CHAPTER III

THE “Hitachi” was now a German ship, the Prize Captain was in command, and German sailors replaced the Japanese, who had all been transferred to the “Wolf.” The German Captain spoke excellent English and expressed a wish to do all he could to make us as comfortable on board as we had been before. There was of course considerable confusion on board, and we found next morning that the bathrooms and lavatories were not in working order. This state of affairs prevailed for the next few days, and the men passengers themselves had to do what was necessary in these quarters and haul sea-water aboard. The next morning the transference of coal, cargo, and ship’s stores from the “Hitachi” to the “Wolf” began, and went on without cessation for the next five days. One of the Ger-

26
man officers came over and took photos of the passengers in groups, and others frequently took snapshots of various incidents and of each other on different parts of the ship.

We know now that we were then anchored in a British possession, one of the Southernmost groups of the Maldive Islands. Some of the islands were inhabited, and small sailing boats came out to the “Wolf,” presumably with provisions of some kind. We were of course not allowed to speak to any of the islanders who came alongside the “Wolf,” and were not allowed alongside the “Hitachi.” On one occasion even, the doctor of the “Wolf” went in the ship’s motor-launch to one of the islands to attend the wife of one of the native chiefs! On the next day—the twenty-eighth—all the “Hitachi’s” passengers returned on board her, and at the same time some of the Japanese stewards returned, but they showed no inclination to work as formerly. Indeed, the German officers had no little difficulty in dealing with them. They naturally felt very sore at the
A CAPTIVE ON A GERMAN RAIDER

deaths of so many of their countrymen at the hands of the Germans, and they did as little work as possible.

With their usual thoroughness the Germans one day examined all our passports and took notes of our names, ages, professions, maiden names of married ladies, addresses, and various other details. One young man who had on his passport his photo taken in military uniform was, however, detained on the "Wolf" as a military prisoner. He was asked by a German officer if he were going home to fight. He replied that he certainly was and pluckily added, "I wish I were fighting now."

On October first the married prisoners from the "Wolf," together with three Australian civilian prisoners over military age, a Colonel of the Australian A. M. C., a Major of the same Corps, with his wife, an Australian stewardess, some young boys, and a few old mates and sea-captains were sent on board the "Hitachi." They had all been taken off earlier prizes captured and sunk by the "Wolf." The Australians had been captured
on August sixth from the S.S. "Matunga," from Sydney to what was formerly German New Guinea, from which latter place they had been only a few hours distant. An American captain, with his wife and little girl, had been captured on the barque "Beluga," from San Francisco to Newcastle, N. S. W., on July ninth, both of these ships having been sunk by the Germans. All the passengers transferred were given cabins on board the "Hitachi." We learnt from these passengers that the "Wolf" was primarily a mine-layer, that she had laid mines at Cape Town, Bombay, Colombo and off the Australian and New Zealand coasts. She had sown her last crop of mines, one hundred and ten in number, off the approaches to Singapore before she proceeded to the Indian Ocean to lie in wait for the "Hitachi." Altogether she had sown five hundred mines.

During her stay in the Maldives the "Wolf" sent up her seaplane—or, as the Germans said "the bird"—every morning about six, and she returned about eight. Everything was apparently all clear, and the
“Wolf” evidently anticipated no interference or unwelcome attention from any of our cruisers. Two of them, the “Venus” and the “Doris,” we had seen at anchor in Colombo harbor during our stay there, but it was apparently thought not worth while to send any escort with the “Hitachi,” though the value of her cargo was said to run into millions sterling; and evidently the convoy system had not yet been adopted in Eastern waters.

The “Wolf” remained alongside us till the morning of October third, when she sailed away at daybreak, leaving us anchored in the center of the atoll. It was a great relief to us when she departed; she kept all the breeze off our side of the ship, so that the heat in our cabin was stifling, and it was in addition very dark; the noise of coaling and shifting cargo was incessant, and the roaring of the water between the two ships most disturbing. Before she sailed away the Prize Captain handed to my wife most of her jewels which had been recovered from the bottom of our lifeboat. As many of these were Siamese
jewelry and unobtainable now, we were very rejoiced to obtain possession of them again, but many rings were missing and were never recovered.

The falls of the lifeboats were all renewed, and on October fifth we had places assigned to us in the lifeboats, and rules and regulations were drawn up for the “detained enemy subjects” on board the “Hitachi.” They were as follows:—

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ON BOARD THE GERMAN AUXILIARY SHIP “HITACHI MARU” DETAINED ENEMY SUBJECTS

1. Everybody on board is under martial law and any offence is liable to be punished by same.

2. All orders given by the Commander, First Officer or any of the German crew on duty are to be strictly obeyed.

3. After the order “Schiff abblenden” every evening at sunset no lights may be shown on deck or through portholes etc. that are visible from outside.
4. The order "Allemann in die Boote" will be made known by continuous ringing of the ship's bell and sounding the gongs. Everybody hurries to his boat with the lifebelt and leaves the ship. Everybody is allowed to take one small bag preciously packed.

5. Nobody is allowed to go on the boatdeck beyond the smokeroom. All persons living in first class cabins are to stay amidships and are not allowed to go aft without special permission; all persons living aft are to stay aft.

6. The Japanese crew is kept only for the comfort of the one time passengers and is to be treated considerately as they are also d. e. s.

