

*Dresden* was a sister ship of the notorious raider, *Emden*, which had been destroyed some time previously by the Australian ship *Sydney* off the Keeling Islands. At the outbreak of the war she was in Mexican waters to protect the interests of Germany, in case of need, during the civil war then troubling that republic. Afterwards, in an interval snatched from a programme of scouring the seas in pursuit and destruction of defenceless merchantmen, she took part in the naval action off the Falklands, she and *Nürnberg* being fortunate enough, for the time being, to escape. They were both hotly pursued, however, and *Nürnberg* was sunk almost immediately, leaving *Dresden* striving to evade as best she could the British squadron which was ever inexorably on her track.

At length, on March 9, she managed to reach what appeared to be an absolutely isolated and safe refuge, Cumberland Bay, in an island belonging to the Juan Fernandez group. There she cast anchor, about 500 yards from the shore.

It was necessary, however, being a belligerent warship, that she should obtain the permission of the Chilean authorities, for the island belonged to Chili, before she could remain in the neutral territorial waters of that State. And even that permission could not be granted—such are the obligations of a neutral State—for more than a period sufficient to refit adequately to proceed to another port—usually a period of twenty-four hours.

Accordingly, in order that his stay might be as long as possible, the captain decided to pretend that his engines were out of order, and that eight days at least would be required for their repair.

So he requested permission to remain for eight. But the Governor of the port refused to grant the request. He was satisfied that the reason given for it had no foundation, and therefore ordered the captain to leave the bay within twenty-four hours, and threatened to intern the ship if her stay were prolonged beyond that period.

The time expired, and *Dresden* had not departed. The Governor thereupon, true to his word, immediately notified the captain that he had incurred the penalty imposed, and that the ship was interned.

Very shortly afterwards the Peruvian barque *Lorton* arrived at Valparaiso with the crew of the British barque *Conway Castle*. The latter, it appeared, had been recently sunk, with a cargo of grain, by *Dresden*; it was now learned that *Dresden* had then only a small and insufficient quantity of coal left in her bunkers. The Chilian Government had also intercepted wireless messages from *Dresden*, summoning German merchant ships anchored at Valparaiso to bring her supplies, and it was believed that two ships which had just left that port were searching the seas in order to supply *Dresden* with the coal she needed.

The British cruiser *Kent*, arriving off Coronel, was placed in possession of these facts. Immediately coaling, she, with her squadron, at once sailed to look for and capture the hiding raider, the movements of British shipping on the Chilian coast being meanwhile suspended.

And now, on March 14, the British naval squadron, composed of the cruisers *Kent* and *Glasgow* and the armed transport *Orama*, suddenly arrived at Cumberland Bay. The commander had no difficulty in speedily appraising the true situation. Though *Dresden* at once hoisted a flag of truce and dispatched an officer to the squadron to emphasise the circumstance that she was in neutral waters, yet it was obvious, from her flying colours and trained guns and the fact that she was awaiting supplies of coal, that she had not accepted internment, and, intending to take advantage of the geographical position of the island, its lack of military force, and the difficulty of communication with the mainland, was about to make a sudden dash for the open sea and there continue her work of destruction. Undoubtedly, if the British squadron had not arrived *Dresden* would, as against the Governor of the port and his inadequate forces, have been mistress of the situation and able to stay or leave at her own pleasure.

Should the squadron assume some part of the obligation of Chili and keep such watch of the German ship as would preclude her escape, or should it—under the peculiar circumstances—not-

withstanding the neutrality of the water—which *Dresden* had been flagrantly abusing—force her to fight?

The commander decided that he would force her to fight.

He summoned her to surrender, warning her that if she refused she would be destroyed.

An action ensued. The tale is very short. After five minutes' fighting *Dresden* hauled down her colours and displayed the white flag. She was then much damaged and set on fire, and, after burning for some minutes, her captain gave orders that the powder magazine should be blown up. There was an explosion and she sank.

The crew were saved.

And there were no British casualties and no damage was done to the ships.

And a day or two before, on the 10th, another German commerce raider, the auxiliary cruiser *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*, had also come to its end, though less gallantly. She was the vessel that had sunk the American ship, *William P. Frye*, and now, herself, was forced to seek refuge in—of all places—the American harbour of Newport News, where she was duly interned on April 7. One can easily imagine the feeling in America.

But there she found herself in congenial company, for already three other German warships had been interned in United States ports—the *Geier* and *Locksun*, which had sought refuge at Honolulu and were interned there in November 1914, and the *Cormoran*, which arrived at Guam in the following month and was then interned. And very shortly afterwards, on April 11, the *Kronprinz Wilhelm*—believed to be the last of the German raiders—also found a shelter from her British pursuers at Newport News, to be subsequently interned in her turn.

Quite a respectable proportion, if not all, of the surviving units of Germany's armed ships, other than submarines, were thus now safely confined within the ports of the United States and elsewhere.