



TATTLE TAILWINDS!

written and illustrated by **JOE ARCHIBALD**

Major Garrity had chased Phineas off the drome. The Royal Flying Corps buzzards had sworn a vendetta against him. And over in Germany, the wily Rittmeister von Schnoutz was scheming. Aside from these, Phineas didn't have an enemy in the world!

EVEN THE LOWLY ANGLE WORM, according to the old maxim, will turn and put up its dukes when sorely beset. The lowly worms of this story, of course, are the buzzards of Major Rufus Garrity's Ninth Pursuit Squadron. Their tormenter, Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, born on April Fool's day, cradled in conjury and reared in raillery, perhaps had never heard about the deceptiveness of the proverbial worm. A worm had never kicked back at the amazing, freckle-faced, buck-toothed pilot from Boonetown when he was attaching it to the end of a fishhook. Nevertheless, Phineas should have known that he who lives by the sword will sooner or later get a taste of cutlery.

OUR STORY BEGINS on a blithe mid-afternoon in July. Phineas Pinkham, our doubtful hero, was sitting in his hut scraping a two days' growth of bristle from his homely physiognomy—as futile a beauty treatment as rouging the face of a prize hog. As the last patrol of the day passed into the limbo of brushes with Brother Boche, Phineas was looking forward to revelry in Bar-le-Duc and a tryst with Babette, his one and only love. In another hut, three pilots were also prettying themselves for the coming diversion, but on each of their faces was the smug expression of a cat which has had three helpings from a bird cage.

Eight miles away, on the drome of a squadron belonging to King George, other sky-skimmers were holding an indignation meeting. Only yesterday their privacy had been intruded upon in a very rude fashion by Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham of the Yankee Ninth Pursuit. The great Rugby game between two Limey squadrons had been at fever pitch when down out of the air dived a Spad. A red tab, who had been something of a player back at Oxford, had just kicked the bally ball high into the air. As it reached the height of its climb, Vickers chattered. The ball, the only regulation one between France and Piccadilly Circus, suddenly collapsed and came down to the ground like a sodden dishcloth.

As if that were not enough, Phineas' playfulness hit a new high, and he shot down low to scrape over the top of a truck which had been driven out to serve as a temporary grandstand. The Britishers leaped to earth. Some made good landings but many pancaked, and among them was a Limey colonel who rolled over three times until he slipped into a ditch. By the time the colonel had been dragged out of the muddy water and the tadpoles were taken from his pockets, Phineas Pinkham was well on the way home.

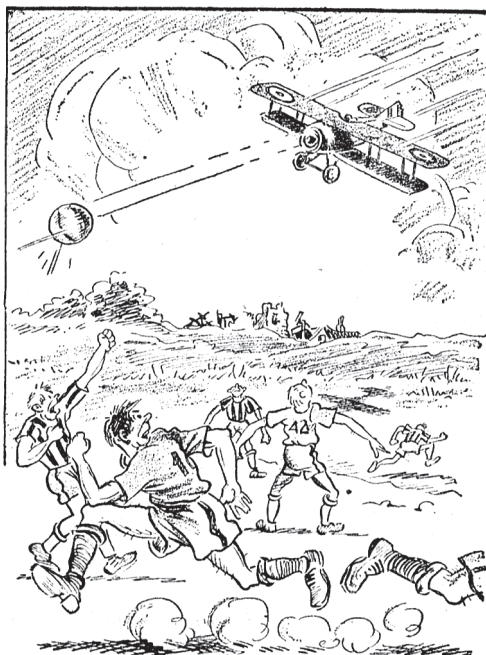
"The Spad went out of control an' who can say it didn't, huh?" was the Pinkham alibi. "Those old ruins we have to fly are safe like canoein' in a leaky bathtub. Well—"

"Shootin' the ball, how about that?" Major Rufus had roared. "Let me see you get an answer to that one,

you—you—"

"It was right in front of my prop, an' if it had hit the prop, oh, boys!" Phineas had countered. "I shot it to kick it out of the way. It's a hell of a note that I have to fight while the Limeys play football. No wonder the *guerre*—"

Major Garrity, waving a chair leg around his head, had chased the culprit out. It seemed as if that was all to be done about it. But the Royal Flying buzzards swore a vendetta. Pinkham and Berlin were their objectives. And over on the Jerry side, the Rittmeister von Schnoutz leaned against his Albatross, also keeping Phineas very much in mind, his wily brain scheming, scheming. With the exception of all these, Phineas Pinkham did not have an enemy in the world.



Three gentlemen of the Ninth preceded Lieutenant Pinkham into Bar-le-Duc by a good half hour on that momentous eve. Phineas arrived at Babette's front door at precisely seven-thirty. Babette was bewailing a touch of rose fever, and refused to accompany her swain along the primrose path.

"Huh," the trickster grinned, "look at the treat you're missin'. I am maybe the most famous guy in the *guerre*. Well, adoo, Babette. I should sit with you an' read you poems, but I am young and in my prime and crave the fleshpots. Adoo!"

"Peeg!" shot back the *mademoiselle*. "Eef eet ees yestairday I nevair see you *encore*, eet weel seem *aussi* like eet ees too soon. Bah!"

