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**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl

SPY a'la MODE

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For the first time in his life Phineas “Carbuncle” Pinkham wondered if a sense of humor wasn’t a handicap to a man who aspired to grow a long white beard and play with his grandchildren.

It had taken a lot to make him feel that way—just a little matter of assaulting a Colonel!

THE SPAD WARMING UP in front of A flight’s hangar intrigued Colonel William Q. Woolsey. The brass hat had recently been assigned to the general staff at Chaumont, and business of much importance had brought him to the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, Major Rufus Garrity commanding. This business concluded, Colonel Woolsey had meandered out of Wings to take a look-see at how and for what reason an airdrome percolated.

The Spad was as much an attraction to the

forementioned colonel as a talking machine is to a tribe of Zulus. He approached it and grinned broadly at a tall, homely-looking specimen of the *genus homo*, who leaned indolently against the battle bus, giving instructions to a pair of grease monkeys. The verbal barrage was punctuated with rich, ripe adjectives. As two or three of these floated over to Colonel Woolsey, he frowned, shoved out his jaw another notch, and increased his pace.

“I say,” he snapped as he drew up, “is that the proper language for an officer to use? By gad, I’ve

never heard worse in a mule skinner's outfit!"

Lieutenant Phineas "Carbuncle" Pinkham saluted briskly, his face taking on an appearance of nausea. "Huh? Ya never heard as good! It's the only language these here bums know. I—"

If Major Garrity had not been delving into very profound problems of his own, he might have taken the time and trouble to accompany Colonel Woolsey about the drome. Under ordinary conditions it was not healthy for an unsuspecting brass hat to be on the loose with Lieutenant Pinkham in the vicinity. Major Garrity was well aware of this fact, but on this day, unfortunately, he had had so much on his mind that he had forgotten having grounded Phineas just a few hours before.

There were few men on the field. Two flights were up over the lines, undoubtedly endeavoring to hold their own with von Bissinger's flock of Pfalz hellions. The personnel of C flight, little interested in Phineas Pinkham's affairs, were in squadron headquarters, just fooling around.

Colonel Woolsey did not like Phineas' tone of voice and told him so. "I suppose," he said in a strident voice, "they don't teach you to respect superiors in the Air Corps, what? I'll report you—what's your name?"

"Lieutenant Phineas Shadrach Pinkham," smiled the Boonetown ace sweetly, "but forget the connectin' rod in that name, sir; or if you do say it, smile! Haw-w-w-w!"

The name seemed to wring some of the haughtiness out of the colonel's torso. Evidently he had heard about Phineas some place. He harumphed a bit, growled, then ignored the flyer completely as he turned his scrutiny to the Spad. The colonel's interest in the machine pleased Phineas beyond words. He looked toward the big house, then sidled up to the brass hat. A chuckle began in Phineas' diaphragm but he made it stay there for a while. Here was corn for the husking.

They would ground him, would they? And what had he done? Nothing. Nothing at all. He had simply gone strolling the previous afternoon with an air rifle for company. It seemed that some French brass hats had taken it upon themselves to inspect the efficiency, et cetera, of Colonel Boncouer's Frog squadron which was the nearest Allied bird house to Major Garrity's coop. It had been a pretty sight and Phineas had sat on a knoll overlooking the place of ceremony, his air rifle laid across his knees.

PERHAPS it had been the rear view of one of the Frog flyers who stood in line with his fellows that

had stirred the playfulness in Phineas' bosom. The Frog apparently had owned more than his share of the trouser seats in the world. Phineas had acted upon impulse and had drawn a bead on the blue tail assembly, letting his air gun pop.

Well, it had certainly been funny to see the Frog jump and to hear a brass hat unroll a whole bookful of angry French epithets. Phineas' next shot had spatting against the ear of bigger game. A major had howled and had forgotten all about inspection and the dignity of the occasion. Then another leaden pellet had hit one of Boncouer's brave gentlemen where he wore, his back collar button in times of peace.

To make a long story short, the inspection had proved to be a flop, and no one would have been the wiser as to who had been responsible for the outrage if Phineas Pinkham had not lost a little paper booklet out of his pocket. The cover of the booklet had advertised to the world that the contents consisted of one hundred and one tricks to fool one's friends.

The French squadron commander probably had read many books on the art of detecting crime. Blue-uniformed Nieuport-pushers had been deployed to search the topography of the drome. And one had been triumphant. Within two hours Colonel Boncouer had waved the damning evidence in Rufus Garrity's face. Sir Rufus had read the black letters on the cover of the well-thumbed book and immediately had lapsed into a spasm.

Phineas was hailed to his presence, accused, found guilty, and threatened with the few threats that had not been heaped upon his head before. Finally he had been driven to his hut where he was ultimately to receive the word anent that which was going to happen to him in a military court.

