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FEATURES

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TAM O' THE SCOTS

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THE LAW BREAKER AND FRIGHTFULNESS

It is an unwritten law of all flying services that when an enemy machine bursts into flames in the course of an aerial combat the aggressor who has brought the catastrophe should leave well enough alone and allow his stricken enemy to fall unaided.

Lieutenant Callender, returning from a great and enjoyable strafe, was met by three fast scouts of the Imperial German Flying Service. He shot down one, when his gun was jammed. He bunched over to avoid the attention of the foremost of his adversaries, but was hit by a chance bullet, his petrol tank was pierced and he suddenly found himself in the midst of noisy flames, which said "Hoo-oo-oo!" most lazily.

As he fell, to his amazement and wrath, one of his adversaries dropped after him, his machine gun going like a rattle. High above the combatants a fourth and fifth machine, the one British and the other a unit of the American squadron, were tearing down-sides. The pursuing plane saw the danger, banked round and sped for home, his companion being already on the way.

"Ye're no gentleman," said Tam grimly, "an' A'm gunt' to strafe ye!" Fortunately for the flying breaker of air-laws, von Blasing's circus was performing stately measures in the heavens and as von Blasing's circus consisted of ten very fast flying machines, Tam decided that this was not the moment for vengeance and came round on a hairpin turn just as von Blasing signalled, "Attack!"

Tam got back to the aerodrome to discover that Callender, somewhat burnt but immensely cheerful, was holding an indignation meeting, the subject under discussion being "The Game and How It Should Be Played."

"The brute knew jolly well I was crashing. It's a monstrous thing!" "One was bound to meet fellows like that sooner or later," said Captain Blackie, the squadron philosopher. "I suppose the supply of gentlemen does not go round, and they are getting some rubbish into the corps. One of you fellows drop a note over their aerodrome and ask them what the dickens they meant by it. Did you see him, Tam?"

"A' did that," said Tam, "that we Hoon was saved from destruction owing to circumstances over which A' had no control. A' was on his tail; his headlights were glancing along the skirts of his overcoated Lewis gun, when A' appeared the grand circus of Mr. Macblissing waiting to perform."

Tam shook his head. "A'm hoping," said he, "that it was an act of mental aberration, that 'twas his first crash; and carried away by the excitement and enthusiasm of the moment, the little fellow fell into sin. A'm hoping that retribution is awaiting him."

"Ma wee Hindenburg," says Mr. Macblissing, stern and ruthless, "did I see ye behaving in a manner likely to bring discredit upon the Imperial and All-Highest Air Service of our Exalted and Talkative Kaiser? Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!"

"Little Willie Hindenburg hangs his head."

"Baron," or "ma lord," as the case may be, says he, "I'll be telling ye a lie. I was not me!" "That last wee dram of sauerkraut got me all lit up like a picture palace," says he; "I didn't know whether it was on my head or somebody else's," said he; "I admit the allegation and I throw myself on the mercy of the court."

"Hand me ma story," says Mac Blasing pale but determined, and a few minutes later a passer-by might have been arrested and even condemned to death by boarin' the sed and wicklike mousie that came true headquarters."

"That 'Little Willie Hindenburg' had not acted indiscreetly, but that it was part of his game plan to strafe the strafe—an operation equivalent to kicking a man when he is down—was demonstrated the next morning, for when Thornton fell out of control, blowing from engine to tail, a German flying-man, unmistakably the same—as had disgraced himself on the previous day, came down on his tail, keeping a hail of bullets directed at the fuselage, though he might have saved himself the trouble, for both Thornton and Freeman, his observer, had long since fought their last fight."

Again Tam was witness and again, like a raging tempest, he swept down upon the law-breaker and again was followed by the vigilant German scouts from executing his vengeance.

retiring author. He closed the book with a long sigh, sat upon his bed for half an hour and then went back to the pine table, took out from the debris of one of the drawers a bottle of ink, a pen and some notepaper and wrote laboriously and carefully, ending the seven or eight lines of writing with a very respectable representation of a skull and cross-bones.

