



KRAUT FISHING

written and illustrated by **JOE ARCHIBALD**

a
**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl

Neither of the international shooting parties encamped in that noxious neighborhood bordering Bar-le-Duc was in a sugary mood. To the Teuton tracer-tossers, the capture of their sinister Spandau-ist, Hauptmann von Heinz, had proved a decided pain-in-the-neck. Likewise, von Schmierwurst's gory Grim Reapers had become a pain-in-the-neck to the Democrats. And Phineas? You guessed it! He was a pain-in-the-neck to everybody.

NOT LONG AFTER Lieutenant Phineas "Carbuncle" Pinkham had knocked off Herr Hauptmann Adolph August von Heinz—the Owl of the Ozone, whose nocturnal marauding had been driving the Chaumont brain trust to drunkards' graves—the Allies had a meeting. And the motion was moved and seconded that a medal be struck off for the hero from Boonetown, Iowa.

But two hours after the order was okayed by the Democratic board of directors, Major Rufus Garrity, boss of the turbulent Ninth Pursuit Squadron, wished that Phineas had let the Heinie alone. For irked no end by the news that von Heinz had been shellacked for a row of ammo dumps by Lieutenant Pinkham, a certain Boche bombing outfit hopped into their egg crates close to dawn of the day following the *descendu* of their Kraut hero who doted on darkness.

The Gothas arrived over Bar-le-Duc to find most of the personnel of Garrity's outfit already wide awake and prepared to jump out of their individual skivvies if anyone so much as said "Shush" to them. Phineas and his hutmate, Bump Gillis, sat up in their respective beds and gnawed their knuckles. Garrity paced the floor of his quarters chewing up the rubber stem of a briar pipe. Over in the groundmen's barracks, Sergeant Casey took two mighty snorts out of a half-filled bottle of *vin rouge* and, while waiting for it to drive away some of his jitters, stuffed oily waste into his ears.

They were all awake because from all parts of the dark landscape hemming in the Ninth came the mournful, indignant hooting of owls. Baleful green orbs pocked the darkened foliage of the trees surrounding the Spad playground. The nocturnal feathered creatures of the genus *strigidae* had apparently come to keep their human affinity, *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz, company while the Yanks kept him locked up in their basement hoosegow. The captured Kraut, according to reports emanating from his native heath, the Black Forest, had been brought by an owl instead of a stork. Sunshine was poison to him and he never prowled until long after the sun had set.

"'Tain't natural," Bump Gillis wailed. "We never had no owls around here before. I git the creeps."

"Well, it ain't dice you hear rattling over here, Bump," Phineas sniffed. "I have chattered all the enamel off my tusks. I wish that Heinie bum was already in the Allied klink. I would not be surprised if the owls attacked us. I can hear 'em comin' now. Git a club, Bump! Pick up anything! Listen to that whirr of—"

The alarm sounded. A siren shrieked and a searchlight stabbed at the ozone. A machine gun began to pop just as Bump and Phineas barged out of their Nissan and headed for the bombproof dugouts.

HO-O-O-O-OR-R-R-R-RO-O-OOM!

"If those are owls I see upstairs," Phineas yipped, "I am goin' to drink no more coneyae."

"Run, you dopes!" Garrity yelped before the first bomb hit.

"W-what d-d-do you think we're d-doin'?" the Major's pet peeve tossed back at him. "Posin' for animal crackers? Git out of my way, everybody. Oh-h, them Krauts! And look! It's the Gothas with the scythes painted on 'em! The Grim Reaper Squadron. Look!"

"Oh, you crackpot! That is—wh-what we git for what you—d-did, you f-f-fathead," Captain Howell

gulped as he dived headlong into an underground shelter. "They—are s-sure s-sore at us. That is the most hell-raisin' bombin' outfit in Germany. Git your foot out of my mouth, Carbuncle, or—"

BLA-A-A-A-AM! BLO-O-O-OEY!

"We sleep like Indians from now on," Phineas chortled. "Haw! Haw! Wouldn't it be funny if they tagged the farmhouse an' blew up the Owl, huh?"

"An' all my clothes an' things," Major Rufus Garrity snapped. "You would laugh if you were caught in the middle of a forest fire wearing a celluloid suit. Shut up, you sap!"

BLA-A-A-AM! BLAMMITY-BLAM!

OVER in the cellar of the Frog farmhouse that was headquarters for the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz sat all hunched up, his greenish eyes gleaming and his hooked nose twitching. "*Ach, das ist gut!* Shoodt idt down *der* Owl, *hein?* *Verdammt* Yangkee *Schwein!* Ho! Ho! By *der* zound, *das* bombers ist none odder but *der* great von Schmierwurst *und* his 'staffel. *Himmel, das ist* close by me vunce. *Don-nervetter!*"

The Owl got up on a packing case and looked out of the cellar window. He saw a pair of, green eyes peering through the lower branches of a nearby tree. *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz shook his august head. "*Nein, das ist* nodt Bismarck¹ yedt—budt I bedt he cooms by me soon, *ja!*"

"*Ach, he vill miss me und coom by me, ja.*"

"Anyway we can't hear them owls no more," came Bump Gillis' voice across the drome. "I don't know what is worse, Gothas or owls!"

"I don't see why hoots should bother you, Bump,"

Phineas countered. "You are a Scotch bum! Hoot mon! Haw-w-w-w-w!"

Major Garrity banged Phineas in the nose with his elbow.

