

well-known opponents of slavery. The author's view is that the violent crusade in the North, led by Garrison, stirred up as violent a reaction in the South, and led to the 'conflict between the will of certain Southern States to secede rather than accept the position of a permanent minority and the will expressed in Jackson's celebrated toast, "Our Union, it must be preserved."' He resorts to a curious quibble in defending the action of the North:

The resistance of the South [he says], though so nearly universal, was *not* strictly national. You cannot compare the case with that of Ireland or Poland. The Confederacy was never a nation, though, had the war had a different conclusion, it might perhaps have become one.

For our part, we are sure that there was at least as wide and deep a gulf between the South and the North in 1861 as there is to-day between Sinn Fein Ireland on the one part and Ulster

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and Great Britain on the other. The North was justified in preventing the secession of the South for precisely the same reason which would justify us in preventing the secession of Sinn Fein Ireland; sectional interests must be subordinated to the welfare of the whole community. 'If the Union were broken up,' as Mr. Chesterton asks of America, 'what could men say but that Democracy had failed?' As it was, the Union was placed on so firm a basis that no American would now think of challenging the Federal authority. The new Constitutional amendment enforcing Prohibition is in many ways a more severe blow to private interests than the abolition of slavery, which affected only a limited class of wealthy people; but it is safe to say that the States unfavorable to Prohibition, though they are among the largest and richest of all, will not dream of threatening to secede from a 'dry' Union.

THE TANK COMMANDER

BY JACK SPUR

His commission bore the name of Henry Alfred Grafton, but to his brother officers in the 'Tanks' he was always 'The Count.'

He earned his nickname this way. He had come to us from the Rifle Brigade, and in appearance was a big-boned, typical-looking Englishman. We took to him all right, though we never felt that we knew him in the same way as we knew our other fellow

subs. For one thing, he was no good at games. Then he was a teetotaler, and, worst of all, a glutton for work. Of course, some of us *had* to work, and, if he preferred it, it was no business of ours.

Soon after Grafton joined us Charlie Sommers came back from leave, and he and I went down to the mess together. Grafton was standing in the anteroom when Sommers and I entered.

'You have n't met Grafton, Charlie,' I said, 'Let me introduce you.'

The two looked at each other; then Sommers gave a hearty laugh.

'Grafton, did you say? Why, this is "Graf," an old school chum of mine. — How do, Graf? I did n't even know you'd joined up'; and he shook hands warmly with our latest sub.

I thought Grafton changed color on seeing Sommers, and he gave my friend a meaning look. Anyway, Sommers said no more. Several of us had heard his remark, and asked him about Grafton, but he gave us no information.

Afterwards, however, it came out that Grafton's name had been Grafenstein, and that his father, a naturalized German, on the outbreak of war had changed his name to Grafton.

Grafton and Sommers had been chums at school, and they remained so in the service, but the rest of us held aloof. Sommers used to call him Graf, and as Graf is German for 'count,' as subs will, we christened him 'The Count.'

He took it all in good part, and when he was chaffed about his German descent, took no offense, and expressed no feeling one way or the other. Grafton went over in the same big draft that Sommers and I went in, and we settled down to our work together. We were sitting in our quarters one night, just before the big push at St. Quentin, when Grafton's name was mentioned, and one or two of the fellows began discussing him.

'It's a bally silly idea,' said young Travers, 'giving a fellow like him the command of a tank. Once a German, always a German! He'll hop over to his pals one of these fine days and make them a present of a nice new landship. Then, when they've cottoned to the idea and improved on it, we shall be boosted out by an army of Boche tanks.'

'Rot!' replied Sommers. 'You're talking through your hat, my boy.

I've known old Graf for years, and I'll bet you a pony he's all right.'

'Don't tell me,' persisted Travers. 'Why, the very fact of his changing his name gives him away. I'll bet, if he gets a chance, he'll ——' and then he paused, for the object of our conversation stepped into the room. He could n't have helped overhearing what we were saying, for none of us was exactly whispering. He stepped up to Travers, whom he looked squarely in the face.

'He'll what?' he asked.

Travers looked foolish for a moment, then with an obstinate set of the jaws replied, 'I contend that a man with German blood in him, when in a corner, can't be trusted to play the game. He will remember that he is of the nation, his old sympathies will revive, and he'll be more likely to stand by the country of his descent than by that of his adoption.'

'The Count,' as he generally did, listened quite calmly.

'Travers,' he replied, 'suppose your father, disgusted with England, had left it when quite a young man, had gone to Germany, settled, married, and become naturalized there. Suppose you, as the son, had been educated there, imbibed German ideals, played German games, read German literature, and become convinced of the purity of German foreign policy. Suppose, also, that you had only occasionally visited England, and spoke the language imperfectly—I ask you, would your sympathies be with England or with Germany in this struggle?'

'With England, emphatically!'

'But suppose, further, that you hoped some day to — er — marry a lady belonging to the land of your adoption?'

'My dear chap, if my father had emigrated to Timbuctoo, and I had been born in the Brazils, of a Tartar

mother, I should remain English to my finger tips!

