



HORSE FLYERS

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Yoicks! Tallyho and tantivy! Here is Phineas Carbuncle Pinkham riding to 'ounds—believe it or not—in plane! But, as Phineas says, “It’s more fun to be the fox!”

IT WAS A STRANGE CHAIN of circumstances that pulled Phineas Pinkham right out of France, towed him across the Channel, and finally deposited him in a very bucolic spot in Merrie England.

It all started because one of the King’s brigadier generals got out of a G.H.Q. bus not far from Nancy one night to ask three frowsy-looking Yanks why they were footloose on a Frog country road. After a very unsatisfactory interview with the doughs, who were well fortified with courage that came out of bottles, the brigadier strode back to his means of locomotion, only

to have his right of way argued by a nocturnal beastie known as a polecat. The result was very obnoxious to the brigadier, although he had the satisfaction of kicking the animal in the slats.

As the brigadier rode toward Nancy, it became apparent that those who rode with him were going to dump him overside any moment and take the consequences without so much as a qualm. In fact, the brigadier was having a tough time to tolerate his own presence. Finally he called a halt, picked up an extra tin of petrol that was in the bus, and got out. Using the shelter of a tree, the Brass Hat took off his uniform

and skivvies, spread them on the ground and poured the petrol over them generously.

"By gad!" he ejaculated. "That'll jolly well fix things, what?"

The brigadier waited for half an hour. Satisfied, then, that his apparel was dry enough, he dressed himself again and got into the car. As it started rolling, he pulled out a cigar and shoved it between his teeth. He struck a match. *Pouf!* The Brass Hat squeaked, and yelled for somebody to do something.

"Fire! Fire!" he yowled. "Do somethin', blast it! Cawn't you jolly well see I'm burnin' to a cr—"

A shadowy shape swooped down. It made a sound like a sawmill tumbling out of the sky. It hit the road and headed for the brigadier's bus. The driver shut his eyes, swung the wheel desperately and bit a big hole out of a fence. The car shot a hundred feet and splashed into a canal . . .

Phineas Pinkham had a hard time pulling the three out of the drink. The colonel, after coughing up what he had swallowed out of the canal, swore at the Boonetown wonder and questioned his parentage. The brigadier, looking like something that had been yanked out of an incinerator just in time, grabbed at the Pinkham right and shook it heartily.

"Wonderful headwork," he enthused. "I jolly well would have broiled like a chop if you had not acted with such hasty precision. Plane no end banged up, what? I'll see you get another—two—three! Lieutenant—your name, sir?"

"Pinkham," Phineas informed him. "Haw-w-w-w! Well—" The Yankee miracle man was addled, and not from the big bump on his pate. This brigadier had been dumped into the drink and seemed pleased about it, and that did not make sense.

"Name's Stokes-Furness," the Limey Brass Hat went on. "No end of thanks, old chap!"

"H-huh?" gulped Phineas. "You must own the Furness coal in Newcastle, haw-w-w-w!"

"The Furness coal?" repeated the brigadier, scratching his head. "Coals—furnace—yaw-w-w-whaw-w-w-w! Deucedly clever, old chap! You hear that, colonel? Coals in the furnace, what? Yaw-w-whaw-w-w-w!"

"I heard him," growled the colonel. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't laugh yourself to pieces, will ya?" grinned Phineas at the sour-faced one. "Well, I must be goin' to Barley Duck. I was attacked by three Heinies on the way home an'—well, the C.O. will be worried."

"I'll see to it that we get a conveyance, lieutenant,"

declared the brigadier, pawing at a singed mustache. "Only a mile or two into Nancy. I'll see that you get to your squadron. Yaw-w-whaw-w-w! Coals in the furnace! Must write that home. Must be jolly to have a sense of humor."

"I'll need one when I get to the squadron," replied Phineas, casting a side glance at the brigadier. "They won't believe I broke up a Spad savin' you as—"

"Oh, they won't, eh?" Stokes-Furness said. "I'll see to that. I'll accompany you— my duty—owe you my life an' all that, what?"

"I didn't say anythin'," said Phineas.

"Yaw-w-w! Coals in the furnaces," gurgled the brigadier. "Bet you're bloomin' well filled up with jokes, eh, lieutenant?"

"Yeah," Phineas came back. "It seems there was two Scotchmen—"

MAJOR RUFUS GARRITY sat on the steps of the stone farmhouse which was headquarters for the Ninth Pursuit Squadron outside of Bar-le-Duc. Captain Howell and Lieutenant Bump Gillis leaned against the side of the house and looked up at the sky.

"Think he'll come back this time?" Howell queried tauntingly.

"I'd hate to think he wouldn't," snapped Garrity. "I'd hate to think he got laid away among the poppies without hearin' the names I have thought up about him. Brand new ones. Run out on formation again, after I warned the crackpot. Don't give a tinker's dam what I say, huh? Oh, you wait, Phineas Pinkham! But it would be just like him to spite me and get himself killed. Wouldn't it, Howell?"