When he had finished he drew an envelope toward him and sat looking at it for five minutes. He scratched his head and he scratched his chin and laid down his pen.

It was eleven o'clock, and the moon would still be sitting engaged in discussion. He put out the light and made his way across to the deserted aerodrome.

Blackie saw him in the anteroom, for Tam enjoyed the privilege of entrance at all times.

"He's a very curious one," said Blackie; "we've just had a message through from Intelligence. One of his squadron has been brought down by the Creepers, and they are so sick about him that this fellow who was caught by the Creepers gave him away. His name is von Muhl, the son of a very rich pal of the Kaiser, and a real bad egg."

"Von Muhl," repeated Tam slowly, "and he will be belongin' to the Routers lot, A'm thinkin'."

Blackie nodded. "They complain bitterly that he is not a gentleman," he said, "and they would kick him out but for the fact that he has this influence. Why did you want to know?"

"Sir," said Tam solemnly, "I have a grant stum." He went back to his room and addressed the envelope: "Mr. von Muhl."

The next morning when the well-born members of the Ninety-fifth squadron of the Imperial German Air Service were making their final preparations to ascend, a black speck appeared in the sky.

Captain Karl von Zeiglemann fixed the speck with his Zeiss glasses and swore.

"That is an English machine," he said, "those Bavarian swine have let him through. Take cover!"

The group in the aerodrome scattered. "The Archie fire grew more and more furious and the sky was flecked with the smoke of bursting shell, but the little visitor came slowly and inexorably onward. Then came three resounding crashes as the bombs dropped. One got the corner of a hangar and demolished it. Another burst into the open and did no damage, but the third fell plumb between two machines waiting to go up and left them tangled and burning."

The German squadron-leader saw the machine bank over, saw, too, something that was fluttering down slowly to the earth. He called his orderly. "There's a parachute falling outside, Fritz. Go and get it."

He turned to his second in command. "We shall find, Muller, that this visitor is not wholly unconnected with our dear friend von Muhl."

"I wish von Muhl had banged under that bomb," grumbled his subordinate. "Can't we do something to get rid of him, Herr Captain?"

Zeiglemann shook his head. "I have suggested it and had a rap over the knuckles for my pains. The fellow is getting us a very bad name."

Five minutes later his orderly came to the group of which Zeiglemann was the center and handed him a small linen parachute and a weighted bag. The squadron-leader was cutting the string which bound the mouth of the bag when a shrill voice said:

"Herr Captain, be careful; there might be a bomb."

There was a little chuckle of laughter from the group, and Zeiglemann glowered at the speaker, a tall, unprepossessing youth whose face was red with excitement.

"Herr Captain," spluttered the youth, "I do what I think is my duty to my Kaiser and my Fatherland."

He saluted religiously. To this there was no reply, as he well knew, and Captain Zeiglemann finished his work in silence. The bag was opened. He put in his hand and took out a letter.

"I thought so," he said, looking at the address; "this is for you, von Muhl." He handed it to the youth, who tore open the envelope.

They crowded about him and read it over his shoulder.

"THIS IS THE FIRST WARNING OF THE AVENGER. SHAKE IN YOUR SHOES. TREMBLE!"

He turned again, this time straight for home, dropping his post-bag (he had correctly addressed his letter) and he knew it would be delivered. He shot down out of control a clever enemy machine that showed fight, chased a slow "spotter" to earth, and flashed over the British trenches less than two hundred feet from the ground with his wings shot to ribbons—for the circus had got it within machine-gun range.

A week later Lieutenant von Muhl crossed the British lines at a height of fifteen hundred feet, bombed a battery and a casualty clearing station and dropped an insolent note addressed to "The Englishman Tamm."

He did not wait for an answer, which came at one o'clock on the following morning—a noisy and a terrifying answer.

"This has ceased to be amusing," said Captain von Zeiglemann, emerging from his bomb-proof shelter, and wired a requisition for three machines to replace those "destroyed by enemy action," and approval for certain measures of reprisal. "As for that pig-dog von Muhl."

