



ECLIPSE OF THE HUN

written and illustrated by **JOE ARCHIBALD**

On the Western Front, things looked mighty dark for the minions of Democracy—so dark, in fact, that by contrast the pall over Pittsburgh resembled a bridal veil caressing a snowdrift. Once again the fly-by-night in the Entente ointment and cocklebur in the Allied rompers was that sinister Hauptmann von Heinz—The Owl of the Ozone. But what of Phineas? Well, he'd bought himself a book on the Cosmos. To put it poetically, Carbuncle was "lost in the music of the spheres!"

A GENTLE WIND WAS BREEZING a dulcet ditty through the palm trees on the beach at Waikiki and hula maidens tossed their hips with reckless abandon to the plaintive strumming of steel guitars. But it just happens that this story takes place in France—so we will have to forget about the peaceful Hawaiian Islands.

Since all yarns have to start *somewhere*, this one might just as well begin on a narrow Frog road—a highway under construction not far from Blercourt. It's night. And a Yankee first looie and a tall gangly top-kick are putting the pressure on a gang of Senegambians who are building a right of way toward the palpating front lines.

They're laboring with the zest and dash of so many pall bearers and their dark pans sporadically take a gander at the ozone over their heads.

"Come on, ya gallopin' domino champs," Sergeant Colvin tosses at the patriots from Dixie, "don't tell me yu're afraid of an 'owl'!"

"Ah ain', Sarge," one husky pork chop addict shot back, "long as they don' talk lak Ah does, an' walks lak Ah does, an' don' fly no ahplanes."

"Ha! Ha!" Lieutenant Myers said to the top-kick, "there's no bird that can fly like they say this von Heinz can. Aviators drink too much cognac. Anyway, no Heinie is going to come over in soup like is upstairs tonight just to bomb some engineers."

a
**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl

“We’re buildin’ a road, ain’t we, Lieutenant?” the top-kick retorted. “An’ doughs walk over roads, an’ trucks drive over ’em an’—” He stopped suddenly. “Listen!”

The dark doughs stiffened as if their blood had turned to starch. “Oh-h-h-h-h! O-w-w-wl stay ’wa-a-a-ay from mah do-o-o-o’!” wailed one.

“Feets, when Ah gives de word, don’ sprout no mo’ bunions, no s-a-a-a-ah!” hollered another.

“I don’t hear anythin’, Colvin,” Lieutenant Myers cracked severely. “Come on, sweethearts, start diggin’ into that terra firma!”

The Senegambians reluctantly went back to their stints. Everything now seemed as quiet as the main street of Glasgow during a charity drive.

BUT upstairs and not far away, the grim figure of *Hauptmann* Adolph August von Heinz—he who was dubbed The Owl of the Ozone—was slumped down in the pit of his Albatros. The top of his leather casque barely showed above the office of his sky buggy. Softly purred the Mercedes engine as his big greenish eyes glowed with anticipation of a night of skullduggery.

This latest threat to Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, Cagliostro of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, was a strange Heinie any way you looked at him. He was born on the stroke of twelve in the middle of the Black Forest, and it was rumored across the Rhine that every mouse in the Province scurried to cover when the stork dropped this Kraut squaller down the chimney of the Heinz menage.

From that day on, von Heinz got blind staggers when he looked at the sun, and the War found him sleeping in the daytime far removed from his comrades—to be exact, in a little hut a mile from the Heinie Staffel. It was said that his own cronies always gave him a wide berth, also that a big owl always sat on the limb of a tree near his hut to stand guard while he slept.

“Ho! Ho!” The Owl chortled as he headed toward Blercourt. “I see idt *der* lighdts ein liddle bit *und das ist gut, ja!* Zome *verdammt* Yangkees at vork yet, *hein?* *Ach*, sooch a sport idt vill be!”

Below, on the Frog soil, the tall, gangly top-kick now heard the drone of von Heinz’s Mercedes for sure. He let out a yell that lifted the first looie’s feet off the ground. “There he is! Run! Duck, you guys!”

BLAM! BLAMETY BLA-A-A-AM!

The Senegambians tossed aside their earth-tickling instruments and headed for Paris and the Channel. The looie and the top-kick dived into a ditch and tried

to dig a deeper hole with their hands. “Cr-r-r-ipes!” enunciated Sergeant Colvin. “It’ll take the Northwest Mounted two years to find them dinges again. Stop pushin’ that dirt in my face!”

“Can you make grape jelly without scatterin’ some seeds?” the Lieutenant cracked back while The Owl continued to unload his eggs. “Huh, why don’t the Yanks ever teach flyers to work after dark—that’s what I’d like to know. I heard that this crackpot, Pinkham—!”

AS A matter of fact, Phineas Pinkham was upstairs. For the past three nights he had been taking to the heavens without a light—to see if he could brush The Owl out of the attic. But the jokester from Boonetown, Iowa, had found that it was not as easy as putting flies in the Old Man’s soup.