"I would not put a thing past him," replied the flight leader. "He's an awful aggravating ape."

After twenty more minutes of waiting, they saw a car roar onto the drome and make an unearthly noise with dirty brakes as it stopped in front of the Frog farmhouse. Phineas Pinkham alighted and doffed his hat.

"Good evenin', bums!" he said, expansively. "Well, well, it's the major. I hope I'm not keepin' you up."

"Hand me that stone milk crock, Gillis," Garrity ground out. "Now, you lop-eared, spotted laced son of—"

"Harumph!" came a voice. The brigadier stepped to the ground. "Why, major, such language! I can see that the leftenant was justified in what he was saying about you on the way out. Hard task master, are you, Major Garrity? Well, this man saved my life saved me

from a horrible death. Cawn't talk to him like that in my presence, Garrity. I'll report you, sir. I'm Brigadier Stokes-Furness, K.C.B., V.C. Leftenant," he said, turning to Phineas, "coals in the furnace—what? Yaw-w-whaw-w-w-w!"

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" agreed Phineas. The Old Man got to his feet slowly. He looked dazedly at Howell and Gillis, then at Phineas and the brigadier. He scratched his head, blinked and swallowed his Adam's apple several times before he became articulate.

"H-he said things about me?" Garrity gulped at last. "That ape rippin' me up the back! I'll—by cr-r-r-ipes—"

"Now, Leftenant Pinkham," the brigadier interrupted, "you said you could put six horses into five stalls. Let me think—what was it now? I got it! You feed 'em radishes, eh? Yaw-w-wha-w-w!"

"No, you make horse radish," Phineas corrected him. "Huh, you catch on easy, don't ya?"

"Now, look here, Pinkham!" roared the C.O., shaking a finger in the Boonetown flyer's face. "The King's Brass Hats can't interfere here and—"

"You make horse radish," Brigadier Stokes-Furness chuckled. "Get it, Garrity? You have five horses an' you cawn't put them in six stalls—"

"Aw, what's the use?" mumbled Phineas. "H'lo, Bump, I—"

"Pinkham, you—"

"I'll answer for Pinkham's delay on reaching his squadron," the brigadier snapped. "Saved my life. See to it that he gets a new ship. I've got influence, Garrity. In Buckingham Palace, too, what? Going to take Leftenant Pinkham on leave with me, to England. I'll get in touch with your Wing Headquarters, Garrity. No end entertainin', that chap."

"Will you arrange it so I never lay eyes on the fathead again?" howled Garrity. "By golly, sir, I hope all the Kraut Vons he knocked down escape from the British camps an' bump into him on the moors!"

"Garrity, there were two Scotchmen—ever hear it? A jolly good howl, as you Yanks say. It seems Pat an' Mike—"

ONE WEEK LATER, Phineas Pinkham was a full-fledged guest of honor at Stokes-Furness Manor, Hardleigh-on-Tyme, Shuddersfield, Worcestershire, England. Brigadier Stokes-Furness and Lady Furness were entertaining several house guests. It was dinner time when Phineas, resplendent in dying togs, was ushered into the big hall of the Manor. A table groaned

with viands. A roast pig, stuffed with chestnuts, was being placed in the center of the table by a flunkey with knee breeches that revealed stout calves. Not far from the pig was a sizzling roast of beef.

"Just in time. Grieves," the brigadier exclaimed. "Take the leftenant's luggage."

"He is some dog-robber, huh?" remarked Phineas. "Oh, boys, what a make up!"

"Uh—er—" stuttered the host. "He's the butler, Pinkham. He—er—well, shall we eat?"

"Oh, what a mess, huh?" exclaimed Phineas. "What a mess!"

A long-faced woman uttered a little squeak and snapped a lorgnette up to scrutinize the Yank.

"Maybe I should've brought my goggles, too," grinned Phineas.

"Uh—er—he means mess, yes. Er—that is what officers call dinner, don't you know, yaw-w-w-whaw-w-w-w!" the brigadier hastened to explain.

Phineas was introduced to the guests in the best English manner. The wonder from Boonetown, Iowa, caused quite a stir when introduced to Lord Busby-Troutbrooke, M.P.

"Huh?" he grinned at the solemn-faced peer. "Oh, boys, don't brag about it! Once I am in Commercy, an' a M.P. grabs me for drivin' on the wrong side of the street. I says to the bum—"

Lord Troutbrooke swallowed quite a chunk of Yorkshire pudding and was finally brought around by a vigorous tattoo on the small of his back delivered by Lady Crumbleton. It was, perhaps, the most exciting dinner ever partaken of at any English manor. Lady Stokes-Furness had hysterics when she found a very black June bug in her broiled kidneys. Phineas was about to explain that it was made of licorice, when the Duchess of Featherstone squealed and threw both arms around the neck of Lord Busby-Troutbrooke, yelling something about snakes. The M.P. picked up a fork and fenced with a little green snake that somehow had got into the Duchess' watercress. This had almost been smoothed over by the brigadier when Grieves, the butler, intruded upon the festivities, knowing full well that it was very un-butler-like.

