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**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
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GEESE MONKEYS

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Trouble had been coming to Phineas in bunches, like bananas. At last, the Ninth Pursuit thought they had got him down. But don't let that fool you. A Pinkham at bay is worse than an army of leopards with brass knuckles.

IN THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY, 1918, Phineas Pinkham strolled to Bar-le-Duc one day. It was the tra-la-la season, and the thoughts of the flyer from Boonetown, Iowa, had turned to love, as he was a young man, if not fancy. Under his arm, Phineas carried a box of bonbons. He whistled a lilting tune as he walked with sprightly step to the bailiwick of Babette, the oo-la-la of his dreams. But as the sprightly step carried him around a corner, Phineas' fuselage collided with that of a very spiffy Frog officer who was wrapped up in the scenery of the French Flying Corps.

"Pardonnny *moi*," Phineas hastily tossed out. "I—er —huh? Uh—" The glib Pinkham tongue became dry, and curled up like a truffle as he spotted the femme who was fastened to the right wing of the pompous war bird. It was none other than Babette, the fair.

"So this is it, huh?" spluttered Phineas. "Two-timin' me, huh? You like little boy blues, do ya? Why, if it ain't Major L'Eclair, the Rose of Picardy. Well, I'm waitin'—"

"Peenkham," blustered the French love-dream buster, "step to ze side so we should mus' pass, *n'est-ce pas?* I am ze superior."



“Nuts to voose!” exclaimed the Yank, flaring like a sulphur match. “Awright, Babette, here’s my arm an’—”

“*Non! Non!*” objected the heroine of the drama. “I geeve to you ze foot, so. For ze complete week I have not see you. *Mais non*, you t’eenk I crave ze standeeng up all ze time, *oui?*”

“I was under arrest,” explained Phineas patiently. “The old termater wouldn’t let me leave the drome. I kin explain as—”

“Bah,” countered Babette forcefully. “*C’est* what you call ze feathers from ze horse. *Beaucoup* juice from ze prunes. Francois, late ees eet an’—”

“Awright,” said Phineas, “*allez* with the bum. You’re no Peggy Joyce, an’ I passed her up once, haw-w-w-w! An’ I want them medals back, too, also that diamon’ I give ya. I ain’t spendin’ three bucks and a quarter on no gold digger.”

“Lieutenant,” exclaimed Major L’Eclair, “you have insult ze *fleur de la belle France*. *Sacré—*”

“I wish she was a dandelion,” snorted Phineas. “I would break her off at the neck.”

Major L’Eclair shoved Phineas. The Yankee trickster poked the Frog flyer right on the prop boss, and Babette shrieked for *gendarmes*. M.P.’s came running,

and one told Phineas he was under arrest. A trio of Yankee doughs oozed out of a gloomy *estaminet* and asked the M.P.’s what was the idea of helping the Frog. Before the M.P.’s could reply, the doughs waded in.

Phineas shoved the Frog C.O. on his way out of the *mêlée*, and *M’sieur* L’Eclair skidded back to a seat in a garbage can. Then the box of bonbons, which Phineas had been toting to the fair damsel’s residence, bounced off his rival’s head. Phineas headed for another part of town. Whistles were still blowing, M.P.’s were still yelping, when he barged into a secluded *buvette* and sat down in a corner to steep himself in woe. His heart was heavy as a bride’s first biscuit as he reviewed the events of the past several days. Trouble had been coming to Phineas in bunches like bananas. As he took off his cap, a pair of imbibers near by stared at the bared Pinkham thatch and mumbled to each other. Patches of Phineas’ red hair had turned to green, due to the treachery of some Limeys. Three of them had visited the drome and had succeeded in getting possession of the Pinkham flying helmet for a few moments. Bump Gillis had been a party to the skullduggery, and had even taken the dye from his hutmate’s own trunk of tricks.

“I’ll git the beef-eatin’ bums,” our hero growled as

he sipped his grog. "Maybe even now they wish they never fooled with me."

And there was Major L'Eclair, flying C.O. of the Frog squadron which had been moved in close to Sivry. Nice new Spads they had, and the supremacy of Major Rufus Garrity's Ninth Pursuit Squadron was being reduced to a minimum. And now the Frog had snagged Babette.

"Oh, but I'll git hunk," he reassured himself bitterly. "I'll git the Frogs, too, and then the Krauts over by Metz. I am a Pinkham at bay, and that is not healthy for even an army of leopards with brass knuckles." Phineas paused in his soliloquy long enough to order another glass of brain spinner and gulp it down.

"Babette," he muttered. "Hm, Babette! I wash jusht a playshing, huh? A moth flutterin' 'round the can'le. Awright, you'll be shorry. Jusht wait—you'll be shorry."