The Boonetown flyer became very indignant and got something out of his pocket after a struggle. He crushed it under his big right mauler and soon a terrible odor seized hold, of the dugout.

"Lemme out of here!" Garrity yelled. "They're dropping gas bombs! Run, men! Cr-r-r-r-ipes!"

In just three minutes Phineas had the place to himself. "Haw-w-w!" he enthused, "it was worth twenty-five cents for them little smell bombs!"

¹ Bismarck was the owl that hibernated close to *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz's hut far back of the Kraut lines.

THE Gothas were on their way home when Phineas Pinkham finally crawled out of the dugout and sniffed at the night air. The smell of cordite bit into his proboscis, traveled right up into his sinus canals. A hangar was on fire and the Ninth Pursuit tarmac looked like a slice of Swiss cheese. Captain Howell and a few pilots were lifting the wing of a Spad off the Old Man. Bump Gillis was sitting three feet away talking like a mental case: "Awright, awright, I was cornin' out of a side street an' this bum hit me with the coal truck. Oh yeah? Who passed a stop sign? I'll git me a lawyer. Where's a telephone? I will sue the coal company an'—"

Phineas went over and slapped Bump in the chops until the mist had cleared out of his lamps. Then Phineas had to start running again because Major Garrity was chasing him with a spanner wrench.

"Drove us out of the dugout, huh?" erupted the Old Man. "Put us out wh-where—the K-krauts could wash us up, you—you freckle-faced, flap-eared baboon's son-in-law! If I catch you, I'll part your hair right down through the middle as far as your tonsils!"

The fleeing culprit made for a tree, but an owl leaped at him and sunk its landing gear right into the Pinkham thatch. Yelling bloody murder, the Boonetown joke-smith changed his course, the owl still in the saddle. And Phineas didn't get the bird loose until he plunged head first into a brook and stayed under the water long enough for the owl to decide whether to let go or drown.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! Ho!" laughed *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz. "Noddinks vas neffer zo komical, *nein nein!*" And the Heinie kept on laughing until the packing case wobbled under him and gave way. "Sooch a night! Neffer I forget idt."

Anyhow it was an occasion that the buzzards of the Ninth were not to forget in a hurry. Casey ran his groundhogs all the rest of the night and part of the next day filling up holes so that the Spads could do their daily stints.

Chaumont got the news of the omelet that had been beaten up with those Kraut eggs and they gave orders that the Grim Reaper Squadron be wiped out by Allied winged stock pronto. Brass hats came to see Major Rufus Garrity and requested his assurance that his Spads would be ready to give the D.H.'s plenty of escorting if they were called upon to nurse the said two-seaters over toward the Rhine.

"But just try to find anything on them that looks like an airdrome! There's one thing I do know, though.

That von Heinz is going out of here after sundown. I'm not going to sit up every night listenin' to owls swear at me. If he stays here another night, I bet Dracula will come up an' knock on the door."

"Haw-w-w-w!" guffawed the irrepressible scion of the Pinkhams. "Yeah, that's what I say, too, Major. Either von Heinz goes or I do. Look at my scalp where one of them birds made a three-point landin' on it! It's not safe here with that Boche bum down in the cellar." "Pinkham, sew up that subway-entrance mouth of yours!" bawled the tried C.O. of the outfit.

"Oh, awright," Phineas yelled. "But don't ask me for no advice then. I saw two Albs up there with those Gothas an' I bet they are Heinie bat flyers that go along with von Schmierwurst just in case the Allies have opened a night school to teach us to fly after dark. Now I have got an idea about—"

"I said 'Shut up', you weasel!" Garrity howled. "Get out of here! Beat it!"

PHINEAS sniffed audibly and left. He ambled over to his hut, taking a brief gander at the timepiece on his wrist before he got to his door. He saw that he had twenty minutes before going up to try to knock off a Boche or two. When he reached the Nisson, Bump Gillis got up off his cot and yawned. He pointed to something on the table. "It come for you, Carbuncle. I've already soaked it in water, as I ain't takin' no chances of gettin' blowed up."

"Why, you nickel-nursin' bum," Phineas exploded. "It is a book. I ought to paste you one. I been waitin' a long time for this novel, as I bet it is spicier than one of De Moppasant's. Wait until the boys back in the barber shop in Boonetown get a peek at it. It is about two dames and it cost me three bucks. Flora and Fauna of France it is called. Boy, does it sound nippy, huh?"

Bump shook his head. "Phineas Pinkham," he said, "sometimes I look at you and can't believe it. If bein' dumb was a crime, you would never get out of solitary. Ha! Ha! I can't wait until you read that book. I can't wait!"

The heir to the worldly goods of the Pinkham Clan ignored his grinning hutmate and tore away the wet paper wrappings from the book. Having been soundly wrapped, the water had not seeped through too far.

There was a momentary silence while Phineas opened the book and read about three lines. Then he let out a terrific yowl and banged the book against the wall. "I been gypped! I will sue for my dough. It's only about flowers an'—oh, ya can't trust nobody. I—"

he jumped up and down in high dudgeon until the Nisson hut creaked and swayed.

Howell was passing by the hut. He paused and stuck his head in the door. "Awright, Pinkham, quit tap dancing. We are ready to go upstairs and fight some Boche. You've got just two minutes so put on your coat, you spotted hy—"

Phineas interrupted with a crack to his flight leader that was not nice to say to a superior, whereupon Howell flung open the door and stamped into the Nisson. "Oh, ye-eah? Take off your coat, you—you—"

"Make up your mind, make up your mind!" yipped the trouble brewer. "You wanted me to put my coat on—an' now you say take it off. What'll it be? Haw-w-w-w-w!"