And now Major Rufus Garrity’s wonder man had caught up with The Owl just as that haunting Heinie arched across the scraposphere preparatory to taking a powder back to his nest.

Herr Hauptmann von Heinz flapped his wings—and hopped on the Yankee bat as if to lift him right out of his Spad with the Alb’s undercarriage. He poked enough lead into the Pinkham crate to sink a tramp steamer, and right quickly Garrity’s night watchman signalled for a fair catch and downed the jittery Spad on the Allies’ forty-five yard line. It sideswiped a dead tree—out of which something plummeted smack down upon Phineas.

“Ya fathead!” roared a voice. “Of all the trees in France, ya would have ta hit this one.”

“Y-yeah?” spat out Phineas along with some barbed wire and a mouthful of Frog real estate. “What was ya climbin’ a tree for? An’ a dead one at that! Coward, huh? I’ll report ya to your commandin’ officer an’—”

“Nuts to you an’ many of them—even if you’re a general,” retorted the big dough as he gruntingly helped Phineas out of the mess.

“Didn’ ya ever hear of snipers, dope?”

“I used to watch ’em snipe butts in front of Gribbon’s poolroom back home,” Phineas grinned. “Uh—er—oh, you’re a sharpshooter, huh? What was you gunnin’ for?”

“Partridges,” the dough snorted. “Say, that spill musta knocked you cuckoo, an’—”

BR-R-R-R-RANG! S P I-I-I-I-ING!

“Run!” the grounded sniper hollered at Phineas. “That Kraut is gettin’ back at me.”

“Why? Are you both from the Kentucky mountains?” the flyer yipped, picking up the fellow’s rifle and



ducking low toward an advanced trench. "It's a fine kettle of smelts for you to keep feudin' while the Allies—"

IN A nice safe trench, Lieutenant Pinkham took a good look at the dough's rifle. It had a telescopic sight which intrigued him. "That brings things up close," he mumbled. "Why through this thing, a Singer's midget would look like Jess Willar—"

"Hah, it was pretty how that Heinie knocked ya off, Pinkham," a shavetail suddenly smirked. "The Owl again, huh? Looks like he's top man around this *guerre*."

"Oh, yeah?" snorted the miracle man of the Ninth. "It's only a run of luck he's havin'. He is a coward, as he only sneaks out at night. But I will smack that bum yet. You wait!"

"Wait? Chaumont don't want to," a captain horned in, poking his head out of a dugout. "If he ain't stopped right soon, we will never get any guys to replace us here and will have to eat our shoes. Last night he washed up four trucks loaded with rations, and the night before—"

"Never mind bringin' that up," Phineas interrupted, cut to the quick. "Get me out of this ditch, as I do not

want cuties all over me. I demand transportation back to Barley Duck."

"I will see if the chauffeur is off duty yet, Mister Vanastorgould. What'll you have, the lemon-colored jalop, or just the town car? Rats! You'll get to Barley Duck the best way you know how. Who asked you in here, anyways?"

Phineas made his way through a maze of trenches until he came to a place in the Yankee backyard where a couple of trucks were just pulling out for points south. The Boonetown flyer hopped one of them and was unloaded ten miles short of Bar-le-Duc. Here he slept in a Frog barn until late the next morning.

When he woke up, a cow was nibbling at his ears. He pushed the hay away from him and sat up.

"Ugh," he gulped as the cow continued to rake him with her tongue. "Gosh, I wanted to be back las' night, too, as it was Howell's birthday and I can't wait until he tells me how he liked the can of tobacco I gave him. An' the necktie. That was the best necktie I could buy, haw-w-w!"

But Phineas' mirth was short-lived. Several bruises on his anatomy reminded him that he had met *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz not many hours before. He could already hear his fellow buzzards adding insult

to injury, and he could hear the Old Man grinding his teeth as he wrote another Spad off the list of Ninth Pursuit winged battleships of the sky.

“There must be some way to get that Kraut bum,” Phineas mused. “I guess he’s the toughest I ever met. He can do anythin’ in a Heinie air circus but walk a tight rope from one crate to another when they are ten thousand feet up. He’s a better shot than Annie Oakley, an’—well, the bum can do anythin’, even screech like an owl. But a Pinkham never gives up. It is brains they use an’ not brawn. Look out, you wienie eater, as it is a Pinkham who has been pushed too far!”

MAJOR RUFUS GARRITY walked the floor of the Operations office waiting for word from Phineas. The infantry outfit had reported him as sound-on-the-hoof as could be expected when he had left their midst.

“Deserter, ha-a-ah?” rumbled Garrity, coming out into the big room of the Frog farmhouse he used as headquarters.

Captain Howell hoped so. He wanted the pleasure of seeing Phineas Pinkham shot. His eyebrows were burned off and the end of his nose was done to a turn.

“Gunpowder in that tobacco, huh? It was criminal assault! I will prefer charges against—I—er—aw-w-wk!” While Bump Gillis watched, Captain Howell got blue in the face. He was slowly strangling to death before the Scot’s eyes even though there were no hands anywhere near his throat.

