the critical spot. The others on deck had realized the same thing, and faces were white and strained. Being sunk by your own torpedo was no way to end a successful voyage.

Without excitement, almost in conversational tones, Krüder gave his orders to the helmsman:

"Hard a' starboard, lad. And put your beef into it. Twizzle for your life."

When the rogue torpedo crossed the bows of the *Pinguin* it was not more than twenty yards away. For a moment or two it continued on its course, and then it dived below the surface and was seen no more. Everyone heaved a sigh of relief.

"Try another one, Gabe," ordered Krüder in a quiet voice. "See if we have any better luck with her." In his heart he was thinking that misfortunes seldom came singly.

The second torpedo shot out of its tube. There was nothing wrong with its performance this time, except that it missed its mark and careered off into the distance. Krüder was still perfectly calm and he made no comment.

"All right, Gabe," he said, and there was no anger in his voice. "This doesn't seem to be our day. Give her another one. Third time's lucky, they say."

The third torpedo sped on its way, and this time the tanker was hit squarely amidships.

Gabe was upset, and his face showed it; but Krüder clapped him on the shoulder, grinning cheerfully.

"Don't take it to heart, man. I know your department's all right. You've proved it more than once. That fish obviously had something wrong with its steering gear."

No doubt the constant change of temperature in the tropics

had something to do with the failure of the first torpedo. The German Navy of those days had very little tropical experience, but as far as possible the torpedoes on board the *Pinguin* had been carefully maintained and their mechanism regularly checked; there was always one of them jacked up in hold No. 3 for examination. As for the second one, well, no man, however good he is, can score a bullseye every time.

But even the third torpedo had not finished off the little tanker completely. When the *Pinguin* hurriedly left the scene part of her was still sticking out of the water, and they could read her name, *British Emperor*. That was in position 8° North, 55° East, only 400 miles south of the island of Socotra.

21. END GAME AND MATE

WITH A DISAGREEABLE FEELING IN HIS BELLY, KRÜDER GOT THE very most he could get out of his engines and steered a south-easterly course. The last reserves of their high quality Allied fuel oil had already been exhausted. For some reason, there was a disagreeable feeling among the crew, too. More than one voluntary lookout appeared on deck looking anxiously in all directions, for fear the men on watch might have overlooked something. This sort of thing happened occasionally, but it was happening frequently now. The men were ill at ease.

It was only a coincidence, of course, but this was precisely the moment chosen by Struppi, the ship's beloved pet, to go off his food. Dr. Wenzel, his master and also something of a vet, examined him, took the little dog's temperature and found fever.

"They say animals have a sixth sense," said Krüder. "There's something in the air. What do you make of it, Michaelsen?"

Michaelsen, the calculating sobersides, had no time for sixth senses in dogs.

"Nothing," he said laconically.

But Krüder noticed that he, too, kept his eyes constantly on the horizon, though it was no part of his job to do the work of the men on watch.

Evening came, however, and the day ended just as normally

as all the others before it, and gradually the feeling of nervousness and strain was allayed.

But at 0200 Lewit, the officer of the watch, sighted a strange silhouette. A quick glance at the chronometer and he dashed into Krüder's cabin.

"Object to port, sir. Ship, I think. 0200."

Krüder was on the bridge in a moment. There was no doubt about it, the object was a ship. He followed its movements closely.

"That's no freighter or tanker," he muttered. "I don't like the look of her, Lewit."

Krüder altered course from south to east and south-southeast to rid himself of their uncomfortable companion.

"Cramer," he called down the voice pipe to the chief engineer, "get the very last ounce out of the engines, will you."

"Very good, sir."

The *Pinguin* began to shake and shudder as her engines raced. In the messes coffee cups and glasses rattled, and so did all the instruments in the chart house. Rumor began to creep swiftly over the ship. The seamen rolled from side to side sleeplessly.

"This ruddy heat!" they complained.

But it was not the heat that disturbed them. They could feel that the ship was going at full speed, and they had a presentiment that it was fleeing from something unknown but unpleasant. Something intangible—not yet tangible. In their hearts they all devoutly hoped that the intangible would remain intangible.

Dawn broke. At 0600 a small dark object became visible on the horizon and crossed ahead in a descending flight.

"A gull," said Krüder. But he knew perfectly well that it

was not a gull. Then, almost casually, he ordered the compartment in which the plane was kept in No. 2 hold just forward of the bridge, to be closed.