The Count smiled. 'Well, after all,' he said, 'England is not Germany. You may be right.' And he disappeared through the door.

Sommers turned angrily upon Travers. 'I say,' he growled, 'it's an infernal shame to bait old Graf so. He's a white man all through; that I'm sure of.'

'We shall see,' retorted Travers; and so the matter dropped.

II

In the push that followed, the tanks played a very important part, and much of the initial success was due to them. The Germans cut down the carriages of field guns to get a low trajectory against the tanks; but even when they made their surprise counter-attack upon us, though they knocked a good many tanks out, we flattered ourselves that they could not capture one intact, and therefore would n't have our model to serve them as a pattern to manufacture from. That idea was, however, rudely dispelled a few days later. Things had gone pretty badly with us, and tanks, instead of heading an advance, had now to protect a retreat.

An ugly rumor began to circulate. One of our tanks, getting into a warm corner, had pulled up; then for some reason or other it had gone straight on, right into a whole battalion of the enemy, and had disappeared without firing a shot. The number of the tank was B2411, and it was the one of which Grafton was in command. The rumor gave rise to a considerable amount of heated comment; but, like everything else in war time, the subject was soon dropped and forgotten. Nor should we have thought any more about it if it had n't been for a curious accident.

On the evening that we recaptured

Bapaume, Sommers' and one or two more of us were standing talking amid the ruins, when suddenly, from nowhere, as it seemed, a crump came hurtling over us. We heard the whir-r-r and threw ourselves on the ground before the crash came. A mighty rush of air swept by us, and then we looked up cautiously and felt ourselves to see if any of us were a corner short. No; we were all right, except —

'Hallo!' cried Sommers; 'where's Henderson?'

We looked round. Poor Willie Henderson! He had completely disappeared. Not a vestige of him, not a badge, not a button remained; and we looked at each other with solemn faces, the same thought in all our minds.

He had been blown to pieces!

No sooner were we convinced of the fact, and had got upon our feet again, than a hollow voice was heard saying, 'I say, you fellows, can't some of you help me out of this confounded hole?'

We all jumped. The voice was undoubtedly Henderson's, and it seemed to come from under our very feet. Sommers solved the mystery. He looked round, and saw a smashed wooden trap that opened into a cellar beneath the house in front of which we were standing. It was clear Henderson had been blown, or had fallen, through.

In a few minutes we had procured a light, descended, and found our friend, bruised, but otherwise unhurt. The rush of air caused by the crump had blown him down into the cellar. We were helping him out, when a groan from one corner of the cellar drew our attention.

'Hallo! there's another fellow here!' said Sommers. 'Perhaps it's a Boche.'

A search showed us a figure huddled up in a corner, and in five minutes we had him out too. Getting him into the daylight, we saw he wore the remnants

of a khaki uniform, and that he had a sergeant's stripes.

'And, look, he's one of ours!' said Henderson, pointing to the tank badge on his arm; 'and it's — yes — no — why, it's Sergeant Smithers, who disappeared with poor old Grafton.'

Smithers tried to speak, but could n't. In a few minutes we had him on a stretcher, and a doctor was attending to his hurts, which were not serious. He was merely exhausted. In a couple of hours he was comfortably waiting to be taken back to a base hospital, and Sommers, Travers, Henderson, myself, and one or two others were sitting round him to listen to his tale.

III

'It's soon told,' said Smithers. 'I was taken prisoner on March 24th, and have been kept at work by the Huns just behind their front ever since. I've been half starved, and worked almost to death. I was in Bapaume yesterday, helping to load motor lorries till I fainted with hunger and weakness, when a ginger-headed sergeant — pray Heaven I may one day meet him face to face! — simply kicked me down into the cellar where you found me, and told me to lie there and rot. I did lie there, and felt so weak and ill that if you gentlemen had n't rescued me I should have died there.'

'Nice people, these Huns,' said Travers grimly. 'I hope, now Grafton has got among his friends, he'll feel comfortable. I suppose *he's* all right, Smithers.'

The sergeant's eyes flashed.

'Mr. Grafton, sir,' he cried vehemently, half sitting up, 'if ever a man deserved the V.C., it was Mr. Grafton.'

'It is rumored that he voluntarily went over to the Boche,' suggested Travers softly.

'Whoever said so is — I say, speaks

falsely;' and Smithers sank back on his stretcher.

'Tell us what happened,' said Sommers gently.

'It was this way, sir. As you know, on the 24th we all got separated, and some of us were well ahead of the others. Our tank must have been leading by a good way when we got a slanting hit. I don't exactly know what happened, but we found our steering gear was knocked out. We could go ahead, but we could n't turn, neither could we stop, and so the old crab went straight on, right into a whole battalion of Boches, who simply smothered us with rifle and machine-gun fire. We could have dropped out ourselves and got back safely when we were first hit, and at the time I suggested doing so to Mr. Grafton, but he turned to me in surprise, then burst out laughing.