Having nothing much to lose so far as his standing in Bar-le-Duc was concerned, Phineas suggested that Colonel Woolsey get into the Spad's pit and fool around.

"They ain't nothing to flyin'," declared Phineas with a sniff. "You just twist this an' that, pull this an' yank that. It's easier than a flivver when you git the hang of it."

"Gad!" enthused Colonel Woolsey. "I've always wanted to fly one of these. Would have been in the Air Corps but I'm a little too old, you know. Ha!" Experiencing the thrill of a kid who straddles the seat of his first bike, the brass hat stepped up to the stirrup of the Spad and eased his obese chassis into the pit. Phineas called to a grease monkey, then jumped to the

stirrup to show the colonel what to do. A roar of the Hisso almost made an albino out of Woolsey. Phineas guffawed.

"That's perkin' great!" he said. "Switch on, colonel. We'll roll a little an' then stop, huh?"

"B-but—"

Phineas signaled to the man at the prop. Contact! The prop was spun. Phineas reached past the colonel's ribs and jammed in the throttle. The Spad hopped the blocks and rolled.

"Swell, huh?" yipped Phineas.

"G-great!" answered the colonel. "But don't let's go too far. I—I—"

Everything seemed to happen at once. Phineas' foot slipped. He hit the ground on his ear. Major Garrity came tearing out of the big stone house, wondering why in hell a Spad was taking off. Colonel Woolsey howled and tried to do things with the gadgets in front of him. He succeeded. The Spad shot across the field in too much of a hurry.

Major Garrity saw Phineas pick himself up and run after the lurching Spad. His jaw fell away as he saw the light. Out on the field he barged, yelling instructions to the colonel. The Spad skidded to the right and Major Rufus started backing up. In the next second he was facing the same way as his boot tips and going away fast. He dived into the door of the big stone house and held his head in his hands.

Crash! Whe-e-e-e-e-e-e-e! The crash siren blared out. *H-r-r-r-r-r-oo-oom!* Overhead Spads were circling. A and B flights were coming in. Pilots looked overside and wondered what had happened now.

PHINEAS was the first to reach the wreck of the Spad. Colonel Woolsey, however, was not in it. He was still spinning around on one shoulder twenty feet away from the machine, due to the fact that Phineas had neglected to strap him in. Behind Phineas pounded Major Garrity. The Boonetown flyer brought Colonel Woolsey to a stop just as the C. O.'s voice folded up one of his eardrums.

"What in hell does this mean?" yipped the Old Man. "Pinkham, you—you—"

"He wanted to fly," objected Phineas indignantly. "I only let him roll a little an' I slipped. Can I help it if he couldn't steer? I—"

"H-hmmm!" grunted the colonel, looking up cross-eyed at the major. "Some raid, eh, general? How many prisoners did we take? How many Boche? Er—ah—where am I?" Major Garrity helped the colonel to his

feet, propped him up against a tree, then whirled on Phineas.

"Get out of my sight!" he bellowed, one eye cocked on a good sized piece of prop. "You slipped, did you? Fell off the Spad! Had no intention, of course—"

"That's a lie!" Carbuncle defended himself and strangely enough he was telling the truth. He had simply meant to scare Woolsey by taking him for a jaunt two hundred feet up. He had slipped, but what a chance he had of convincing the C.O.! Garrity had the piece of prop in his hand now and Phineas made his retreat. Bump Gillis, helmet dangling from his fingers, hailed his hutmate.

"Now what've you done, you crackpot?" he wanted to know.

"Go to hell!" was Phineas' irate response.

"I'd rather go there than where you're goin', ya bum," retorted Bump as the Boonetown flyer trudged toward his hut.

An hour later Colonel Woolsey confronted Phineas in Major Garrity's sanctum and promised him that the U.S. Air Force would be one man short as soon as he could get back to Chaumont. He accused Phineas of assault with intent to kill among other things.

"I demand a fair trial," declared Phineas. "It was an accident. I know my rights. I—"

"You'll get a trial all right," promised Colonel Woolsey. "It'll be over before you can blink. I have witnesses, Pinkham. You'll have twenty years in which to wish you'd never started up that Spad." He turned to Garrity. "I rather think you'll be anything but sorry to get rid of a man like this one, Garrity," he said in parting. "How did he get into the Air Force? Should've joined up with a circus. Well—"

"Good day, colonel!" said Major Garrity. "See you at the court martial"

"Maybe," grunted Phineas. "Maybe. I giss I kin prove—"

The Old Man riffled papers on his desk and looked at the inimitable trouble and miracle specialist from Iowa. "Sure," he agreed in a voice as gentle as a hyena's, "you'll beat these charges, Pinkham. Let's see, now, you only left formation two days ago for the twentieth time. You've insulted the French flag for the third time and broken up the party of French officers inspecting the drome of Colonel Boncouer. Now you've just tried to kill a Yankee brass hat and have stoved a Spad to kindling wood. That's all you've done. Get out of here, Mister Pinkham, and don't worry. It's nothing!"