Now the captain was hauling and yanking at the new black silk tie Phineas had also given him for his birthday. “Ha-a-alp—glub—ugh—up! Aw-w-w-wk! G-gur—gle—aw-w-w-wp!”

“Don’t just stand there, Gillis!” the Old Man roared. “Do somethin’! Rip that necktie from his throat!”

“You don’t look any brisker to me than an iron elk on a lawn yourself,” Bump retorted as he fumbled in his pocket for a knife.

“Don’t speak to me in such impertinent fashion, Gillis,” Garrity stormed. “I’ll bust you wide open, you—”

“A guy is dyin’ an’ you talk of discipline,” Bump sniffed. Then he managed to cut the black tie loose from Howell’s throat without taking a piece of jugular vein with it.

“G-git that b-box th-that tie come in,” the Captain gasped when his windpipe was open for business once more. “Wh-where is it?”

Glad Tidings Goomer picked it up, brought it to the Flight Leader. On the cover was printed:

MERLIN NOVELTY COMPANY

Bluebeard’s cravat. A self-shrinking tie that needs only perspiration to perform its amazing magical feat. Only thirty-five cents. Ten cents extra in Canada.

“I-I’ll kill him,” Howell roared. “S-s’posin’ nobody had been around. I’d be a corpse. I want him arrested the moment—”

“Let The Owl get him,” Bump suggested. “It’s only a question of time. Don’t have no murder on your conscience, as the bum ain’t worth it! Maybe he is even dead now, I hope. And wouldn’t that be swell news!”

The Old Man staggered back into his sanctum just in time to get another diatribe over the wires from Wing Headquarters. Chaumont wanted something done about von Heinz. The Major swore, told a colonel to drop poisoned mice back of the lines as that was what owls ate, and offered other potent suggestions. “Get some prairie dogs, too,” he howled. “They’re to owls what caviar is to a Russian!”

A brass hat arrived at the drome twenty minutes later to insult and threaten the C.O. right to his face. He wanted to know when the A.E.F. engineers were going to get a road built so that troops could be moved up without being washed out every time they shook a foot. The brass hat, incidentally, was a man whom Major Garrity had never felt like taking to his bosom. He was a pompous, swivel-chair jockey with a waistline that reminded nobody of Vernon Castle.

“They made you a brass hat, Gilpey,” Garrity roared, “because they figured you could think of things like that. All they do in Chaumont is ask what to do. If we knew, we would be sittin’ at a desk pushin’ buttons. You think of the way to knock off von Heinz!”

“You are insubordinate, Garrity!” Gilpey blustered. “I’d have a care what I said if I were you.”

“Go ahead, sue me!” erupted the Old Man.

The brass hat poked an index finger into the bowl of an old dudeen. Then he reached into his pocket for tobacco, suddenly got huffy, and kicked a chair over. “Dammit! Forgot my—oh, I see you have some tobacco, Major. Mind if I—?”

“Help yourself,” Garrity grunted without thinking.

Gilpey filled his pipe, tamped down the wad of tobacco, and lighted it. *SW-W-WISH!* He back-pedaled like a hard-pressed Limey prize fighter, his hands pawing at the ozone. One side of his mustache was smoldering and one eyebrow was completely obliterated.

“Uh—er—you got that—that tobacco that Pinkham

—Oh-h-h! That was evidence I was keepin' to put that crackpot in a sling, Gilpey," the Major gulped. "It's not mine. I—"

"You'll sweat for this, Garrity," Gilpey bellowed. "Criminal assault! That's what it is—criminal assault!"

MEANWHILE, over in Bar-le-Duc, Phineas, who had whiled away most of the day, was getting quite a boot out of a Frog who had set up a telescope in front of the Cafe of the Pink Horse. The Frog had a sign hanging from the sky prober which invited passers to see Venus for "*quarante centimes*."

"Monsewer," said Phineas, ambling up, "will she look like her pictures, huh? You should get arrested, as such a display is endangerin' the morals of the A.E.F. Haw-w-w-w! Carranty centees? *Ici*, monsewer, I will get me an eyeful." Thereupon the pilot from the west squinted through the telescope and his big ears twitched a little. "Boys! It sure brings 'em up close, don't it? I don't see no dame, though. Where is she—in the big dipper, monsewer?"

"*Cochon!*" snorted the Frenchman. "She ees ze planet, *comprenez*? Bah! Nozzeeng *vous comprenez* of ze astronomee. *Ici* ees ze book I have sell eet for nozzeeng almos'. Lieutenant, to you. Eet tell all ze planet an' ever't'eeng, *oui*."

Figuring that there might be something in the "music of the spheres," the Yank dropped a couple of coins into the Frog's hand and walked away with the book. Then in the light shining from the doorway of an *estaminet* he flipped the pages curiously. "Quite a volume!" he soliloquized. It told all about the stars and the rise and fall of tides. Moreover, it went on to enlighten the ignorant citizenry who bought it regarding such celestial phenomena as the eccentricities of the moon and sun. It even foretold the end of the world.