"What! abandon the old thing?" says he. "Make a present of it to the Huns? I *don't* think; and I'm surprised at you, Smithers, for hinting at such a thing. We've got our guns intact, and we shall have the opportunity of our lives directly." And so we did. No sooner had Lieutenant Grafton convinced himself that the tank was out of control than he waited his chance, and when we were well in among the enemy he let fly until we had not a single round of ammo. left. We drove on, well in rear of the Germans, till we practically ran into the base of a small hill, and there we jammed. In an instant a hundred Boches swarmed round us and tried to force an entrance, but Mr. Grafton emptied his revolver among 'em, and then, telling us to lay hold of spanners, hammers, or anything, he leaped out and laid about him with a small crowbar.

'I can tell you, gentlemen, we left our mark on the Boche, but it was no good. In a few minutes Mr. Grafton, myself, and Tommy Hunter were the only ones

alive, and we should have been bayoneted if an officer had not come up and literally booted back the men attacking us. He told us in English to put up our hands at once or it would be the worse for us; but even then Mr. Grafton defied him, and told him to shoot us down as they had shot the women and children at Louvain. The officer gave an order to his men, who leaped upon us and secured our arms. Then the officer, who had been joined by several others, got into the tank and had a look round. They could not make things out, apparently; so the first one who had come up returned to us and asked us our names and ranks, and then said to Mr. Grafton, "You were in charge, I suppose?"

"I was."

"And you thoroughly understand the machine?"

"Thoroughly."

"And could explain everything to me?"

"Yes."

"Well, we're very anxious to know all about these tanks. Tell us, and we will spare your life."

Mr. Grafton laughed in his face and said, "Do you expect me to accept such a vile offer? I refuse absolutely."

The officer turned savagely upon him. "Wait," says he. "Before I shoot you, these fellows" — pointing to Tommy and me — "shall be bayoneted before your eyes."

At this Mr. Grafton turned pale and seemed to hesitate, while the German grinned like a devil and lit a cigarette.

"It would n't be 'playing the game,' as you sporting fools say, to sacrifice these"; and he nodded again towards us.

"If I do as you want, will you give these men their liberty?" asked Mr. Grafton.

"Yes."

"And me my life?"

"Certainly; and a good deal more if you play your cards properly."

I thought I saw a meaning glance pass between them, and I cried out, "Don't consider us, sir. Let these devils do their worst. We're not afraid to die"; on which the German officer hit me on the mouth with the back of his hand. I tried to break away from the men who held me, but it was no good. I told that brute what I thought of him, but I was punched and kicked till I shut up.

Mr. Grafton took no notice of me, but said quietly to the officer, "I will do what you want on one condition. I will explain everything — but only to your general and his staff. If you don't agree to that, do your worst."

The German looked him straight in the eyes. "I am an engineer officer," he said. "I may be present, of course?"

"Certainly; that is one of my conditions."

And then we waited. At Mr. Grafton's request, Tommy and I were marched out of earshot, and Mr. Grafton talked and smoked with the German officer. Presently a tall, old, gray-headed devil of a German general, several crosses and things on his long frock coat, came up, and with him about a dozen others — staff officers, I should say, for they were all great swells, and several had eyeglasses and showy uniforms. There was a great deal of saluting and jawing, and Mr. Grafton talked to them all. Then they walked round the tank, and we could see Mr. Grafton pointing out this and that, while Tommy and I cursed him under our breath. Then Mr. Grafton, the general, and five or six officers all went inside, and for about five minutes we saw nothing. Afterwards Mr. Grafton came to the door and beckoned the others, as though he wanted them to observe something. He disappeared, and in another second there was a blinding flash,

a terrific report, and the tank, Mr. Grafton, and all those German officers in and near it were blown into a thousand bits. Tommy and I were a good fifty yards away, and were knocked over by the explosion. When we recovered we looked round, and there was a torn and ruined mass of metal, and one or two tattered groaning forms, in the remains of swagger uniforms, lying around. The rest, every mother's son of them, had been blown to Kingdom Come.'

Sommers gave a long-drawn 'Ah!' when Smithers finished speaking.

'It was Graf's own idea,' he said softly. 'He told me about it. A dynamite charge hidden in the bottom of

Chambers's Journal

the tank and operated electrically by a push button. He told me he had fitted one to his own tank, and had written home recommending them to be fitted to all tanks, so that they could be blown up in case of danger of capture. Poor old Graf! He was a gallant gentleman.'

'Sommers, I misjudged your friend,' said Travers, and his voice was a little husky. 'I apologize. Have you a match?' and lighting a cigarette he walked off.

The rest of us went our several ways, and for my part I wondered whether, placed as 'The Count' had been, I should have had the pluck to act as he had done.

THE TOKEN

BY WALTER DE LA MARE

LISTEN, I who love thee well
 Have traveled far, and secrets tell.
 Cold the moon that gleams thine eyes,
 Yet beneath her further skies
 Rest for thee a paradise.

I have plucked a flower in proof,
 Frail in earthly light, forsooth:
 See, invisible it lies
 In this palm: now veil thine eyes;
 Quaff its fragrances.

Would indeed my throat had skill
 To breathe thee music faint and still —
 Music learned in dreaming deep
 In those lands, from Echo's lip:
 'T would lull thy soul to sleep.

The Saturday Westminster Gazette