"That's just what I am goin' to find," Phineas said in parting. "A swell one, with a rail. Adoo *encore*!"

Now strange things were happening in Bar-le-Duc. From the doorway of a small *estaminet*, a voice hailed Phineas. "I say now, old chappie, it is Leftenant Pinkham, eh, what?"

"In the flesh," responded the chuckling Yank. "Settin' 'em up, huh? Well, it's time you Limeys softened up. Up to now I couldn't tell you from the Scotch bums."

Phineas and the Limey became very chummy. Something had to be wrong. In a cafe several blocks away, the customers waxed merry. Gruff voices of Allied officers blended with the laughter of the *femmes* of France. A hand appeared on the sill of an

open window. Two white mice dropped to the floor of the cafe. Two more followed. Outside, in the dark, sounded a gloating grunt.

Suddenly a dark-eyed coquette shrieked, and tried to climb the wall. Another one yelled "Eek!" and shinnied to the shoulders of a very dignified Yankee colonel. Tables were upset. The feminine element ran, crawled, and rolled toward the door. Swagger sticks went into action as the white mice played hide and seek with the flower of the Allied forces.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" yelled a voice from the window. A major paused as he was about to swing on a mouse. "By gad! I know that jackass laugh," he roared. "It's that flyer—Pinkham!" He made a dive for the door to call the M.P.'s, fell over a wriggling female and slid into the street as if he were beating out a scratch single. That was not all. Into another *estaminet*, haunted at the moment by a certain well-known colonel by name of Pritchett, was shoved a grunting porker. An officer's headgear had been fastened between its ears and a Sam Browne belt spanned its girth. Painted on its rump were the words, "Root for Colonel Pritchett. He's a Swill Gent!"

Colonel Pritchett's jowls inflated. His neck became the color of a brick chimney.

"What does this mean, hey?" he yipped. "By gad!" Again that derisive roar came out of the murk. "Haw-w-w-w-w!"

"Pinkham, the crazy—"

Fifteen minutes later, Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham was sauntering down the street. He turned into the cafe which was being put into order after the rout of the rodents.

"Had a fight, huh?" he observed to the remaining occupants. "That's just my luck to miss—"

It seemed to Phineas that everybody made a grab for him at the same time. His jaw dropped. A Frenchman leaped the bar, his white apron fluttering out behind.

"Ah, ze mouse, out?" he roared. "I cut you in ze leetle beets, *non?*"

"*Non* is right!" Phineas howled and sped out, yelling for M.P.'s. "He-e-e-elp! Everybody's nuts!"

"Got ya," a big dough cracked, hooking a beefy hand through Phineas' elbow. "You better come quiet or I'll smack you one."

"Huh?" snapped the captive. "I demand to be released as you have made a mistake, and—"

"Hang 'im!" yelled a voice and Phineas wondered why it sounded so much like the tones of Bump Gillis,

his hutmate. A fuming big figure pushed through the crowd and shoved his face close to Phineas' befuddled visage.

"So I'm a pig, am I, lieutenant?" he tossed out.

"Colonel Pritchett is a swill gent, huh?"

"Tweet, tweet," Phineas chirped, his brain awl. "Let's go, Alice, an' cavort on the green of Wonderland! Cripes, who said you was a pig? Who?"

"Oh, you act innocent, do you, Pinkham?" Pritchett yelped. "Well, well, so you didn't drop the white mice into the cafe, or drive the pig into—"

"Huh?" the Boonetown flyer gulped. "White mice? My white mice? Somebody's stole 'em. Oh, wait until—"

"So, you admit it, huh? You—" Pritchett choked on a bellow. "Arrest this homely, fresh—"

"I can prove I wasn't here when it happened. I just left Lieutenant Boods, the Limey, over at the Pink Vache an'—well, he'll tell ya I was there."

They rounded up Lieutenant Boods at the *estaminet* in question. But the lieutenant denied ever having seen Phineas Pinkham, much less stooped to drink with him. And then and there it became glaringly apparent to Phineas Pinkham that all the dirt had been swept out of Denmark and into Bar-le-Duc.

"Oh, wait until I git the bums!" he yipped as the M.P.'s hustled him to a bastille. "Nobody can double-cross a Pinkham. I'll—"

The worms had completely turned.

MAJOR RUFUS GARRITY stood on his legal rights, having heard somewhere about a habeas corpus. He transferred the person of Phineas Pinkham to the airdrome and promised him a speedy court martial.

"I'll appeal to the U.S. Attorney General," Phineas declared indignantly. "I been framed. It's an outrage. Some bums ganged me."

"Oh, they did?" the major grinned. "Ha, ha! You ought to think up a new one. Well, get out of here, and don't dare take a step off this drome. I have—er—instructed the sentries to shoot you if it seems necessary, Pinkham."

"Well, I know when I'm being persecuted," Phineas snapped as he turned on his heel and started out. "But you wait, as when I go to work on you bums—"

The Old Man chuckled and leaned forward to get his pipe. *Kerplop!* Ink sprayed from the glass container on the table. Black spots as big as the trademarks of a leopard appeared on the C.O.'s face and as far down on his torso as the third button of his tunic. One eye was

closed, and one gob of ink had managed to get into his mouth. A freckled face peered in through the door.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" came a familiar guffaw.