"Beggin' your pawdon, sir," he addressed his employer, "I must give you two weeks' notice come Whitsuntide!" Grieves had a cloth over his big proboscis, which was stained with his life's blood. "I opened the leftenant's bag, sir," he complained, "and somethin' jumped hout an' bashed me, sir. I—"

Brigadier General Stokes-Furness sighed, promised

Grieves another shilling or two a month on top of a two weeks' holiday.

When coffee and cigars were served, the ladies retired to the drawing room. The Duke of Featherstone was halfway through his cigar when it exploded with a bang. His pince-nez went zooming off his nose and plopped in a gravy bowl.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" Phineas guffawed. "It's lucky you have a sense of humor, huh?"

His host swore and eyed a great Norman battle-axe that hung on the wall. The duke was for going back to dear ol' Lunnon immediately. With the duchess' vote, that made it unanimous. The brigadier explained as best he could, and then asked Phineas to give a demonstration of his marvelous talents. It was the one great mistake of the general's career during the entire war.

When the entertainment was over, half the servants had evacuated the Manor. Some had even gone as far as the moors. The duke and duchess had cleared out without any fooling. Lord Busby-Troutbrooke eyed his top hat with a countenance as pale as a red cabbage. In the bottom of the hat were the remains of an omelet.

There was a big hole burned in Lady Stokes-Furness' new rug. Lady Crumbleton had been in a faint since Phineas had taken a horned toad from out of the back of her evening dress. Grieves, the butler, had locked himself in the attic after Phineas stabbed him with a rubber butcher knife. Sir Franklyn Buckleby, hunter of wild animals and African explorer, retreated after a bass voice started to come right out of the lips of the usually piping Duchess of Featherstone while she was in a faint.

At eleven o'clock, Brigadier General Stokes-Furness and Phineas Pinkham were left alone on the field.

"Some fun, huh?" grinned the jokester. "It ain't half I know."

"Godfrey!" muttered the Brass Hat. "Saved my life, what? I wonder if it was worth it."

"What?" queried Phineas.

"Huntin' in the morning," said the brigadier. "Follow the hounds, Pinkham. You'll enjoy it no end." He lowered his voice and turned his head. "Hope you break your blasted neck."

"Oh, boys!" exclaimed the Yank. "Yoicks, yoicks! A tallyho and a tantivy or two, what? I always wanted to ride a horse. Well, I can't wait—"

Just then the phone rang, and the brigadier snapped it up. Phineas was told later the general's son had rung up. He would fly over in a Bristol in the morning to take part in the chase.

"Some, fun, huh?" said Phineas as they took a nightcap before going upstairs. "Haw-w-w-w! 'It hain't the 'eavy 'untin' that 'urts the 'orses' 'oofs—it's the 'ammer, 'ammer, 'ammer on the 'ard 'ighway.' Jolly, what? Pip-pip!"

A voice came from the stair landing, a voice that meant business. "Afford," it snapped, "stop that idiot from yowling at this time of night and come to bed!"

"Yes, my dear," groaned Brigadier Stokes-Furness. "I'll jolly well catch hell when she gets me alone."

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" Phineas laughed. "It's always the way. But if I ever marry a dame, she won't wear the pants. A Pinkham was always master in his own house—well, all except Uncle Filbert, as he was bit by a rabbit when he was six an'—"

"Good night," growled his host. "You know where your room is. I hope you walk in your sleep, you halfwit, and head for the old well."

"Yoicks!" responded Phineas. "I'll be ready for the hound patrol at dawn." He headed for his room. "Boys, what excitement. I wish there was Heinies gettin' tough over here, though. Well, I will look into a thing or two, as I should mix business with pleasure—oh, ho! A-'untin' I wi-i-l-l-l- go-o-o-o. 'Igh o the merry-o-o, the farmer in the del-l-l-l!"

A heavy object slammed against the panels of Phineas' door.

MORNING brought Graves to the same door. He knocked, thrust in some clothes, then ducked fast. The Boonetown miracle man looked over the uniform and dared not believe that he would ever put it on. But Phineas was game. He appeared for breakfast in the conventional red, swallow-tailed hunting jacket, ascot tie, and waistcoat. White pants were tucked into boots of shiny black, and a hunting cap, much too small, perched atop his rusty thatch of hair.

"Bomb joor!" he greeted the gathering in the big hall. "Where will I meet my horse?" Outside, hounds began to bay, and drowned out the few voices that deigned a reply. "Looks like Eliza will get an awful chase across the ice, huh?" Phineas kept on. "Well, I will have my coffee, garsons!"

Once outside, the Yank was even more intrigued. At least one hundred and fifty hounds were milling about. There were thirty riders ready to follow them out.