Indeed, Lieutenant Pinkham got so interested in it that he went into an *estaminet*, found a place to rest his empennage, and became a bookworm for almost two hours. And then it was that three M.P.'s walked in, found him there, and advised him that he was under arrest.

"Huh?" the freckled pilot gulped, looking up at the military club-swingers. "It was not me that killed cock robin," he cracked. "I did not even know Kitchener was on board that battleship. You can't prove I got Napoleon out of Elba. It's a lie! I will see Robespierre as I am not an aristocrat!"

"Balmy, Mike," opined one of the M.P.'s. "Uh—er—

awright, Lieutenant, we won't harm ya none. It's only that we want to take ya home where you can git looked after. Awright, don't git scairt as—cripes, no wonder he is A.W.O.L., Mike! That crack-up—"

"Awright, I'll go," Phineas consented blandly. "But you got to let me ride the white horse. *En avant! Vive la France!*"

Anyhow, in less than an hour Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham was back in the Ninth Pursuit Operations Shack standing in front of Commanding Officer Major Rufus Garrity, who now eyed the miscreant with a baleful gleam in his optics while he fingered a spanner wrench longingly. What's more, Captain Howell was waiting just outside the door with a chair leg clutched in his fist.

"The erackup knocked you goofy, huh?" the Old Man ripped out. "But you headed straight for Bar-le-Duc like a homing pigeon, and then they find you sittin' in a bar room reading astronomy! Listen, Pinkham, you mushhead! Now that you've recovered, do you remember giving Howell two nice birthday presents? For instance, that tobacco! I had it here for evidence and a brass hat came in and filled his pipe with it. He's going to wash me up for assaulting a superior officer! How d'you like that?"

"Haw-w-w-w! I like it fine—er—what'd you say?" the unfaltering alibi artist stammered.

Major Garrity grabbed up the wrench, but the Recording Officer saved him from a murder indictment. Then the R.O. yelled for Lieutenant Pinkham to run, as how long did the crackpot think he could hold the Old Man?

So Phineas went through the door fast—so fast that Howell missed when he lunged forward to paste the Iowan in the skull with the chair leg. Thereupon, Bump Gillis threw every phonograph record that the squadron owned at the Boonetown trickster—and missed him with all of them. But he didn't miss Sergeant Casey, who got three teeth loosened by one that ricocheted against his chops. That particular musical disk was labeled *The Yanks are Coming*.

When Phineas finally reached the safety of his hut and barricaded the door on the inside, he was sure he could already hear the creak of wheelbarrows and the click of spades against loose rock in Blois.

But a wide grin bisected his homely countenance as he sat down to get a little more education on the solar system. For one paragraph in his astronomical book particularly intrigued him. Quickly he lounged down upon his cot with his knees drawn up under his

chin and devoured the print with intent blue eyes. Yes, a possible way to throw a monkey wrench into The Owl's solo system had at last dawned on him!

OVER on the Jerry side, *Herr Hauptmann* Adolph August von Heinz was just beginning to arouse himself for his night's work. The sun had gone down, and he emerged from his hut like a predatory bird, blinking his greenish eyes and squinting up into the gathering gloom. A field mouse saw him, squeaked, and sprinted for its underground hangar.

Von Heinz looked up into the branches of a tree and chuckled. Two green eyes were peering down at him.

"*Wie Gehts, mein Freund,*" he guttured. "Always *du bist ein sign uf gut luck, ja. Ach, du bist maybe der ghost uf mein grosser Fadder, ja. Der trap I half set idt vunce und maybe tomorrow idt giffs two nize fat mouses fur you, mein Freund mit feathers. Ha! Blacker yet gets idt der night by der minute und vork ist vhat shouldt be did, ja.*"

Heinie ackemmas got the shivers when von Heinz waddled out of the shadows of a hangar. "*Mach Schnell, Dumkopfs!*" he grunted. "*Der Owl vants he shouldt fly yedt, ja. I dig mein claws by das Pingham's geneck und poosh him oop right oudt uf der Spadt.*"

"*Ja wohl,*" a Heinie grease monkey said hurriedly. "*Der Albatros ist in drei minutes ready. Ach, der geese bimples he giffs by me yedt. Donnervetter!*"

AT MESS that night Phineas Pinkham simply acted as if he had done nothing at all in the way of upsetting the Ninth's apple wagon. As usual the crackbrained pilot made himself the life of the party and even kept a straight face when Major Rufus Garrity, a greenish tint to his chops, pulled a currant-studded roll apart

and then yelled for Glad Tidings Goomer. The mess monkey rushed over, stiffened in front of the C.O.