"He has received his fifth warning," said his unsmiling junior, "and he is not happy."

Von Muhl was decidedly not happy. His commandant found him rather pale and shaking, sitting in his room. He leaped up as von Zeig-

brought down by a chance Archie shell and fell with a sprained ankle in the German support-trenches, facing Armentiers.

"A warning to me to leave Muhl to fight his own quarrel," he said as he limped from the car which had been sent to bring him in.

There comes to every man to whom has been interpreted the meaning of fear a moment of exquisite doubt in his own courage, a bewildering collapse of faith that begins in uneasy fears and ends in blind panic. Von Muhl had courage—an airman can not be denied that quality whatever his nationality may be—but it was a mechanical valor based upon an honest belief in the superiority of the average German over all—friends or rivals.

He had come to the flying service of a combat he was compelled to come to within a thousand feet of the ground and was on the point of climbing when, immediately beneath him, a Prang military railway train emerged from a tunnel. Tam carried no bombs, but he had two excellent machine guns, and he swooped joyously to the fray.

A few feet from the ground he flattened and, running in the opposite direction to that which the train was taking, he loosed a torrent of fire into the side of the carriages.

Von Muhl, looking from the window of a first-class carriage, saw in a flash the machine and its pilot—then the windows splintered to a thousand pieces and he dropped white and palpitating to the floor.

He came to Frankfurt to find his relations had gone to Kaserhube, and followed them. The night he arrived Kaserhube was bombed by a French squadron. . . . Von Muhl saw only a score of flying and venetian Tam. He came back to the front broken and paralytically before he replied.

"Sir," he said, "the habits of the Hoon, or Gairman, have been a life study. Often in the night when ye gentlemen at the mess are smokin' had seengars an' playin' the gambler's game o' bridge-whist, Tam o' the Scots is workin' out problems in Gairman psych—I forget the bonnie waird. There he sits, the wee man wi'oot so much as a seegar to keep him company—thank ye, sir, A'll not smoke it the noo, but 'twill be welcomed by one of the sufferin' mechanics—there sits Tam, gettin' into the mind, or substitute, of the Hoon."

"But do ye seriously believe that you have scared him?"

"Mr. Craig, sir, what do ye fear wi'oot in the world?"

"Snakes."

"An' if ye wanted to strafe a feller as bad as ye could, would ye put him amongst snakes?"

"I can't imagine anything more horrible," shuddered Craig.

"Tis the same with the Hoon. He goes in for frightfulness because he's afraid of frightfulness. He bombs little things because he's scared of his ain little dooms bonie."

He believes we get the wind up because he'd be silly wi' terror if we did the same thing to him. Ye can always scare a Hoon—that's ma theory."

Craig had no further opportunity for discussing the matter, for the next morning he was "concussed" in mid-air and retained sufficient sense to be fortunately the ground was in the temporary occupation of the German.

So Craig went philosophically into his quarters and handed over to von Zeiglemann's wing "for transport."

"This is r. von Muhl," introduced Zeiglemann gravely they were going in to lunch; "you have heard of him."

Craig raised his eyebrows, for the spirit of mischief was on him.

"Von Muhl," he said with well-assumed incredulity; "wings, I thought—oh, by the way, is today the sixteenth?"

"Tomorrow is the sixteenth," snarled von Muhl. "What happens tomorrow Herr Englishman?"

"I beg your pardon," said Craig politely; "I'm afraid I can not tell you—it would not be fair to Tam."

And von Muhl went out in a sweat of fear.

From somewhere overhead came a sound like a buzz-saw as it bites into hard wood. Tam, who was walking along a deserted by-road, his hands in his breeches pockets, his face cap at the back of his head, looked up and shaded his eyes. Something as big as a house-fly, and black as that, was moving with painful slowness across the skies.

Now there is only one machine that makes a noise like a buzz-saw going about its lawful business, and that is a British battle-plane, and that this was such a machine, Tam knew.

Why it should be flying at that height and in a direction opposite to that in which the battle-line lay, was a mystery.