Over in the Cafe of the Pink Vache, in Bar-le-Duc, Babette was already feeling sorry. Her craving for bonbons knew no bounds, and she had resurrected them from the scene of battle. At the moment, her face was as white as the blind spot of a codfish. It would have looked more appropriate at the rail of an ocean liner in a heavy sea. Babette's eyes were a little out of focus as they ogled the big gap in the top layer of the box of bonbons.

"Maybe Babette she die *ici, oui*," she mumbled to L'Eclair. "Zen she feel bettair. *Mon Dieu*—I like for to be burie' in ze churchyard. Babette, she feel like eet ees ze merry-go-roun' she have swallow' inside. Awk! Air, *vite, vite!* Somebody get ze air—"

It was midnight when Phineas evacuated the Frog grog shop and weaved his way out of town. The Spad pusher from Boonetown remembered nothing more until Bump Gillis poured a pail of cold water over him at dawn. Phineas sputtered and turned over on his stomach, began to use the crawl stroke.

"I'll make it," he muttered. "Only three miles to shore. A Pinkham—uh—er—where am I?"

"Git up, ya fathead," barked his hutmate. "You been crocked to the gills."

"Huh? Oh, yeah," the errant son grinned. "So I found my way home, huh?"

"You did," growled Bump. "A sentry followed you in here. Ya took his gun away an' wouldn't give it back. An' you left a mule tied up out in the hangars. It kicked hell out of Sergeant Casey. That's all I've heard so far. Where did ya get it?"

"See my lawyer," retorted Phineas. "Outside of that, how's every little thing? I—er—" His bloodshot optics

spotted something on a table—a box which once had held bonbons. Speechlessly, he pointed. Then he burst out with a loud guffaw. "Yuh ate 'em, huh? Haw-w-w! They was. just chock full of soap. I had two boxes of them things an'—didn't ya git sick, Bump?"

Lieutenant Gillis inflated his chest and bestowed upon his hutmate a very engaging grin. "Oh, I just switched them boxes, Carbuncle. You took the one with the soap to Babette an'—oh, well, I been wantin' to git square with ya. Now be a sport an' don't git sore. Now don't make a pass at me as—"

"Bump Gillis!" exclaimed the jokesmith, rising exuberantly. "Put it there! Shake! Oh, boys—so they will fool with a Pinkham, huh?"

Bump swallowed and then stuttered, "I—I—d—don't git it. I—er—huh, maybe you're still boiled. Ain't yuh sore?"

"For-r-r I'm the Queen of the Ma-a-a-ay—tra-la," trilled Phineas. He began to make his toilet, light of heart. An orderly came in and saluted.

"Major Garrity just can't wait to see you, sir!"

"Tell 'im I'll be there after I've fixed my hair," grinned Lieutenant Pinkham. "It's simply a fright!"

"He's awful sore at ya," Bump warned him.

"So the Frogs called up, huh?" Phineas tossed out. "Did ya hear about the bum? He was with—"

"It's about the Limeys," Bump interrupted. "You been insultin' the Italians, too, by any chance?"

"Haw-w-w-w-w," erupted Phineas. "If it is what I think it is, I will go to Blah with a smile for everybody. Oh, boys! Adoo, Bump!"

"GOOD MORNING, Mr. Pinkham," trebled Major Garrity as Phineas barged in. "Did I disturb you?"

"Oh, that's all right," Phineas assured him. "The street cars outside my hotel room were very noisy this a.m. and woke me up anyway. What can I do for you, if anything?"

Major Rufus did a Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde act. His face began to twitch, and his lips curled back from his teeth as he half rose from his chair. Homicide was written all over the C.O.'s countenance.

"D'you know what you've done?" Garrity yelled. "You've knocked hell out of the Limey Camel outfit. Five of them are wrapped up in bandages like the things they take out of tombs in Egypt. Poison ivy, Pinkham, and it was cut down from some place and strewn all around the swimming hole where the Limeys go. You know they go in without clothes, and you know damn well where they hang their clothes.

You put that poison ivy all over that limb. You—”

“Prove it!” snapped Phineas. “Haw-w-w-w-w! Look at my hair. You laughed when you saw that, didn’t ya? I warned them bums. They was lucky. I was goin’ to get some electric eels an’ put ‘em in the pool, too, but I found out they wouldn’t keep in the mails. What is sauce for the goose, et cetera! Is that all for today, sir?”

Major Garrity pulled out tufts of his hair from a scalp that could not spare them, and pounded his feet on the floor like a young hopeful protesting against a spinach diet.

“You mussed up the Camel outfit,” he yowled, “an’ we’re short four ships ourselves. All we can depend on now to help knock off that Heinie concentration center is the Frogs. Mr. Pinkham, if I say ‘Please,’ will you promise me you won’t dynamite them, too?”

“Sir,” Phineas snapped, drawing himself up, “when I am hard-pressed, I have no mercy. I have got to git hunk with that Frog, Eclair, as he has sullied the Pinkham honor. It’s no use tryin’ to break me down as—”

“You’re busted right now,” the Old Man roared, and picked up a chair. “I’ll show you!”

