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**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl

PROP EYES

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Bump Gillis was crazy to let the Jerries force him down behind their lines. But the Jerries were crazy, too. For Bump was the hutmate of the incurable Boonetown jokester—and taking him away from Phineas was like wounding a sabre-toothed tiger's wife.

EARLY IN THE YEAR 1918, Old Man Woe got into an even nastier mood than usual, mixed the gooiest batch of gloom of his pesky career, and dumped it right down onto the drome of Major Rufus Garrity's Ninth Pursuit Squadron of the U.S. Air Force. The mixture spread over the field, seeped into the pilots' huts, oozed sluggishly into the Frog farmhouse that composed the squadron's headquarters, and bogged down the Spad riders clear to the waist. With one exception, however.

The depressing conglomeration seemed to have

dodged the spot where Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, jester extraordinary, was sitting. The miracle man from Boonetown, Iowa, sat in his usual place making a valiant effort to shorten visages which had lengthened like an Eskimo winter.

"Anybody'd think it was somebody else's hutmate that got forced down over in the Kaiser's cabbage patch instead of mine," he flung out through a mouthful of bread. "Ha, I guess it's me that feels like the pie without the a la mode. I told Bump, the fathead, he should just ignore them orders. It was just like somebody handed

him a death certificate an' told him to go out an' live up to it. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

"Don't you question my orders, you fan-eared, speckled dodo," the Old Man roared. "I'll give 'em again, and I've got just the fathead in mind to take 'em. Laugh that off, Lieutenant Pinkham!"

"Haw-w-w-w-w-w! Don't say I don't know my discipline. Anything ya say, major! Well—" He flipped a hand by way of emphasis.

Major Garrity picked up his cup of steaming coffee, threw a lip over the rim. *Bong!* The muddy Java sprayed out, laved the irate C.O.'s apoplectic countenance, and added another cleaner's bill to his expense account. The major threw the cup through the window. There was a crash of glass. The window had not been open.

Phineas indulged in an enthusiastic guffaw. "Boy, what nerves! I bet they're all frayed up like a beggar's elbows. Haw-w-w-w! It was an exploding pastille made out of—"

Major Rufus slowly removed his splattered tunic, carefully placed it over the back of his chair as he got up.

"Lieutenant Pinkham," he said solemnly, "we are going to fight!"

"Oh, no, we ain't," protested the jokester indignantly. "Not that I'm afraid of you, but it's the principle of the thing. You are darin' me into a court-martial, that's what! Go ahead, hit a defenseless man! I know a lawyer in the army, an' I got somethin' on him. I will sue you to the hilt. Haw-w-w-w! Oh, well—"

Garrity made a lunge for his tormenter but missed. The Boonetown flyer had reached the door when the major threw a chair. Phineas sidestepped nimbly and let the article of furniture fly out through space. It bounced off the head of a doughboy who sat at the wheel of an auto that had just rolled up. The Brass Hats' car had just slowed down but the driver, rendered *non compos mentis* for the moment, pushed down hard on the gas. With a roar, the khaki-hued gas buggy shot for a tree, kissed it hard and bounced back. Phineas loitered just long enough to wonder how everybody got into the front seat so quickly, then hustled away on his own business.

"See! That's what happens when you get all worked up," he flung back as Garrity jumped out of the house like a toad in a fit. "You should learn to take a joke."

Major Rufus helped a fuming Brass Hat off the hood of the car and talked fast.

"I will explain nothing," he glowered. "Just going

to put things in order an' leave for Brest tonight. Have you got a list of transport sailings, sir?"

"By Godfrey, major, I'll—what's the meaning of—how dare you? By gad!"

"Oh, I'll come clean," snorted the Old Man. "I tried to kill Lieutenant Pinkham. Furthermore, I haven't given up. I'll try it again, gentlemen. So what do you want to make out of it?"

"They ought to do away with this outfit," a colonel yelled as he picked splinters of windshield glass out of his chin. "I'll recommend it to Chaumont. I'll—"

"Let's draw up the papers," Garrity ripped out.