"These ain't currants, Goomer! They're *f-flies!* An' I ate three of 'em, y-you—"

"Wha-a-a-a?" Bump Gillis choked out, a well-bitten roll in his hand. "Ugh—er—aw-w-wk, excuse me, sir, as I—"

"I don't see how they got in there," Goomer gulped. "That box of currants was awright las' week. But now that you mention it, I figure I had more than I oughta have had left after that las' batch, an'—" Glad Tidings scratched his head, turned his woebegone face toward Phineas.

"Now don't look at me!" Phineas yelled. "Always blamin' me, huh? If you'd put fly paper in that kitchen, Goomer, maybe them—flies wouldn't git—haw-w-w-w-w! Boys, they do look like currants, all curled up like that, don't they?"

"Pinkham!" Garrity thundered. "How many did you eat?"

"Five," the suspected one sniffed. "Tie that one!"

"He did, too," Bump Gillis had to admit. "I saw him."

"There! Ya-a-a-ah!" Phineas said with triumph, kicking a paper bag under the table with

his foot. "It is one time I prove my innocence."

"Not to me, you haven't," Garrity snorted. "If—if I ever—prove what I'm thinkin', you lop eared half-wit, I—er—pardon, gentlemen, I must get to the medico."

"Me, too," Howell chimed in. "Quick!"

"Haw-w-w-w!" Phineas mocked them. "All on account of a few flies! Why, they shouldn't hurt nobody. You're a bunch of sissies." And he, too, traipsed out.

Since mess had been late that night, it was already 10 p.m., so Phineas decided it was time to get moving. He grabbed a motorcycle and wheeled out of the drome, and the Old Man started court martial proceedings before the noise of the mechanical bug



had died in his eardrums. Major Garrity then went over to the Equipment Officer and unloaded some verbal pyrotechnics that burned the man's scalp.

"But he said he had to get some medicine for you, Sir," the E.O. protested. "He said it was urgent and that I better not cause him to lose a second or I'd be a murderer. An' another thing, sir. He's nuts! He says to me: 'Watts, if there's a war goin' on, nobody would find time to bat an eye if there was a rumor that an island in the Pacific disappeared, would they?' I says 'No.' And then he asks me don't I think maybe a lot of big things have happened while we was fightin' a war and that both the Krauts and the Allies didn't even give 'em a second thought because they was too busy tryin' to lick each other. I says 'yes' an' he says—"

"You're nuts, too," Garrity cracked, then clamped his hands to his mid-section and groaned. "Cr-r-ipes, that medicine is worse than the flies. I bet that medico give me insecticide by mistake. Nobody does anythin' right around here. Nobody takes orders an' everybody's nuts. I hope I am busted before Saturday night!"

SKULLDUGGERY was abroad in Bar-Ie-Duc that night, and it was not riding on a snail's spine. Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham stood in a square in the Frog town taking a peep at the moon through a telescope. He was not studying the markings of the celestial body, however. He was scheming, contemplating his chances of committing grand larceny and getting away with it. And strange as it seemed, it was *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz who showed him the way. The Owl came over the Frog town and dropped deviled eggs down on Bar-le-Duc, whereupon the population scattered for cellars. And the old Frog with the telescope reached one ahead of everybody else.

CRASH! BINGITY BA-A-ANG! BLA-A-AM!

"Boys," Phineas grinned as he wriggled underneath a Yankee truck, "for once, seein' you makes me happy, you Kraut bum!"

Herr Hauptmann von Heinz, his raid over, swung back to his drome to load up with some more hell capsules. And with their nerves singing an anvil chorus, the citizens of Bar-le-Duc crawled out of their hiding places. But the old astronomical Frog did not make his appearance, so Phineas went in search of him. He found him in a corner of a cellar half hidden by big chunks of plaster.

"*Voila, m'sieus*. A new comet I have see her," the Frenehie was jabbering. "*Aussi un nouveau set of etoiles*. *Oui!* Out! *Sacre bleu!* I see ze beeg deeper *avec*

tres handles. *Regardez, m'sieus*. She ees only *quarante centimes*. Ze new comet deescovair' by *m'sieu Jules LaFonde*. Ze deescovairee of ze ages."

"Battier than a loon," Phineas chuckled as he got down to business. And then for another hour the populace of Bar-le-Duc observed *m'sieu Jules LaFonde* taking in *beaucoup centimes* from those celestially inclined. Then when the sky got a little overcast they saw him close up his business and go over to where a horse and wagon were hitched together in front of a darkened Frog shop. Here they saw him load his telescope into the wagon, heard him bade *bon soir*, and watched him roll slowly out of Bar-le-Duc.

It was during the ensuing forty-eight hours, that the portion of the Western Front lying between those two big wood lots, the Vosges and the Argonne, was in no end of a dither. *Hauptmann* von Heinz, the fly-by-night in the Entente ointment, the cocklebur in the Allied rompers, was beginning to make himself disliked more and more every time the calendar shed a leaf. The Owl had dropped bombs all over the place. He sprayed Yanks in their billets with Spandau lead and near Nancy blew the tires of a big boiler carrying a general of note. In fact, he shot the pipe right out of the big boy's teeth. Chaumont was indignant.

