



SCRAPPY BIRTHDAY

written and illustrated by
JOE ARCHIBALD

Over in Kraut-land spirits were high. Flourish and fanfare heralded a super celebration in honor of the A-1 Hohenzollern. And the first dish listed on The Great One's menu was—"Phineas Pinkham on the Half-Spad." But too many cuckoos spoil the hasenpfeffer, and though the meat is sweeter near the joint, the Vons hadn't figured on double joints.

ALATE SUMMER BREEZE kissed the lindens in Kaiser Bill's home town. Birds chirped *unter* those lindens and Frauleins stormed the post offices to get word from the palpitating Front as to whether their *Herr Romeos* had been liquidated or not.

But as this story opens on the drome of the Ninth

Pursuit Squadron, located south of Bar-Le-Duc in sunny France, we should worry about the whole Potsdam family.

Jitters were prevalent on Major Rufus Garrity's reservation. For days rumors had been thicker than Spandau bullets. The Krauts were up to something in the neighborhood of Mont Sec, and the brass hats

sojourning at Chaumont were squirming in their swivel sofas acquiring quite a shine on the seats of their whipcord pants—because they couldn't find out about it. Boche planes were as plentiful over Mont Sec as Zulus around a pot of stewing missionary. Many a Yankee patriot came back from look-see jaunts over that inflamed wart on the topography of France much sadder but a lot wiser.

Phineas "Carbuncle" Pinkham, freak of fate and soldier of misfortune to his fellow men, scoffed at the idea that any Boche could stop him from taking a close squint at the aforementioned eminence. There were times, however, when even Phineas was wrong. He ran into an assortment of Pfalz pursuit ships; Fokkers with three wings; Fokkers with two wings; and a smattering of Albatross jobs. They dropped on his neck just as he got a glimpse of activity at the foot of a steep slope. Boche were parading back and forth toting heavy sandbags. Trucks, that looked like a line of bugs, moved along a road.

And there was a big tent a mile off to the left. It bore a Jerry Red Cross insignia on its roof. Phineas had time to observe three ambulances crawling away from the hospital tent just before a flock of lead smashed into his Spad and almost flipped the ship over on its back.

Archie iron sprayed him and a piece of it bounced off his cranium, ushering in the night hours ahead of schedule. There was little doubt that the hunk of scrap iron saved the Government twenty-five thousand dollars. Kraut pilots forgot to shoot when they saw that Spad go into convulsions and do everything in the air that a dog with a fit could do on the ground. When Phineas reached out for his scattered marbles, he was only a thousand feet in the air and if he had had a pennon of smoke streaming out from the tail, it would have formed a corkscrew in the air.

JUST when it seemed that the ground was going to leap up and kiss him Phineas pulled out. A wing tip almost hamstrung a stork in a ruined chimney of a house on the democratic side of the lines when he gave the crate the gun. Up he went, wiping beads of sweat as big as marshmallows off his homely face. Then he picked himself a likely looking landing field and brought the Spad down. It seemed to be shaking, too, when he climbed out of it.

"B-Boy!" Phineas gulped. "That was as close as wall paper and p-plaster. Oh-h-h-h, my dome! I bet it looks like a cracked egg. I had better leave on my helmet

to keep my brains in 'til I git to a hospital. Oh-h-h-h-h—"

Not far away there was a sunken road. An ambulance went lurching by and Phineas Pinkham let out a howl. The meat wagon kept on rolling, so the Yank took out his service revolver and aimed carefully.

BANG!

The rear tire of the ambulance blew out with a loud report and the Florence Nightingale hack did an Annette Kellerman into a ditch. A dough climbed out, started cursing.

"Cripes—what're they makin' them tires outa now? Bread dough? Huh—that's the t'oid blowout—"

"Bon jooney," trilled Phineas, climbing over a fence. "It's a lucky accident. You almost lost a patient. Haw-w-w-w-w! I will just git in an' lay down while you fix the tire. You give good service in this sector, garson. I hope you'll hurry, as I ain't sure how long I will live."

"You can drop dead now," the dough clipped, "for all I give a blankety—blank—blank—blank!"

"Tsk tsks," sighed Phineas, shaking his head despite his aching scalp. "Just because a wounded man asks for succor—"

"Yeah. That's what I am—a sucker. I shoulda stayed back in Brooklyn. It's a lot of parsley, this here *guerre*," the dough complained. Grumbling, he went to work while Phineas climbed into the ambulance to soothe his aching cranium. He took something from his pocket and plastered it on his face when the meat wagon finally began rolling toward a base hospital.

"Catsup's quite a help," he observed to himself. "Unless you are losin' at least a gallon of blood, they will not take you in, the dopes. I hope it ain't too big a crack, though, 'cause maybe they can weld it as good as new. I'll git hunk with them beer gulpers. He-e-ey, are you drivin' over roof tops or—? I'm a mortally wounded officer."

"Now ain't that too bad?" the driver tossed back at his passenger. "Just have a little patience an' I'll take ya fer a ride along the Champs Delizzies. Shut up!"