"I don't see what chance you will have against one fox," he yipped at the brigadier. "Haw-w-w-w! Yoicks!"

"The fox we have is very fast, old chap," the Brass Hat replied, trying to make the best of it. It would not



last forever. He had personally picked out the Pinkham mount.

"You got the fox already?" shot Phineas. "Then why chase him? It seems silly to me. Haw-w-w!"

"It is sporting," growled his host. "We let him out and give him a chance—"

"Well, I'd still rather go fishin'," argued Phineas. "But I've always tried everything once, even tripe.

When do we take off, huh?"

A groom brought him a horse. It eyed Phineas as if he had once put ground glass in its oats. When he reached out to pat it on the nose, it took a bite out of one of the Pinkham ears.

"Would you have a Spad handy?" inquired Phineas. "It is safer an'—well, I am a Pinkham an' nothin' can stop me. Give me a hand up to the pit, huh?"

Phineas got aboard just as a horn blared out. The horse did a sideslip and bumped into the one carrying Lord Busby-Troutbrooke. The M.P. nosedived into a hedge. Before Phineas knew what was happening, the horse under him had got into the spirit of the thing. Phineas had never imagined in his wildest nightmares that a horse could be so uncomfortable. The legs of the animal seemed to have stretched; otherwise, why should it seem so far to the ground? Even during a battle with the Vons upstairs, Phineas had never taken more punishment in the empennage. He began to look around for a place to land, just as somebody yelled, "Yoicks!"

"Y-y-yoicks!" quavered the Yankee horseman. "Cr-r-ripes! It'd be more fun to be the fox."

Coat-tails streaming out behind, elbows working like pistons, Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham followed the pack. He knew his backbone was already halfway up into his head, and wondered how long it would be before it came out through the top and knocked his hat off.

"An' some bums join the cavalry," he groaned. "To hell with tantivies an' yoicks! 'Whoa' will suit me."

Phineas said "Whoa" twelve times, but the horse didn't seem to get it. And then he came to a fence. The horse skidded on all four hoofs and stopped dead. Phineas kept on going, however, soaring over a brook like a bird. He then nose-dived into a bunch of blackberry vines. Scratched up like an old school desk, he crawled into the clear. When his buttons stopped rattling, he heard a sputtering sound and, looking to the left, saw Lord Busby-Troutbrooke backing out of a brook on his hands and knees. It was apparent that the peer had waved his hands on his way through the air, and had wing-slapped himself out of some distance.

"Yoicks!" Phineas greeted him, and helped the old man to his feet. "Who wants a fox, anyways, huh? They must have awful brakes on them plugs, huh, lord?"

"A bally lot of rot, what?" replied the M.P., wiping mud from his well-bred face. "Fawncy chasin' a bloomin' fox. Bah!"

"There's only one way to foller hounds," said Phineas, as they limped up a hill. "That's in a Spad. How would you like to go for a ride in the Bristol the lieutenant flew over, huh?"

"But it's against military regulations, sir," Lord Busby-Troutbrooke said, drawing himself up indignantly.

"I'm a guest here," retorted Phineas. "I must be given hospitality. I know my rights. I'll have everythin'

at my disposal, even a Bristol. It's some fun, flyin', lord."

"By jove!" the M.P. ejaculated. "Rippin'! Pip-pip! Let's be off, lieutenant. Always wanted to soar in one of the bloomin' sky busses, eh, what?"

"Tallyho," responded Phineas. "To horse, Brooktrout!"

Grieves, the butler, came out and, beggin' the Pinkham pardon, asked Phineas if he would mind foregoing a jaunt in the Bristol. The jolly old Royal Flyin' Corps captain would be no end fussed.

"Go about your buttlin'," replied Phineas. "I'm an officer and will brook no insolence. Just a minute! You go up an' spin that prop when I give you the word, my man."

Grieves did as he was ordered, and almost lost his head. He was still sprawled out, cussing Phineas, when the Bristol soared over the gorses, the glens, the glades and bosky dells of the English countryside. Phineas spotted the hunt and pointed down.

"Oh, boys! That fox is tryin' to make the dogs dizzy, runnin' in a circle," he yelled. Then he saw the fox make for a big tree, with the hounds not far from its tail. The fox ran up to within a yard of the tree, then banked and did an Immelmann onto the ground.

"Now, that's funny, lord," Phineas shouted back. "It was as good a tree as any, huh?"

There was no answer. Lord Busby-Troutbrooke was no longer interested in foxes, but in the perverseness of gastronomic gear. The M.P. was leaning over the side of the Bristol pit, trying to brush colored spots away from his eyes. Somebody had told him once that everything that went up had to come down. It occurred to him that the axiom would also work in reverse.

"Some fun, hey, Brooktrout?" yelled Phineas. Then he realized that there were two other ships in the sky. Bristols! He waved to them, but they came roaring up until they were close enough for a punch. And punch they did. Vickers lead tore at the pit close to the M.P. A hail of it ripped across Phineas' lap and singed his hunting pants.