However, Phineas had leaped out of the Orderly Room and slammed the door behind him. A panel split as the chair crashed against it.

“Tsk, tsk!” chortled the exuberant Yank. “Is that a temper, oh, boys! Well—”

An engine roared outside. Tires shrieked as brakes were jammed on. A British officer, very much agitated, pushed open the door of the Frog farmhouse and glared at the occupants. His eyes bore down heavily on Phineas. “Pinkham, eh, what?” he gritted. “Two more R.F.C. men broke out with a rash this morning. Whole outfit’s jolly well messed up. By gad, I’ll have you broken, Pinkham! I’ll—”

“You’re just too late, as I am resigning,” the Boonetown jokester chuckled. “The major is at home, but knock before you go in, as there is one chair left an’—well—” Phineas broke into song.

“*Oh-h-h, major, may we go out to swim?*”

Why, yes, you great big aces.

But look out for poison spinach,

As it grows in funny places! Haw-w!”

Captain Howell and three pilots got up in a hurry and made a dive for the Britisher who wanted to take a poke at Phineas. A brawl was averted as Sergeant Casey came tearing into the house. The Flight Sergeant skidded to a stop.

“I don’t care if you are generals,” he yelped. “I’m

comin’ right to the point. Lieutenant Pinkham has got to git that mule to hell outa the hangar. It’s kicked the tail of a Spad off an’ has bit three groundhogs. Where’s the Old M—er, Major Garrity? Look where it kicked me! I’m fed up. I’m—”

Howell shooed Casey out, then turned on Phineas. “You know what you’re doin’, you big ape? You’re just framin’ us all up nice for the book they will print about aviators after the *guerre*. Our maps’ll all have black borders, you homely cluck! We needed those British guys to help wash up von Beerbohm and the Pfalzes over by Metz, an’ you go—”

Perhaps it would be well at this point to explain the situation that stared the Allied forces in the face at that stage of the big fuss. According to the observation crates, the Jerries were concentrating ammo and supplies over close to Metz, preparatory to a gigantic leap at the Democrats’ throats. It would be a juicy bone for the Allied dogs of war to snatch, but one *Rittmeister* Ludwig von Beerbohm and a dozen and a half Pfalz crates had established a camouflaged drome close by the big dump to insure it against a wash-up.

For days, von Beerbohm’s Pfalzes had made it hot for Allied buses. The drome had been pitched somewhere between Metz and Chambley, and telephone connections had naturally been established between it and a Boche observation post that reared its ugly head right above the Jerry trenches. No hostile flight could get by this Jerry hawk-eye. Always, von Beerbohm had been waiting with full strength spread out around him.

G.H.Q. was relying on the Spads to get through the von Beerbohm sky barrier, and it was only a question of hours when the order would come through to Garrity and L’Eclair to combine forces and knock off the Pfalz flight by mass attack. So it was no wonder that the members of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron were watching Phineas Pinkham with palpitating power plants.

“You would think you were fightm’ for the Krauts,” Bump Gillis shot at him. “They should shoot ya for treason, you freckled—”

“When they hand out medals, who is always waitin’ for them, huh?” retorted Phineas with a grin. “I ain’t worried about von Beerbohm, as I will fix his wagon, also. Haw-w-w-w! Well, if you’ll excuse me, I must go now, as the biscuits are in the oven an’—”

“I don’t know why we just don’t kick the hell out of him until we get the dump,” Howell growled. “If he ever gets the Frogs mad at us, it is all over but the burial services.”

THEN CAME the eventful hour when Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham ducked Howell's returning flight and went back toward Metz to take a squint at the pattern of the Boche linoleum. Von Beerbohm had jumped A Flight with ten Pfalz pursuit ships, and had convinced Captain Howell that it was not his day to gloat. Phineas' playmates had battled it out until they had spotted another flight of Boche spearing up from the mosaic. Discretion had handed valor a punch in the solar plexus, and back to the drome the Spads had raced. But *Herr* Pinkham had grown very indignant.

"I'm goin' back an' take a look," he growled. "Maybe I will catch the bums unawares." As fate decreed it, a Pfalz had also remained aloft, and it was inevitable that an argument should result as to who had the most right upstairs. Phineas soon spotted the Pfalz, and girded his loins for hattle. Von Reerbohm's scout proved to be a set-up. After a series of maneuvers that made Phineas dizzy, he poked at the Pfalz' blind spot.

"*Ach—Gott!*" the Boche pilot yipped, and winged over. "*Himmell*" coughed the squarehead, as the Pfalz shivered again. "Nefer shouldt I coom oop *mit* sooch *ein* headache, *nein*. *Ach*, I been feel shakes *mit* shudders."