Phineas Pinkham rarely did what he was told, but this time he was beyond objection. In an hour he had arrived at the hospital. He was carried in and laid on a nice white bed. Never had anything felt more exotic to the Pinkham carcass. Right then and there the hero from Boonetown, Iowa, decided that he would make his sojourn last three days so he could catch up on some sleep. But a doctor looked at the Pinkham brain container and told its owner that he had a skull as thick as the door of a vault.

"You'll be out in the morning. Say, you could sell that skull of yours for plenty of dough, Lieutenant—to the Smithsonian Institution. Ha! ha!"

"I am dyin' an' they think it's funny," Phineas moaned. "Out in the A.M., huh? Just when I was gittin' comfortable. Boys, what I could think up to do to the Krauts lyin' here in bed like this! Oh well, I ain't out yet. I am glad I purchased that last book for my library."

In the morning a nurse ran wild looking for a surgeon. She found one and led him back to the Pinkham cot. Phineas was on the floor with one of his legs twisted around his neck. The other one was flopped loosely in front of him, looking like a wide open "V."

"Ha-a-a-alp!" he yipped. "Do somethin'—I giss that forced landin' broke most of me up from the—



hips down. Ohh-h-h-h-h, that's it—stand there and enjoy my agony! Ohh-h-h-h-h!"

The doctor knelt down, looked the knotted Phineas over. He helped the nurse get Garrity's errant pilot into the bed. Then he scratched his head.

"They'll have to take some X-rays," the boss medico decided. And while Phineas yelled and squirmed he got the Boonetown miracle man's right leg from around his neck. "Huh—he's passed out. Well, let 'im be. If he needs a hypo—"

ON THE drome of the Ninth Major Rufus Garrity was pacing the floor of his sanctum. For an hour he had been waiting for word from Lieutenant Pinkham. Suddenly his telephone set up a racket, and the Old Man jumped, swore, and snapped up the receiver. It was the hospital near Larouville calling. Garrity was told that Lieutenant Pinkham was a patient there—that he had cracked up.

"How bad?" yipped the Major. "I'm not good at guessing."

"We don't know," the voice came from the other end. "I think he's broken both legs and one arm. As soon as we take pictures—"

Garrity hung up, pawed at his face. Poor Pinkham! He must be in terrible pain, he thought. Running out of the Operations Office, he yelled at Captain Howell, leader of "A" Flight, and Bump Gillis, hutmate of the wounded Pinkham, who were sitting at a table fighting over a checker game.

"Come on, come on," howled the C.O. "Pinkham's smashed up. Broke both legs—we'd better go see him before—maybe he found out something over Mont Sec. Well, what're you waiting for? What—?"

Bump Gillis had a sour look on his face. "Huh, there's somethin' fishy about that bum bein' in a hospital. I—er—picked up a book he's been readin' lately. Once I woke up and he looked like he was in a knot and he was grunting like an elephant lifting teak logs. My bet is that he is practicin' up somethin', the crackpot! I've got the book here. I'll show it to you. Here—"

Major Rufus Garrity snatched the dog-eared book out of Bump's hand. On the cover he read:

BE A CONTORTIONIST MAKE BIG MONEY. CARNIVALS AND CIRCUSES SHORTHANDED. ANY DOUBLE-JOINTED MAN CAN LEARN IN TWELVE EASY STAGES. THIS BOOK SHOWS YOU HOW. PRICE—25c.

AND DON'T FAIL TO~~TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR OTHER STARTLING OFFER AT THE SAME TIME: DR. FLUBB'S MIRACLE MASSAGING LINIMENT. PRICE—10c

"Uh —er —that fathead!" stuttered Major Garrity apoplectically. "If—what I—think is—true, I'll fix that weak-chinned son of a cuckoo! Legs broke, huh?" Major Garrity barged out to the tarmac and yelled for an official U.S. taxicab. In just five minutes he was rolling off the drome with both fists clenched and itching for the feel of that receding Pinkham chin.

"That makes me even with that bum for cuttin' up cordite and puttin' it in my tobacco!" chortled Bump Gillis.

Phineas Pinkham was getting pictures taken of his undercarriage and his right wing when Major Garrity stormed into the emporium of succor. The flyer took one look at his Commanding Officer then at the book the Old Man held in his fist.

"Gimme my clothes," he gulped. "I'm gittin' out of here."

"Be still, Lieutenant, how do you think you'll get well if—"

"Hah, git well? I don't want eight more fractures in my dome. One side! Every man for himself!"

"Pinkham, get out of that bed!" roared Garrity, picking up a hundred-pound weight used to keep cracked undercarriages in place while they are healing. The nurse squeaked and the doctor made a dive for the Major. "Invalid, huh? You flap-eared big mouth. Contortionist, eh? In ten easy lessons!"

"Twelve," Phineas corrected him, jumping out of bed like a rabbit after nibbling loco weed. "Oh, awright, I am busted! But I had a rest comin' to me. You wouldn't let me go to Paree to git my nerves untangled. I says to myself, I'll take a vacation on my own hook. I—uh—hook—hook? Say, it is not a bad idea, haw-w-w-w-w! Boys, it is lucky I took a few hours off here, Major, as I got me a great idea."

"Get your clothes on, Pinkham! I'll give you just two minutes!" the Major screeched.

"You would think I was an Indian," complained Phineas, "with only a loin cloth to put on. Well, I'm hurryin' ain't I? I am no fireman!"

