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"SALADA" TEA

TO THE HILT

By
Percival Christopher Wren

CHAPTER II

Flying Officer John Vere-Vaughan suddenly realized that it was all over; that he was at rest, at peace, and unhurt.

"Tommy!" he shouted. "Hi, Tommy! Tommy! Are you all right?"

What an idiotic thing to ask. How could he be all right when he had been so badly hit that he had collapsed twice?

Scrambling out from under the machine, he rose to his feet, stooped beside the pilot's cockpit and again called, "Tommy! Are you badly hurt? Tommy . ." There was no reply.

Crouching, he crawled under the overturned airplane, felt about until he found the catch of Lucke's safety belt, released it and vainly endeavored to do something to break his friend's fall, as the sharp click told him that he had unfastened him.

Crawling out again backwards from under the machine, he dragged Lucke after him, turned him over onto his back, unbuttoned his tunic, and ere long realized that he was dead. A bullet him struck him in the right side, and evidently passing upward, must have pierced his liver and lungs; probably gone very near his heart.

With a lump in his throat Vere Vaughan realized that Tommy, mortally wounded, had flown the machine, had, with a supreme effort in the very article of death, summoned the strength and skill and courage deliberately and accurately to do the one thing that could be done. As he died Tommy had saved his friend's life.

And now what? Here he was, with a smashed machine over a hundred miles from home and on the wrong side of the mountains, in the heart of the enemy's country—and might as well be a thousand for all the chance he had of finding his way back without a guide and food.

What had he better do first? Set fire to the machine, of course, and then give poor Tommy some sort of decent burial.

What could he do about poor Tommy? It would be impossible to get his body away. No plane could ever land anywhere near here, even if the place could be spotted. Perhaps he could find a suitable cave handy. Pile up a little cairn of stones, anyhow.

Well, this wouldn't do. The longer he stood staring, the worse he'd . . .

Bang!

A bullet struck a boulder close beside his head. After him already, were they? The vultures and the feast.

As he flung himself down, another rifle was fired. Another. And another.

Were they going to shoot him up, at long range, and then come across for the loot? Better that than being taken alive. They were nasty people in this part of the world. The ordinary Border outlaws were bad enough, but they were sufficiently sophisticated and civilized to consider a captive British officer from the ransom point of view.

But it would be rather a different matter with the wild men in this part of the world, so far from the Border. They might have neither the experience nor the facilities for sound financial use of prisoners. And, by Jove, if one fell into the hands of the Singing Hadji of Sufed Kot, one would know all about it!

Hullo, that was a close one. Somebody had got round to a flank where he could enfilade him.

The firing ceased suddenly and completely. There was a pattering of horny feet and, with a rush, a mob of tribesmen swarmed up from below over the curve of the mountain flank, while simultaneously two other crowds swiftly converged on either side upon the boulder behind which he crouched.

Vere-Vaughan rose to his feet as the three hordes of huge and hardy mountaineers, active as cats and strong as buffaloes, with wild yells and brandished rifles bore down upon him and engulfed him.

But even as he fought desperately, driving his fists into open-mouthed wild-eyed hairy faces, he realized that the great Khyber knives, the small needle-pointed Pathan daggers, the heavy rifle butts, were not being used and that he was to be taken alive.

Before a blow on the head knocked him senseless, he saw that what had seemed about to happen to him was actually happening to the plane. It was being literally torn to pieces, rent asunder, destroyed by the wild triumphant masses that swarmed upon it and covered it like a million ants upon the body of a fallen bird.

When he recovered consciousness he found that he was lying on the ground, his clothes in rags, his nose bleeding, an eye closed, his head one agonizing ache, but otherwise undamaged, unwounded, his arms and legs unhurt. That was something to be thankful for. While one can walk, one can escape—perhaps.

But what was the idea? Ransom or torture? If they took him to the Singing Hadji of Sufed Kot, as presumably they would, his fate would depend entirely on whether the Hadji would prefer to get a considerable sum in sacks of silver Indian rupees, or whether he'd prefer to get a little of his own back on the British Government in the person of one of its officers, in revenge for his heavy defeat after the siege of Giltraza Fort.

It had been a humiliating end to his wonderful crusade which, starting at Sufed Kot, was to have taken Giltraza and then swept like an avalanche through the passes, over the Border, down into the Indus valley, to lay waste the country of the Infidels from Peshawar to Calcutta.