"Come, come now," the third Brass Hat soothed him. "Unfortunate occurrence, that's all. Let's forget it. We have more important things to see you about, major. Shall, we step inside?"

"It's a hell of an army," growled Garrity. "Don't they let anybody resign? Oh, well, come on in."

When Phineas Pinkham entered his hut, he felt an aching void in the region of his diaphragm. Bump Gillis' pipe, still loaded with fresh tobacco, lay on a table. It was also loaded with little bits of horsehair.

"I'll get even with them Krauts," he stormed.

"Cheat me out of laughs, huh? It's just like Bump. He gets captured just when a guy—" The last part of the speech was lost, as Phineas was on his hands and knees under Bump Gillis' cot.

Soon he emerged, pulling out a large, square box to which was attached a string. Phineas turned his head to the side and jerked said string. The box lid flipped up, and a large boxing glove, caked with dry mud, reared its head like a striking cobra. The motivating spring hummed.

"It would have smacked Bump right in the tail assembly," bemoaned the vanished flyer's hutmate. "Gosh, them Heinies! Von Beerbum, I bet it's you that got Bump. Well, that is like you wounded a sabretoothed tiger's wife. I am good and sore and I'll get hunk. I will get that big shed loaded with Heinie haberdashery and canned horsemeat! When I get through, the Kaiser will have an army that will look like catacomb inmates let out for recess. I guess I'll go to Barley Duck as it is dead around here."

No sooner said than done. That was Phineas Pinkham—a man of action. He did not bother to consult the equipment officer regarding means of locomotion. It was easier to simply appropriate a motorcycle from B Flight's hangar.

"He'd only argue if I asked him," Phineas contended, pushing the machine out.



Sergeant Casey ankled over fast when he saw the proceeding.

“Lootenant, I got orders. You’ll git hell for that!” “I will give you half,” grinned Phineas and set the mechanical bug to stuttering. “I am a sport; Adoo, sarge!”

“The homely bum!” Casey gritted. “I’m in a sling ag’in. I bet I git docked. If I do, I’ll bust that guy in the nose!”

Now even as Phineas Pinkham headed for Barle-Duc, an old Frog vender of strange wares was inquiring the whereabouts of the jokester in an *estaminet* of that historic hamlet.

“*Le bon customair*, he ees,” the old peddler assured those whom he quizzed. “*Quelque chose amusant*—how he says *le funnee* t’ings he buy, *non? Peut-etre*, eef I wait, *le lieutenant arrive bientot, oui?*”

“*Vous allez*,” growled the Frog bartender. “Phinyees Peenkham, he ees crazzee lak ze bug in ze bed. *Vous aussi! Allez! Vite!*”

The Frog vender left the oasis, shaking his head dolefully. As he went through the door, a flyer stopped him.

“If voose desire to see the lieutenant, there’s wan place he weel arrive at if he comes in *ce soir*, old man.

See that house down the street? *Une* madwaselle lives there. The lieutenant, he is gaga about her. Don’t mention it.”

“*Merci, merci*,” squeaked the Frog. “Ah, j’attende tout de la nuit.”

IT CAME TO PASS that Phineas Pinkham, having imbibed a snort or two of virulent Frog brew in a *buvette*, chug-chugged up to the *maison* of his Josephine and separated his gangly frame from the motorcycle. Before he could climb the steps, however, the old merchant had jerked at the skirt of his trenchcoat.

“*M’sieu*,” invited the old man. “*M’sieu* lak ze fun, *non?*”

“Does a seagull like fish?” retorted Phineas, grinning. “Haw, you sell eet mabbe rubber crullers, huh?”

With this much encouragement, the old peddler hurriedly jerked his pack from his ancient back and rummaged inside of it.

“*M’sieu*, you have hear’ of ze wax museum *avec* ze figures of ze murderers?” he quavered with salesmen’s tactics. “*Oui? Zen m’sieu* weel lak l’objet Henri have *ici*. *Les yeux, m’sieu!* What you say? Eyes! Eyes of all

ze most wicked creeminals of ze worl'. Ah, *m'sieu*, *l'homme*, he mak' ze eyes an' he ees ze, what you call heem? Ze expert! *Regardez, m'sieu! Ici* Henri have ze eyes of *l'homme* what has kill' hees wife an' eighteen *enfants avec* ze pick-axe, *oui! Regardez!* Henri put zem on ze top of his eye! *Regardez, m'sieu! Les eyes* zey fit!"