"Hey—yoicks!" howled the Yank. "Call off them bloodhounds, as I quit! Boys, you would think I was stealin' the crate. Huh, once more an' I'll smack them back, the bums!"

Again the Bristols piqued in, ripped out burst after burst. Phineas swore and climbed, pushing the Rolls Royce power plant to the limit. He rolled over at the top of the loop, then banged away at the nearest Bristol.

"A tantivy for ya! So ya want to play, huh?" Suddenly it occurred to Phineas that there was a serious misunderstanding somewhere. He had a lord in the back seat, and the King would most likely be very disagreeable if Phineas lost his passenger. Phineas signaled for a landing back at the big flat meadow behind the manor, and the Bristols pulled their punches and crowded him in. He landed with his right tire flat. The Bristol spun around, then slid toward a big hayrick like a ball player making for third. The two-seater came to rest with its tail up.

LORD BUSBY-TROUTBROOKE had parted company with Phineas Pinkham at the edge of the meadow. Grieves came running to pick him up as the Yank gave his attention to the Bristol's landing.

"Yoicks!" the M.P. shouted, his eyes working at cross purposes. "A tantivy! I'll make the next, jump—"

Two Bristol pilots strode up to Phineas and wanted to fight.

"If that is all, put up your dukes," yapped the cause of it all. "Shoot me down, huh? I'll call the King. I'll write to the Queen about—"

"We thought you were the escaped prisoners, you blinkin' jackass!" stormed one of the pilots. "Two German flyers got out of Excheater early this morning. Von Schnoutz and von Bissinger—"

"Ah—er—what?" Phineas gulped. "If you'll excuse me, I'll go somewhere to swoon. Von Beestinger' an' von Schn— an' after all the trouble I had knockin' them down! I—er—well, I better be gittin' back to France, as it looks like the Old Man at Barley Duck was psychic. He must've been wishin' like hell since I left."

"You'll answer to charges, by gad!" thundered a voice. Brigadier Stokes-Furness rode up, jumped from the saddle. "Foolin' with the King's air equipment, what? Oh, it's a chance to get rid of you, you fresh, mutton-headed blatherskite!"

"I'll look that word up," snorted Phineas, "an' if it's what I think it is, I'll— haw-w-w-w! You're not in uniform, so I can speak to ya as if you was a human being. Stoke Furnace, I snap my fingers at ya. Look!" *Click-click!* "You remind me of somethin' that was put in a dark cellar ten years ago an' was forgot. Yoicks to ya, haw-w-w-w! I'll tell the U.S. Consul the treatment I was accorded here."

"Technically, you're under arrest," the captain of the British squadron yelled. "You'll be confined to your room until I consult with my squadron commander, Lieutenant Pinkham."

The brigadier nodded his approval and spoke to the other flyers. "You'll have dinner with me tonight, gentlemen? Notify your mess, what?"

"He couldn't be worse than you," grinned Phineas, walking jauntily up the hill to the big manor house.

The Bristols roared, prepared to leave.

"I rather think those Krauts will be close to the Channel by this time," one flyer said to the brigadier before the take-off. "They're wearing British uniforms."

"Huh," yelled Phineas, "if you had to knock 'em down like I did, you wouldn't be so careless an' let 'em out. You should've locked 'em up in Scotland Yard, as it is so tight nobody could git out. Haw-w-w-w!"

"Yaw-w-wha-a-w-w-w!" mocked the brigadier. "Pinkham, you are as funny to me now as a winding sheet. I must've been balmy. Well, I will show you."

"I was a little nutty, too, to drag you out of the canal," Phineas grinned. "That makes us even. Did ya ever hear the story about the rotten egg?"

"Well, spill it," the Brass Hat said. "Make me laugh, I dare you. What's the story?"

"It's too bad," guffawed the unquenchable humorist. "Haw-w-w-w! Git it? Er—well, just forget I even mentioned it."

"Fawncy," Lord Busby-Troutbrooke exclaimed. "By the way, general, you told me about the horses an' the radishes that had to be jolly well installed in the same barn. I just got it, haw-w-w-w! It couldn't be done, general, as the bally beasts would eat the radishes!"

"I wish I was with the Old Man," groaned Phineas. "He would look like a cherub to me at the moment."

Once ushered into his room by a savagely exultant Grieves, our hero sat down to think things over. Von Bissinger and von Schnoutz, if they ever got back to Germany, would make things very unpleasant for him. Their chances of getting out of England were slim, unless—

"Yoicks!" Phineas suddenly exclaimed. He got up and went to the window. He had suddenly thought of the fox that had been chased across the Limey countryside earlier in the day. A sly grin bisected the homely map of the Yankee flyer. It was quite apparent to him that the brigadier was quite a so-and-so around these parts. Phineas had learned that flyers very often came to dinner at Hardleigh-on-Tyme, and arrived in their machines. It was also plain to Phineas that he could be busted quite handsomely by said brigadier, so something had to be done.