Phineas felt like saying a lot, but he clamped his

teeth tight and walked to his hut. There he sat down and began to meditate as fast as his brain cells would function. This time he was in a mess. Not a loophole to freedom could he see, even with a telescope. Twenty years in jail. The disgrace to the Pinkhams!

Phineas sighed at length and reached for three strange-looking pieces of wood that were cached under a little table. They were bent like a dog's hind legs, and the wood at the handles was very smooth, as if it had been used by many calloused hands. He had purchased them from an Anzac shavetail while on leave in Paris. Boomerangs, they were called, and Phineas had become quite proficient with them after many hours of practice in a nearby field. However, at the moment they suggested nothing, and he dropped them back into place.

MESS that night tasted as its name implied, so far as Phineas was concerned. The buzzards were in the middle of it when an excited sergeant came running into the big farmhouse. A plane had flown over the drome, he gasped out, and it had been a Boche. To prove it, he shoved a big archie shell toward Major Garrity. Pieces of charred rope and cloth still clung to it. The men outside had seen the little torch arching down just as the Boche had high-tailed for Germany.

Necks stretched to their extreme as the Old Man examined the shell. The top of it had been tightly stuffed with paper. After much difficulty Garrity removed the wadding and then turned the shell upside-down. A little cylinder of oilcloth rolled out. He ripped away a rubber band and unrolled the cylinder so that the cloth lay flat on the table before him. Having hastily read the message, he swore roundly.

"Von Bissinger," he snorted. "I knew it! Another love letter to Lieutenant Pinkham. Well, he'll have a long time to wait before he crows over filling him with lead. Wants to fight you tomorrow, Pinkham," he grinned. "Too bad you can't. I'd like to oblige him."

"H-huh?" gulped Phineas. "That's my letter, ain't it? I giss I kin read my. own mail." And he reached out a huge paw and grabbed the missive from under the Old Man's nose. He read it and his ears began to glow a salmon pink. Cuss words fell from his lips.

"He can't call me a yeller, corn-fed ape, the squarehead bum!" he tossed to those around him. "Says if I got even a banjo string for a spine to come upstairs tomorrer an' he'll lay me out for a nice funeral. Huh! An' he says they've already picked the flowers for me—yeller cowslips! The dirty Heinie, I'll show him! I'll—"

"When, Mister'Pinkham?" purred the C.O. "And with what?"

Phineas stared at the head of the table. "You mean I can't go up an' fight this here von Bee stinger? You mean he's gonna git away with callin' me them names? It's an insult to me an' all the air corps an' the stars an' stripes and the President! I'll see Pershin'. I'll—"

"Shut up, Pinkham!" barked Garrity. "I've got other things on my mind besides your correspondence with the Jerry Air Force. The colonel you almost wrapped up for a military funeral has got some ideas of his own. Listen, you birds."

"B-but—"

"You heard me, you halfwit!" interrupted the C.O. "This doesn't concern you, anyway, as you're about as much a part of the Air Force right now as an Eskimo."

Phineas swallowed this additional insult and shut up.

"Troops are moving in back of the Jerry lines. G.H.Q. has an idea that they're not coming out of the Rhineland—that they're not raw recruits. Neither is Jerry strong enough to move divisions from other parts of the Western Front. That means that they're either from the Italian or Eastern fronts. If so, such information would be vital to the Allies in those sectors." The Old Man paused.

"Chaumont wants that information—if possible, before these new men get into action. Several futile raids on the part of the infantry in that salient have convinced the brass hats that these new German divisions are to be used for shock troops. Spies are going over, men. On fast ships—Spads. Maybe one or two of you buzzards will get a chance to take them over. G.H.Q. wants some things by which they can conclusively identify these men—identification tags, shoulderstraps—"

"Maybe," drawled Phineas as he rose to leave, "we could git their fingerprints or—well, what does it matter, huh?" He snapped his fingers and grinned. "No Pinkhams will git telegrams askin' where to send the remains. Bum sewer, fatheads!"

THE OLD MAN'S temperature went up to the nth degree. In the stillness one buzzard fancied he could hear something like the boiling of a kettle of fat. The raging Rufus, however, said nothing. There was nothing to be said, nothing to be done to Phineas, for Phineas was at the end of his rope. No C.O. in France could push him any deeper into disgrace.

The C.O. of the Ninth cooled himself off with a glass of water, wiped his brow and started in where he

had left off. After the powwow Sir Rufus walked into Wings and sent for Phineas Pinkham.

On his way to the big house the Boonetown flyer was stopped by Howell, who significantly held out a hand. Phineas took the hand, gripped it hard, grinned and went on his way. A howl of rage came from the flight leader. He stood looking down at the little sprig of poison ivy which he had let fall to the ground as though it had been an asp.