"Explodin' pastils. I'll show ya. I'm beginnin' at the top an' workin' down. Well—"

Leaving Major Garrity tongue-tied, with ire, Phineas slammed the door and went out into the big room. He looked at Bump Gillis and pointed an accusing finger.

"Come clean, you tightfist," he cracked, "or I'll slam you so dizzy that—"

"It looks like it'll rain," Bump said to Wilson. "I saw two Frog cows layin' down this a.m. an' that is a bad sign. Well—ahum—"

"How about you, Howell?" Phineas turned to the flight leader. "I bet you've got a guilty conscience, too."

"It's just like you said," Howell tossed at another pilot. "When you think you have got a dame figured out, she'll always—"

"Awright," growled Phineas, "ignore me. But you wait, you bunch of low-lives!"

The peers of Chaumont had intended to break all speed records for court martials in the case of Lieutenant Pinkham, but Jerry, himself, forced a postponement. For two weeks or more, it had seemed to the Allied Brass Hats that the Boche were able to anticipate every move they made. Planes strafed troops just at the right time and place. Bridges and ammo dumps were tagged and duly rendered useless. At first, G.H.Q. had simply deplored the unadulterated run of bad luck but as each day passed, it became apparent that the dice were loaded. The capture of a flock of Hun troops near Brabant precipitated the sickening drop in Allied Morale, Inc.

"*Ach*," one of the Kraut doughs exulted, "soon the Chermans go by Paris, yedt. Eferyt'ing *der* High Command vants he should know, so iss idt. The Allied prisoners they talk, ha, efen if they don't vant to. Yoost vun drink of somet'ing vhat looks *und* tastes like vine, *und* they go to sleep budt answer questions yoost *der* same. *Ach, hoch der Kaiser!* Soon I vill be free like all the Chermans, *ja!*"

The news spread over the front faster than a morsel of scandal in a hick town. Brass Hats went into huddles. Wires buzzed. G.H.Q. at Chaumont began to look like a psychopathic ward. Nail files were thrown away as incisors gnawed relentlessly. Everywhere, brains were racked for an antidote for this bitter Boche dose. To the drome of the Ninth Pursuit came wild-eyed, desperate Brass Hats. Colonel Pritchett was among them.

"Yes, colonel," Major Garrity snapped as the officer's avoirdupois was squeezing into his sanctum, "always come to the Air Force, eh? What does G.H.Q. think we are, what? Maybe you think we could fly over and steal that witches' brew, do you? Well, I wouldn't even send Pinkham—"

"Came to talk to the pilots, major," Pritchett said in a voice as hollow as a gourd. "Very urgent, major."

"Mess begins in five minutes, colonel," Garrity groaned. "See 'em all you want."

Later, in the big room of the Frog farmhouse which served as mess hall, with all the pilots present; including Phineas Pinkham, Colonel Pritchett intoned the message he had brought from Chaumont.

"In the face of what is going on, men," he said, "no flyer must be taken prisoner, understand? Once he is shot down—"

"That would be better than bein' half-shot," a cocky voice cut in. "These bums blab everythin' once they swig this Frog booze, ha—"

"Shut up, Pinkham!" Garrity barked. "Colonel, go on. If he opens his yap again—"

After a black look at Phineas, Pritchett continued. "You—er—understand, gentlemen," he said. "You will never be taken alive. Ahem, orders. Yes. You will all carry a weapon and will use it in the event of—well—you understand. The Germans, once they get the information as to the location of airdromes, et cetera—well, I guess that is all."

"That is out," Phineas said emphatically. "Suicides git no insurance. Huh, well, what of it? I am out of it. Well, Bump, you'd better put in an order for poison, as no bullet will go through your thick dome. Ha, I thank you for framin' me, boys, as—"

Colonel Pritchett got up, huffed until the pilots thought he would have a stroke. "Hasn't that upstart one spark of discipline?" he roared at Garrity. "Can't you shut him up? Can't—"

"You don't know what you're asking, colonel," the Old Man replied, waving a hand helplessly. "You could gag him, cut out his larynx, and he would start talkin' with his hands. Pinkham, you go to your hut. I give you one second to start moving and then—"

"Oh, I'm goin'," Phineas assured him. "But I bet you'll wish I was in good standing to get the Allies out of this mess. But don't even beg me, as I am retiring soon and—"

"Pass me a glass of water," Pritchett said huskily.

Howell poured one and handed it to the colonel. He took a big gulp, settled back in his chair. He

smacked his lips, stretched his jaws; then a wild look came to his optics.

"Uh—er—m-m-m-m-m!" he forced out as he shook a fist at Howell. "By-y-y-y—"

"Wha-a-a?" Garrity gasped. "Howell, what did you—"

The flight leader picked up the water pitcher and held it up to look at the bottom. Through the glass, a tiny sediment could be seen.

"Alum!" Howell yipped. "Pinkham, the dirty double-crossin'—"

Pritchett, lips puckered, stamped toward the door. "I'm ge'in' ou' o' 'is ma'house," he half-whistled. "Da' ou'rage. I'll bus' the 'ole squadron. G'nigh'!"