CAPTAIN HOWELL was in a mean mood when he finally got his flight up into the scraposphere. He dived on five Fokkers over Mont Sec and waved his buzzards to come with him. The Heinies got stubborn and put up their dukes. One smacked Phineas in the Hiss, causing the power plant to send up steam like a factory whistle. Bump Gillis nearly got sandwiched between two Tripes like a slice of ham being slapped in between two pieces of rye bread. He slid out just in time—and the two Boche went into a merger that was never to be split up. "A" Flight's leader knocked off one Fokker and sent another one out with a bad case of rickets. Bump chased another one into a cloud and then swung toward the rendezvous over the Meuse where Howell was taking his flyers for the purpose of peppering balloons.

"A slave driver, huh?" Phineas Pinkham snorted. "Well, I am parboiled now from this flyin' calliope an'

I'm gittin' out of here. I am nobody's Trilby." So saying, the Yank drove his sick Spad toward Bar-le-Duc. He fell short of the Frog town by a mile and a half but managed to make a pretty fair catch at the real estate despite the fact that his engine conked and he had to come in dead stick.

After the bullet-ridden ship had stopped quivering, the pilot climbed out and wiped steam from his goggles. The first thing he saw was a bunch of doughs

resting near an ancient barn. Phineas walked over to them and looked inquisitively at the paraphernalia in a light truck nearby.

"Signal Corps, huh?" the Boonetown pilot said, grinning amiably enough. "What're you doin' here?"

"Listenin' for submarines," a shavetail replied. "What did you think we do with telephone wire—knot sweaters?"

"Tsk! Tsk! Where's your manners?" Phineas chided him. He then glanced about and spotted two big trees standing about a hundred yards apart. Back came his eyes to a coil of wire lying at the dough's feet. "Now if you could forget an' leave that wire here," he said significantly to the shavetail, "I would not be surprised if you become richer by ten one-buck bills in U.S. argent, mawn amy."

"Lemme see the dough, you big brave aviator," the looeey growled.

Phineas produced a small roll, tossed it to the officer. The shavetail grunted that he was taking a risk, but he guessed it was worth it. He counted the money, then nodded. Driving away a few minutes later, he grinned at the Boonetown Bam: "What a sucker! I was leavin' that wire there anyway."

Phineas Pinkham just kept on walking toward Bar-



le-Duc, and he was sporting a broad grin likewise. "Yeah," he said to himself, "and I was just gonna throw that counterfeit dough away, too. It shows you should throw nothin' out. Even after a hundred years it might come in handy—as a antique, haw-w-w!" He turned and looked back at the trees which had intrigued him and which had put his mental assembly to work like an army of ants. "It—er—could work," he soliloquized, beaming on the world in general now that he was A.W.O.L. once more. "H-huh, I will fix that tonight. A couple of days practice an'—oh, boy!"

The sable curtain of night dropped down on the stage of the theatre of the big fuss and the sun made its exit without an encore. Behind the curtain the stage director moved the star performer, Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, over near an *estaminet* called *LePoulet Noire*. A big ear was standing in front of the place ready to pull out of town, and Phineas was sure that nothing less than a brigadier would be using such a conveyance. In the shadows he took a piece of bamboo tubing out of his pocket, then put some small barbs in his mouth. He placed one end of the tube against his lips and blew hard. Six times the Iowa funster fired with his bean shooter, then he walked away wondering how long it would take before the barbs wormed their way through the tire fabric to the inner tubes.

"I hope it is on the edge of a cliff or a canal," he chuckled. "Now I'll go see Babette for a few minutes before I go out to do a little job."

The bane of Garrity's existence strolled nonchalantly toward the domicile of Babette. At the door he knocked and chirped: "Yoo hoo, mawn pateet, eet ees your beeg soldat which fly through ze air, *non?*"

"Peeg! It is *trois* weeks an' you don't have *arrivez* to see me," his light of love tossed back through the door at him. "*Allez vite*—or ze bouillon kettle-pot I gieve she on *votre tete, cochon!*"

"Oh, awright," Phineas sniffed, swinging around on his heel, "filberts to voose! There are as *bon* fish in ze ocean as never got caught! Anyway eet ees a busy man I am tonight. I hope you git ants in your cupboard! Adoo!"

Jauntily the spurned lover walked out of Bar-le-Duc thinking of many things. He recalled to mind a certain excursion over the lines with Captain Howell when "A" Flight had been out trying to spot von Schmierwurst's hidden Gotha nest. Near Saarbrücken, with the Spad gas tanks very low, Howell had called it quits for the day. Phineas had thought he observed

something not according to Hoyle around the Kraut industrial center. It seemed very funny to him when, through the powerful telescope he carried in his pit, he spotted a pair of dachshunds sunning themselves near a pile of slag.

"Of course it might be their bone-buryin' yard," he had told himself, but just the same he had not been satisfied.

An hour after leaving Babette's front stoop, Phineas was in the top of a tree mooring one end of a long piece of wire to a branch. The other end was already hitched in place. When one length of wire had been hung, he busied himself stringing another one from tree to tree. It was about twenty feet lower than the other. This task finished, the errant pilot of the U.S. Air Corps made a good landing on Mother Earth and sat down under the tree to rest.