"Get a move on, men," he called out vigorously. "At the double on all that good food can't do you any harm."

The startled men jumped to it.

"The question is: has he or hasn't he?" said Krüder softly.

"I should think it very likely that he has," said Michaelsen simply. "Now he's probably getting instructions from the ugly fellow we met in the night."

1005: Object on the starboard bow.

1015: Object undoubtedly a plane. Disappears astern.

1028: Plane reappears and circles over the ship, then flies on parallel course at a distance of some twelve miles.

Shortly afterward, machine disappears.

"Disappeared in the direction in which our nocturnal visitor must be lying," said Krüder.

1202: Machine reappears. Flies quite close; near enough to be fired upon.

Krüder decided to withhold his fire. There was nothing to be gained by shooting down the plane; those in her had no doubt reported the *Pinguin's* position long before. The plane began to signal:

"What ship? What nationality? What is your port of destination? What cargo?"

"Inquisitive fellow," said Krüder dryly. "Not much he doesn't want to know."

Sailors in plain clothes made flag signals in reply. This form of reply was slower than by signal lamp, and any delay now was something gained. In the plane they would probably be able to read the flag signals only slowly. They might not even know the international code of flag signals, and they might not carry a signal book with them.

On the bridge with Krüder were his navigating officer, Michaelsen, and the officers of the watch, Müller and Lewit. They were all in plain clothes, and they were behaving calmly and moving around slowly as one would expect of seamen, and in particular, Norwegians, in the tropics.

On the upper deck three sailors were flag-wagging.

"Take it easy," Krüder called to them. "There's no hurry. And a few mistakes won't matter."

The plane now flew low across the supposed *Tamerlan*. It was a British machine, of course, and they could easily see the tricolor roundels of the Fleet Air Arm on its wings. The *Pinguin's* stern gun was uncovered and clearly visible, as was always the case with Allied ships.

"Shoot him down," said Michaelsen grimly. "We must gain time. It's all-important now."

Krüder looked at him. Michaelsen being impetuous!

"No point in it," he said. "If this one doesn't get back they'll send another. And in any case we'd have had it. No, we'll rely on our disguise. It's our only hope."

The British airmen seemed to have their suspicions, but why Krüder could not guess.

"At first we were not suspicious," they subsequently reported. "The ship looked exactly like a Norwegian, and we had no reason to doubt her. The only thing that struck us as odd was that there were so few people on deck. And the captain of our cruiser was struck by the same thing when he studied the photographs. Normally, when we fly over merchantmen, and in particular non-British ships, the crew piles on deck to have a look at us. A plane is something out of the ordinary in such latitudes. We were also a little surprised to see no colored sailors."

Krüder had cautiously kept his men between decks. For once he had been overcautious. And as for colored seamen, he had about a hundred of them in the prisoners' quarters.

The commander of the British cruiser below the horizon was certainly suspicious, but he had not made up his mind. He had studied his shipping silhouettes and checked the appearance of the Norwegian *Tamerlan* in every particular. On the other hand, taken in connection with recent happenings in the Indian Ocean and with the absence of seamen on deck, his suspicions were not dissipated.

For a long time the British plane circled around the *Pinguin*. Krüder kept his head. He was not going to abandon his disguise if he could help it. Then the plane disappeared. The *Pinguin* maintained her course at high speed. Everything on board went on as usual. At dinner there were sausages and potato salad, followed by compôte of pears. Seamen are usually hungry mortals. Today not many of them gave any signs of being hungry; some did not eat at all.

There was a constant procession of men on deck to stare in the direction in which the British plane had disappeared.

Then, at 1352, came a shout from the lookout: "Smoke in sight astern."

1353: "Two columns of smoke astern."

1354: "Could be three columns."

On the bridge Krüder was staring astern through his glasses.

"Could be a ship with two or even three funnels," he said. "Or it could be two cruisers steaming in formation."

1448: "Mastheads in sight astern!"

Slowly, but quite certainly—and they were not to be shaken off—two thin masts arranged very close together, almost one behind the other, appeared above the horizon. They were not the masts of a merchantman; they belonged to some type of British warship.

On the bridge of the *Pinguin* they kept their glasses glued to their eyes and their eyes glued to the two masts. Then the funnels and the bridge structure came in sight almost to-

gether. London or Berwick Class? was the only question now. Beyond all doubt, the stranger gaining on them was a heavy cruiser.

"Well, lads, this looks like it," said Krüder. "They've taken a long time to catch up with us. And we're not finished yet. Action stations!"