In ten minutes the squadron car was rolling toward Bar-Le-Duc. And Phineas Pinkham was riding in it with Major Rufus Garrity.

"I wish you would take it easy over the bumps," the culprit called to the driver. "It was no dandelion blossom that hit me on the dome. Well, if I have a relapse with this cracked dome of mine, I'll sue somebody. I know my rights!"

"What did you do with the Spad, you halfwit?" Garrity growled at him.

"Oh, it's over near the Meuse," chirped Phineas. "I will go get it as soon as I am well."

"Oh, you you?" the C.O. sniffed. "Want to bet?"

"Awright, but I would not advise you to send anybody else for it as it is liable to blow up. I have got a bottle of nitro hid inside of it. I was goin' to drop it on Mont Sec. And the Hisso's not in very good shape. If anybody had a forced landing, well—awright, you send somebody for it, haw-w-w-w!"

AT THIS, Old Man lost his temper and threw his pipe against the windshield. Hot embers of Lady Nicotine sprayed the driver's physiognomy and he threw both hands up into the air and let the boiler have its head. The car whanged a tree and Major Rufus Garrity described an arc through the ozone and plopped prop foremost into a very ugly looking mud puddle. The C.O. of the Ninth was in no mood for a game of jack straws when he finally reached the drome. His feet were pulsating with the urge to kick somebody when he removed his boots. Phineas went to his hut and began to flay Bump Gillis.

"You blab-mouthed Bum!" he railed. "You—!"

Hr-r-r-r-r-o-o-o-o-m! Br-r-r-r-wu-u-u-u-m!

"Krauts!" yelled Bump, jumping out of the door. Phineas was just one leap behind him. Everybody on the drome was accelerating speed. A machine gun began to sputter. The Old Man drowned it out with his trumpeting. Overhead four Boche ships winged over and piqued at the field of the Ninth. Five hundred feet up, they lifted their noses and clawed for the roof. But four strange missiles hit the tarmac of the Ninth. They broke up with loud plopping sounds. Yellow smoke began to roll over the field, Sergeant Casey got a whiff of it and clamped both lunch hooks to his bread basket. Three groundmen did likewise. Captain Howell got his bellows choked with the obnoxious stuff and his chops turned green.

"Uh—ugh!" gulped Bump. "I—I'm sick. I'm dyin'—it's gas! Git me to my hut, Carbuncle. I gotta write the folks. Oh-h-h, the dirty—!"

The meat wagon rolled out onto the field when the vapor had lifted. But the memory lingered on. One of the drivers turned as pale as a stiff bosom at an opera and let go of the wheel.

"Cripes, am I sick! Oh-h-h!"

KERWHACK! His ambulance hit the ammo shack and folded up like a camp stool.

It was quite a coup for the Kaiser's boys. Two hours later Major Rufus Garrity took an inventory. Howell

and six other pilots were laid out in the big mess room of the Frog farmhouse crying for stomach pumps. Lieutenant Gillis wanted to know how long it would take him to die.

"Haw!" guffawed Phineas, "you're all sissies. You should've lived near a piggery once like I did outside of Waterloo, Iowa, one time. Boys, that stuff the Krauts sprayed us with is lavender bags soaked with attar of roses compared to the aroma that comes from a porky's boudoir. But, gosh, I wonder what it was, huh?"

A groundman, whose head was wrapped up in a suit of oily dungarees, trotted in and handed the Old Man a tin can. He said it had been dropped from one of the Kraut battle wagons. After much difficulty and a stream of blasphemy, Major Garrity took out a folded paper. He read it, then threw it at Phineas Pinkham, The Boonetown wonder deciphered it out loud, elaborating upon the contents in true Pinkham fashion—

Dear Herr Leutnant Pinkham:

You only have it der tricks maybe, nein? How is it der smell yet, hein? Do notd fear your Kavierads vill die, but such ein sickness vill be by der Durakopfs for maybe drei days, ja! It giffs mud in der eyes.

—Hauptmann Hans Rudolph von Spieler.

"That's enough!" howled the recipient of the insulting letter. "They asked for it. You wait, you big hunk of limburger! Where's a Spad? *Where—?*"

Major Garrity staggered into his sanctum, shut the door. An hour later the wires began to sizzle. The telephone kept up an insistent buzzing until the Operations Office sounded like a bee hive. When the Old Man came out a few of the pilots were nibbling at their mess.

"Anybody die yet?" he growled,

"Nope," Phineas answered promptly. "I went over to see the bums before I put on my dinner clothes. Bump says he bets corpses feel more like taking a constitutional than he does. Howell's pan is the color of a bullfrog's back and Casey keeps hollerin' for somebody to start operatin' on him. Boys, that was some stuff, haw-w-w-w!"

"Yeah," the C.O. howled, "and it happened on three air dromes this afternoon. Right in this sector, too. There's something cock-eyed—"

Outside, brakes squealed and the Major wilted into a chair to wait for the visitors to barge in on him. They turned out to be up to his worst expectations—a brigadier, a colonel, and a major.

"They forgot a captain somewhere," Phineas chortled. "Haw-w!"