"Haw-w-w-w!" he chuckled, rummaging into his war bag. He withdrew a very big coil of something

that looked like telephone wire. "It is preparing that counts. I'll bide my time. I can be a sport, too—like havin' somethin' an' then lettin' it loose so's I can catch it again. Haw-w-w-w!"

Grieves came in at dusk. "The officers are very lenient, sir," he intoned. "You are to join them at dinner, sir. I jolly well 'opes yer choke hon it—sir," he added bitterly.

"Go to hell, Grieves," Phineas replied cheerfully. "Tell 'em I'll be down when I peel off the monkey suit."

As Grieves went out, Bristol power planes began to make themselves heard. With a roar, a pair of Bristols zoomed over the manor house, swooped low and came to rest in the big meadow. Four flyers got out and ambled up to the house. Phineas saw that the brigadier had three farmhands placed near the Bristols. Each of them was armed with a ride.

"In an hour it'll be twilight. Then it'll be dark," chortled the Yank. "It's like the Limeys to have twilights. Haw-w-w! When I think of that fox with the hounds nippin' its empennage, an' that tree an' well—is it my fault I was born readin' minds?"

He went to the window and dropped the wire to the ground. He then donned his officer's uniform. Having again rummaged in his war bag, he drew out a long, thin tube and an oilskin article that looked like an oversize tobacco pouch. This he fastened to the belt of his trousers so that it hung down under the skirt of his tunic.

"Boys, the Limeys don't know what a real hunt is like," he mumbled. "I'll show 'em a yoick or two. An' they think they'll bust me, huh? Well, well!" He walked down the stairs toward the banquet hall, where the officers and guests were already making merry.

"'Coals in the furnace,' he says," the brigadier was chortling. "Yaw-w-whaw-w-w! Then the bloomin' idiot tells me a story of two Scotchmen, Pat and Mike. It seems they met a farmer's daughter—yaw-w-whaw-w-w!"

"An' they murdered Kitchener," sighed the Yank, shaking his head. "Well, let 'em wax merry as—hello, bums—er—chappies!" he said aloud, striding to the festive board. He took a toe hold under it. "Did ya git the fox?"

Faces soured. The brigadier cleared his throat noisily and called for port.

"Huh, that is my weakness," Phineas immediately announced. "I am the champion port-slinger. There's nobody who can hold as much port as me an'—"

"Bah!" a Bristol pilot tossed out. "I'll jolly well take you up on that, Pinkham. Want to bet?"

"They bite!" Phineas exulted inwardly. "Oh, boys! I'll bet ten pounds," he said aloud. "If that ain't enough, make it a ton. Haw!"

Port was consumed. Everybody at the table joined in the bout. Glass after glass was tipped to Phineas' lips as he drank glass for glass with the other Bristol pushers. Eyes began to glass; words came out as thick as Yorkshire pudding.

"Sh-terrible," a Rolls Royce throttler muttered. "German aishes eshcape. Hunerd an' shirty planesh they shot down when they wash looshe in Franshe. Terrible blow to Alliesh, ol' thingsh, what?"

"Righto," affirmed another imbiber. "Meansh turn of tide in skiesh on Western front. King be no end angry, what? Somebody'sh goin' be bushted. Hunerd an' shirty planesh—oh, shameful."

"It's me that thinks it's terrible," Phineas Pinkham cracked. "Didn't I shoot 'em down? An' the Limeys let 'em go. Grieves—more port. I ain't wet my tonsils yet, haw-w-w!"

The brigadier's eyes bulged. Lorgnettes were lifted and eyes, utterly incredulous, surveyed the human wine cask. The eyes of Phineas were clear as crystal, yet his dazed audience had actually watched him drain glass after glass of wine.

"Bust me, huh?" mumbled the Yank, accepting more port. He shifted a little in his chair, as there was a weight at his hip that unbalanced him a bit. "Huh, if the Vons git loose, it'll be worse than if the Kaiser had found another army under a wiener factory some place. Them two Vons are poison. Well, it'll be England who's to blame, and I bet they'll even bust some M.P.'s, too, haw-w-w-w! How about it, Brooktrout? More port, Grieves!" He looked out of the window. The sky was darkening. Two Bristol pilots began to snore, their noses wiping up gravy in their plates.

"Heresh ten pounds," the Bristol captain forced out. "Hell with you, an' all that short of shing. Blinkin' bloomin' tank, what?"

"Haw-w-w-w!" guffawed the winner. "Sissies! Well, now that my thirst is a bit quenched, I'll take a stroll. Word of honor, huh? I won't run out, as where would I go, brigadier, huh?"

"Fawncy," Lady Stokes-Furness marveled. "Grieves, how is the supply of port?"

"Exhausted, your Ladyship," replied the butler, spreading his palms dismally. "If I may say so, he is a blinkin' 'og!"