MEANWHILE over on the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron two brass hats, flanked by three tough M.P.'s, loaded *Herr Hauptmann* Adolph August von Heinz, alias The Owl, into a U.S. gas buggy. From all parts of the darkened area came eerie, indignant hoots of his brothers under the feathers. Von Heinz muttered as he got into the boiler: "*Ach, mein Freunds*, they are *mit* me, *ja*. Bismarck I bedt also *ist* here. By *der* bick voice I know him as *das ist* more louder yedt as *der* odders. *Ach, Donnervetter*, sooch *einen nacht* for flyink *mit* vings."

"Get him out of here quick," Garrity barked. "He gives me the creeps. Look at the Boche's eyes and the way his shoulders hunch up when an owl hoots. I bet he would taste like a bird if he was fricasseed."

"He'll be doing a lockstep in three hours, Major," a brass hat promised. "*Bon soir*, Garrity."

The A.E.F. patrol wagon passed through a lonesome spot not far from Savant some time later. There the Argonne Forest started to thicken. So does our plot. Rounding a bend in the rough Frog road, the car lurched drunkenly three times as three tires blew out. At the third "BANG" the A.E.F. bus zigzagged toward a ditch, slid into it, and lay down on its side. And *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz was tossed clear of the conveyance and was up and running before the military cops had picked up their scattered marbles.

A brass hat crawled out of a clump of bushes and spun around on his hands and knees, looking for all the world like a pooch bedding down for the night.

"Haa-alp!" he hollered suddenly. "That Heinie has escaped. After him, men!"

The Owl, however, saw freedom ahead of him where the darkness was the thickest. His short, bowed undercarriage ate up distance rapidly, carried him into the woods before the M.P.'s could get organized. Into the wee small hours of the morning they hunted for Adolph August.

They were still out there disconsolately combing the topography when Phineas Pinkham ankled onto the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron. The inimitable exponent of skullduggery, legerdemain, prestidigitation, and magic, wondered why Major Rufus Garrity and his underling flyers were not in their beds sawing wood.

"Where've you been, huh?" the Old Man bellowed raucously when he caught sight of the prodigal. "While you were A.W.O.L. what do you think has happened, you laughin' lizard?"

"I have not seen the late papers," Phineas replied calmly. "I have got a busted Spad out there and it needs more fixin' than just a dustin' off. What has happened, huh? Did the tomcat have kittens?"

The Major emitted a sound which was a cross between an elephant's trumpeting and a hungry lion's roar. "Von Heinz escaped, you crackpot! The car got wrecked and had three blowouts. If that Kraut gets back to—" He groaned at the thought.

Phineas took off his flying coat, tossed it onto a chair. Something fell out of it and clattered to the floor. It was a long tube made out of bamboo. Garrity hopped on it and retrieved it.

"A blow gun!" he bayed. "Where did you get that—an' what've you been doin' with it is what I'd like to know?" He swung on the other pilots in the room and yelled: "Grab him and hold him! Pinkham, I'm goin' through the pockets of that coat. If he struggles, men, you can shoot him!"

"This is an outrage!" Phineas squawked.

But nobody paid any attention to his complaints. All eyes were on the Major who had found a small cardboard box in one of the pockets of the miscreant's coat. On being opened it disgorged a dozen or so steel barbs about two inches long.

"So!" exploded Garrity. "That boiler was in Bar-le-Duc early last night—and so were you! If we find things like these in the tires of that car, you'll get hung at the very least. Aiding and abetting the escape of *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz! You are a traitor, Lieutenant Pinkham. You are under arrest—restricted to this drome while we file charges."

"It's a lie!" Phineas gulped weakly.

"I been framed. That blow gun—I never saw it before in my—I bet you are going to blame me for sinking that Limey sub last week over in the channel. I bet you think I drowned Kitchener. Here I am forty miles away from where von Heinz—I will not stand for such insults!" Shaking from his hips down, Phineas trotted over to his hut and collapsed on his cot to think things over. "Oh-h-h," he groaned, "I give the Kraut an assist on that play. But how did I know—?" His giblets parched, Phineas lay looking up at the ceiling and contemplated fifteen years in Leavenworth, Kansas.

After awhile the pilot from the great open spaces of Iowa decided to lay misery aside for the nonce. He picked up the book entitled *FLORA AND FAUNA OF FRANCE* and mechanically read a page of print. The knowledge that water hemlock was a species of plant that was poisonous to humans did not interest him to any great extent. The fact that it had a peculiar odor at a certain period in its span of existence likewise was not his concern. So he tossed the book aside and returned to the problem of how to worm his way out of this latest mess he had leaped into.

Bump Gillis came in, a broad grin on his Scotch countenance. "Hello, Benedict Arnold," he said. "You would sell out your grandmother for a mess of pottage. Get out of my way, you cad, as I want to take my trunk out of here."

"Try an' move it!" Phineas dared him. "I nailed it to the floor las' night. Haw-w-w-w!"

FOR the succeeding few days Chaumont would not leave anybody alone. Repeatedly they demanded that von Heinz be captured. They threatened that there would be a worse shakeup in the A.E.F. than there ever was in any earthquake. They not only delivered that ultimatum but requested in no uncertain terms that something be done about von Sehmierwurst's Grim Reaper rowdies.

To be sure, the infantry had tried very hard to snag The Owl in the woods where he had taken sanctuary, but they found that von Heinz, wherever he was holed up, was not alone. War correspondents did not dare to write what an infantry officer told them after the first attempt to get von Heinz. The captain, his tunic looking as if it had been put through a coffee grinder, his face crisscrossed with scratches, related a story that would have been branded as screwy if it had been printed in *The Arabian Nights*.