Usually a machine begins to drop as it reaches our lines, even though its destination may be far beyond the aerodromes immediately behind the line—even, as in this case, when it was heading straight for the sea and the English coast. Nor was it customary for an aeroplane bound for "Blighty" to begin its voyage from some point behind the German lines. Tam stood for fully five minutes watching the leisurely speck winging westward; then he retraced his steps to the aerodrome.

He found at the entrance a little group of officers who were equally interested.

"What do you make of that bus, Tam?" asked Blackie.

"She's British," said Tam cautiously.

He reached out his hands for the glasses that Blackie was offering, and focused them on the disappearing machine. Long and silently he watched her. The sun had been behind a cloud, but now one ray caught the aeroplane for a moment and turned her into a sparkling star of light. Tam put down his glasses.

"Von's Mr. Craig's," he said impressively.

"Craig's machine? What makes you think so?"

"Sir," said Tam, "I had know her anywhere. Von's Mr. Craig's 'bus, right she's right."

Blackie turned quickly and ran to his office. He spun the handle of the telephone and gave a number.

"That you, Calais? There's a Bloche trying one of our machine gone in your direction—yes, one that came down in his lines last week. A fair-light battle-plane. She's flying at sixteen thousand feet. Warn Dover."

He hung up the telephone and turned back.

Holiday-makers at a certain British coast town were treated to the spectacle of an alarm.

They gathered on the sands and on the front and watched a dozen English machines tracking upward in wide circles until they felt were hovering specks in the sky. They saw them wheel suddenly and pass out to sea and then those who possessed strong glasses noted a new speck coming from the east and presently thirteen machines were mixed up and confused like the spots that come before the eyes of some one afflicted with a liver.

From the pickle of dots one slowly descended and the trained observer standing at a point of vantage whooped for joy, for that which seemed a slow descent was, in reality, moving twice as fast as the swiftest express train and, moreover, they knew by certain signs that it was falling in flames.

A gray destroyer, its three stacks belching black smoke, cut through the sea and circled about the debris of the burning machine. A little boat danced through the waves and a young man was hauled from the wreckage uttering strange and bitter words of hate.

They took him down to the ward-room of the destroyer and propped him in the commander's armchair. A business-like doctor dabbed two ugly cuts in his head with iodine and carefully encircled his brow with a bandage. A navigating lieutenant passed him a whisky-and-soda.

"If you speak English, my gentle lad," said the commander, "tell me your rank, title, and official number."

"Von Muhl," snapped the young man, "Royal Prussian Lieutenant of the Guard."

"You take your breath away," said the commander. "Will you explain why you were flying a British machine carrying the Allied marks?"

"I shall explain nothing," boomed the youth.

He was not pleasant to look upon, for his head was closely shaven and his forehead receded. Not to be outdone in modesty, his chin was also of a retiring character.

"Before I hand you over to the wild men of the Royal Naval Air Service, like you on toast, would you like to make any statement which will save you from the ignominious end which awaits all enterprising heroes who come cannonfishing as enterprising young Britons?"

Von Muhl hesitated.

"I came—because I saw the machine—it had fallen into our lines—it was an impulse."

He slipped his hand into his close-fitting tunic and withdrew a thickwad of canvas-backed paper which, unfolded, revealed itself as a staff map of England.

"This he spread on the ward-room table and the commander observed that at certain places little red circles had been drawn.

"Tippinlegh, Colburn, Exchester," said the destroyer captain; "but these aren't places of military importance—they are German instrument camps."

"Exactly," said von Muhl; "that is where I go."

In this he spoke the truth, for to one of these he went.

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DECISION TODAY IN MONCTON AUTOMOBILE CASE

Moncton, Feb. 6.—The prosecution, conducted their case this afternoon in the case of Vanbuskirk, Foderer and Wilson, charged with the theft of an automobile in November last from a Sunny Brae man, and the magistrate will give his decision tomorrow morning as to whether the prisoners will be committed for trial or set free. If Gregory, a garage proprietor of Cabot, Maine, gave evidence today identifying Vanbuskirk as one of the parties who left the stolen auto at his garage.