Probably the British had no more venomously vindictive enemy than this Mullah. And apart from him and his personal hatred, the attitude of all Pathans toward flying officers was peculiar. Apparently they regarded them as persons of tremendous importance and value to the British Government and considered them as a breed of supermen whose marvelous gifts, powers and knowledge enabled them to fly about the sky, and from the safety of their altitude to rain death upon their enemies beneath.

Well, that might be all to the good and weigh sufficiently with these people to decide them upon a course of action of their own, independent of their spiritual suzerain, the Singing Hadji of Sufed Kot. They might, after all, know enough to do a deal with the British Government on their own account, and that might be the reason why they had only knocked him about and not slashed him to pieces with those awful Khyber knives, which were really swords.

Owing to the extreme poverty of their soil and the hardship of their lives, the Pathans were about the most avaricious and grasping fellows on the face of the earth. If they would only keep him themselves and not pass him on to the Hadji, surely he could persuade them that he was more valuable alive than dead.

Could he put that into Pushtu? Probably they wouldn't listen. They considered that this air fighting was an abominable business. Most unfair. It was openly said in Peshawar that once upon a time the British had been fine and honorable foes who fought man to man, rifle to rifle and bayonet to knife. They had liked the Sahibs very much in those days, and had enjoyed the various shows, Black Mountain, Tirah, Malakand, Tochi, Afghan wars; all of them.

And now the British, who considered themselves sportsmen and war the best of all sports, had gone and spoilt war.

Hullo, that was plain enough. Someone had shouted. "Bring him to the Malik, I say."

And someone else, "No, to the Mullah—who is as ten Maliks."

The Mullah presumably would be the Singing Hadji of Sufed Kot himself, and the Malik the local chief of Khan.

Hullo, it was warming up. A man, unusually big, brawny and active even among those huge mountaineers, had suddenly whipped out his Khyber knife, seized the beard of a man who was thrusting his furious face into his own as he screamed, "The Mullah! The Mullah! The Mullah!" and slashed him across the neck, the broad blade sinking down to the bone. There'd be a free fight in a minute and the captive would get the benefit. Somebody would give him a swipe with one of those ghastly butcher knives—one of the Mullah lot probably, to spite the Malik men. He had better do something about it.

Vere-Vaughan rose to his feet, his aching head seeming to spin upon his shoulders. "Hi!" he shouted in the momentary lull, as he swayed. And as all heads turned toward him he bawled in Pushtu: "Listen! The Sirkar gives big rewards for the Sahibs who fly. Ransom. Take me to the Malik. Rupees. Backsheesh for everybody."

And led by the man who had slain the Mullah's representative, the Malik's party, grouping themselves about him began to hustle him down the mountainside.

Staggering, stumbling and falling, Vere-Vaughan, by this time he was shaking with fatigue, reached the plain and a distant view of a village which from the airplane he had not seen.

Hullo, he was going to faint. He could go no further. He was done. That must have been a proper blow he got on the head. He fell rather than sat, and at once discovered that in thinking he could go no further he was mistaken. For down the mountainside after them came a smaller but violently vociferating crowd of Mullah's men, evidently nobler souls than these his captors, inasmuch as they put blood before backsheesh, punishment of the Infidel invader before ransom and reward. .

Thrusting the others aside, the big leader who had already killed one man that morning seized Vere-Vaughan by the arm, jerked him to his feet and shouted in Pushtu: "Come on, you fool. They'll slash your insides out if they get you."

And with an effort of will which was a triumph of mind over matter, Vere-Vaughan pulled himself together, rose to his feet and again staggered on.

(Continued Next Week)

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'Novel Air Attacks' Blast Mareth Line

Prime Minister Winston Churchill was believed by observers to have been referring to 4,000-pound block-buster bombs and new tank - busting Hurricane planes when he mentioned "novel forms of intense air attacks" used by the Allies in Tunisia.

The effect of two-ton bombs when dropped on Mareth Line positions has been described in British dispatches as "terrific."

The tank-busting planes were said to have proved more than an answer to Germany's Stukas. The Hurricanes use both bombs and powerful cannon in smashing at hostile armor.

TABLE TALKS

SADIE B. CHAMBERS

In these days, with talk of meat rationing and the desire of everyone to reduce budgets, it is difficult to plan a variety of meat dishes. Remember some of these dishes, easier on the budget, are also very rich in nourishment. Nothing can be more appetizing than fragrant beefsteak-kidney pie or a plate of liver and onions. Another suggestion is beef liver with a savoury dressing.

Calves liver may be more tender but not any more nourishing than beef or pork liver. Liver is a veritable "builder upper," tremendously rich in iron and other minerals so important in the upkeep of our health; vitamins too in abundance and the protein so important for growth and repair.