The order was passed by word of mouth. Krüder preferred not to use the more exciting and dramatic alarm bells.

The men were hurriedly making arrangements with their buddies: "If you get out of it, pal, here's my father's address." "Give 'em my best wishes at home if you ever get there."

No one was in any doubt about the odds that would have to be faced if it did come to a scrap, but everyone still hoped that the disguise might still see them through. Some of the more optimistic hoped that if it came to a fight a chance shell might disable the big fellow over there. . . .

The enemy came nearer and nearer. The whole superstructure was visible now. Suddenly her masthead signal lamp began to blink. It was an order to heave to.

"Get busy, Brunke," ordered Krüder.

Charlie Brunke was already sitting at his captured British set. When transmitting it was very clearly distinguishable from German transmitters. Krüder was still banking on his disguise.

Charlie Brunke began to send out radio appeals in English for assistance: dot, dash, dot, dot, dash. "Being attacked by German raider." Then followed name and nationality. No sooner had he finished one message than Charlie Brunke started the next. The key of his set worked ceaselessly.

On board the British cruiser, as was subsequently revealed, the captain again became uncertain when it was reported to him that the ship ahead was using a British radio transmitter. In Berlin the German Naval Command received the message and knew what was happening.

Krüder estimated the British cruiser's speed as between twenty-eight and twenty-nine knots. The "heave to" message was now being repeated energetically. "Heave to and await boarding party!"

Krüder still made no reply.

"We'll keep our heads," he said, "and perhaps they'll get tired of it first."

"What a hope!" muttered Michaelsen.

Minutes seemed to lengthen into ages. The enemy was no more than 8,000 yards away now, and he had obviously reduced speed. They could see that all the guns of his turrets were trained on the *Pinguin*. However, even that did not mean that he was now quite certain that the *Tamerlan* was not all she pretended to be—it could be just a routine precaution. If the British commander were quite certain that the *Tamerlan* was really a German raider he would never come so close, and he certainly would not have reduced speed.

Krüder had made up his mind to fight it out. He had a real chance of disabling his enemy, and that was confirmed later by the success of the *Kormoran* in sinking the cruiser *Sydney*. For Ernst-Felix Krüder it was a matter of course that the highest standards of the old Imperial Navy should be upheld in the new. He did not know that he and the man on the other bridge had already faced and fought each other at Skaggerrak, or as the other would put it, Jutland. They had both been small fry then.

1602: Krüder turned away to put on his gold-braided peaked cap and his uniform jacket.

"Unmask battery! War flag up! Open fire!"

The Norwegian flag was run down, and the German naval flag ran up into its place. With a dull sound the gun covers fell away, There were shouts as ranges were passed down and orders given. Then the *Pinguin* shuddered as her first salvo left the gun muzzles. There was a flash of flame, clouds of

smoke, and then acrid fumes. The marksmanship was good, and columns of water rose around the British cruiser. On board her there were now sudden stab-like flames as her guns opened up. They had not come in close to the suspect without being prepared for all eventualities. The *Pinguin, HK*-33, fired salvo after salvo. Shell cases hit the deck with a metallic sound as the breech blocks swung back. Shells roared overhead. Above the noise of battle they could hear the engines of the British plane.

"That was a hit, Rieche," said Krüder appreciatively to his gunnery officer. Rieche grinned, nodded, and went on with his job.

And again they appeared to score hits. The British captain seemed to be too close for his liking, for now his engines were racing at full speed ahead again, but he was turning away to port. Obviously he intended to get out of range, although he was greatly superior in gunpower and armor to the German auxiliary cruiser, a mere armed merchantman. His fire-power was greater; he was heavily armored; he was far less likely to sink; and with his much greater speed he was vastly more maneuverable.

A direct hit damaged the British cruiser on the waterline and another shell possibly hit the foremost of her three funnels.

"We may have hit the fire-control director," shouted the gunnery officer, Rieche. "The heavy stuff isn't firing any more."

"I hope you're right," Krüder called back, never for one moment dropping his glasses.

But then the heavy, long-range guns of H.M.S. *Cornwall* opened up again. On the basis of the British Navy silhouettes in their possession they had now discovered the identity of their assailant.

"Try your luck with the fish, Gabe," ordered Krüder.

Lieutenant Gabe already had the torpedo tubes ready for action, and a second or two after Krüder's orders a salvo of torpedoes left the *Pinguin* and raced straight toward the British cruiser.