Phineas was getting ready for another punch, when another ship spun down out of the cloud mass above his head. It bore the cocardes of L'Eclair's squadron, and the Yankee yelled bloody murder as the ship slammed a burst into the Von.

"It's my Von, ya big snail-eater!" the Boonetown pilot roared. "Lay off, as I will forget you're on my side. Oh, the Kraut is goin' down—you fresh Frog! Well, if ya think you kin cheat me—"

The Pfalz went into a spin, snapped out of it, then glided down into Allied real estate. Its wheels smacked the bumpy sod of a pasture devoted to the feeding of sheep, bounced high into the air, and then came down once more to land on the bias. Phineas, as he wing-slapped down, saw that the Frog Spad was wasting altitude fast, and it looked like a toss-up as to who would collar the Von first. But Phineas' crate kissed the turf ahead of the Frog bus, and the Iowa miracle man left his ship in a hurry. An excited, swearing, gesticulating Frenchman was lifting himself out of his pit when Phineas skidded to a stop not ten feet from the Kraut, who was leaning up against the side of his ruined Pfalz.

"*Handen hoch!*" grinned Phineas. "Did I bring ya down, or didn't I, huh? Hurry up, as the U. S. treats ya better than the Frogs, ya know that. Well—I —er—"

Phineas gulped, then backed away as he took a good look at the grounded Von. Just then the pilot of the other Spad came up, uttering lusty protests. Phineas looked at him, then laughed to himself. It was Major L'Eclair once more.

"Oh, so we meet ag'in, you wrecker of love-lives," yipped Phineas. "Well, I always play fair, an' the Von is yours. There's lots more of 'em in the *guerre*, haw-w-w-w!"

"*Merci beaucoup*," prattled the French squadron leader. "You are ze *bon homme*, Lieutenant Peenkham, *oui*. I—"

A groan came from the Boche. He was passing a hand over his brow. Major L'Eclair stepped up and gloated over the prize.

"*Regardez*," he thrust at Phineas. "Ashamed he ees, an' his face eet ees *tres rouge*, *non?* Ha, ha!"

"Yeah, haw-w-w-w!" chuckled Phineas, as he continued to backstep. "Look, the Kraut is even shakin' just lookin' at voose. Well, adoo, majair, as I will leave ya with your prisoner, haw-w-w-w!" And as Phineas climbed into his Spad, he murmured to himself, "No wonder he was a set-up. Oh, boys!"

Phineas' intentions about returning to the drome were good, but his Spad had other ideas. Somehow, during the brief set-to with the Von, his Hisso had been poisoned with lead. It quit, not far from the village of Revigny, and Phineas nursed it down right into a Frog farmyard. The Boonetown trickster climbed out, and wondered what all the noise was about. A tiller of the soil soon enlightened Phineas.

"Peeg!" the farmer screeched. "Almos' you have break up all ze geese coops, *oui!* Crazee *Americain!* *Sacré! Mon Dieu! Vite, vite*, get ze fly' machine away!"

"I guess you think that's just a go-cart, huh?" retorted Phineas. "Let me see ya pick it up an' throw it under the apple tree over there. Huh, now just relax, as what is the use of gittin' all worked up. Boys, look at the geese! You must be Papa Goose, huh? Haw-w-w-w!"

"Bah," snorted the Frog peasant, and stamped away.

Phineas followed him, and became very interested in the wire pen that was filled with the honkers. "That's a big flock," he tossed out. "Are they wild?"

Evidently the farmer had a yen for the squat fowl with the big feet. He began to brag about how much he knew of the feathered creatures.

"I have fin' ze wild goose eggs," he explained proudly. "Ze geese she go up nort' to lay heem some egg. When zey have hatch' an' geet *tres gros*, zey fly

back to ze sout', pouf! *Oui*, I, Pierre Bretay, am ze champion gooze raiser, *non*? When zey weel fly away eef I let zem out, I keep zem mebbe wan year, an' zen they don' go."

"I bet they're good eatin', huh?" grinned Phineas, suggestively licking his lips.

"So?" exploded the Frog. "You steal zem I bet you. Seex shot guns I have, an' loaded up. *Aussi* Pierre, he does *ne* sleep *pas*, *comprenez vous*?"

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" guffawed Phineas. "A word to a wise guy is plenty, huh? Well, I'll *allez* now, an' send somebody out to fix up the Hisso. Don't start usin' it for a hen coop while I'm gone, Pierre. Adoo!"

As Phineas strolled across country, his mind began to churn, and evolved a batch of ideas, the possibilities of which were positively astounding. Like the Count of Monte Cristo, he was laying the foundation of sweet revenge on all his persecutors. Babette, he felt sure, was ruing the day that she incurred the Pinkham wrath. The British wisenheimers had tasted bitter reprisal. If he was not sadly mistaken, Phineas mused, Major L'Eclair and his Frog pilots would soon regret the day that Phineas Pinkham had made them a present of a Jerry Von.