"That's what you get for postponin' the court martial, colonel!" the Old Man yelled after the Brass Hat.

AT DAWN, Phineas Pinkham was up with the early patrol—not that he was going anywhere. He followed Bump Gillis and Howell to their Spads.

"I hope you bums put more than one bullet in your revolvers," he said, grinning, "as you could never hit yourselves the first time. Haw-w-w-w! The suicide squadron!"

Bump Gillis swore and wriggled inside of his flying leather. Three different areas of his epidermis were sadly in need of scratching, for during the night he had discovered that his bunk was plentifully decorated with cockleburrs.

"Let's shoot him!" he proposed to Captain Howell. "We'll say he tried to steal a plane."

"I will lay off you bums," Phineas said, "if you'll come clean about Barley Duck as the Allies need me and—"

Howell climbed into his Spad. "Ha, ha," he laughed. "No, Mr. Pinkham, a thousand times no. Well, let's get goin'."

"If you get shot down, I will say it was not suicide, Bump," Phineas cried after his hutmate. "I'll say you didn't know the gun was loaded, haw-w-w-w!"

The flight returned intact. But it was apparent that nerves were playing the anvil chorus as the six buzzards walked to their huts.

"I had that gun out once," Bump Gillis said as he tagged along with Wilson. "When I went into that spin that time. But I got out of it. Gripes! I am glad I didn't shoot, as—"

Major Garrity listened a minute, watched Wilson's cigarette quiver between the pilot's lips like

a humming bird's wing, then hotfooted it to overtake Captain Howell. The captain was trudging toward Wings as if it were the path to the guillotine. The flight leader yelled and jumped a foot when Garrity slapped him on the back.

"Well, what's eatin' you bums?" the major yipped. "You got back, didn't you? Huh, of all the skittery schoolgirls—"

"I saw a Limey git forced down," Howell cut in. "It was a Camel, and if that buzzard squeals, well—call up G.H.Q. and tell 'em. We got to move the drome, major, as he'll spill where everything is, and Gotha's'll be over tonight as thick as—"

"Ah—er—you sure about the Camel?" interrupted the Old Man. "Maybe it got out of the mess and—"

"If it did, it had an engine in the tail," Howell snapped, and walked out.

The major did not bother to call the Brass Hats. He knew that all he would get would be insults. He began to chew at his knuckles, when in walked Phineas Pinkham.

"I've got it all figured out, major," the Boonetown hero said, saluting in a manner to which he was not accustomed. "If the Jerries want a flyer, we'll give 'em one. Haw-w-w-w-w-w, I would like to see them make me talk, the squareheaded bums! Now here is the way—"

Sixty seconds later, Phineas was getting his breath, back in the rear of a hangar.

"That is what ya git for offering to lay down life and limb," he complained to a greaseball who sauntered by. "Don't ever try an' aim higher than you are now, as—"

The private muttered something. Phineas was sure he said "Nuts to you!"

"I'll report you," he yelled at the groundman. "I'll teach ya!"

A laugh came from the other side of the canvas against which Lieutenant Pinkham was resting. It was Sergeant Casey's burst of mirth.

"Oh, I see why I git no respect," growled the squadron jokester. "They think I'm busted. It is time to act as you are a Pinkham, Phineas, and you've got your back to a wall. Will you be weak-kneed, or will you boil your Pinkham blood and fight back? That is what I will do. Fool with me, will they? The bums!"

The morale of every branch of the Allied service began to quiver. True to Howell's prophecy, three Gothas came over that night and bombed a supply depot three miles from a Limey drome. To make two omelets out of the same egg basket, they saved three

bombs for the Camel drome. When the Gotha boys had winged back to Germany, a bunch of Limey groundhogs were detailed to fill up the cavities.

"Somebody squealed," cried Phineas as he ran out of his hut in his cherished yellow and red striped pajamas. The ground was still shaking from the impact of the eggs. "That Limey pilot, huh!"

Morning brought further hysteria to the Allied ranks. Over toward Montfaucon, the Jerries dented the Yankee lines right at a weak spot. In the know, the Huns broke through and cleaned up four machine-gun nests. More prisoners were taken—guinea pigs for the devilish Kraut concoction that made even the strongest men tell all. At mess, the following day, Major Garrity let the pilots know that the heads of the Allied Command were at their wits' end.

"They didn't have to travel far," contributed Phineas. "Haw! As I said before, there's only one way to git a sample of the Heinie brew, an' that is to send over a guy like me to drink some. Of course, if I was only not arrested—"

Abruptly, the siren blared out. Came a roar from out of the dusky heavens. The nerve-frazzled buzzards tumbled out of the house. Machine-gun bullets dug up the turf of the field. Three Albatross Scouts, not five hundred feet up, were piquing at the Nissen hut belonging to Phineas Pinkham.

Br-r-r-r-rt! Hell was loose. Bump Gillis and Howell ran toward the hangars with the Hun undercarriages almost scraping their pates. Spandau slugs made a sieve out of the Pinkham cubicle.