PHINEAS strolled casually out of the banquet ball.

There was a big bulge at his hip, but no one noticed it. Snores increased at the festive board. The R.F.C. pilots were washed out. Outside, Phineas increased his pace.

"Bust me, huh?" He grinned. "Oh, boys, if them Bristols was needed in a hurry. Yoicks!" He scooted around the side of the house and picked up the wire he had dropped from his window some time before. Then he scampered toward the thicket lining one edge of the meadow where he crouched low, in its shelter. Not more than a hundred feet away, the tails of the Bristols were turned toward him.

Phineas listened intently for night sounds for a while, then began to look for something. He finally found it—a sizeable log of wood in the first stages of senility. To each end of it he attached the long wire. Then he removed the oilskin sack from his belt, removed a tube and dropped something into the pouch.

Several minutes later, the three men guarding the Bristols brought up their rifles.

"'Alf a mo', ya bloke," said one. "Stop in yer blinkin' tracks before we—"

Phineas advanced slowly, his hands behind him.

"Strike me bloomin' pink, 'Arold," exclaimed the farmhand, "it's the bloomin' Yankee flyer—yuss!"

"Don't shoot." Phineas grinned. "I've brought ya some port, as the night's chilly. If ya don't mind drinkin' it out of what it's in."

"Gorblimey, it's a gent yer be—sor," breathed another guard. "Let's 'ave it, lieutenant."

Phineas handed it over. The three sat down and put their rifles across their knees. The oilskin sack was quickly emptied, having passed from one to the other with rapid sequence.

"A nice night, huh?" said the Yank, sitting close to the sentries. As he spoke, he looked over into the woods. A premonition of startling events to come sent pleasant thrills along the Pinkham spine.

"A bloomin' shyme—makin' us sit 'ere, lieutenant. Who'd steal a blinkin' Bristol hin England, what?" complained one little man. "I arks yer, lieutenant—uh—er—ah-h-h-h-hum!" He yawned capaciously.

Five minutes later, the three farmhands were slumbering peacefully. As they slept, Phineas crawled under the Bristol nearest the woods, and attached something to the undercarriage of the two-seater.

"Haw-w-w!" he chuckled. "In the dark, that black wire is hard to spot. Now if only—"

His task finally completed, Phineas crawled out from under the plane and crossed the greensward

toward the other two-seater. Under it, he lay prone and waited. An hour must have passed, he thought, before his hunch materialized. Two stealthy forms emerged from the woods a hundred yards away. At first they advanced slowly, then broke into a run. They stopped to examine the sleepers closely.

"Ach," spoke a hoarse voice, "drunk yedt. Qvick, *Hauptmann*, now iss it *der* chance."

One picked up a rifle and climbed into the control pit of the Bristol. He switched on. The other night prowler swung the prop. The Bristol Rolls Royce sucked at the spark avidly, caught. A roar split the murk. A gun was tossed out of the Bristol. The Rolls Royce began to advance. It was tearing along the ground when several of the Britishers tumbled out of the big house, waving their arms and yelling murder. Phineas met them halfway.

"Y-you, Pinkham?" the brigadier blurted out. "You—by gad—stop the bloomin' Huns! It's—"

"Get the pilots!" Phineas shouted. "To horse—as we must take up the chase. Where are the flyers, huh? Oh, boys, the King'll be sore. They're drunk in times of stress. You got them boiled, general. Wait until I tell the King. Bust me, huh? Haw-w-w-w-w!"

Brigadier General Stokes-Furness held his head in his hands and waltzed around the greensward in distress. "By gad, what a bally mess! Pinkham—do something. The Huns are escaping—what? Stop!" he yelled. "In the name of the King!"

"That'll scare 'em," observed Phineas. "Huh, well—"

The moving Bristol seemed to falter in its stride as a crashing sound came from the thicket. Something bounced over the turf, taking big divots as it went. The thing almost washed out the brigadier.

"A log—fawncy!" yipped the general. "Pinkham, what—by gad, you got those sentries to sleep. Why, you—"

"We are goin' 'untin'," howled Phineas. "I am the only flyer who is not cockeyed. You will get in the rear pit. I'll show ya a hunt," he yelled. "Yoicks! Sportin', what—when you already got a fox an' then let it go so's ya kin chase it. Spin that prop, Stoke Furnace, as we are off over the bosky dells in a tantivy. Haw-w-w-w!"

Desperation driving him, the brigadier turned the prop over. When Phineas had the Rolls warmed up, he jammed in the throttle. Stokes-Furness made a grab for the stirrup as it shot away. As Phineas cleared the runway, the brigadier was struggling to get right end up in observer's pit.

The Vons barely got the two-seater over the top



boughs of a group of trees at the eastern boundary of the estate. The log they were towing was quite a handicap. Phineas had figured that it ought to slow a Bristol down by approximately twenty miles per hour.