IT WAS LATE when the errant Ninth Pursuit pilot returned to his home drome. The pilots wore at mess, and Major Garrity was in his sanctum listening to the woes of emissaries from G.H.Q.

"Evenin', bums!" blared a familiar voice. "It was a long walk, but you have no idea how exercise in the open stimulates me. Where is Goomer, as I am famished."

"Tell him," Bump Gillis said darkly. "He won't have no appetite then, captain."

"Day after tomorrow night the show starts," Howell informed the prodigal gloomily, idly sopping up gravy from his plate with a hunk of bread. "We go over an' wash up the dump—maybe. Ha, ha! Well, we've lived longer than most guys, anyway."

"It's about time!" gurgled Phineas. "I've been waitin' for the day. Do ya think the Frogs will be much help, huh?"

"They'd better be," groaned Howell, "or else—excuse me. I have to write a letter home, an' then you can have the rest of my writin' paper. The R.O. is thinkin' up nice telegrams already and—"

The door burst open, and Major Garrity stamped out of his quarters with two Brass Hats hard at his heels. The Old Man caught sight of Phineas' physiognomy, and his shoulders sagged.

"I thought it was too good to be true," he moaned. "Where you been, you—"

"Why, I was out studyin' the wild life of our feathered friends," Phineas informed him. "Up until now, I was never interested in the goose, but did you know of their breedin' habits? Major, it is somethin' all of you must look into more. I—"

Captain Howell and Bump Gillis kicked back their chairs with deep sighs. They saluted their superiors listlessly, and filed out.

"That's just like them guys," Phineas said scornfully. "They never want to talk on educational matters. Major, if a goose got out, an' it wasn't time to fly south, what direction would it go?"

"Ah—er—excuse him," the Old Man explained to the Brass Hats. "Lieutenant Pinkham is carrying on just on his stamina alone. Ha, ha! Well, anybody is liable to go nuts in this *guerre*, eh?"

"Too bad," commented a colonel, shaking his head. "And so young, major."

"I'm just as sane as you bums—er—officers," yipped Phineas.

"That's a sure sign he's crazy," the brigadier said to Garrity. "Ah—er—aren't you afraid he'll get violent?"

"Ha, ha," laughed the C.O., "I wouldn't know if he did."

They all walked out and left Phineas alone. Glad Tidings Goomer, the mess monkey, came out with a platter of beef, set it down and ducked fast.

"They say I'm nuts. Ha, ha!" Phineas laughed hollowly.

"Don't ya b-believe th-them, looten-ant," said Goomer, but he broke into a run, dived into the kitchen, and bolted the door behind him.

"Oh, yeah?" Phineas sniffed indignantly. "I'll show them fatheads."

A Flight patrolled again at noon of the next day. Von Beerbohm chased them out of his front yard, and singed them with tracers. Phineas took quite a pasting from the Von himself, but managed to get back and set down a Spad that looked like the carcass of a turkey on Christmas night. Its wishbone was laid bare, its ribs were knocked awry, and fabric hung from it in shreds.

"You'd better call off flyin' until tomorrow night," Howell tossed at Garrity, "or we won't have anythin' to fly over to the ammo dump but kites. Look at them crates!"

"No, thanks," groaned Garrity, and turned his eyes away. He knew that if he could put eight Spads in the air on the morrow, he would be very lucky indeed.

But it was the next morning early that the last straw which broke the well-known camel's back was wafted in on the breeze. A Renault boiler roared onto the drome and unloaded two Frog officers. They waved their arms and chattered like lemurs as they scrambled into squadron headquarters. Garrity came running out, suspenders dragging. Pilots who were not up on the early go, also appeared to investigate.

"Ze Majair L'Eclair's squadron, she ees all kaput—pouf!" squeaked a French captain at the major. "*Mon Dieu, sacré bleu*—they have get *tres mal* in ze beds, *oui*."

"Wha-a-a-at?" The Old Man swallowed hard as his heart zoomed for his tonsils.

The Frog stumbled on. "Ze prisonair ze Boche he ees ver' seeck with ze German measle, an' ze majair an' *beaucoup* peelots catch eet. Ah, *Mon Dieu!*"

"Frogs with German measles, huh?" yipped Phineas. "I declare—the Eskimos will git malaria, next. Haw-w-w!"

"You shot down that Hun, huh?" Garrity roared. "Oh, I heard you did. An infantry outfit saw you. You saw that the Jerry had—why, you big spotted gargoyle, you let the French C.O. have him and didn't tell him? Why, you—"

"Blamin' me again, huh?" snorted Phineas. "Why—huh—maybe it was careless of me not to have my stethoscopes with me, an' my temperature thermometer. I would've examined him an' made out a chart. Oh, you can't pin this on me. I says to myself, 'I'm not takin' any Von with the measles back so that my dear C.O. will get them.' An' what thanks do I git, huh? Oh, boys, I hope I knock one down that has got leprosy. I'd show ya!"