"Shut up!" barked the C.O. in a stage whisper. His fingers slid suggestively toward a heavy milk pitcher. Aloud he yipped: "Attention!" and got to his feet. "Good evening, gentlemen! I'm glad you got here. There's hell to pay!"

"Mighty strange thing," the brigadier groaned. "Fully twenty flyers incapacitated, Garrity. Nobody dead yet?"

"We ain't sure," Phineas Pinkham interjected. "But if we started to bury Lieutenant Gillis right this minute, he would not complain, ha-w-w-w!"

"Pinkham, get out of here!" roared Garrity.

"Yessir." The Boonetown pilot left the mess and walked outside. Near a window he paused to get the low-down.

"It isn't gas, Garrity," the brigadier growled. "Men show no symptoms of poison—lungs are all right. Just makes 'em blasted sick. A ruse to keep a lot of Allied machines out of the air for a day or two. Well, there's nothing to worry about. The Huns are preparing for the expected fall drive on St. Mihiel—throwing up sandbags—putting in concrete pill boxes. That's the reason for the activity around Mont Sec. Naturally, they wish to keep bombers and strafing planes out of the air over that spot. Chaumont's certain that nothing unusual is going on over there. Well, I'll be going along, Major. Good evening." And the parade of officers sallied forth. Phineas had quite a task to evaporate quickly enough.

The Old Man sighed heavily, then yelled at Glad Tidings Goomer, mess attendant: "Bring me a bottle of cognac!" When the sad-eyed dough shuffled out of the kitchen door he cracked: "Well, that's something off our minds—that Mont Sec scare."

"Huh," muttered Phineas on his way to his hut, "that's what the bums at Chaumont think! How did they git to be officers anyway? A Pinkham is not so gullible. Well, I got to git to work."

ALL during the night the Boonetown worker of miracles husied himself in one dimly lighted corner of "B" Flight's hangar. He seemed to be wrapped up in wire when a mechanic came in and looked at him. Promptly Phineas told him to scram "trays veet," and the mech did as he was told with alacrity, for fear he'd be enlisted into the Pinkham private war. Alongside of Phineas was a paper box filled with big deep sea fishing hooks and a smattering of heavy lead sinkers.

At dawn the plotter asked his Major for permission to go out and salvage the Spad he had left close to the lines. Garrity told him to go right ahead and not to remember the bottle of nitro that might providentially break loose.

"Haw-w-w-w, they believe everythin' I tell 'em, these bums," Phineas chuckled as he hied to locate the Equipment Officer. From that gentleman he chartered a mechanical bug. He borrowed Sergeant Casey's best mechanic and the grease monkey had to sit in the tin bathtub holding a big wooden box in his lap all the way to where the Spad had been forsaken.

The Spad turned out to have been unmolested. In fact two or three doughs had been detailed to stand watch over it. The pilot from the Ninth put those patriots to work, too, and in about an hour the under side of the Spad was honeycombed with heavy wire. Seven or eight wires trailed behind the empennage. On the end of each were heavy sinkers and great fish hooks.

"Well, that's a good job done," Lieutenant Pinkham commented. "I'm the guy that put the 'hook' in hookey. It calls for cigars all 'round, haw-w-w-w!" Six smokes came out of his pocket and he passed them around. The doughs accepted eagerly but the mech screwed up his face and dropped his stogey to the turf.

"Spin the prop!" Phineas hollered next. "I'm on my way for a solo over Mont Sec."

"Fish hooks—wires—the guy's screwy," observed the grease monkey as he swung the heavy prop. The Hisso turned over and the doughs scattered. They waited until the Spad was a thousand feet up before they put the cigars into their mouths.

"You're a lot of suckers if ya light them things," the mech opined. "They'll blow your bugles off. That crackpot's Lootenant Pinkham."

"Yeah? I git it now," said one of the doughs, grabbing the cigar out of his teeth. He broke it in half and tossed it away. The others promptly followed suit. Then a patriot wearing a corporal's stripes made a dive for his discarded stogey and examined it carefully.

"Why this weed's okay," he hollered. "Look at the band—a Corona—of all the fatheaded Spad nurses! Get him, guys!"

"Lissen," pleaded the mech, starting on the double, "how did I know? Lissen, guys—"

Bop! Splat! Whang!

The mech hit Mother Earth on his angel bones. One of his eyes felt as if it had exploded. He felt a perfectly good molar slide down his throat and his

jawbone strummed like a piano that a moving man had let fall out of a third-story window.

"Oh-h-h," he groaned, "that bum—when he does things right, it's wrong. Well, if I see a chance to do it, I'm gonna fracture his skull. I will bide my time an' keep an anvil handy."

Phineas Pinkham went to Mont Sec. There were only two Boche planes in the skies toward Germany. "Haw-w-w," he enthused, "the Heinie *Herr* Obusts figure that the stink bombs were better than they really are. Huh—" He peered overside, spotted a huge tent marked with a red cross. He pointed the Spad for the linoleum and dived down to within a hundred feet of the ground. At that altitude he straightened out, opened up the Hisso, and then gradually pushed the stick away from him.