If the Naval Command had equipped the *Pinguin* with ultramodern bubble-free torpedoes the fate of the *Cornwall* might have been sealed that day, but as it was the British plane flying overhead spotted the path of the torpedoes and radioed their course to the cruiser, which immediately took evasive action. The nearest torpedo passed under her stern, missing by yards only.

On the bridge of the *Pinguin* Krüder was intently studying his wristwatch. Amidst the noise of battle he was counting the seconds aloud. Then his left arm dropped to his side.

"Nothing doing, Gabe."

The figures coming down from the range-finders above the bridge showed that the distance between the two ships was steadily increasing. H.M.S. *Cornwall* was withdrawing out of range of the *Pinguin's* guns. The last salvo left the red-hot barrels and fell short. The *Cornwall* could now blow her out of the water with impunity.

The captain of the *Cornwall* could very clearly remember the Battle of Jutland and the speed and accuracy of German gunnery and the penetrating power of German shells. He proposed to take no risks.

"Not a chance now," said Krüder regretfully.

In the radio office Charlie Brunke had just passed the same message three times to the German Naval Command: "After sinking 136,550 gross register tons and obtaining excellent mine results am now engaged with British heavy cruiser *Cornwall.* (Sig.) Ernst-Felix Krüder." It was received.

His assistant, Bork, was listening to Norddeich. Only a

little while before the German station had been very lively; now it was silent. From thousands of miles away its operators were following the hopeless battle.

H.M.S. *Cornwall* now obtained her first hit. The rigging of the *Pinguin's* foremast carried away and fell to the deck with a rattle.

"That'll do," said Krüder. "There's no point in going on. Free the prisoners—Martin, see to that, will you—Scuttle ship and abandon!"

The last orders of Captain Ernst-Felix Krüder were never carried out. It was too late. The guns of the *Cornwall* were beginning to shoot themselves in. Of a salvo of four shells three were over and one was short. The next salvo was a direct hit. Four 8-inch shells tore into the thin hull of the *Pinguin;* one hit the fore part of the ship, the second destroyed the meteorological office under the bridge, the third burst in the engine-room, killing and maiming men there, and the fourth exploded in No. 5 hold amongst the 130 mines Krüder had intended to lay before Karachi.

A terrific explosion followed, and a spear of flame shot many thousands of feet into the cloudless tropical sky. One of the few survivors was in the crows-nest on the foremast. He can remember vaguely that the after part of the *Pinguin* was suddenly transformed into a fire-spitting volcano and sank immediately afterward. The fore part of the ship then capsized and sank, too, and he was flung into the water.

Another survivor was Chief Quartermaster Neumeister. He was one of the very few men on the bridge who survived. It was his job to measure the distance from the ship at which the enemy shells were bursting, and in carrying out this task he was constantly going from port to starboard. Suddenly the deck seemed to rise under his feet, and he fell. For a moment or two he must have been unconscious. When he came to, the first sight that met his eyes was a fire appliance dis-

charging its contents all over the place. He sprang to his feet and saw that the port side of the bridge was no longer there.

Where he had last seen Krüder and his navigating officer there was now a jagged hole in the bridge structure. Neumeister then felt that the ship was sliding backward into the water.

"She's going under," he said. "Time to get off."

He ran down the steps to the boat deck; and he nearly pitched down, owing to the fact that some of the steps were missing. By this time the *Pinguin* was lying at such a slant that the water was to up the funnel on the boat deck. Neumeister sprang into the water with someone else, but he could never remember, afterward, who it was. He found that his life jacket interfered with his swimming, so he got rid of it. He wanted to get away from the hull of the sinking ship as quickly as possible; he had seen too many ships sink to want to be anywhere near one when she did. He knew that, quite apart from the down suction, a few minutes later all sorts of floating debris rushed to the top from the place where the ship went under, and that a solid piece of beam, for example, which shot to the surface from perhaps five or six hundred feet below water, came up like a projectile, leaping perhaps ten or a dozen feet into the air—and woe betide anyone who happened to be in the way. On the other hand, the man who is fortunate enough to be a little distance away can then swim in safely and cling to it once it has dropped back harmlessly into the water. There are all sorts of things an old hand keeps stored up in his head for all eventualities.

When Neumeister had swum away from the ship he turned and looked back. There were the bows of the *Pinguin* sticking vertically out of the water. The bridge itself was already practically submerged. Clinging to the rail were a number of sailors. In their panic they didn't seem to know that they ought to let go and get away as quickly as possible.