"There, ya bum," Phineas shot back. "Kid me, will ya? Haw-w-w-w-w-w! That stuff don't bother me none, but I remember how it takes to you." And, quite pleased with himself, he crashed the door of Garrity's throne room.

"Well, Pinkham, you fresh pup," was the Old Man's greeting, "I brought you in to tell you something because I'm soft-hearted. I'm going to give you a chance to keep out of jail—"

"Aw-w-w-w-w, cripes, that's swell!" interposed Phineas. "I alius knowed you didn't hate me as much as you acted an'—"

"I'm going to let you get polished off, Pinkham," snapped Garrity. "You're going out to fight von Bissinger in the morning. It is a heroic way to get killed, I figured. I'll tell Woolsey you escaped. But if you don't get shot, don't come back, see? I'm not going to get my pants burned on account of you. Anyway, I'm not going to have it peddled around Jerry dromes that one of the Ninth turned yellow. That's why I'm doing you this favor, understand?"

"Yeah, sure, thanks, I see," and Phineas shifted from one foot to the other. "Well—er—well—ah—I—well—"

"One thing more, Pinkham," blurted out the Old Man suddenly. "We'll have that ship examined before you take off in the morning. No tricks, see? We'll see who the best man is, you or von Bissinger!"

"Givin' the squarehead a break, huh?" growled Carbuncle, who never failed to get the last word. "Well, we'll see if you've got me planted. We'll see! I had brains before they made 'em for that fatheaded Heinie, an' I hope you lose your bridge work!"

Phineas was outside before Garrity's wild leap ended up against the door. The C.O. skinned four knuckles on each hand and his nose was pushed back nearer to his face. He staggered back to his chair, his sympathies all on the side of von Bissinger.

THE next morning Boonetown's contribution to the war ignored everybody on the field as he climbed

into his ship. The Old Man ran out of the farmhouse, waving his hands and yelling like a fool. What did that big yap mean by going without seeing him first? Wha-a-a-at? Why, the fathead was thumbing his nose at him! Garrity felt a twinge of conscience, then tossed it away. He hoped the bum would get shellacked just enough to be eligible for a German prison camp. And then he wiped his hands of Phineas Pinkham, trickster extraordinary, and ambled back into the house to get some coffee.

Over in the Jerry district von Bissinger was also about to take the air. Junker pilots crowded about him wishing him lots of luck.

"*Ach*," exclaimed the Von, "Von Brahm he iss right. We send oudt a thief to catch a thief. Fighdt fire *mit* fire, unerstandt? Ha! *Der Lentnant* he vill half three more ships to fighdt iff me he beats. Budt he vill not, the upstart! The other Pfalz ships they vill watch, *ja!* From away oop high, *ja!* *Der Leutnant* Pingham, he iss through *mit* the var. *Kontackt!*"

And such was the layout for the air duel. Phineas without tricks was coming to meet von Bissinger, who had a great big one up his sleeve. There had been a powwow with the High Command, on the previous day. Get Lieutenant Pinkham, no matter how! And von Bissinger was open to any proposition that would keep him in the good graces of the landlord of Potsdam.

As he flew toward the Rhine, Phineas felt confidence slipping away from him. A victory would be a hollow one. Beat von Bissinger and what of it? He couldn't go back. One Colonel William Q. Woolsey stood in his path. And without time to conjure up an offensive against this Von his chances of breathing two more hours were very remote indeed.

For the first time in his life Phineas wondered if a sense of humor was not a handicap for a man who aspired to grow a long white beard and play around with grandchildren. Then it occurred to him that he was flying high over the hottest part of the world conflagration and that there was a little dot in the skies to the northeast. The dot grew bigger and bigger until it was not a dot, but a Pfalz ship with von Bissinger riding it ragged.

And then Phineas swore with might and main and went into a high dudgeon. Three more ships were coming on behind the Von, only they were flying three or four thousand feet higher. It was a Boche barbecue, if there ever was one!

"*Ach*," gloated von Bissinger, nosing down, "I haff him now. It iss *der Tag* for the von Bissingers, *ach!*" He

dived and opened up the exercises with a quick burst.

Phineas swooped under the Von's undercarriage and looped. But the German leader was not in front of his sights when he leveled out. He was coming down straight from the port side of the Spad and he meant every burst he was throwing from his Spandaus. Phineas felt the Spad shudder under him and he thought it groaned. Desperately he tried to outsmart the Von, but gave it up and trusted to luck.

For the next few moments the Boonetown wonder thought that the other three Boche ships had plunged in. Von Bissinger seemed four places in the sky at the same time. The Boche was flying like a demon and Phineas wished that there had been a referee in the sky to stop the fight and save him from further punishment. He knew that the Spad was taking an awful pounding. He bet that he could cover four or five holes in the fabric with one hand on any part of the Spad. No tricks! A hell of a note! He wanted to run but had no place to run to.