With one eye on the two soaring Huns and the other on the big canvas tent, Lieutenant Pinkham hedgehopped. He sliced over the rotting canvas with his trucks almost kissing it. At the right time he zoomed. The Spad halted in its stride. A strut gave way. The Yank gulped and looked back. A great hole yawned in the canvas tent. He got up to a thousand feet and winged over. When he knifed down again, Krauts were running as if bill collectors were after them.

"Huh," Phineas yipped, "there aren't any nurses down there. It's filled up with boxes of stuff—hospital, huh? If it is a hospital, then Notre Dame Cathedral is a fight club. Well—er— oh-h-h-h-h, boys!"

Two Albatross Scouts were boxing him. Lead was burning along the fuselage. It caromed off the snout of the Spad and banged holes in the top wing. Another strut began to wobble and Phineas knew that there had been a lot of strain on those wire fish lines. The top wing of the Spad began to shimmy. A Kraut slug zipped through the cloth covering the Pinkham empennage and Phineas hopped right out of the bucket seat and howled like a Comanche Indian. The Spad began to go into fits on its way down to the hostile linoleum. Phineas fought it tooth and nail and managed to get its nose up a few seconds before terra firma hugged it to her bosom.

BUTTERFLIES filled the Pinkham cranium and the manager of that skull of tricks had an idea he was on the way West as he felt himself rise toward the ceiling. Ten minutes later somebody dragged him off the Milky Way and dumped him into the Big Dipper. Phineas opened his eyes and felt around with his hands. He contacted metal that quivered. Ten more

minutes passed before he had put all his screws back in place. When his senses had been put back in their respective cubbyholes, the wandering Yank found that he had been dumped into the tin bathtub on the side of a motorcycle. And what was more, the thing was moving. Up ahead was another Kraut mechanical bug. Phineas emitted a long-drawn howl that made the bugs sputter and stop moving.

"*Ach Himmel*, alife yedt he ist. Hermann—!"

"Gooten afternoyn," Phineas tossed out and pulled himself erect. "Where am I?"

"In *der* zoop," a Heinie chortled. "Soon it giffs *der* shtone vail *mit der* blindfolds—ha ha!"

"Heh! heh!" echoed Phineas weakly. Then he recovered his self-confidence. "Awright, you bums," he sniffed. "I'll show you how a Pinkham gives up his all. Hurry up! You bums don't smell like no lilies of the valley."

"*Ach, Hermann, Gott! Ich habe gedenken—Der Kaiser's Geburtstag! Der gross Tag das ist. Herr Leutnant Pingham macks einen gut bresent fur der Kaiser's Geburtstag, ja? From von Spieler yedt.*"

"*Himmel!*" belched the other squarehead. "*Ja, idt giffs you alzo me der offizier's zoots, hein? Mack. Schnell, Franz, mack Schnell!*"

It did not take the Pinkham gray matter long to interpret that mixture of Heinie and Yankee English. "So the big bum von Spieler is going to give me to the Kaiser for his birthday, huh? Well, I ain't shot yet, you walking limburgers. So this is Will's birthday, huh? Is his wife buyin' him a new Napoleon hat?"

"*Ich giff der gut* mind to kill him vunce rightd now," the bigger of the two mechanical bug straddlers erupted.

"Vunce would be joost too much for me," Phineas grinned. "Keep goin' as the geburstday vill be ofer."

At a cross-roads the Huns stopped to recite some passwords. Three trucks were standing there, too. A big Heinie *Ober-Leutnant* had the drivers in the road while two lesser Huns went through their pockets. One of the Kraut doughs found a pipe as big as a summer squash on a truck driver. He handed it to his superior and the Hun brass hat smashed it against the stone wall.

"*Dumkopf! Das ist verboten*," Phineas heard him guttural. "*Raus mit—!*" The Boonetown pilot could see into one of the trucks and it was choked with, wooden boxes. Pipes *verboten*, eh? The Yank had an idea why and also that the stuff in those boxes was on its way to Mont Sec. He was quite certain that it was not whole wheat flour.

IN TWENTY minutes Phineas was dumped out of his portable bathtub in Ars. The place was palpitating with expectancy—Heinie flags fluttered everywhere. Jerry brass hats were as thick as Kilties around a free lunch counter. The doorway of a big house was draped with bunting and predominating over all was the coat-of-arms of the Hohenzollern breed. The news of *Leutnant* Pinkham's capture spread like a rumor of divorce in a hick town. *Herr* Pinkham would be the *piece de resistance* of the Kaiser's natal day—they would present the captive to Kaiser Bill and await a handsome reward.

Hauptmann Hans Rudolph von Spieler nosed down to a flat space on the outskirts of the Lorraine foundry site and lost no time in hotfooting it to the square where the prisoner was on display. It was a trying time for our hero. Townspeople made faces at him and gestured threateningly toward the Pinkham jugular vein.

"Ach," gurgled von Spieler, "*der vorm* has turned, *nein? You bist kaput—mein freund! Lader der Kaiser* he locks at you—also *der Crown Prince—und* then ve fill you oop onit holes *vas ist* like *der Sviss* cheese, ha ha!"

"Haw-w-w-w!" laughed Phineas. "I can insult anybody now as you can't do anythin' worse than send me West. I been wishin' the Clown Quince would come, too, as I want to die laughin'. Get it? Just skip it, then, as who could put anything inside your thick square domes? Will the Kaiser be ridin' his wooden horse, ha-w-w-w?"