And so was a French taxpayer named Jules LaFonde—who accused a certain Yankee flyer of stealing his business right from under him.

Nor was Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham feeling any too good when Major Garrity dragged him onto the carpet a couple of days later. The Boonetown whiz had just come back from a stint over the Heinie excavations where he had been kicked around by a pair of sky-going Boches until he felt like a big ball of air wrapped up in pigskin. To make things worse, three overpowering M.P.'s were on the drome waiting around expectantly while Phineas was in before the cantankerous Major trying to fight off the rap.

"Huh!" the Boonetown bamboozler snorted indignantly when Garrity hurled the charges at him. "Oh, I have been a sleight of hand artist at times, but I ain't smart enough to make a horse an' wagon and a big telescope disappear. Are you sure the Eiffel Tower ain't missing, too? Search me! Look under my bed if you think I am hidin' a horse an' wagon. Haw-w-w-w, it does not make sense!"

"You come clean, Pinkham!" roared the Major.

"I will try to," Phineas retorted, "but I ain't had no bath for almost a week. There's somethin' wrong with the hot water supply."

“Not the barrel of it you’ve got into,” Garrity hollered. “I’ll give you just twenty-four hours to tell me where you took that horse an’ buggy or—”

“Awright,” Phineas sighed, “I will need that much time. But right now I am workin’ on somethin’ more important. Like the C.O. tells me, I bet if Java blew up and went right off the map, we would not know it until after the guerre, as nobody here thinks of anythin’ but to cut each other a piece of throat, huh?”

“S-sure,” Garrity grunted confusedly, “I g-guess so. Uh—say, what d’you keep asking everybody that for, huh? I’ve got a good mind to have your dome examined. Get out of here, and if you know where that Frog wagon and horse is at, you go and get them, you rattle brain.”

“In two days I bet the Allies will have a directors’ meeting to shake my hand, haw-w-w-w! It is Blois you think I am going to, huh? Well, I bet it will be to Parea in Pershin’s limousine. Adoo!”

“He’s up to something,” Garrity ground out, biting his mustache. “That crackpot!”

“Huh,” Phineas grunted loftily a moment later when he passed the M.P.’s, “it is a waste of time for you bums to be here. You might as well go back to the A.E.F. station house an’ take up your knittin’.” Thereupon, he ducked into his Nisson hut, locked the door, and picked up his astronomy book, the title of which he read as “Comprenny voter eet-walls”—*Get Acquainted With Your Celestial Neighbors*.

Phineas quickly turned to a marked page and again read a paragraph that he had already studied a dozen times before. Then he looked up at his hut calendar and grinned as he noted the date—June 6, 1918.

“Well, you Kraut mouse hunter,” he said aloud, “in two days somethin’ may happen. If you had not knocked me down, I would not have met a sniper and would not have thought of what I’ve thought of! Haw-w-w-w! I am thinkin’ of the hill billy named Mahomet who had to go to the mountain because it would not come to him. But a Pinkham—”

THE following night, The Owl came over and blazed particular hades out of Major Rufus Garrity’s drome. What’s more, he almost washed out three brass hats who had come down from Chaumont to investigate the purported mismanagement of the Ninth and to check up on charges of grand larceny against Phineas Pinkham. Indeed, the Boonetown marvel only escaped von Heinz’s wrath by a whisker, for a tracer bullet passed by his proboscis so close that

he tasted sulphur for the next five hours.

After the raid he hopped to headquarters. “I wish to volunteer to get von Heinz, as he will be out again tonight, sir,” he said, saluting smartly, which was unusual for him.

“Beat it!” Garrity roared.

“Look here, Major,” a brigadier interposed testily, “it looks as if what Gilpey said about you is true. Here a man offers to risk his life to tender the Allies a service and you discourage him. Pinkham, step over here!” “Yessir!”

The Old Man groaned, pawed at his face, began to pull out his hair. Then he jumped up and yelled: “All right, Pinkham, get into a Spad—and to hell with you!”

“Your every wish is a command to me, Major,” the intrepid Yank countered, saluting smartly again which further aggravated the C.O. “I would die for dear old G.H.Q. Adoo!”

It was a break for Lieutenant Pinkham. He hopped off fifteen minutes later, flew just beyond Bar-le-Duc, and landed in a sheep pasture. In the cellar of an old demolished barn a horse was hitched, and it was contentedly munching hay when the miracle man from Iowa arrived. There was a wagon hidden in the woods back of the barn. The errant Yank had oodles of time and did not have to hurry the job in mind. The telescope, which he had taken apart and stored in a broken down cow stall, now demanded his undivided attention until midnight.

TIME skidded away. Over on the Heinie side of the fence. *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz called it a night at the crack of dawn and ducked for the shelter of his hut. The Owl pulled a big square of canvas down over his one tiny window, stripped to his union suit, and hopped into bed to sleep away the hours of sunshine.