The Old Man groaned, "Cripes!" and fell into a chair. He began to count on his fingers. One, two, three—up to eight. That was the number of ships which would try and smash their way through the Jerry protecting screen to the concentration center near Metz.

"Well, I'm square with everybody now—all but von Beerbum," Phineas said complacently, quite unabashed. "I will cross him off next. Well, compared to me, the Count of Monte Gristo was just a wall flower. Adoo, as I must go out an' brush up on wild life."

Captain Howell tried to get the Frog officer's gun away from him. Bump Gillis and the Old Man helped tear the flight leader loose.

"Go ahead, Pinkham—run!" Garrity roared. "We'll

hold Howell for just five seconds and then give him the gun. I don't know why I'm stopping this."

The wires buzzed all over the sector until dusk. Wing Headquarters went haywire, but assured Garrity that he was to carry on with what equipment and manpower he had, and like it. The C.O. of the Ninth locked himself up in his quarters and paced the floor like an actor rehearsing his lines. And while he contemplated packing up and getting to the Swiss frontier in disguise, Phineas Pinkham was put-putting out of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron on a motorcycle. One of Casey's best ack emmas was sitting in the sidecar with a bag of tools in his lap. Major Rufus Garrity had given orders that the Pinkham Spad should be in shape to take the air if they had to borrow parts from every other battle wagon on the drome.

"That is like the old turtle," yipped Phineas to the mechanic. "Always thinkin' of me, huh? It is little things like that that help me to bear up in this *guerre*, haw-w-w-w!" With the guffaw, Phineas took a curve at fifty miles per hour and the bathtub attachment was lifted off the ground.

"Hey, you damfool," the non-com yelled. "I ain't no flyer. Cripes, will I git even with Casey for this!"

THE FROG FARMER was finishing up his nightly chores when Lieutenant Pinkham and his passenger got out of the motorcycle and strode up to where the Spad crouched. The ack emma scratched his head as he surveyed the crate.

Phineas grinned. "Well, let's take a look at the Spad's giblets. C'mon."

The non-com climbed up and began to poke around. Suddenly he swore and looked down at his superior. "Only a couple of wires knocked loose," he snapped. "It'll take about four seconds, an' here I give up a date in Barley Duck an'—"

"You can take the motorcycle an' go back," Phineas told him. "The Old Man said ya could have it for the evenin'."

"Did he?" the ack emma yipped gleefully. "That was sure nice of the old boy. I kin take my dame ridin' an'—he's a swell guy, huh, lootenant?"

"Yeah," agreed Phineas and turned to the Frog, who was watching the proceedings with avid interest. "How are ze goose, *non*? How much would ya take for the lot, huh?"

"*Non, non, ze million francs I take not,*" protested the Frog vigorously, using much emphasis and a flock of gestures. "*Mais non!*"

“Well, lootenant,” grinned the ack emma, climbing down from the Spad, “it’ll perk now. I’ll help ya git the crate out where ya kin git a good start, an’ then I’m off to Barley Duck.”

Ten minutes later, the motorcycle chugged away.

“Boy, will he git hell!” grinned Phineas. He turned back to the Frog farmer. “You wouldn’t have some *vin rouge* by any chance, would ya?” the inimitable Yank tossed out carelessly. “I can’t wait until ya tell me more about them swell geese of yours, *oui*.”

Until the wee small hours, Phineas sat in the farmhouse of the gullible old Frog listening to Pierre Bretay’s lengthy discourse on the life and habits of the gray-lag goose. When the Frog began to yawn, Phineas suggested that he would like to hit the hay, but that it was too late to get back to the drome.

“Oh, *m’sieu, ici avec moi* you stay,” the peasant eagerly suggested.

“Mercy beaucoup,” grinned the Yank.

Later, in the privacy of his chamber, the great Pinkham began to burn the midnight tallow and, aided by the light shed from it, he began to work on an intricate design. With pencil and paper he toiled until the crack of dawn. He had figured out the distances between Bar-le-Duc and Revigny, between Revigny and Ars, a small town near the spot where von Beerbohm and his Pfalzes had to be. He had figured the speed of a Spad with Hisso wide open, and the speed of the same bus throttled down. At length the miracle man yawned, grinned, and then prepared for bed, muttering to himself.

“Stranger things have happened,” he murmured. “If it don’t work, I’ll just go over an’ git me a pair of wings with the rest of the bums, as I am willing to give up all for the Stars an’ Stripes. Goodnight to yourself, Mr. Pinkham. H a w-w-w-w-w!”



Dawn on the drome of the Ninth brought more grief to the Old Man. Bump Gillis woke up to find that Phineas Pinkham had not slept in his bunk. Major Garrity was duly acquainted with the fact and the C.O. sent for Casey and the ack emma who had gone out the night before. Casey showed up, but the groundman was nowhere to be found.