"Jump!" he shouted. "Jump for your lives!"

It was all he could do for them. He turned again and swam away from the ship as fast as he could go, and behind him he heard the *Pinguin* go under with a terrific sound of cracking and bursting. *HK*-33 had met her end.

Neumeister expected to feel something of the notorious suction when a ship goes under, and he lay flat on the water and waited. He felt nothing whatever. Once the suction was past, the next thing to be feared was the violent rise of a variety of unsinkable objects to the surface. For this he stood upright and trod water in order to offer as little surface as possible to the danger. Once again there was nothing, though black oil did well up from the depths after a while.

Most of the survivors had subsequently no idea of how they managed to get into the water. Chief Quartermaster Neumeister looked around. A sailor was swimming a few feet away from him. Three men together were a little distance away, and still further away, dotted around, were others.

"Anyone seen the Old Man?" he shouted. No one had.

"Let's get together," he shouted again, "we'll stand a better chance." They all swam toward the group of three sailors who proved to be clinging to a damaged life raft. There were ten of them hanging on to it now. The other men were still looking around and asking after Krüder.

Some distance away there was another group of survivors; they turned out to be chiefly lascars. They were shouting to the Germans to come over to them.

"What happens if we do?" said of the sailors. "They might get nasty."

"Shut up," said Neumeister. "Listen to what they're shouting."

It was something about sharks and black water.

"*Donnerwetter!*" he exclaimed. "They're right! I'd forgot-

ten all about it. This is a shark zone. But what does black water mean? Let's swim over."

They found the Indians swimming in oily water. That was their "black water." They welcomed the Germans in a friendly fashion. Everyone was in the same boat now. It appeared that they had been shouting that sharks wouldn't go into unclear water and certainly not into oily water, so the safest thing was to stay where there was oil. There were two British officers in the group. They too were perfectly friendly.

"What's the matter with the *Cornwall*?" someone asked. "Why don't they come and pick us up?"

"Have you got a pistol, Neumeister?"

"What for?"

"Just in case. We don't want to drown, and we don't want to be eaten by sharks. It doesn't look as though they're going to pick us up."

"Don't be daft! They'll come. If not for us, then for their own people; and once they're here they'll pick us up, too."

"How do they know any of their own people were on board, anyhow?"

"They've got to reckon with the possibility. They've probably gone after the whaler. That could take a little while."

Spirits sank at the thought. The lascars began to pray aloud.

Gradually it became clear who had survived and who had not. There were only three officers: Dr. Hasselmann, Lieutenant Roll, and Lieutenant Böttcher, who had been transferred from the *Alstertor*.

Two hours later the *Cornwall* reappeared and lowered boats to pick up survivors. Her crew crowded along the ship's side, watching the rescue operations and shouting to the rescue crews as they spotted fresh survivors here and there clinging to floating debris in the oily water.

The survivors were taken to the quarterdeck of the cruiser, where friendly, almost comradely, British sailors brought along great mugs of hot tea or cool lime juice, an excellent drink in the tropics. Cigarettes were handed round. Others brought up hot water and soap and towels to help the survivors get the first layer of oil off themselves.

Although the temperature was tropical, the men had been two hours in the water, and they were cold and exhausted.

Dr. Hasselmann was asked to go to the operating theater of the *Cornwall,* but first he was rigged out with British tropical uniform, as his own was dirty and torn. On the way they had to step over fire hoses and thick cables. The *Cornwall* had obviously suffered damage in the battle. There had been fire, and Rieche had perhaps been right when he supposed that the *Pinguin* had destroyed the fire-control director. This cable was probably the improvised repair; the guns had opened up again.

In the operating room Dr. Hasselmann found survivors of the *Pinguin,* both members of the crew and prisoners.

"The prisoners speak well of you," the British naval surgeon said when they had made themselves known to each other. "They say you treated everybody to the best of your ability, whether friend or enemy. I'd like you to know we appreciate that and to see for yourself that we do the same for your people."

Fortunately neither the wounds nor the injuries turned out to be very serious; the worst injuries were broken arms and damaged ribs. The rest were chiefly cuts and bruises.

A final count showed that three officers, ten petty officers, and forty-seven men had survived of the crew of the *Pinguin,* and twenty-seven of the prisoners who were fortunate enough to be quartered forward, including three British officers and fifteen lascars. The men in the after part of the *Pinguin* had had no chance at all.