"The dirty bums!" howled the miracle-man from Boonetown. "Lookit what they done. Thought I was in there, huh? That Limey put 'em wise. He was over here once. This is the end. I will take the bit in my teeth—"

Something heavy thudded to the ground close to the raging Phineas. It was a canvas sack. As the Albatross Scouts zoomed and headed back to Germany, Lieutenant Pinkham opened up the bag. Around a block of wood was tied a message, reading:

"Compliments of the *Rittmeister* von Schnoutz and the German forces. We see all, know all!"

"Look at that!" Phineas cracked. "It's time to act. I won't swallow no such insult from von Snouts. Look at my hut. It won't hold gravel."

Captain Howell and Bump Gillis chased the Jerries for five miles, then gave it up and came back. They left their Spads on the field and walked over to Garrity.

"What's the use?" the flight leader said. "They've



Phineas pasted the black wig over his head.

got our goats. Huh, right over into our laps and—ha, ha, look at that hut of Pinkham's. Well, after all there is something funny in everything."

Phineas Pinkham went to his hut. Rummaging around, he uncovered a book entitled, "Magic in Your Own Home." He turned to a page on which was printed, "How to Drink Poison in Front of Your Friends. A Great Joke!" After rereading the instructions, he got a pair of scissors from his trunk and snipped off most of his hair. Even Phineas shuddered when he looked at his reflection in the mirror.

"Well, I'll even sacrifice my curly locks for the Allies." He grinned, then picked up a black wig and pasted it over his shorn pate. Working fast, the amazing pilot proceeded to disguise himself. When his appearance had been magically changed, he wound bandaging around his neck and brought it up close to his lower lip. In the pocket of his tunic was a flat pint bottle, and from the neck of it ran a rubber tube. This disappeared under the bandages, and all in all it was a very mystifying procedure.

A SHORT TIME LATER, all the pilots of the Ninth and Major Garrity were huddled together in the farmhouse, steeped in gloom, when Phineas walked onto the field. As he neared Howell's Spad, an

ackemma looked at him and uttered a squeak. He had never seen this flyer before.

"Sa-a-arge!" he shouted. "He-e-e-ey, sarge!"

As Casey came out of a hangar, Phineas chuckled. "It's only me," the thorn in Garrity's sore ribs guffawed. "Haw-w-w-w! An' I didn't cut my throat, neither. It's a secret. That's ketchup you see, not my life's blood. Well, git. to the nose and spin that prop when I say the word. Hurry up or else—" Phineas got into the pit and switched on.

"Lieutenant," Casey moaned, running to the Spad, "git out of there! Or I'll yell for the Old Man and—"

A gun appeared in the Pinkham fist. "I'll use this if I have to, Casey," the miracle-man declared. "I'm desperate, as I'm under arrest, and the Allies must be saved. Hey, spin that prop, or I'll shoot ya before Casey," he howled at the trembling ackemma.

"Do as he says," ordered the flight sergeant. "He'll shoot, as he's all off his nut now. I'm not layin' down my life to no homely fathead like Pinkham."

"When I come back, Casey, I'll prefer charges for such disrespect," the delighted pilot threatened. "Adoo. Tell the old turtle I hate to disobey orders, but it's out of his hands, as I have taken up the white man's burden."

Hr-r-r-r-roo-o-om! The Spad slithered away just as Major Garrity and three pilots tumbled out of the doorway of Wings.

"Pinkham, you—you—" spluttered Garrity. "Come back, you—"

"Well, there he goes," said Bump Gillis. "An' take a good look at your Spad, Howell, as you'll never see it again."

"He was all disguised up," Sergeant Casey explained as he trotted up. "He's bandaged up, too. Maybe he cut his throat and is going out to die like a hero."

"He'd better," Garrity gritted. "If he ever comes back, I'll boil him in oil, the loud-mouthed, insubordinate—"

"The suicide squadron is right," mumbled Pilot Wilson. "I think I'll drink me a bottle of iodine."

"He'll land right in the streets of Berlin, that dam-fool!" Garrity yipped. "They'll feed him that stuff and he'll tell everything he knows."

"Then why worry?" Howell drawled, and slipped back into the house.

"Wisecracks!" raged the Old Man. "Nothin' but smart sayings. Cripes!"

Phineas Pinkham, heart filled with the desire to save democracy, skimmed over the Kraut lines, stabbed

at by searchlights and Jerry gun batteries. He saw a big chunk of iron spit through a wing and wash out a strut.

"Haw-w-w-w-w! It ain't my crate. The joke is on Howell."

Into the German back area hopped the Spad, with every cylinder hitting on high. Fabric began to curl up from the top wing as Phineas eased the stick away from him. The nose dropped, and the plane went knifing down toward the carpet. Jerry soldiers pointed their guns skyward and let blaze.

"You could save lead if you only knew it, you bums," hollered their prey. "I am going to be easy to take, like sugar-coated pills."

So saying, Phineas skimmed low over a Jerry billet, zoomed and banked around to set the Spad down three feet from the edge of a canal. Gray-green figures closed in, bayonets as thick as straws in a field of wheat.

"*Handen hoch!*" bawled a Jerry non-com.

"Why—er—" stammered Phineas as he looked at the enemy, "ain't this my side? Huh, what d'ya think of that? I got twisted around. I'm lost!"