"Oopstartd!" blustered von Spieler. "Insulds by *der Emperor, ja? You shouldt get idt der firink sqvad* already yedt. *Gott!*"

"Hold *der vace* shudt," clipped an *Herr Oberst*. "*Der Kaiser* shouldt maybe talk vunce onit *der verdammt Yangkee, ja.*"

An *Unter-Offizier* came running up to a pompous and boiling *Herr Oberst*. "All *ist* readty, *Excellenz! Der brizon fur der brisoner!*"

"*Vorwarts!*" growled a Kraut and three sharp points concentrated on the Pinkham tail assembly.

Von Spieler laughed with enjoyment, poking his face close to the Pinkham prop boss. "*Ich habe gesehen der blace* where you get locked oop, *mein freund*, ho ho! Efen *der eel idt* gets away *nein*. *Fur* vunce ve make *idt* sure uf *der vamous Herr Leutnant* Pingham. *Auf Wiedersehn, Schweinhund! Der medals* I gedt *idt.*"

"Don't try to lock up the barn before the horse gits into it," Phineas tossed at him. "A Pinkham never giffs oop until he is *der* skeleton, Pop. Boys, I can't wait to see the Clown Quince! Does he hemstitch fast?"

"*Schmutzig Yangkee Schiveinhund!*" exploded the von, growing a rich beet shade.

"Tsk! Tsk!" Phineas admonished him. "Is that what they teach you at Heidelberg? Haw-w-w-w, here's the 'brizon,' fancy that!" The Yank's heart, however, did a nose dive when he looked at his cell. It was an ingenious contraption. The boards of the floor of a deserted house had been ripped up to make a rectangular hole about eight feet long and three feet wide. The ground beneath the floor had been scooped out and Phineas Pinkham's proboscis twitched like a rabbit's as he scented flowers and heard harps twanging high up in the firmament.

"Ach, efen *das* Pingham von'dt gedt oudt uf here, *nein*. *Der boardts* get nails *mit und* then only *ist* vim trapdoor in *der* middle *mit ein* cover, *ja*. *Der* trap door shuts *und* zo *ist das! Ach, das ist der Tag! Der Kaiser* sees *Herr Leutnant* Pingham *und* ve gedt idt *der crosses mit* iron. *Mach Schnell!* In he goes, *der verdammt Yangkee!*"

Phineas was deposited none too gently into the pit. On his back, he looked up into the leering faces of the Krauts. Von Spieler scoffed down at him while the wooden hatch was being slid over the rectangular pit:

"*Der Spad* ve bring in, *Herr Leutnant, fur ein* bresent *fur Kaiser Wilhelm*. *Das Spad* flies yedt—*der* headt you hit by *der instrumenz boardt, Herr Leutnant*. *Ach*, too badt, you go by *der veil* vunce odder twice too mooch. Bleasant dreams, *mein Freund!*"

"Go shave a pig, you fathead!" retorted Phineas from the depths of his prison as the wooden cover blotted out the daylight. "Haw-w-w-w!! Tell the Kaiser not to take it too hard if I ain't here to meet him." The last sentence was muffled by the pounding of hammer heads against big nails.

The captive Yank squirmed and did things to his joints. He began to get one knee twisted up close to his ear. The trap door, he judged, was just about over his middle. "Huh—uh—boys, this is—tough—there was nothin' in—the—book—about how—a guy could—git out of—I'm goin' to ask—for—my dough—back—ugh—ugh—ugh!" Each grunt marked a step in the Pinkham progress. If he could get that knee up against the trap, he could kick it loose. Then with the other knee up too—he knew all the skin was shaved off his undercarriage by the time he got both knees into place. His whole double-jointed fuselage and undercarriage ached like an old maid's heart at a Valentino flicker.

PHINEAS lost all track of time. It seemed as if he had been in the hole long enough for the Hohenzollerns



to die out—yes, even the next generation of the Kaiser's brood. The Boonetown exponent of trickery suddenly gave a prodigious heave. The trap lifted—and fell back against his shins. After three more tries his legs were sticking out through the opening in the floor. He waited breathlessly. It was getting dark inside the house. When nobody grabbed at his feet, Phineas began to use his hands. He hitched his gangly frame out of the hole until he could stand on his big paws. Then, like a wrestler getting clear of the mat, he gave a violent leap and got his body half out of the hole. One more convulsion and he was lying on the floor, bruised and skinned from his arches to his scalp.

"Boys!" the liberated Yank sniffed. "I hope I didn't bend my legs all out of shape."

He got to his feet, wobbled to the door. It was locked. He was peering out of the window when he heard a crazy yelling. Boche doughs were being kicked and cuffed into line on either side of the street. A band began to blare. A big Heinie staff car hove into view. Two officers stepped out. Then came an imposing figure in a long cape. A mustache whose points

threatened his eyesight garnished the glowering face. Just behind came a string-beanish figure with a profile that reminded Phineas of a parakeet. A visored cap rode atop his noggin.

"Boys, it's the Kaiser and his son," chirped the peeper. "Will you look at the *Herr Obusts* stiffen up! Well, I got to git out."