"I don't go in there any more," the infantry officer

had ripped out. "The place is lousy—filthy—with owls as big as cider barrels. They attacked us—more than a hundred of 'em! They sank their hooks into us and bore down like ice tongs. I bet they've got grindstones in there to sharpen their toenails on. Wha-a-a-t? Listen, how could I be drunk? I ain't seen a bottle since I was in Paree. We went in there with fifty men—an' forty of 'em are ready for straight jackets!"

The members of the Ninth Pursuit did not scoff at the story, however. Phineas Pinkham shivered when Garrity gave out the grim accounts of the first attempt to grab von Heinz. "All the owls left when von Heinz did," Garrity choked out. "They followed him into the woods, I bet. Nobody will ever get him out!"

"They could get snipers," Phineas suggested. "But it'd take a year to knock off all them owls. Why don't they bomb the woods, huh? They'd better before that Kraut sends word to some Alb outfit where he is. Oh, he'd be able to do it! I heard he's got one owl that carries messages just like a pigeon. They've got to bomb—"

"Shut up, you snake-in-the-grass!" the Major yelled. "You got us into this!"

"Awright," Phineas said meekly. "Awright, blame me. But just the same I want to know why they don't bomb him out, huh?"

"Because those woods hide an Allied ammo dump, you halfwit. That's why! Oh, I've gone and done it now. You'll tell the Germans, you low-down traitor!"

"I have heard enough insults," Phineas snapped. "I will not stay here and get insulted any more. Okay, I knocked that Boche bum down but I'll—I'll—well, I don't know yet. I've been thinkin' too much about finding the Gotha nest. But you wait, you fair-weather pals!"

BLA-A-A-A-A-AM! BO-O-O-O-O-ONG!

"What's that?" Bump Gillis exclaimed in a choked voice.

"It's not mice," Major Garrity yipped. "It's those Gothas again—and they're blowin' up something. Ohh-h-h-h-h!"

"Mice," Phineas bit out. "Mice! Ye-e-eah! Haw-w-w-w! Why—er—lemme out of here! Lemme out!"

"Who's holding you?" the C.O. snorted. "But don't you dare try to escape. There are orders here to shoot you on sight if you do."

Phineas ignored him and went to his hut. He snatched up the book on flora and fauna of Frogland and hastily flipped it open to a page he'd read only a short time before. He got down to business, studied a

paragraph that had not seemed at all important at the time, "Why—er—water hemlock, huh?" he said aloud. "Let's see. Not common to France but was found there in 1906. Looks like celery when—haw-w-w-w! Why I've seen that stuff. I know where some grows. I—er—I will get out my makeup box, deck myself out in that private's uniform I found, an'—"

An hour later the alarm sounded. Phineas Pinkham had slipped out of the drome! Major Rufus Garrity fought off apoplexy, threatened to shoot the sentries.

"Nobody went past me, I tell ya, sir," swore one of them stoutly. "Only Glad Tidin's Goomer, the mess monkey. An' who could mistake that bum with the long nose, huh?"

But Glad Tidings Goomer was not out of the barracks. They found him propped up on his cot reading *The Rover Boys at School*.

"Wha—wha's the matter?" Glad Tidings stammered. "Did I oversleep? Is it time to serve mess, huh? Oh, Lord, I'm—"

"Where's Sergeant Casey?" the Old Man roared. "Get Casey!"

"The sergeant is out workin' on that Spad that Pinkham left over by Bar-le-Duc," an ackemma ventured. "He's been gone—"

"Aw-w-w cr-r-r-ipes!" groaned the commanding officer, pawing at his fiery pan. "What a *guerre*! Oh, I knew he was guilty. I bet he wanted The Owl to escape so he could get the chance to shoot him down again. Maybe Pinkham is shell-shocked and thinks he is on the Krauts' side of the war. Maybe—I'm nuts!"

THREE MILES from Bar-le-Duc two doughs were sitting at the side of the road. They took turns swearing, and what words one did not know, the other produced. "That's what you git," one hurled at his companion, "for failin' for that gag. That guy wasn't wounded, an' there wa'n't no airplane nowhere's around. Said he cracked up an' was crawlin' to his drome. Blah!"

"Could I help it if he slugged me an' took the motorbike?" countered the other. "But I got his description, the mug!"

"Horse feathers! Ya can't ride on a description," growled the first complainant, tenderly fingering his jaw.

Not many miles distant Phineas Pinkham was gathering water hemlock. The smell was anything but pleasant, but he stuck to his task. Pretty soon he had the sidecar of his appropriated mechanical bike full of

the weed, whereupon he headed for the fringe of the big Frog woodlot known as The Argonne.

Deep in the woods, von Heinz was hived up in a sort of cave. He nibbled on berries and chuckled from time to time. “*Ach! Mein owls, dey vill safe me. Und maybe by der nacht der Albatros cooms und pigs me oop vunce. Den vatch oudt, Herr Leutenant Pingham! Bismarck already ist on der vay mit der map. Ho! Ho! Mein Freunds, dey lick der Yangkee Schwein und drife idt dem oudt mit from der voods! Zo!*”

He crawled out of his hiding place, looked up into the darkness. Fifty pairs of greenish eyes assured him that his skin was safe for the present. Then he went back into his lair and hunched up like the great bird he emulated.

Two kilometers from that hidden cave Phineas Pinkham was now contacting a bunch of doughs. The faces of most of them bore at least a dozen patches of court plaster or iodine stains.