Ever try rolling it around a strip of bacon and browning in bacon or butter fat along with a minced onion? Add a little water, cover and let simmer until tender. Thicken the gravy and garnish with parsley. This is particularly good with baked or mashed potatoes and scalloped tomatoes. Round out the meal with baked apple.

Remember in cooking liver that a high temperature will result in a tough flavorless dish.

Beef Liver Southern Style

1 lb. beef liver
2 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon salt and pepper
1 large onion sliced
3 tablespoons chopped green pepper
1 tablespoon bacon fat
2 cups tomatoes
¾ cup cooked rice
½ cup cooked peas
½ cup cooked corn

Cut liver into slices, then into strips. Dredge with flour seasoned with salt and pepper. Brown onion with liver and green pepper. Add tomatoes and enough water to cover meat. Cover and simmer until liver is tender, about 40 minutes. Add rice, peas and corn. Continue cooking for 5 to 10 minutes.

Kidney Stew

6 lamb kidneys (beef may be used)
1 tablespoon chopped onion
3 tablespoons bacon fat
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup water or stock
2 teaspoons condiment sauce
1 teaspoon prepared mustard

Split kidneys and remove veins. Saute onion in fat for 3 minutes. Add kidneys and cook until done, about five minutes. Remove from pan. Add flour and stir until brown. Add liquid and seasonings and stir until thick and smooth. Pour gravy over kidneys. Serve on toast. Also may be served with mashed potatoes or noodle border.

Liver Souffle

2 cups ground and cooked liver
2 cups hot medium sauce
3 eggs separated
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon chopped onion

Pour white sauce over egg yolks which have been beaten until lemon colored. Cool slightly. Add meat and seasonings. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Pour into a greased casserole. Place in a pan of hot water and bake in a moderate oven 350°F. for 40 minutes until set.

Miss Chambers welcomes personal letters from interested readers. She is pleased to receive suggestions on topics for her column, and is always ready to listen to your "pet peeves." Requests for recipes or special menus are in order. Address your letters to "Miss Sadie B. Chambers, 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto." Send stamped self-addressed envelope if you wish a reply.

Spaciousness

Where space is fairly limited, it is advisable to follow a strictly informal layout in landscaping the average home. The central portion of the grounds should be clear of beds and shrubbery and devoted entirely to grass. Around the edges will be grouped beds of perennial and annual flowers, leading up to shrubs and vines along the walls or fence boundaries. This open centre adds to the effect of spaciousness and if the rigid boundaries are softened and partially hidden, so much the better and intriguing.

Where the grounds are larger, experts advocate screening off a portion by bringing forward the surrounding shrubbery at one point, or using a hedge, wall or trees so that the whole affair will not be entirely visible from any one point of observation. This will add further to that air of spaciousness and also provide a secluded corner or two for children's swing or sandbox or possibly a seat or trellis-covered table, where on hot summer days the family may enjoy outdoor meals.

Lawn Care

Moth-eaten, weedy lawns usually mean that the soil below is poor. Good grass needs food just as any other plant. A liberal application of chemical fertilizer, put on carefully to avoid burning, will help wonderfully. It will bring out deep, green color and quick growth to choke most weeds. At this time of year the lawn will also benefit from one thorough weeding and regular, close cutting with a sharp mower. In dry weather a thorough soaking once a week is advisable.

The professional advises a thorough rolling of the lawn each spring to press roots back firmly into the soil. They also urge one thorough weeding each year with a special spudder, and at least one good application of fertilizer. The latter is most important as it will tend to promote rapid growth, which will choke out most weeds. It also improves the colour.

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This Young Hun Was Dutiful Son

This is the story of a dutiful son in the German Army.

A youthful Nazi private captured in the fighting north of Oued Zargo told his captors that when he was called for army duty his father advised him to do three things:

First, ask for service in the Africa Corps.

Second, after arriving in Africa volunteer for the front line as soon as possible.

Third, after reaching the front line to take the first opportunity to surrender.

The young soldier reached Tunisia this month and was soon captured.

Britain Releases Many Postmen

Plans to curtail mail deliveries in Britain and eliminate certain types of telegrams and other services to release thousands of postmen and women to the armed services and war factories were announced recently to the House of Commons by Postmaster General Harry Crookshank.

Deliveries in London, he said, will be reduced from four to three a day, and in the provinces from three to two, releasing 5,000 full-time women workers and 2,000 full-time men employees.

Greeting telegrams, which he said had risen from 4,000,000 annually before the war to 8,500,000, will be abolished.

A Pleasant Habit
DAILY MAIL
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