7. The d. e. s. are not allowed to talk with the crew.

At sea, October 6th, 1917.
Kommando S.M.H. "Hitachi Maru"

C. ROSE,
Lt.z.See & Kommandant.
Lieutenant Rose very kindly told me that as I was leaving the East for good and therefore somewhat differently situated from the other passengers, he would allow me to take in the lifeboat, in addition to a handbag, a cabin trunk packed with the articles from Siam I most wanted to save.

It was evident from this that the Germans intended sinking the ship if we came across a British or Allied war vessel. We were of course unarmed, as the Germans had removed the "Hitachi’s" gun to the "Wolf," but the German Captain anticipated no difficulty on this score, and assured me that it was the intention of the Commander of the "Wolf" that we should be landed in a short time with all our baggage at a neutral port with a stone pier. We took this to mean a port in either Sumatra or Java—and we were buoyed up with this hope for quite a considerable time. But, alas! like many more of the assurances given to us, it was quite untrue.

There were now on board one hundred and thirty-one souls, of whom twenty-nine were
passengers. On Saturday, October sixth, the seaplane returned in the afternoon and remained about half an hour, when she again flew away. She brought a message of evidently great importance, for whereas it had been the intention of our Captain to sail away on the following afternoon, he weighed anchor the next morning, and left the atoll. He had considerable trouble with the anchor before starting, and did not get away till nearly eight o’clock, instead of at daybreak. Evidently something was coming to visit the atoll; though it was certain nothing could be looking for us, as our capture could not then have been known, and there could have been no communication between the Maldives and Ceylon or the mainland. The ship was cleaned and put in order, the cargo properly stowed, and the bunkers trimmed by the German crew, aided by some neutrals who had been taken prisoner from other ships before and for some days after we sailed. Some of the sailors among the prize crew were good enough to give us some pieces of the “Wolf’s” shrapnel found on the “Hitachi,” relics which
were eagerly sought after by the passengers.

The passengers were now under armed guards, but were at perfect liberty to do as they pleased, and the relations between them and the German officers and crew were quite friendly. Deck games were indulged in as before our capture, and the German Captain took part in them. Time, nevertheless, hung heavily on our hands, but many a pleasant hour was spent in the saloon with music and singing. One of the Australian prisoners was a very good singer and pianist, and provided very enjoyable entertainment for us. On Sunday evenings, after the six o'clock "supper," a small party met in the saloon to sing a few favorite hymns, each one choosing the ones he or she liked best. This little gathering was looked forward to by those who took part in it, as it formed a welcome break in the ordinary monotonous life on board.

The only Japanese left on board were some stewards, cooks, and the stewardess. A German chief mate and chief engineer replaced the Japanese, and other posts previously held by the Japanese were filled by Ger-
mans and neutrals. The times of meals were changed, and we no longer enjoyed the good meals we had had before our capture, as most of the good food had been transferred to the “Wolf.” Chota hazri was done away with, except for the ladies; the meals became much simpler, menus were no longer necessary, and the Japanese cooks took no more trouble with the preparation of the food.

However, on the whole we were not so badly off, though on a few occasions there was really not enough to eat, and some of the meat was tainted, as the freezing apparatus had got out of order soon after the ship was captured.

We steamed gently on a southwesterly course for about five days, and on the succeeding day, October twelfth, changed our course many times, going northeast at six-thirty a. m., southeast at twelve-thirty p. m., northeast again at four p. m., and north at six-thirty p. m., evidently waiting for something and killing time, as we were going dead slow all day. The next morning we had stopped entirely, and sighted smoke at ten-
twenty a. m.—it was, of course, the "Wolf," met by appointment at that particular time and place. She came abreast of us about eleven-twenty a. m. and we sailed on parallel courses for the rest of the day. She was unaccompanied by a new prize, and we were glad to think she had been unsuccessful in her hunt for further prey. She remained in company with us all next day, Sunday, and about five p.m. moved closer up, and after an exchange of signals we both changed courses and the "Wolf" sheered off, and to our great relief we saw her no more for several days. There was always the hope that when away from us she would be seen and sunk by an Allied cruiser, and always the fear that when she came back to us we might again be put on board her. The Germans seemed to have a perfect mania for taking photographs—we were of course not allowed to take any and cameras were even taken away from us—and one day Lieut. Rose showed me photos of various incidents of the "Wolf's" cruise, including those of the sinkings of various ships. (I saw, too, on this
day a photo of the "Hitachi" flying the German flag and one showing the damage sustained by her from the "Wolf's" firing. There were ugly holes in the stern quarters, but all above the water-line.) The German officers would take with them to Germany hundreds of pictures giving a complete photographic record of the "Wolf's" expedition.

We cruised about again after the "Wolf" had left us for a couple of days; and on the seventeenth were stationary all day. Several sharks were seen around the ship, and the German sailors caught two or three fairly large ones during the day and got them on board. On the eighteenth the sea was rough and we were gently steaming to keep the ship's head to the seas, and on the following day we again changed our course many times. Saturday morning, October twentieth, again saw the "Wolf" in sight at six-thirty. She was still alone, and we proceeded on parallel courses, passing about midday a few white reefs with breakers sweeping over them. Shortly afterwards we came in sight of many other reefs, and at two p. m. we anchored,
and the “Wolf” tied up alongside us within a snug and sheltered spot. We were almost surrounded by large and small coral reefs, against which we could see and hear the breakers dashing. It was a beautiful anchorage, and the waters were evidently well known to the Germans. Some of the seafaring men amongst us told us we were in the Cargados Carajos Reef, southeast of the Seychelles, and that we were anchored near the Nazareth Bank.