"Ho-o-o-o ho!" laughed a Jerry, who evidently knew some English. "*Der Leutnant* he iss lost, *ja?* *Das ist* komikal, *hein?*"

"*Und der Leutnant ist der Amerikaner,*" enthused another one. "*Der air force giffs us the marks mit iron crosses, ja. Gott sie dank!*"

"Well, the joke's on me," Phineas laughed. "Ha, ha!"

The Jerry infantry officers lost no time in conveying the Yankee pilot under heavy guard to a Boche bombing squadron. Phineas was shoved into the presence of a big bull-necked *Herr Oberst*. Another tall monocled Hun laughed thickly as Phineas was hailed into Jerry Wings.

"Take off *der* helmet," the *Herr Oberst* growled. "Where iss idt your manners, *hein?*"

Phineas took off the headgear, felt of his chin gingerly with two fingers.

"Vounded, *hein?*" shot the *Herr Oberst*.

"Yeah," Phineas grinned. "That's why I flew the wrong way, I guess."

"Kolossal!" purred the *Herr Oberst*. "Your squadron, *Dumkopf?*"

"Ninth Pursuit, Major Garrity commanding," replied the flyer.

The *Herr Oberst* jumped up as if someone had slipped a hot coal under his pants.

"Pingham's squadron, *hein?*" he yelled. "*Ach, Gott!*"

Qvick, Ratz, ve need all *der* information aboutt *das* Pingham. *Der* vine, *ja*?”

“*Ja*,” came the response. “*Und* maybe you sendt for *der* Rittmeister von Schnoutz, so he shouldt hear vunce?”

“So iss it,” smirked the *Herr Oberst*. “Send for him.”

“Wine?” grinned Phineas. “Oh, boys, this is too much.”

“Ha,” laughed the *Herr Oberst* gutturally, “ve pudt you oudt, *Herr Leutnant*.”

Everybody laughed at the joke. The man, Ratz, came back with a bottle of wine. He poured out half a water tumbler full, and handed it to Phineas.

“Drink, *Amerikaner*,” he sneered.

Phineas Pinkham, as you will remember, was very quick with his hands. He picked up the glass, tipped it to his lips. As the Jerries watched, the wine disappeared and the *Herr Oberst* rubbed his palms together.

“In *der* next room, *Herr Leutnant*, iss it a couch. You shouldt gedt *der* rest.”

“All the comforts of the Astor, huh?” grinned the captive Yank. “I think I’ll take forty winks ‘cause I’m a little weak at the knees.”

Phineas was ushered into the next room, and there he eased his frame to the old rickety couch. He yawned and passed a hand over his eyes.

“Wake me up at five, as I have to do the milkin,” he chuckled. “Bon sour!”

“*Ach!* So qvick iss idt he sleeps,” said the *Herr Oberst*. “When *der* Rittmeister comes, ve ask him questions, *hein*? Clever he iss, *der* Professor Steinberg. Such a chemist!”

Phineas was snoring when the *Rittmeister* von Schnoutz and two other Jerries from a neighboring squadron entered.

“Now, von Schnoutz, you gedt news of Pingham. You shouldt listen close.”

“*Herr Leutnant*,” the Jerry brass hat snapped as he leaned over Phineas, “vas *das* Pingham killed last night by *der* strafing?”

“N-No,” responded Phineas hesitatingly. “He wasn’t in the hut that was shellacked.”

“*Donnervetter!*” rasped von Schnoutz. “*Ach—*”

“Where iss it Pingham tonighdt?”

“In Barley Duck,” Phineas replied sleepily.

“Right outside in a big tent. The Allies is puttin’ on a vaudeville show. Phineas will take the part of the Kaiser riding a jackass and—”

“*Der* oppstardt!” growled the *Herr Oberst*. “Budt ve gedt him now, *hein*, *Herr Rittmeister*?”

“*Ja*,” acquiesced von Schnoutz. “I ask a favor, *Excellenz*. I shouldt be in *der* Gotha—”

“*Das* ist where you vill be, von Schnoutz. *Der* crew vill divide *der* forty t’housandt marks if ve gedt him. Listen vunce. I haff *der* bick joke. Ve take *der* *Leutnant* also *mit*, *und* pudt him in *der* Gotha. Ve t’row him into Bar-le-Duc *mit* a paper pinned on his coadt what thanks the Yangkees for *der* information.”

Phineas’ heart did a flip-flop. His stomach shrunk to the size of a nettle.

“*Ach*, budt ve von’t kill *der* *Leutnant*,” went on the *Herr Oberst*. “Ve strap him to *der* chute. Vhat iss vun *Leutnant*, compared to *der* Pingham *und* maybe a dozen Allied offizers, *hein*?”

“It iss *der* greadt joke,” the Hun called Ratz agreed. “You should giff back to the Allies *der* tattletale. I understandt, *und* it iss funny.”

Phineas heard and almost betrayed his consciousness with a chuckle.

All that night and the next day, the Jerries treated Phineas with the utmost courtesy. He was incarcerated in an old stable and guarded by two Hun soldiers. The *Rittmeister* von Schnoutz came over toward dusk of the momentous evening, and assured him that he was very grateful for the information he had given in regard to Pinkham.