More time passed; then still some more.

Anyhow, hours later The Owl awoke with a start, and his big greenish eyes blinked. It was very dark inside his boudoir. He hopped out of bed, shook himself like a big bird that has been rained on.

“*Ach Himmel! Der Dumkopfs* ledt me sleep *und der* night idt cooms already. *Donnervetter, das ist der* time I shouldt go oop *und* haff idt *der* sport.”

Quickly *Hauptmann* Adolph August von Heinz got into flying leather and barged out of his hut. The sky was dark and a few lights blinked over across the field where the rest of the Kaiser’s buzzards hived up. The Owl spotted his Albatros in front of a hangar and the

prop was idling. There were three other sky buggies not far away from it and two of the Mercedes power plants were being revved by Boche grease monkeys. Their crazy yowling drowned out all other sounds.

Suddenly a Kraut spotted von Heinz getting into his crate, and he let out an oral blast. But The Owl heard nothing but the roar of props. All he knew or cared about was that it was time to fly, that the sun was gone and the stars were out. He licked his chops, jammed the throttle home, and got away from the drome without noticing that half of the Jerry Staffel was chasing across the drome to stop him.

Yes, The Owl was in the sky and on the prowl, his hooked proboscis already sniffing for prey in the person of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham. He was going to make another try at skewering the Boonetown upstart. He'd plug him right through his Nisson hut as he lay in bed. What sport!

NOW let us take a ride on the Pinkham chariot. Garrity's buzzard was ready to take the air at any moment. Directly between his twin Vickers, a telescope had been fitted, and Phineas sat waiting with his Hisso purring and one eye squinting through the space defier. A tree top which was really a mile away seemed to jump right at him when he focussed on it. He could count the heads of three baby birds in a nest.

"Haw-w-w-w!" he guffawed. "Maybe I never was Annie Oakley's twin brother with a Vickers, but if a sniper can bring a Kraut to him with a little telescope, I can bring von Heinz up close with this high-powered baby. It surprises me sometimes when I think how smart the Pinkhams—er—if he is comin', it ought to be about time, haw-w-w-w! Well, the star gazers had it right. It is as dark as—there's the bum!"

Herr Hauptmann von Heinz, apparently confident that no other crate would be abroad in the dark sky, looked neither to the right nor the left as he pushed his Alb toward the Ninth Pursuit. En route, he skimmed over Pinkham's private air field, but he did not see the telescope-bearing Spad slide across terra firma.

The Owl went over Bar-le-Duc, swooped down on Garrity's layout, and gave it the well-known works! And when his guns were almost empty, he swung around and headed back toward home.

He was over Vaubecourt when he saw the Spad blocking his right of way.

"*Donner und Blitzen!*" the Kraut yelled. "*Das* Pingham! Ho! Ho! Only *der* few bullets I haff, budt *das* ist enuf."

It was at that moment that the *Hauptmann* let loose a loud "*Was ist?*" For a fearful ring of light in the sky above had suddenly attracted his attention. And as he stared at it, he grew as frantic as a nymph wrapped in poison ivy. His eyes watered under his goggles.

But even so, *Hauptmann* von Heinz had to stop ogling—for Phineas Pinkham has pointed his Spad, squinted through his telescope, and triggered his Vickers in 1-2-3 fashion. And The Owl now jumped as lead began eating into his Alb.

Through the Pinkham telescope, von Heinz' crate seemed not two feet away, so the Boonetown miracle worker pulled up his nose in a hurry to avoid what he thought would be a certain wash-out. Then he laughed when he took his right glimmer from the eye-piece of the 'scope and saw that the Kraut was still almost half a mile away.

"Boys, that scairt me for a min—" Phineas cracked. Then he again leveled his Spad, got a dead bead on The Owl, and opened up with his hemstitching again. The Kraut ship did a sort of curtsy, spun on its tail like a penguin with the hot foot, then righted itself and pointed toward Germany.

Hauptmann von Heinz was shaking all over. He was one big itch from his scalp to his toe nails. That strange light in the sky did not come from the moon! "*Himmel! Ach Gott!* Vunce I am told—vunce I hear of *der—Donnervetter!*" The Owl squirmed in his pit, tried to see through goggles opaque with perspiration. He took his hands away from the stick to scratch himself, and the Alb, raked by Vickers lead, threw another fit.

"Haw-w-w-w!" laughed Phineas Pinkham. "How could I miss the bum? Boys, he looks like he was glued to my prop. Oof Vidderson, you fathead! Take that, an' that, an'—"

The Kraut wondered if he had flown off his course and had got over Denmark. Nothing could have turned out so rotten anywhere else. Wires had snapped loose, a strut went wacky, and the Alb was handling about as smoothly as a concrete mixer. The Pinkham tracers had even set the dope on the Alb's wings to stewing and the smell of it crept up through The Owl's sniffing pipes. There was no fight left in the night watchman from the Black Forest, he was ready to hock the Kaiser for the price of a limberger sandwich.