As he threw the riddled bus all over the sky, he thought he caught a glimpse of a stately castle with gilded portcullis and drawbridge. A lilting, strumming sound was in his ears. It sounded like an orchestra of harps. Another burst from von Bissinger kicked him closer. Was that somebody hailing him? Did he hear wings flapping? Then he was plummeting down and his head cleared. The flapping sound was loose fabric on the wings. The shrill hum was loose wires in the backwash. Phineas looked back. The Von was on his tail. Von Bissinger was getting hunk this time, and no mistake.

"*Ach*, I haff him," gloated the Von, his guns still yammering. "Into the ground I poosh him, *ja*, und I shake hands *mit* the Kaiser *unter den Linden*, *ja*!"

DOWN to *terra firma* went Phineas. He cared little whether it was owned by Jerry or Yank. He wanted to feel the sod under his boots once more. A year or so in a Jerry klink and then he would go looking for one William Q. Woolsey with a load of arsenic.

The ground jumped to meet him. Big geysers of earth spat out of it. Crimson flashes told of trouble on the carpet. Phineas leveled out, shot over a palpitating sector and into comparative clear. There was a place down there to land and he took it, despite the fact that it offered but a short run.

His wheels kissed just as von Bissinger emptied another drum of slugs. They whined over Phineas' scalp and kicked up dirt in front of the rolling Spad.

Disconcerted for a second, he let the Spad go too far. It hit a clump of willow shoots, turned over and splashed into a little stream.

When Phineas got his head out of a spin, he focussed his wild eyes on the grinning, triumphantly exultant countenance of his latest arch enemy — *Hauptmann* von Bissinger.

"The dog, he hass his day, *ja*?" mocked the Von, his Luger pointed straight at Phineas' vital organs. "*Leutnant* Pingham, my prisoner you are. *Ach*, der great *Leutnant* Pingham. No tricks, *nein*? You forget them, *ja*? Too bad! You find oudt I the better man am, *ja*?"

"Drop that gun and I'll show ya, ya Heinie louse!" yelled Phineas. "I could lick six Heinies with one hand. Drop the gun and—"

Blam! A shell hit not more than three hundred yards away. Von Bissinger paled a trifle and threw a glance at his ship. It was still intact. Another shell screamed and tore a hole in France big enough for the cellar of a chateau.

"Ged oop, Pingham!" ordered von Bissinger. "We go oudt of range of the shells. When it iss over, we take a ride to my staffel, *ja*!"

A quarter of a mile away were the ruins of a Frog farm. One outbuilding was left and into the shelter of this Phineas Pirikham was hustled by von Bissinger and his Luger.

"Now ve vait, *Herr Leutnant*," said the Junker. "*Ach*, great der *Tag* iss for me. Der Kaiser—"

Blam! Phineas peered out of the door.

"Haw-w-w-w-w-w!" he laughed uproariously. "There goes your Flatz bus or whatever you call it, haw-w-w-w-w-w! Looks like we walk now, haw-w-w-w-w-w!"

"*Donnervetter!*" exclaimed the Boche.

Time dragged. Phineas opened up his flying coat and drew out two crooked sticks of Australian bush ingenuity. He fondled them until the Von's attention was engaged. The German stared curiously. Phineas got up and walked out into the open. Gun in hand, von Bissinger followed.

"I'll show ya somethin' to entertain ya while we're waitin'," grinned Phineas. "See the top of that li'l tree? Watch, Beestinger."

The Boonetown flyer held the boomerang poised until he figured he was using the right technique. Then he let it go. The weapon cut through the ozone in a long, wide sweep. It took a twig from the top of the little tree and came sweeping back. Deftly Phineas

caught it by the handle and turned to the Boche.

"Not bad, huh?" he invited applause. "Swell sport!" And again he displayed his skill with the bushman's weapon. Once more.

"Giss you could throw one like that?" mocked the resourceful Yank. "It takes brains an' I never saw much of the stuff in any Heinie."

"Smart you think you are, Pingham, *ja*?" retorted von Bissinger. "Well, you giff me that stick. I show you. But stand over there where I keep the eye on you, *ja*!"

"Sure," said Phineas obligingly, and he walked to the designated spot. "Shoot!"

Von Bissinger hefted the weapon, clutched it like Phineas had done, then let it sail into space. It cut the top of the very tree at which Phineas had aimed and came sweeping back. Von Bissinger turned toward Phineas and laughed with great gusto.

"So, oopstardt!" he exclaimed. "A better throw you did not make *und*—"

Whack! Von Bissinger spun around three times and hit the dirt on his back. The boomerang still spun in the air and Phineas jumped and retrieved it.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" he laughed, grabbing the Luger. "The Von forgot that the thing generally comes right back to papa, and when papa don't take it by the hand, it smacks papa on the coco! Oh, well!" And Phineas dragged von Bissinger into the little outbuilding and tied him up with some rusty wire he found. He pulled an old burlap sack over the German's head and tied it tightly at the neck.