“That’s some stuff, that squealin’ tonic,” Phineas said. “Well, they can’t blame me.”

“Budt they vill,” the *Rittmeister* pointed out. “I bedt you. Tonight, after ve blow up *der* tent, ve ledt you go down *und* see the remains of Pingham, so!”

“I’d like to see them, as what a surprise it’d be to me,” was the Boone-town miracle worker’s cryptic remark.

AT TWO HOURS BEFORE MIDNIGHT, a pair of giant Gothas rolled out of the Hun drome. In one was the *Rittmeister* von Schnoutz, and at his feet, close to the rear-pit, was the trussed up figure of a Yankee pilot. On his leather coat was pinned a placard to the effect that he was a squealer. The Gothas roared away and headed for Bar-le-Duc, toward the big canvas tent which was pitched outside. There was going to be a show put on in the tent, but it was not to be until two days hence.

“It’ll disgrace me,” wailed Phineas above the throaty growl of the motors. “I’ll never live it down. Put me behind barbed-wire, anythin’, Krauts, anythin’ but that! Oh-h-h!”

“He whines,” laughed von Schnoutz. “All the *Amerikaners* haff jelly spines, *ja*.”

"I beg you—" Phineas pleaded. "I hope the chute busts so's I can die honorably."

"Der chute it vould not," the *Rittmeister* said. "*Das ist vun gut chute. Das ist new from the Drachens.*"

Phineas breathed easier. He counted off time as best he could. Soon he heard the shifting of the rear gunner's feet. Nerves were beginning to tighten. The Gothas were not far away from hostile ground. Another few minutes passed. Then voices rumbled inside the bowels of the bomber. A machine gun began to spit. *Crash! Blamety-blam! Blam!*

"Ach," exulted von Schnoutz, "how iss it, *hein?*" He went up the catwalk to the Jerry bombing officer.

"It iss *kaput*," came the answer. "*Der tent it iss kaput.*"

"*Deutschland uber Alles!*" howled another Hun. "*Der Amerikaner*, ve t'row him, *ja?*"

"Ja!"

Phineas let himself be dragged up through the catwalk and up to the rear pit where a Jerry gunner crouched. He was lifted up and heaved overside. Down, down he fell, until the Jerry chute blossomed up over his head. After a jerk that almost wrenched his false nose free, Phineas began to float down lazily.

"Adoo, bums!" he yelled through space. "I've got the bacon. And wait until I git you upstairs, von Snouts! Oh-h-h, the sun shines bright on my ol' Kentucky ho-o-ome—" sang the intrepid Yank in a base bass voice as he spiraled down.

Five hundred feet from terra firma, he began to steer the chute as best he could. In spite of his navigation, he smacked the ground hard two miles from Bar-le-Duc, was dragged through a swamp, and over freshly plowed ground, studded with sharp rocks. Finally, he got to his feet, fought the chute into submission and took off his straps. With a scared look, then, he fished inside his coat.

"Oh, if it's busted," he murmured weakly, "I'll—ah, it's there. It looks like I've been watched over by a kind Providence."

Phineas sat down on a rock, lifted the flat bottle from his pocket and pulled out the rubber extension. Corking the bottle, he held it up and saw that it was almost full.

"Squealer's tonic, huh!" he grinned. "I've got it. Now, I'll rub my bruises before I start walkin' home." He tore the paper placard from his chest, rolled it into a ball and tossed it into a ditch. "Well, it is a long walk but it's worth it. I ought to drag my remains to the old turtle in about one hour."

In the big room of the farmhouse, Major Garrity and his men sat looking at each other. At times they emitted growls. Howell told Bump Gillis to stop staring at him as if he were something in a sideshow.

"It's the end," the flight leader said. "The Krauts know everything. Phineas is all washed up. There'll be no more fun to this *guerre*. Maybe the Allies will give up and we can go home. I—"

"Quitters!" howled Garrity. "I would give all of you for Phineas' thumb right now. He's—ah, well—"

The door opened. "H'lo bums!" said the prodigal son. "I heard you, major, an' you can have my thumb, haw-w-w-w!"

"Back, are you?" yelped the C.O. "Well, I'll skin you quick now. Didn't get away with it, did you? Where's the Spad?"

"I have no idea at the moment," Phineas said wearily. "I am upset." He reached into his tunic and pulled out the flat bottle. "I need a drink of this vin rouge. I got it out at a Frog's near here." He tipped it to his lips, made an attempt to drink, smacked his lips and set it down on the table.

Bump Gillis' shaking fingers grabbed for it. Howell's lost out by half an inch.

"I need a drink, too," the Scot said. "A big one—"

"Don't take it all," yelled Howell, "you big hog!"

"Pinkham," Garrity roared, "tell me—"

"In due time," Phineas cut in, and sat back in a chair. Bump Gillis turned the bottle upside down and handed it to Howell. "It's empty," he said. "It was the best wine I ever drank."

"You have no idea," laughed the Boonetown pilot. "Well we'll just wait an'—"

In two minutes, Bump Gillis' chin had fallen on his chest. A snore ripped out through his nostrils.