Boots scuffled against the ground outside. A key turned in a lock. The head of a Kraut sentry was shoved into the room, and the double-jointed Pinkham arm encircled his neck like a python. The Teuton gullet closed up and a Pinkham fist jolted against his chops. Phineas promptly dragged the Heinie in and eased him to the floor.

"It's a caution how these Krauts under-estimate me," he chuckled, changing clothes with incredible speed. "Now they said the Spad was out there and it was goin' to be handed to the Kaiser. Haw-w-w!" As the patriot from Iowa buttoned up his Kraut overcoat he looked out the window.

Kaiser Bill, the Crown Prince, and three field generals at least were holding a powwow. *Hauptmann*

Hans Rudolph von Spieler was with them. When Emperor Bill suddenly slapped the Kraut pilot on the back, Phineas gulped that it was time to go.

"Haw-w-w-w!" he guffawed. "If everythin' goes right, he'll be pattin' von Spieler on the conk with a gun butt ere long. Let's *avant*, Pinkham! Make history!"

Phineas, slipped out of the door ducked around a corner of the house. All other squareheads were staring bug-eyed at the All Highest from Potsdam. Dusk was slipping into Ars when Phineas emerged stealthily from an area-way to stare at his Spad which was sitting pretty not far from von Spieler's battle buggy on the outskirts of town. He stopped suddenly, grinned when he saw that the Hisso had been spun into action. The Boche were getting the Yankee crate ready for the Kaiser's inspection. Setting his big buck teeth, the Yank strode toward his Spad. Just before he reached it he passed von Spieler's grim sky chariot. Two objects were hanging from the pit. They looked like cocoanuts with the husks on!

In Ars pandemonium broke loose when a *Herr Oberst* and *Hauptmann* von Spieler looked at the open trap door in the house where Phineas had been deposited so unceremoniously. On the floor sat a Hun in his flannel undersuit, his eyes glassy, and a vague expression on his unshaven face.

"*Gott—Himmel!*" yipped von Spieler. "After *der deffil—mach Schnell! Donnervetter*—how *ist das* he gets oudt?"

"*Dumkopfs!*" spat out Kaiser Bill. "*Ach*, always he makes it *der* monkeys from you yedt! Bah! I go—*der* choke *ist?* I don't belief it *du bist haben das* Pingham."

"*Ach, Excellenz,*" moaned von Spieler, "I show idt to vou his Spad, *ja!*"

"*Ja, Mach Schnell!*"

The All Highest from Berlin did not get back to his big boiler before the sky over Ars began to shake with the roar of a Hisso. *Hauptmann* Von Spieler froze in his tracks and his lower jaw sagged almost down to his insteps.

"*Das* Pingham," he groaned. "Shoodt, eferyvun! *Donner und Blitzen! Gott!*"

"Down vunce," howled a *Herr Oberst*. "Your Highness, *ach du lieber!*" The Spad was diving. It suddenly zoomed and something plopped into the square not ten feet from the Hohenzollerns.

"*Ach,*" von Spieler squeaked, "he steals idt *der* Kroglein boms. *Der* nose you shouldt holdt idt, Your Highness. Ugh, ugh, it giffs *der* sickness. Such *ein* shmell, *ja.*"

The Crown Prince set up a howl and clamped both hands to his head. But his visored skypiece went skirling away, snagged by one of those fishhooks that trailed from Pinkhani's battered but efficient Spad. Another hook hit into the empennage of a *Herr Oberst* and dug a neat trench. The Crown Prince flattened himself on the ground holding to an ear. He sucked the horrible odor of the Kroglein bomb smoke into his ample bugle and turned green. Papa Hohenzollern was trying to keep his head down under his cape, all the while muttering threats to the brass hats spread out around him. One *offizier* heard very clearly and wondered how he would look in a private's suit.

Upstairs Phineas Pinkham was in fine fettle. "There's the *Geburstag* present, Bill. Boys, it's no bottle of lilac juice, either, is it? Haw-w-w-w-w! How careless of the Hop Man—leavin' them bilious drops hangin' on his crate! That was two bits well spent—that contortionist book. If I only had gone the whole hog an' sent for Flubb's Liniment, too. I feel like I had crawled through a meat chopper. I—uh—er—"

Four Heinie sky hellions were now hard on the Yankee knight's tail. He looked at his gas gauge and his teeth rattled. It was pointing to a region near zero which indicated Phineas' poor chances of getting over to the Yanks' side of the fence.

"Huh, there ain't enough gas in this tank to drown a moth," he thought out loud. "Well, I'll coast in the last three miles. 'Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray'—huh, I can't think of what comes next. Aunt Sophronia was right—she said I should've kept up Sunday school."

ON THE drome of the Ninth Pursuit those pilots who were not still gripped in the talons of acute biliousness, were walking around in tight circles like canines padding down their beds. When Howell told Bump Gillis that Carbuncle Pinkham had been knocked off, the Scot's face did not change its vacuous expression.

"Go 'way—lemme die in peace," he said weakly.

Sergeant Casey, propped up in bed, just nodded. "Git away from me. Do you happen to have some arsenic about ya? I'll give ya all my francs for a shot of it. No? Well, just go 'way an' leave me."