“They didn’t come back,” announced Casey. “They—” His words curled up and lay down. Onto the drome came the motorcycle, wide open. It described a zigzag course across the field and headed for the Old Man. Casey flattened himself just as the mechanical bug

threatened to wash him out.

“Whoop-o-e-e-e-e!” yipped the occupant, and headed for the groundmen’s barracks. *Crash!* The ack emma bounced out, went right through a window, taking sash and all with him.

“He won’t be able to tell us nothin’, I can see that,” Casey groaned. “That crazy looey! He did this, I know. He—oh, what’s the use?”

By afternoon the ack emma had recovered his marbles enough to tell the Old Man where Lieutenant Pinkham could be found. In less than a half hour, the squadron Cadillac squealed to a stop in the Frog farmyard outside of Revigny. Garrity saw the Spad, but no Phineas. The Frog peasant appeared, doffed his cap and handed the Old Man a letter. It read:

“Dear Sir:

I have run away. I am afraid to die, as I am still young. Forgive me and try to forget. Phineas.”

The old Frog ran to a well and got a pail of water. After a while, Garrity could walk under his own power, so he got into the car and headed back to the drome. All the way, he mumbled to himself like a hermit. He pinched himself, rolled over in the back seat of the car

to see if that would wake him up. Three grim-jawed Brass Hats from Wing headquarters were awaiting him when he arrived at the field. The Old Man pulled himself together and nodded.

“Go ahead,” he mumbled weakly. “How many pilots do you want killed? Ha, ha, the show has to go on, huh?”

It had to, the Brass Hats assured the major. All the Spads he could muster would take off at six. The ceiling promised to be low, but that made no difference. Probably the Pfalz outfit would not expect the visit under those conditions. Four ships would carry bombs.

“Uh-huh,” was all the Old Man said during the entire powwow.

Pilots began to make themselves ready. Spads were looked over. The day wore on. The news of the Pinkham farewell *billet doux* had sent morale down forty points, and the stock of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron had slid right off the Allied exchange.

“It can’t be so,” Bump Gillis protested. “Aw cripes, it ain’t so—not Carbuncle.”

“We’ll carry on, huh?” Howell said. “Nothin’ will daunt us, anyway, huh?”

“Nope,” somebody groaned, “only about two dozen Krauts, ha, ha!”

One hour later, eight Spads rolled away. Four had bombs snuggling close to their abdomens.

“There goes what’s left,” Major Garrity muttered. “Pinkham, some day I’ll find you. I’ll devote my life to discovering a new slow poison and—”

MEANWHILE, at the farm outside of Revigny, Phineas Pinkham was crouching behind a clump of bushes close to the goose pen. Old Bretay was in an outbuilding doing some chores. Heart thumping, Phineas kept his eye on a watch in his hand. The chart he had made the night before was spread out in front of him.

“It is time,” he said at last. “The bums’ll be headin’ out in about fifteen minutes.” He got up, went to the pen and ripped open the door. Geese honked and started for the great outdoors.

“He-e-e-ey!” the culprit howled. “The geese are out, Frenchy.”

Old Pierre tumbled out of the shed, saw the feathered creatures pouring from the pen. The Frog made a big mistake. He chased the geese with a pitchfork. The young geese honked with alarm and hopped clear of the ground. They felt buoyancy under their wings. Instinct did the rest. Lieutenant Phineas

Pinkham ran to the Spad that had been warming up for ten minutes. As he jumped in and jammed the throttle into place, he looked back. Geese were soaring into the leaden sky. A score or more. And when the Boonetown pilot reached an altitude of a thousand feet, he saw that the geese were getting into formation high over the church steeple of Revigny.

“Oh, boys!” the Yank enthused. “They’re headin’ north the way I figured, an’ they’re makin’ speed. Now I must figure this out so I will be way behind and above them so I will look as small as they are. Von Beerbum, I am on my way with my squadron, haw-w-w-w-w!”

Phineas cut his speed down ten miles from Revigny. He saw the big V swerve and his heart flopped. He gave the Spad its head and circled the flight of birds. The honkers changed their course, and Phineas eased up on the gas.

Over Ars, von Beerbohm’s fifteen Pfalzes poured down on Captain Howell and his seven warriors. Right away, Garrity’s brood saw their finish, but they gritted their teeth and hammered away. Spandaus spat back at them. The four Spads carrying the bombs fought to get through, but a wall of Pfalz hellions kicked them back. Bump Gillis said, “To hell with it,” and dumped his bombs overside.

Rittmeister von Beerbohm yelped exultantly as he plied his trade. “*Ach, Dumkopfs*. Sendink *der* mouse vhat shouldt lick *der* moose vunce. Where iss idt *der* greadt Pingham, ha-a-a-a-a-a?”