"Now listen close," exclaimed Phineas and got to his feet.

"Huh?" gulped the Old Man. "Huh?"

"Lieutenant Gillis," Phineas asked, "who put the white mice into the barroom in Barley Duck, huh?"

"Ah—er—" came the immediate dreamy response, "me an' Wilson. Ha, ha, we fooled ya, didn't we?"

"He's asleep," yowled the Major. "But—"

"But his subconscious mind is countin' sheep, haw-w-w-w!" finished Phineas. "Now tell me who drove the pig into the other *estaminet*. The pig dressed up like Colonel Pritchett, huh?"

"Bump!" Howell squeaked. "Wake up. Don't talk. You're hypnotized and—"

"Howell did it," said Bump Gillis between two

“Sure he’s asleep,” said Phineas, “but his subconscious mind is countin’ sheep.”



snores. “That was some fun, ha, ha!”

Major Garrity sprang up. “He’s done it! He’s done it!” he shouted. “He got it. The Heinie stuff that make’s men talk. Oh-h-h!” He grabbed Phineas by the sleeve. “You let Gillis drink it. You fathead—”

“I got some more in my pocket as a sample,” Phineas assured the C.O. with a grin. “I had to make

these bums confess. I guess they didn’t frame me, huh? Well, they will fool with a Pinkham!”

“Aw, cripes!” groaned Howell and staggered to the door. “He’s done it. An’ we’re sunk.”

Major Garrity bolted into the Orderly room and buzzed G.H.Q.

“Did I fool the Krauts?” Phineas was saying to

Howell when the Old Man got through listening to grateful promises from Chaumont. "They tossed me out of a Gotha. The one that blew up that tent. Oh, I squealed awright, but I was in my right senses."

"How would they know?" cracked Howell. "You're either the luckiest pin-head or—"

"Let Pinkham alone, unless you want me to put you under arrest for that dirty trick you played on him in Bar-le-Duc," the Major shot out. "Ah—er—how long will Gillis sleep?"

"He should be swearin' at me in the a.m.," the Boonetown flyer said. "Well, seein' as I have saved the Allies again, I guess I'll retire. If Pritchett wants to apologize when he arrives, I will be in my hut to receive, but not before ten in the a.m. Bomb sour as usual!"

"G'night," said Garrity in a daze. "Sleep tight, lieutenant."

"Oh, I will," was Phineas' parting shot. "I've got a quart of coneyac in my hut for a nightcap. Haw-w-w-w!"

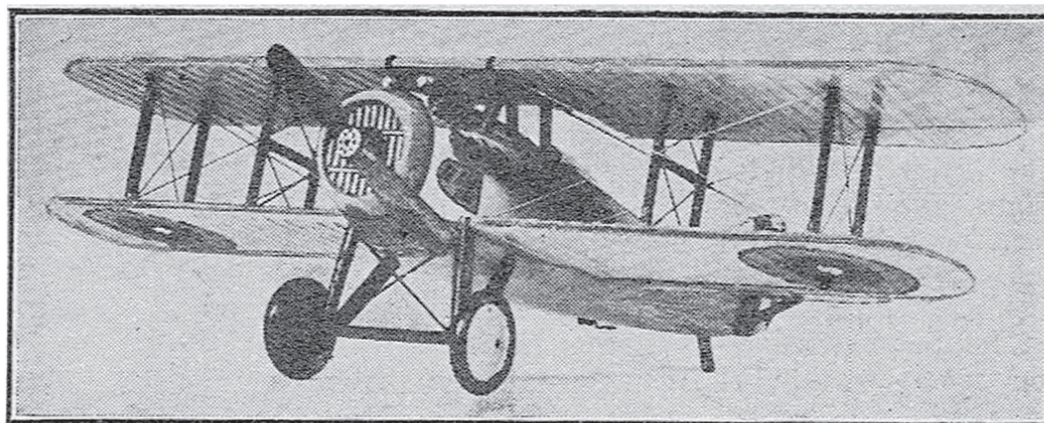
The German Gotha crew, jubilant, singing Jerry folk songs, were nearing the bomber's nest when the guest of the evening, *Rittmeister* von Schnoutz, happened to spot something lying on the catwalk. He picked it up, brought it close to the control pit and let light play upon it. Gurgles rumbled in his throat, and he ripped off his helmet and slammed it against the side of the bombing officer's head.

"*Ach, Dumkopf!*" he forced out. "Look vunce. *Der leedle book.*" Then he read haltingly, "How to Master the Art of Stage Makeup." *Und* on de cover iss idt der name of *Leutnant* Pingham! *Ach*, you giff him back like he vas only *der* umbrella you borrow yedt. *Gott im Himmel!*"

"Bummer!" the bombing officer yelped. "*Und* maybe it iss you vhat iss smardt, *hein?* *Rittmeister—Himmel!* I bedt you he dringks nodt *der* vine."

"*Donner und Blitzen!*" wailed von Schnoutz. "*Der* trick iss idt. *Der* bomber it iss better you shouldt aim it by Holland, *ja!* Ve shouldt land *und* hide yedt so *der* var it ends. *Ach, dn lieber!* Such a headache!"

PHINEAS PINKHAM'S PLANE



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