"NOW where to go?" speculated Phineas to himself. "It doesn't look as friendly out there as the main stem in Boonetown, that's a fact. Them Yankee shells are mean. I can't go back to Barley Duck. Well, I hope they have a lot of fun droppin' spies, the bums!"

He went back into the shed and got another laugh when he looked at the Von. Then he rummaged around the place. The Lord was kind. Phineas found an old pair of peasant's boots, a loose pair of rough trousers and a sacklike upper garment. There was an old dusty hat to complete the outfit.

Donning the musty garments, Phineas took a mirror from the pocket of his discarded leather coat and propped it up against the wall. A once-over pleased him mightily. He put the mirror into the pocket of his senile trousers and felt a pang. It was a memento of Bar-le-Duc. Babette, his dame, had owned it once.

After a long sigh Phineas rumbled up his hair more

than usual, reached into an old barrel and drew out a handful of lime. With this he powdered his face, and the result was amazing.

There was a little door in the outbuilding that caught Phineas' eye.

He examined it and found that it led into a feed bin. Into this place Phineas dragged the now-struggling von Bissinger and barricaded the door behind his vanquished foe. Then Phineas sat down in a corner and listened to the sounds of shells. It all seemed very peaceful and quiet now. No tricks! The joker indulged in some belated chuckling.

Later in the day, we find Phineas Pinkham far from the place where he had cached the important personage of *Hauptmann* von Bissinger. In fact we find him riding on a truck with some Boche soldiers. He has very important information for the Jerries. Moreover, he knows who won the air duel, since he witnessed it, and he thinks he knows the whereabouts of the winner.

Strangely enough, Phineas has shed the appearance of having buck teeth. His lower incisors are in line with the uppers, but it is almost impossible for him to draw his lips together.

The *Herr Oberst* who ultimately received Phineas in the back area of the Boche lines glanced at his fellows significantly and tapped his great cranium. Phineas laughed foolishly and twisted his rusty skypiece in long thin fingers.

"Tell me what you saw, *Schwein!*" rumbled the German officer.

"Wee," responded Phineas, his eyes roving swiftly. His legs shook as he saw a great furry object reposing on a near-by table. It was a large black Busby, the front of which was graced with a grinning skull. Phineas' brain clicked fast. Von Mackensen! The Eastern Front. New troops.

"Speak, *Schwein!*" snapped the *Herr Oberst*.

"Wee, wee!" Phineas hastened to reply. *Je* swee saw *deux* flyeeng machines. *Un* Spad *et un* German sheep, wee! *Le* Spad she come down so queek, wee! *Le* German he follow *et* take ze man prisonair. A shell she hit *et je* run *et* hide. He-e-e-e-e!"

"Goodt!" exclaimed the *Herr Oberst*. "This man iss either crazy or shell-shocked, but crazy people know a lot. What else do you know, *Schwein?*"

Phineas' gaze had been lingering on the shoulderstraps of the men who guarded him. He stiffened quickly and rubbed his head as though bewildered. "Oh, wee," he finally pushed out, "*les*

Americains, they mak' ready for beeg drive, *m'sieu*. I have see' them. They drive me from my farm, peegs! They drive me back where shells they hit. *Je hate ze—*" He paused, choked and put a hand over his mouth. "I know—"

"That's enough!" snapped the German. "Take him oudt. Hold him until further orders. I think," he purred, stroking his chin, "we have a valuable spy in that derelict, *ja*."

"But, *Herr Oberst*," objected another, "we cannot take a chance. He may be—"

"*Ach*, he iss crazy, budt not too crazy," interrupted the first German. "We will look for von Bissinger where he told us to look. If we find him, we know this man is not a spy, *ja*?"

PHINEAS languished for two hours in a little room of the house where Jerry headquarters were stationed. When the German guard outside the door paced the floor, he hastily scribbled on the mirror he carried with a piece of chalk. Soon word came to the *Herr Oberst* that von Bissinger had been found and was on his way to his staffel. He had brought down the great Pinkham, only to lose him. The American flyer most likely was within the German lines. Then again a shell might have tagged him.

Apparently the Von had not been able to see through the sack Phineas had drawn over his head or he would have had a lot more information for the Boche patrols which were sent out to cover the terrain in the vicinity of the little farm building.

"*Ach*, what did I tell you?" exclaimed the *Herr Oberst*. "We haff a valuable man in this Frenchman. We turn him loose so he can get back to the American lines, but first search him thoroughly, *Weltzer*."

"*Ja wohl*," answered the *Unteroffizier* and took his leave.