Across the heavens the *mêlée* swept. Captain Howell speared a Pfalz with a stream of lead, then zoomed high to take stock of the one-sided battle. He winged over as von Beerbohm lanced at him, and Howell signaled as best he could that he had had enough. Bump Gillis nodded with approval and began to fight his way out. Then von Beerbohm yipped, “*Himmel!*” and rocked his Pfalz. From the direction of the Allied lines, a great V had become visible. Higher than the rest was an escorting ship. Howell saw it, too, and uttered a blood-curdling yell. Pfalz ships turned tail and raced back into Germany. Six Spads chased the laggards, cut two down. Then Howell knifed close to a Spad that carried bombs, and stabbed a gloved hand toward the great Boche ammo and supply dump.

“There they go,” shouted Phineas Pinkham. “If the Boche don’t turn back— Haw-w-w-w-w, have I got a squadron, oh, boys!”

Five miles away, von Beerbohm headed for a Jerry drome. Ten Pfalz ships followed after him. And then

the *Rittmeister* watched that great V, with his lower jaw dropping right down into his lap. It had changed its course and headed for the Channel.

“*Ach, Donner und Blitzen*, ships it ain’t. Geese—*Gott!*” He waved an arm, yanked back the stick. As the nose jerked up, he heard a terrific crash. “*Der doomp, ach du Lieber!*” he groaned. “Too late vunce—Geese idt giffs, *und—*”

Bo-o-o-om! Von Beerbohm looked down at the Kraut carpet. Another bomb hit. High explosives were shaken to their vitals, and great gobs of flame and smoke began to well up from the concentration center. Von Beerbohm and his Vons tried to bridge the gap, but the Spads were leaping toward the Allied lines like greyhounds chasing a rabbit. Phineas Pinkham hurled his Spad down close to Howell’s and waggled his wings. The flight leader-responded, and even tossed the prodigal son a kiss.

“Boy, did I make monkeys out of von Beerbum and his other bums!” the Boonetown wizard roared at Howell. “Geese monkeys, haw-w-w-w-w! Well, when I git back to the Old Man, I will have the flying manuals burnt up an’ put Mother Goose books in their place. That makes me even with everybody now. I marvel at myself. Can’t nothin’ stop me?” And although nobody could hear him, Phineas chattered all the way to the Ninth Pursuit’s drome.

Old Man Garrity spotted seven Spads returning, and ran back into the farmhouse. He grabbed at the R.O.

“Go out an’ look!” he squeaked. “See if you see the same thing I do, then I’ll believe it. Hurry up, as I can’t wait.”

“Come on out, major,” the R.O. yelled from outdoors. “It is right.”

One by one, Garrity’s crates landed, but they paid no attention to their C.O. As they got out, the pilots formed into a group and waited until the last battle wagon had taxied to a stop. Then they barged forward and stormed a Spad that bore the markings of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham. Like a man who had just made the winning touchdown, Phineas rode over to

his C.O. on the shoulders of Bump Gillis and Captain Howell.

“Somethin’ is wrong,” groaned Garrity. “He—that fathead, he—”

“Haw-w-w-w-w!” yowled Phineas. “I am Papa Goose. Major, you better give me a flight leader’s job, as if I can lead geese, I can lead these bums. Let me tell ya about wild life, as—”

“Startin’ that again, are you?” stormed the major. “Put him down, you men, and I’ll knock his ears off.”

“We blew up the dump,” chortled Captain Howell.

“Phineas did it—”

“He was leadin’ some geese an’—”

The Old Man pawed at spots in front of his eyes, turned and staggered into the farmhouse. “Geese—poison ivy—German measles,” he muttered. “Ha, ha, get me my rug as I must go out and meet von Sinbad at dawn. Oh, let go of me, I will not go to Elba—ha, ha!”

Some time later, Garrity was finally convinced. Phineas Pinkham sat at the head of the table in his place, and produced the diagram he had made.

“You see, I figured the speed of geese against Spads, and added up the miles between. Well, I also figured how I could make myself smaller than I seemed by flyin’ back of the geese. Multiply the speed of a goose in flight by eighty-five miles per hour—oh, it’s simple, huh? Did you bums know the ceiling’ of a goose is only maybe three thousand feet? But you can scare them higher. Now, them geese—”

The phone buzzed in Garrity’s sanctum. The Old Man blinked his eyes and staggered in to answer it.

“Yeah,” he said to the Wing Commander. “Oh, that? Ha, ha! It is all in a day’s work. Yeah, all right, we’ll be expecting Pershing. How? Oh, we used geese as we are short of—”

Over at the Wing, the Brass Hat plunked down the receiver. “I guess the strain has been too much for him. Garrity’s been under terrific pressure. Too bad,” he said sadly.

The other Brass Hats nodded gravely, sighed in unison and then asked if there was any cognac about.