Major Garrity sat on the steps and chewed off one side of his mustache. His nails were gnawed to the quick and his nerves were even more of a shambles.

"Who told that fathead to go over Mont Sec? I told him to get his Spad and bring it back. Oh, that

cock-eyed, lame-brained—” He got up and left the farmhouse. “Howell,” he said, “can we get some flowers around here. Ha! ha! Kind of silly, ain’t it? But after-all, Pinkham was a flyer an’—he has got to have a funeral.”

“I know where there’s some poison ivy,” Bump said helpfully, “an’ some thistles!”

The Old Man swore, went back to the mess hall and sat down. He wiped off a slice of bread with his napkin and spread butter on his plate. When he took a bite at it, he heard his teeth protest. Swearing, he threw the plate across the room and almost broke Glad Tidings Goomer’s jaw.

“Huh, I didn’t do nothin’,” the mess attendant complained. “I was just standin’ here an’—”

A Hisso sang overhead. It stopped, then started to gargle. Major Garrity jumped up as if a tarantula had nipped his seat. He flew out of the room and bumped into a group of grease-balls who were pouring gas over the ground. One tossed a lighted match into it and a fiery snake flared on the tarmac. The Spad zoomed over the house about fifty feet above the Old Man’s head. Something caught in his coat collar and lifted him right off his feet. Part of an ear was shredded by the time the C.O. sat up against a rain barrel. A big fishhook dangled from his rumpled locks and the Old Man looked at it crosseyed.

“By-y-y-y cr-r-r-ripes! By—that mech told me about that fathead fooling with wires an’ hooks. Wait until he gets down! I’ll—oh, that nitwit! An’ I was feelin’ sorry because he—blast his eyes, I—”

The Spad did not light very gently. It bounced into the air three times before it stayed put near the trunk of an apple tree. Phineas, garbed in a Boche great coat and coal scuttle hat, got out of the mashed crate and rippled his goggles loose.

“Bong sour, bums!” he chirped. “Did ya miss me much? Where is Rufe? Oh—haw-w-w-w-w! There ya are. Are ya goin’ fishin’, Major? That hook would catch a pigboat. Well, it’s quite a time I been—”

“Lookit!” yelped a grease monkey, picking up something. He brought it over to the Old Man. “It’s a Heinie’s hat, sir, an’ inside is a—eagle.”

“What?” howled the Major, snatching the skypiece from the goggle-eyed mech’s hands. “Why—there’s a name in it—Crown Prince—HRH Prince Wilhelm—the Prussian eagle—Pinkham, how did you—?”

“Uh—er—why I guess I picked it up in passin’,” Phineas stammered. “Lemme see—huh, look, there’s somethin’ inside it. A hunk of paper—why, it’s a map—and it’s Mont Sec! Boys, it shows where they

are diggin’ tunnels and plantin’ powder and dynamite. Why, the dirty bums, Major! That was to blow all the doughs to—when they got there to take it over in the fall. Why—haw-w-w-w! Now why wouldn’t that map be safe inside the Clown Quince’s hat? It would if a Pinkham wasn’t in France, huh? Let’s go inside and have a snort of van blank!”

All kinds of brass hats percolated into the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron to look at the evidence of Teuton deviltry. A brigadier har-umphed, snorted, and then pumped out:

“Chaumont will show its appreciation, Garrity—”

“Huh?” Phineas sniffed. “Maybe I was sittin’ here playin’ parchesi during the Kaiser’s *Geburtstag* party, huh? Who was it scoffed at the idea that the squareheads were only hauling sand bags? It was them hooks that ripped the top off that Heinie tent—it was them hooks that got the Clown Quince’s skypiece! It was me who saw Kraut truck drivers getting fleeced of their *dudeens*—pipes to you, sir. That mean the Heinies were haulin’ dynamite an’ powder that wasn’t for dame’s faces. That is the way—a guy who sits on his—”

“Now, Lieutenant, you misunderstand me. I—er—meant the squadron would—look here, haven’t you ever been taught any discipline? I’m a brigadier-general. I’ve got a good mind—”

“It ought to be,” countered Phineas. “It ain’t never been used, haw-w-w-w! Go ahead an’ bust me. Just try. Call up Pershin’ and tell on me. Boys, I know when I’m in the saddle!”

“He’s a little hysterical, sir,” Garrity floundered, glaring at Phineas Pinkham. “Don’t mind him, sir.. Heh! heh!”

“You mean I feel historical,” the unquenchable wisecracker cut in. “It is the way with the Pinkhams—they started makin’ history from the time the Pilgrims tripped over Plymouth Rock. Huh, you goin’ so soon, gentlemen? Adoo, then, until you bring me the medals.”

In the town of Ars a heavy-eyed *Herr Hauptmann* von Spieler stumbled into the house where Phineas had been imprisoned. He looked down into the rectangular, subterranean cell, and shook his head. Then he saw something on the floor near the discarded Pinkham flying coat. It was a dog-eared paper-covered book. He picked it up, flipped the pages. Pictures of men all twisted out of shape met his bulging eyes. *Herr* Hans Rudolph von Spieler felt the need of a whole cellar full of *Schnapps*.