“Haw-w-w-w!” the Yankee plotter said. “You look like Limey pugs after goin’ a round or two. Well, everythin’s all set now, as I bet the owls won’t be around when you try an’ git that Heinie again. I’d advise you to try before sunup as maybe the smell won’t last.”

“What smell?” an infantry officer wanted to know.

“Just wait,” Phineas told him. “But don’t wait too long. I am here to help the Allies and I want cooperation.”

“Okay,” the officer snapped, “we got to make another try anyway. But if them owls are still there, I’m pullin’ out faster than I went in.”

IN THE woods, a pair of owls shifted uneasily on their perches. Other feathered creatures sensed the presence of delectable gastronomic dishes. They began bunching together to talk it over in owl fashion. One pointed out that it would not take long to go and take a look-see at the edge of the woods. Anyway, they were hungry, and even owls had to take time out for mess.

Those owls smelled mice—and mice to owls are what catnip is to cats. And so *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz’s pals took it on the lam toward the enticing aroma, and the Kaiser’s chief flyer crawled out of his hole to see the cause for the disturbance. He was just in time to get a gander at the run-out.

“*Himmel! Comst du hier! Donner-vetter, was ist das, hein?*” The Owl hooted. “*Mein Freunds comst du back vunce!*”

But the aroma *de mouse* in the mists enveloping the wooded lot was stronger than von Heinz’s hold on

the owls. Even as he tried to stop the brief exodus, fifty doughs were making their way through the darkness toward his hideout. He huddled back in his cave, hooked nose twitching, and big eyes staring.

“*Ach, Himmel!*” he croaked. “Besser von Schmierwurst shouldt sendt idt *der* shibs oudt for to loogk for I’m yedt. By *der* edge uf *der* voods I go *und—was ist das?*”

Herr Hauptmann von Heinz had heard a sound like the snapping of a twig under an incautious foot. He drew back into his hole, pulled leaves over him—but too late.

A rough voice yelled harshly: “Come on out, Heinie. I saw you. Come out or we’ll fill you so full of holes you won’t be able to hold gravel on your stomach. An’ hurry it up, Adolph, or we shoot!”

The Owl crawled out of his hiding place. “*Kamerad! Kamerad, mein Freunds!*” he spouted fast.

“That is what you think, Adolph. Aw-right, guys, git him out of here fast as them owls might come back. I’d-like to know how—?”

“Say,” husked one of the doughs, “I reckernize who that guy was now. Saw them freckles on his pan—an’ them teeth? That’s Pinkham, the crackpot aviator from—”

Von Heinz jumped a foot into the air and hit the top of his dome against a tree limb. The doughs had to slap him back to sanity. “*Himmel,*” he moaned, “*das* Pingham! *Der* owls he makes to leaf *und—Der Deffil* he *ist. Ach,* budt how—” He shook his head dolefully and left the question up in the air as to the method *Herr Leutnant* Pinkham had employed in enticing his brother owls off duty.

A little while later, the owls, maddened by the dirty trick played on them by the Yank, came swarming back through the woods. But the place where their Heinie leader had been hibernating was abandoned. They set up a chorus of hoots that would have chilled the blood of a grave robber. From a long way off came the *Herr Hauptmann*’s answering hoot evoked by a couple of prods in the empennage by his doughboy escort which was conducting him to the klink.

Phineas Pinkham goaded him a bit, too. “Haw-w-w-w!” he chuckled. “You runned away, huh? Well, you’re all set for the line-up at G.H.Q. now, Adolph. The birdies left you flat when I hauled that water hemlock out to the woods. An’ the breeze—ze breeze she have blow ze smell right to ze birdies’ beaks an’ they come out quick.”

“*Ach du Lieber!*” von Heinz exploded. “How *ist das?* *Der* owls dey leaf me *und—Himmel!* How—”

"Why that's simple," Phineas grinned. "They smelled mice. Water hemlock smells just like mice—or don't you know nothin' about flora and fauna?"

"Donnervetter! Himmel!"

"Cripes, looka that Kraut," breathed one of the doughs. "His lamps are like an owl's. So is his beak. An' look at the way he swells up when he gets mad—just like an owl. Lock that bum up good!"

"Toodle-oo!" chortled Lieutenant Pinkham as he watched the enforced departure of *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz. "An' now," he grinned as he legged off down the road, "there's something I gotta do yet tonight."

"You ain't been gold-brickin' up to now," a dough countered. "I got to apologize, Lieutenant. I been sayin' you must be an awful screwball!"

"Oh, we all make mistakes, bums! Adoo for good this time," he called. Then he turned, straddled his mechanical bug, and chug-chugged away on his private business. In half an hour he was outside of Bar-le-Duc talking to Sergeant Casey. "Bong sour," he greeted the ackemma. "How's the buggy?"

"Listen, you—" Casey began, almost fuming at the mouth, "half the U.S. army is out lookin' for you. They're gonna shoot you on sight. It is my duty to take you in, Lootenant, as—"

"Why, Sarge," Phineas interrupted him, grinning, "keep your camisole on, as I have just helped capture von Heinz. And stop bein' so patriotic, or I will tell the brass hats about them cigar coupons you've been payin' your gamblin' debts to the Frogs with. They would give you ten years."

"Awright," Casey spat, "I ain't seen you. But say, you ain't goin' to take this plane up, are ya?"

"You don't excavate with airplanes, do you?" the flyer countered. "Beat it, Casey. I got work to do, an I was hopin' I would be able to get in some practice doin' a certain thing with this Spad. But now I ain't got time to practice. I gotta guess at it."