Three men searched Phineas. They examined his mirror, took it apart, then handed him back the glass. After that they took him to the presence of the *Herr Oberst* once more and Phineas listened to instructions with strict attention. Once he was dismissed, he turned and faced the *Herr Oberst*. He grinned and tapped his head with his knuckles.

"*Ja*," grinned the German, "*Ja! Das ist gut*. You *gut* German are, I see. You will be rewarded, *mein Freund*."

"Gooten nicht," said Phineas and went out. Beneath his peasant garb, chuckles romped. No tricks, huh?

The business of picking up a spy was not so good as far as the Ninth was concerned. The first buzzard

to draw the rum job did not come back. Lieutenant Wilson got over the spot where the spy was supposed to be hiding when three Fokkers decided that the best thing for the Yank to do was to try and get back where he belonged. Lieutenant Wilson took their advice and dropped onto the home tarmac with a slumbering Hisso and a wing and a half left on the Spad.

Nothing daunted, the Old Man grabbed Bump Gillis and put him into another ship. Phineas' hutmate said his prayers, jammed in the throttle of his bus and was away to do or die for Colonel Woolsey and everybody else in Chaumont.

AS GILLIS rode the nocturnal highways toward trouble, Phineas Pinkham was being ushered toward the Yankee lines in the sidecar of a Jerry mechanical bug. With unexpected suddenness a dark figure cut across the road ahead. From the gloom out of which it had scurried came two or three stabs of light. Somebody was getting shot at. The Boche stopped the motorcycle. Phineas saw half a dozen Germans cross the road. They fired again. Came a threshing sound in the bushes. A few moments later the coalscuttle-helmeted figures came into the road, dragging a man with them.

"A spy, wee?"

The German looked at Phineas briefly. Evidently he had majored in nothing but Heinie. Anyway, Phineas needed no answer. One of Chaumont's men had been unlucky. The man on the motorcycle seat smiled grimly. Phineas read his thoughts, then chuckled. A few yards down the road he grabbed at the driver's arm. He was going to get out.

There was no argument. The *Herr Oberst* had given orders that Phineas was to work from any point of vantage he pleased, so he disembarked and looked about him for several minutes. He waved cursorily to the chauffeur and the mechanical bug chug-chugged away.

"Oof widderson, fathead!" chuckled Phineas. "Well, some place around here is where a plane can land. That spy was waiting to be picked up or something." He heard the harsh, throaty vibrations of a Mercedes job up above. The Old Man had been sending them out tonight, that was it. Boche were on the prowl.

Phineas walked across a lush stretch of earth, came out on firmer ground and turned up a rise toward a wooded patch. He groped his way through it and came out into a little field. At one edge of this he saw something that made his hair curl. Six Boche were

huddled there and he could hear them conversing in low-tones. Phineas hacked away and began to circle the clearing cautiously.

Bump Gillis was pushing his Spad onward. Two had not come back and the old saw has it that trouble comes in the form of triplets. It looked bad for Lieutenant Gillis and he had made up his mind that he would never sink his teeth in one of Aunt Lizzie McPherson's scones again. Then Bump looked down. He saw a field in the scant moonlight. According to the map he had examined on the way over, it was about the right spot. And then two Fokkers came down and began to give him plenty of attention.

But Bump, if it has not been mentioned before, was something of a hellion with a Spad. One Von found it out as soon as Bump had used up only a couple of bursts. The other gave him battle, but it was evident that this particular Boche had nothing at all in common with a bat. Night flying was not his dish, and before a few moments were ticked away, the Von was on a platter and Bump Gillis was coming down.

However, he did not know that Jerries were awaiting him. They were licking their chops and caressing their *Feldwebels* avidly. The Scot by birth was only a hundred feet up when Phineas Pinkham got into the gloom of the woods to the rear of the reception committee.

"Chase 'em out where the buzzard can see 'em an' we'll see some good Heinies." was his idea of things. He raised a Luger which he had borrowed from the belt of the unsuspecting motorcycle rider and bounced a bullet from the helmet of one of the shocked half-dozen. The Heinies let out a chorus of yells and jumped to their feet.

Bump Gillis' alert eyes were drawn to that corner of the clearing. For the moment the Germans were lying flat, shooting into the woods from whence the shot had come. Phineas stood behind a thick tree trunk and laughed enjoyably. Bump Gillis grabbed some altitude and came diving down. In a few seconds there was hardly a Boche who felt like carrying on with his job. Out into the clear ran Phineas, waving his arms.

Bump nosed in, made a landing without mishap and rolled up to his man.

"Hurry up, fathead! yipped Phineas as he jumped to a wing. "Don't stop movin'. We ain't out of this place yet."

Bump Gillis needed no urging. Swinging around, he jammed in his throttle and sped across the bumpy turf. There would be a medal in this for him. He had

picked up the spy. Why, even that bum, Pinkham, would never have done a better job. Two Fokkers were on the way for a look when Bump got up to five thousand, but the fire from their exhausts was at least a mile away. Lieutenant Gillis brought the Spad down close to Major Garrity fifteen minutes later and informed the whole world that he had brought back Woolsey's man.