"Wait until the Heinies meet me here—of all places," he yipped. "Now this is a real hunt, and is really the yoicks! Haw-w-w-w-w!"

"DER, ship it flies like *der* mud turtle vunce," yelled von Bissinger into his companion's ear. "*Ach, Gott, iss idt you half forgodt idt der flyink?*"

"Besser iss idt you shouldt shudt oop!" von Schnoutz hurled into the backwash. "*Der* throttle it giffs vide open as your bick mouth! *Ach, Himmel!*"

"Tallyho-o-o-o-o-o!" howled Phineas Pinkham. "There's the quarry, Stoke Furnace. Drive them hounds at the bums, haw-w-w-w-w!"

"Jolly sport, I say!" bellowed the brigadier. "Yoicks!" He swung the guns around and let them rip. Bullets flew past Phineas' ear, whanged through the superstructure.

"Oh, you fool!" yowled the Yank. "Am I the fox? Of all the fatheads—"

Herr von Bissinger heard the *rat-a-tat-tat* and went into a zoom. At the top of the climb, he rolled over. The log took up slack, tugged at the Bristol's landing gear. Supports splintered. The Bristol shook as if it had the ague and von Schnoutz wiped icy globules of sweat from his face.

"*Donnervetter!*" he gasped. "*Was ist das?*"

Von Bissinger tried to climb again. The brigadier slammed lead through his tail assembly. The Bristol carrying the Vons suddenly went haywire. The Rolls Royce quit, and sounds came from it that were like the panting of an exhausted fox. It went down to the heath and hit hard. On the third bounce it hopped a hedge.

"That is better than I did it with a horse," Phineas hollered. "Haw-w-w! Well, the fox is treed!"

The quarry was actually treed. It was wrapped around a mighty oak. Phineas landed his two-seater in an adjoining field and returned to help von Schnoutz and von Bissinger out of the wreck. After the cobwebs

had been brushed out of their brains, the Vons stared at that grinning, buck-toothed face close to their own.

"*Ach, Gott!*" groaned von Schnoutz. "*Der nighdt-horse iss idt. Nein, I vill nodt belief idt. Himmel, if it iss by der Argtig Ocean I go vunce, so I find Pingham ridink der valrus, also.*"

"Pip-pip!" chuckled Stokes-Furness. "Sport, eh, what? Yoicks!"

"Take us away," mumbled von Bissinger. "*Ach, Herr Leutnant Pingham. Spots bevore mein eyes, und then it iss der Pingham face mit vreckles. Gott!*"

"Let's go back an' git some more port," suggested Phineas. "Well, it's a pretty pass that the R.F.C. has to git scalded when—well, it is a good thing for the Allies that a Pinkham was on the job, sober, huh?"

"Righto!" affirmed the brigadier.

"Do I git busted, huh?" Phineas wanted to know. "Or do I tell the King the Limey pilots can't hold their grog?"

There was only one answer to that, and Stokes-Furness gave it. "Just havin' my fun, lieutenant," he said. "Jolly old sense of humor, what?"

"I wish you would stop askin' me 'what', when I don't say nothin'," complained Phineas. "Let's go, Vons! It is a nuisance, keepin' knockin' you bums down. Yoicks! Tantivy!"

Later, in the manor house, Phineas said, "You claimed it was bloomin' sportin', old chappies, to have somethin' an' then let it go to catch it again. Tallyhoin', what?" He grinned expansively. "Well, when I was followin' the hounds with Lord Brooktrout in the

Bristol, I saw the fox shy away from a good tree, an' I put two and two together after I found out the Vons had escaped. I figgered that they was hidin' in the tree. So when it was dark, they would scout around lookin' for a Bristol. Haw! So far is it clear?"

Phineas grinned around at his listeners. "Well, I made it easy for 'em, as why not let 'em go, an' have a swell hunt catchin' 'em, huh? I tied a log to the Vons' tail so they couldn't git too much of a start on us. Haw-w-w-w-w! More port, Grieves, old garson! What do I look like—a dwarf? That was good port I give the sentries, huh? A knockout crop an'—"

"By-y-y-y gad!" breathed the brigadier. "Fawncy!"

"It was, if I say so myself," agreed Phineas. "Won't Garrity have a spasm when he hears the King'll decorate me before I leave for Barley Duck, huh? Did ya ever hear the story about the hole in the ground, huh? No? Well, there's nothin' in it. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

"Yaw-w-whaw-w-w-w!" chimed in Stokes-Furness. "I still like the coals in the furnace better. Yaw-w-whaw-w-w!"

"Yoicks!" Phineas grinned. "Grieves, I dropped tuppence. Will ya pick it up, old chappie?"

Grieves unbent his dignity, seized the coin, then let out a howl.

"Haw-w-w-w!" laughed Phineas. "I had it in the chaffin' dish!"

"Beg pawdon, sir," Grieves moaned to the brigadier. "But I arskes yer to accept two weeks' notice, I do. That is final, sir."