"Y-you don't talk sense," Casey complained as he got ready to leave the scene of the Pinkham forced landing. "But then ya never did, so—er—whatta ya mean ya wanted to get in some practice?"

"None of your business, Sarge," Phineas replied promptly. "Now *alley trays veet!*"

CASEY was glad to comply. Phineas waited for five minutes listening to the purr of the idling Hisso before he got into the cockpit. "Sounds great!" he enthused. "Now if I should run across one of them Kraut bat

flyers and was able to knock him down—well, maybe I could get his—er—fingerprints. An' if he's a guy from where I think the Grim Reaper egg crates come from, I—er—well, I do not believe in puttin' off until tomorrow what could be finished today."

Phineas Pinkham was soon circling over the lines. The war was a pretty thing to look at from where he sat. Once in awhile flares went up into the sky and a lot of them made great white lights so that Heinies or Yanks could spot raiding parties. Once Phineas got down a little too close to real estate and the red fire from a Very pistol almost singed his floorboards to give him a hot seat.

Thereupon he climbed to five thousand—and got onto the same sky shelf as two Boche bat flyers. Immediately he roared off with the Albs glued to his tail. Phineas gave the Hisso all it had and went downstairs in a long glide. Spandau tracers began to make passes at his tail fin. They led cupro-nickel slugs to their mark. But the lone Yank gave the Spad some blind staggers and the bullets failed to hit a vulnerable spot.

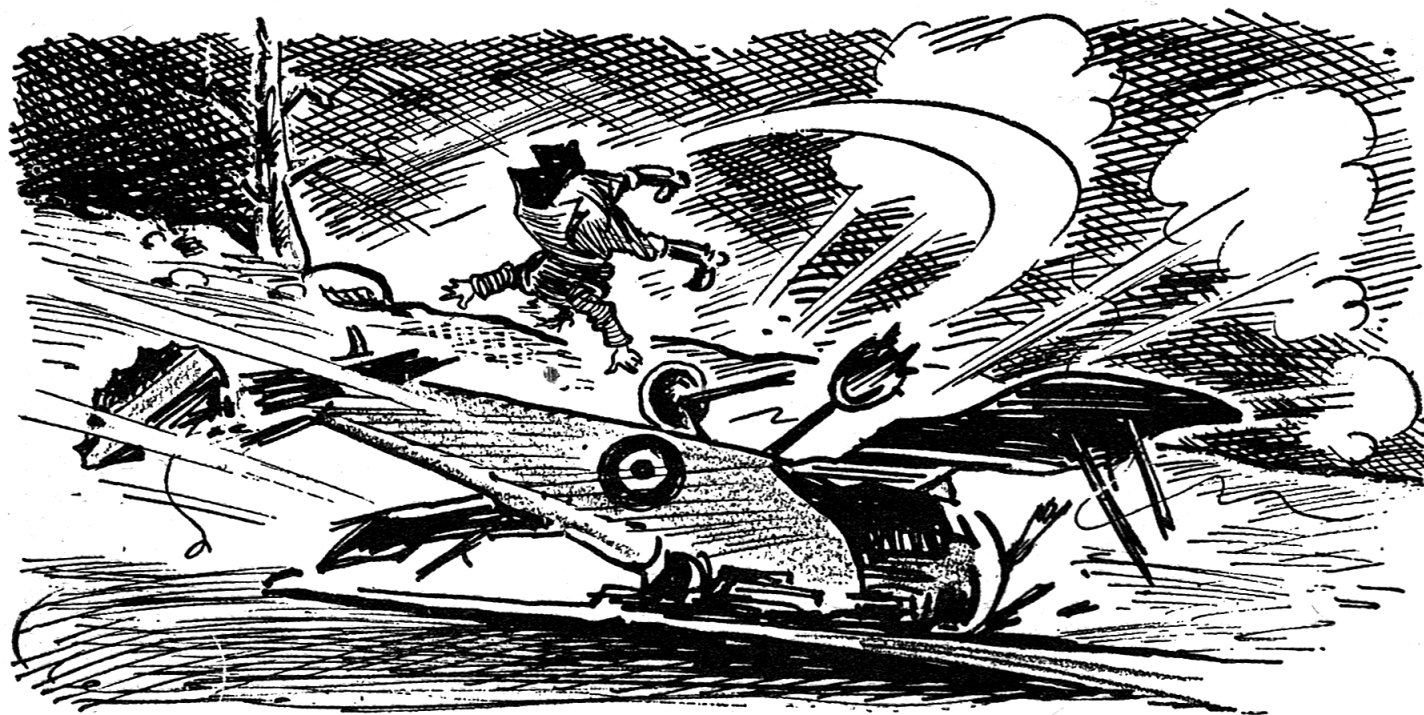
Lieutenant Pinkham passed right over the town of Revigny and kept on going toward Bar-le-Duc. One Hun was still chasing him, and the trickster flying for the Yanks grinned and peered at the nocturnal terrain sliding toward him. There they were—those two landmarks! Phineas lowered his nose with Spandau lead getting closer to his torso every second. If only he could aim his Spad just right, all would be well.

"Haw-w-w-w!" he guffawed. "That Kraut bum knows that only one Allied flyer has the nerve to fly at night. He knows that a Pinkham never heard of fear an'—he wants to git me! For a forty thousand mark reward them fatheads will try anythin', even knockin' off the most famous of the Pinkhams right in his own backyard. Haw-w-w-w! Haw—er—ugh! That tracer melted up that chocolate bar in my pocket, I bet. Well, here I go right down between them two—"

Down whizzed the Spad between the two tall trees outside of Bar-le-Duc. Something smacked against a wing tip and the ship threw a fit. Then, before Garrity's severe case of lumbago could get right side up, terra firma stiffened his Spad with a haymaker.