"You're a cockeyed liar, Bump," said a familiar voice and everybody peered at the homely man who was leaning against the lower wing surface. "I saw them take that poor bum in. You just brought me home." "Pinkham!" Garrity swore.

BUMP GILLIS groaned and stretched full length on the ground.

"Didn't I tell you not to show up here again, Mushface?" roared the C.O., but there seemed to be a lack of mayhem in his voice. "Now you'll sweat. I gave you a chance to beat Woolsey and you—you—"

Phineas guffawed. "Listen, bring the bum over as quick as ya kin. I got a deal to make with 'im. Maybe I ain't been places! An' did I fool that Von! He had me on the ground cold an' I showed 'im how to throw a boomerang and what a sock it give him! The fatheaded Heinie! Haw-w-w-w-w-w! No tricks, huh?"

"I don't know what you're ravin' about but I'll send for Woolsey. What've you got, shoulderstraps or fingerprints? Ba-a-a-ah!"

In a short time Colonel W. Q. Woolsey was facing Lieutenant Pinkham once more. His nose turned up as he surveyed the Boonetown man's outfit. His mien betrayed no break for Phineas—he was like an elephant who never forgets.

"Well, what does this mean, Garrity?" he roared. "Getting me out here this time of—"

"Talk to Lieutenant Pinkham," interrupted the C.O. testily.

"Yeah, talk to me," invited Phineas with a grin. "I got what ya want to know. I'm a business man. I want all charges crossed off against me. Do that an' you git what the Allies want to know. Otherwise I just take this mirror—" and Phineas drew the mentioned article from his pocket as the gallery gaped, "an' break it all up in lots of pieces."

"Gad, what tommyrot is this?" stormed the colonel. "He's got a mirror and asks me to squash the charges of assault! Damme, Garrity, what kind of joke is—"

"It ain't April Fool's day," interposed Phineas. "It's Spy Wednesday. Look in this mirror an' you see what

Heinie troops have come into this part of the *guerre*. Haw-haw! The squareheads took the leather case off it but they didn't find nothin'. I took a ship when nobody was lookin' an' went over the lines, colonel, an' you'll have to forgit about that, too. Now if the brass hats have any brains, they'll know what I mean when I say I got a mirror an'—"

"That's enough!" erupted Woolsey. "I'm leaving, Garrity, and when I get through with this insane asylum—"

"Better listen to him, colonel," advised Major Garrity with a faint grin on his lips. "He generally knows what he's doing. I'll vouch for him. He's found out something. If you want that information bad enough, and I know you do, then you'll forget your grievance against Pinkham. Rather think you'd stand in well with the Allied Staff if you were the one indirectly responsible for such a fine piece of work, eh?"

Woolsey coughed, sputtered and looked at Phineas. "Ah—er—you've got my word, Pinkham. Word of Honor. But if you fool me, by gad, I'll have you hamstrung! I'll—"

"Well," said the astounding miracle worker, "I saw them shoulderstraps on the squareheads that took me to the German klink, an' when they locked me up over there, I wrote them down on this mirror with French chalk so's I wouldn't forgit 'em. Look close now, an' I ain't got nothin' up my sleeve. Hokus pokus!" So saying, Phineas blew breath onto the surface of the mirror. In bold relief came the evidence of his ingenuity. Woolsey swore in amazement and looked closer.

"By gad!" he exclaimed. "Incredible! We'll soon find out what these things mean. We'll know the divisions and—how'd you do it, Pinkham?" And Woolsey was actually grinning.

"Well, I just drew the stuff on there with Frog chalk an' then rubbed it off. Them Heinies couldn't see nothin'. They're dumb. Then when you blow on the mirror again, the lines come out. Haw-w-w-w!"

"Cripes!" mumbled Major Garrity and flopped into a chair. "And what about von Bissinger?"

"I tied him up an' threw him in a feed bin," explained Phineas. "Then I told the bums where he was an' they thought I was a German sympathizer an' they made a spy outa me. I seen them capture the real spy that the colonel sent out, an' so I beat it to the place where I thought they must've picked him up. Then Bump come along and you should've seen him knock off krauts. As much as I hate to admit it, he shot down two Fokkers before he landed. But I want another thing understood! I don't fight that von Beestinger again unless I kin fight the fathead my own way. I was so close once to St. Pete that I seen the lodge pin he wears. Yeah!"

"Anything you say, lieutenant," grinned Woolsey. "Let's be friends. Anyway, I ought to have had more sense than to try to fly at my age. Well, good night, major. Good night—"

"Go fly a kite!" snapped Phineas, but his voice was muffled a bit as he drew the peasant blouse up over his head.