Of the crew of the *Pinguin*, 18 officers, 69 petty officers, and 254 other ratings were missing, and 213 prisoners, most of them lascars.

The survivors of the German crew were accommodated as well as possible in a large compartment, and the three officers were given mattresses and spotless bedding on the floor of the after cabin.

When he had time, Dr. Hasselmann turned once again to his diary:

"The *Cornwall* stayed in the neighborhood of the action until next day. In the morning the British buried their men who had been killed in the engagement. None of the dead of the *Pinguin* had been picked up. It is some consolation to us who have survived to know that our comrades died quickly and certainly did not suffer. Up to the moment the mines exploded no one had been injured, so no one had to suffer the horrors of lying wounded in a sinking ship. They must all have been killed instantly.

"The bodies of the dead sailors were covered with the British flag, and then at the end of the ceremony they were slid into the sea. The British captain made a short speech in which he also praised the fairness and courage of the German enemy, describing Captain Krüder as a worthy opponent and a real sea-fox worthy of the admiration of all sailors. There was nothing hurtful for us in it when he mentioned with satisfaction that with the sinking of the *Pinguin*, which had sailed the seas like a ghost ship, the most dangerous and most successful of all German commerce raiders had been destroyed.

"That afternoon the British captain came to visit us in the after cabin. He was a slim man of medium height, probably in his early fifties. He stood there with his back to the fireplace.

" 'You chaps have done us a good deal of damage,' he said, 'but you've always fought fairly, and that means a good deal. We know that Captain Krüder avoided unnecessary blood-

shed, and we also know from our own rescued men that you treated your prisoners well. I think it my duty to thank you in his absence for that, and it is a duty I gladly perform.'

"As far as the food is concerned I can only judge what we have been given, and that is excellent. However, on British ships officers and ratings do not get the same food so I don't know from personal experience how our men are faring, but I've heard no complaints. If it weren't for the fact that we have no freedom of movement we could easily imagine ourselves to be guests of His Majesty George VI. . . ."

H.M.S. *Cornwall* entered Port Victoria on the island of Mahe in the Seychelles on May fifteenth. The prisoners were then asked to sign an undertaking not to attempt to escape. Dr. Hasselmann spoke for them all, both officers and men.

"No, sir," he said firmly. "That we shall not do."

When the British commander said good-by to his officer prisoners he referred to the matter again.

"Unofficially I'm rather glad you didn't," he said appreciatively. "You would have disappointed us if you had."

One bond of union even war could not destroy, it seemed: the feeling of comradeship between sailors of all nationalities.

Auxiliary Cruiser No. 33, better known as the *Pinguin,* sank within a minute at 1629 in position 03°50′ North, 53°50′ East just twenty-seven minutes after the opening of the engagement as a result of a devastating salvo from H.M.S. *Cornwall.*

From the beginning the *Pinguin's* position was hopeless, but she fired 200 projectiles and scored a direct hit. According to the report of the British Admiralty, the heavy cruiser *Cornwall* fired 136 projectiles from her 8-inch and 4-inch guns.

The *Cornwall* was a 10,000-ton cruiser of the Berwick Class capable of a top speed of 31.5 knots—that is to say, she was almost twice as fast as the *Pinguin.* Her armament was, of

course, also much superior to that of her opponent. It consisted of eight 8-inch guns, eight 4-inch guns, four 2-inch guns and eight heavy machine guns. She was also equipped with a catapult for launching her three aircraft.

Krüder was quite right when he pointed out that to shoot down one plane would be useless—the British would only send out another. And if he had sunk two they would have dispatched a third.

On her long voyage the *Pinguin* sailed 59,188 miles, or a distance greater than double the circumference of the earth. During the course of her cruise she captured a total of 136,550 gross register tons, of which 52,000 tons was sent to Germany with prize crews on board. In this respect she set up an all-time record for both the First and Second World Wars. In addition, the shipping sunk by her mining operations is estimated at between 50,000 and 60,000 tons. Thus by the action of the *Pinguin* alone the Allies were deprived of something like 200,000 tons of shipping—not to mention the loss due to delays and disorganization. The total value of the ships and cargoes sunk or captured is difficult to estimate, but it certainly ran into many millions of dollars.

And yet, thanks largely to the humanity of the *Pinguin's* commander, the casualties resulting from this astonishing performance were not very heavy. From every point of view Captain Krüder's record was no mean one.