Phineas had always wondered how an ear of corn felt when it got shelled in a hopper, and he knew all the sensations when he finally crawled out of an old pig pen with a piece of strut dangling around his neck. Then he heard a lot of yells and saw some doughs running past him.

"Glug-glug!" Phineas forced out a gleeful guffaw



along with a pint of Hisso oil. "I heard hib smag thad wire jud abder I almost missed id!" Snorting and snuffling, he trotted along in the wake of the infantry with all the alacrity of an eighty-year-old Civil War vet climbing up the side of an Alp.

The pilot of the Alb was just getting pulled out of a heap of airplane parts when Phineas arrived.

"Leave him be!" Phineas howled, having cleared his windpipe of the last dregs of oil. "Gimme a flashlight. I got to get a good look at that bum an' the crate he was in. Gimme that light!" He grabbed the flashlight out of a dough's hand and played the beam on the face of a cross-eyed German pilot. "Haw-w-w-w! I'm right again. Look at his pan, bums. It's got coal dust on it. His eyes are rimmed with it. Lemme look at a wheel off that Alb, as I bet you could scrape enough stuff off it to make up as Uncle Tom for the next five years. One side, *garcons!* Detective Pinkham is in charge here!"

"Why there is muck on that wheel there," a shavetail exclaimed. "An' it's as black as licorice. Now where do you think—?"

BRASS HATS got the answer to that question three hours later—right on the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron. And the personnel of that outfit, not having recovered from the first Pinkham coup of the eventful night, just sat and gaped at the pilot from Boonetown, Iowa, as he gave them all the dirt—dirt plentifully mixed with coal dust.

"There," the hero of the hour said, "that drome o'

theirs is right outside Saarbrucken, an' them slag piles have been hollowed out and shored up so that Gothas can be parked in 'em. The Heinies lived in them miners' sheds an' I bet they had coal dust heaped on the roofs so they would be hid, too. I saw two Kraut pooches sunnin' themselves near them slag piles one day, an' I says to myself: 'Why would they be there? It is like findin' polar bears under a palm tree.' So I says: 'If I could knock off a Hun who comes from that place, I would prove that he had coal dust on him an'— Well, don't just stand there, bums—er—sirs. Call up the U.S. bombers an' tell 'em to lay some eggs on that coal mine. There is a big inclined railway right near the pile of slag where I saw the pooches. I bet that is where von Schmierwurst is holed up. You see!"

"Amazing! Simply amazing!" a Colonel exclaimed, dropping a sheet of paper he held in his hand. A long list of words had been type-written on that sheet of paper telling the U.S. Army's District Attorney the numerous crimes with which Phineas Pinkham had been charged, to writ:

*Criminal Assault on V.S. officer.
Destruction of Allied property.
Aiding and abetting German prisoner to escape.
Stealing motorcycle from men on duty.
Desertion.
Carrying counterfeit money.
Insulting superior officers.*

The miscreant Iowan picked up the official memo, looked at it. "Why, is that all?" he exclaimed. "Huh,

you'd think I'd done somethin' to get persecuted like I have been. Okay, go ahead an' arrest me, as I am tired of gettin' the Allies out of messes. It is giving me hardening of the arteries. Here are my dukes. Put on the bracelets."

"Why, Lieutenant," the brass hat said while Major Garrity chewed up another briar pipe. "Ha! Ha! That was not meant for you! We got your name mixed up with another—er—incurrible—er— The army clerical staff is always making mistakes an'— Shake, Lieutenant!"

Phineas shook hands all around—and two days later six brass hats had poison ivy rash all the way up to their elbows. It seemed that Lieutenant Pinkham could not be innocent of wrong-doing no matter how hard he tried. Major Rufus Garrity swore that Phineas had done it on purpose and that he would ram the three medals the Yank had been promised right down his throat. That is, after the Major got so he could use his lunchhooks again.

BUT now that von Schmierwurst's Gotha nest had been washed up and *Herr Hauptmann* Adolph August von Heinz was well established in a bastille, Phineas

thought he was immune to anything. He dropped in on Major Garrity one night when the C.O. was at his itchiest and sat down to read to him.

"It is interestin'—this book on flora an' fauna," the doubtful Samaritan chirped. "It says you have simply got eruptions from the *genus rhus* or *toxicodendron* of the family *Anacardiaceae*. This plant is often confused with the Virginia creeper an' *quercifolia* or poison oak. So's people will know, the book says they should look for greenish flowers an' white *drupaceous* berry. You learn a lot in books, haw-w-w-w! Them owls should take up readin'. They didn't know anythin' else could smell like mice except mice. Anyhow, I have brought you a bottle of coneyac, sir, as alcohol is good for what you got. Funny it didn't hit me. I must be only a carrier an'—don't you dare hit me with that bottle! Drop it, sir, as it is murder! Ohh-h-h-h-h!"

Phineas started running. And the bottle of Frog giggle water only missed him by the length of a gnat's prop boss and broke up against the wall.

"The next time I will have a gun!" Garrity roared.

"No sense of humor! No sense of humor!" sniffed Phineas as he hurried downstairs. "It sure looks like you can't please anybody in this world. *Haw-w-w-w!*"