"*Donner und Blitzen! Ach du Lieber!*" he groaned as Phineas kept scoring direct hits to punctuate each hoot of The Owl. "Dreamink I ben, *ja!* I vake oop *und—Himmel! Besser* I pinch meinsel *und—Gott, der* hifes I itch *mit! Der* sun cooms where vas it *der* moon *und—*"

Nevertheless, *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz got over the lines, went down in a hurry flying from memory, and cracked up in front of the Boche trenches near Thiaucourt. Boche Red Cross workers finally dragged him out of the mud and dumped him into an ambulance. And when he opened his peepers, The Owl let out a bloodcurdling yell and threw off the covers.

"Where *ist* you ben goink, *hein?*" somebody barked at him as he crawled out of bed.

"By *der* zellar or vhere *ist der* darkness. *Der* sun—*Himmel!* Already yet I vill scratch meinsel for *drei* veeks maybe. *Das* Pingham he *ist der* deffil. Night idt *ist und* still nodt night. *Gott!* *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz I am—*der* Owl—"

"*Himmel!* *Der* Owl he *ist!*" yelped an attendant.

"*Ja!* *Das ist der* eglipse uf *der* sun, *Herr Hauptmann.* *Und* niebody tells you, *nein?*"

Even though he had two cracked ribs, a knot on his head that made it look like a big misshapen quince, and a bad case of the hives, The Owl thought of nothing at the moment but to get where it was dark.

"*Ach, das* Pingham!" he wailed. "*Was einen* sharpshooder *ist* he! Me he hidts efery time he fires *der* Wickers yedt. Oudt uf *der* vay! *Himmel!*"

PHINEAS PINKHAM approached the drome of the Ninth when the eclipse was about over. Major Rufus Garrity, some brass hats, and the entire personnel of the outfit were out on the tarmac to watch the Spad come in.

The resourceful pilot took an inventory of the drome as he eased his plane down. Part of a hangar was as charred as a bride's first biscuits. His hut, even from a distance, looked like a nutmeg grater standing on end. The windows of the Frog bungalow which housed Operations likewise betrayed evidence of von Heinz's visit, and Phineas saw Sergeant Casey limping across the field like a Civil War vet.

"Haw-w-w-w! The bum forgot to duck. I hope that Kraut give some brass hats their first stroke." Phineas then swung his taxiing Spad toward Casey and scared the ackemma out of ten years of life. The flight sergeant flattened, swore, and pulled a wrench from his pocket. He got up and threw it, whereupon a brass hat who was in the way let out a pain whoop and grabbed up a shin to see if it needed splints.

"Arrest that man, Garrity! For deliberate assault and intent to—"

"One thing at a time!" the Old Man groaned. "One thing at a time! We just saw one miracle today and I

bet you'll hear about another when that freckle-faced baboo—*lo-o-o-o-ok ou-u-u-t!*"

"He's got three guns on that crate," Bump Gillis hollered. "How in—?"

"Gun?" Garrity bellowed when the Spad finally stayed put. "That's a telescope, you nitwit. That robbed Frog—oh, that crackpot! I'll get him for this. He'll go to Leavensworth and then Atlanta. I'll—"

"Evenin', bums," Phineas chirped. "What a night—er—day, huh? Haw-w-w-w-w! It worked. The Owl thought it was night and come upstairs because he doesn't read astronomy. He ain't educated like the Pinkhams. I knew the eclipse was cornin' upon this eighth day of June in the year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Eighteen. But everybody else around here forgot, an'—awright, I stole the telescope. I mean I borrowed it. It ain't damaged. I says if snipers can bring targets up to 'em with one of them things, a Spad could bring a Heinie crate up close so's a guy couldn't ever miss when—Haw-w-w-w-w! You won't see that bum around for awhile, if ever. I met him on his way back. How long does it take to get over a fractured skull and two busted legs, huh? Awright, arrest me. But no jury will convict me."

"Y-you figured that out, Pinkham?" a brass hat roared. "Why—why, Major, this man is a—a—"

"Let me tell you," Garrity interrupted, "that is if you're not a church elder. I've been thinkin' up things to call him ever since he first set foot on this—"

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" erupted the culprit-hero. "Sticks an' stones may break my bones but names'll never—"

"You're a wonder," a brigadier then said to Phineas. "I'll see that you get a medal for this!"

"Aw, don't bother," the scion of the Iowa Pinkhams flung back over his shoulder as he headed for the farmhouse. "I can get all I want for a franc or two. It is only my duty I am paid to do. He-e-ey, Goomer, what's for mess today, huh?"

"The fresh jackanapes!" sniffed the brigadier.

"You have no idea," Major Garrity grinned. "He eclipses anything I ever saw, sir. If I was a Limey, I'd call him an 'owlin' success, huh?"

Even the brass hat laughed at that one.