"Boys!" exclaimed Phineas. "Ya look like you could strangle a cherubim. They're some lamps! Ugh! Go on, Henri, I am interested no end, as the Limeys say."

Salesman Henri displayed his samples with high glee. This customer was, he had been told, the easiest mark in all Europe. He showed Phineas a reproduction of the eyes of Bluebeard, Lucretia Borgia and other nefarious characters, the mention of whose names quickly changed the minds of recalcitrant little Frogs who rebelled against going to bed at a reasonable hour. And the eyes had been cunningly fashioned so that they could be placed between the eyeballs and the eyelids. A little hole in the center of the pupil of each made it possible for the wearer to see.

"I'll take the ones like Bluebeard and the axe murderer who went haywire in the orphanage," chortled the venture some Yank. "How much?"

"Ten francs each, *m'sieu*," the Frog whispered exultantly. "I have *ici* wan pair of eyes what you have not see. Twenty-five francs *zey* are, an' even Henri he lak not for to look at these eyes. *M'sieu* tak' zem, *non?*"

"*Oui, oui*," agreed Phineas. "Open 'em up."

The Frog peddler did just that, and shoved them toward Phineas. "*Regardez, m'sieu!*" He shuddered.

Phineas flipped the objects over and felt himself grow a little dizzy. "Cripes! This guy must have cut a lot of throats. I'll take these peepers, monsewer. Wrap 'em up, veet! Boy, what glimmers! I could stare down Pershin' with them. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

The deal completed, Phineas bade the Frog *adieu* and walked up the steps to knock on Babette's door. Before she opened it, Romeo facetiously donned Bluebeard's eyes. Babette opened the door, and Phineas greeted her.

"Bomb sour, madwaselle. I have come to foreclose the mortgage!"

"Why, Pheenyas, you mak' eet ze joke, ha, ha! Eeeek! Don't you should look at Babette lak zat. Don' you dare for to keel me. Mabbe eet ees you fin' I have go *avec* ze majair from ze Anglais squadron, *non?* Well, you have give Babette what you call ze stoodup las' week, so! *Mais non*, ze eyes you look weeth, *zey* are *trez* terrib'e— I call eet ze *gendarmes*, He-e-e-elp!"

Phineas turned around and made passes in front

of his eyes, then whirled about to look at Babette again. "Haw-w-w-w-w-w! Did I fool ya? Well, Babette, ain't you got a sense of humor? Put down that stool, cherry!"

Outside in the street, two minutes later, Phineas rubbed a bump on his cranium. It was fast rising to the size of an African native's hut. He looked wildly around for the Frog peddler. Having no luck, he wended his way to an *estaminet*. Phineas was much nettled and in no mood to be trifled with.

"I sye!" a Limey flyer tossed at him as he walked up to the bar, "An' did you buy anythin' tonight? I told a Frenchy about a bloke as would buy anythin' you Yanks call 'nutty.' Ha, ha, I see you met him."

Bop! Phineas massaged the King's pilot with hard knuckles. Two other officers decided to be put out about it. Phineas propelled one through the door with a quick jab to the belligerent's prop boss. M.P.'s got the office from a wildly shouting bartender and blew their whistles. Two tough-looking upholders of A.E.F. law barged into the *estaminet* just as the explosive Yank sideslipped through a rear window.

"Count ten before ya come lookin' for me," he yipped before he started running. "It is not fair! Haw-w-w-w-w!"

Lieutenant Pinkham ran up an alley and dashed through an open door. He found himself in a kitchen and heard sounds above. When a big M.P. plowed in with a flashlight, our hero was hidden behind the stove.

"You keep on goin' up the alley," bellowed the M.P. to his companion. "I'll bet he's in here. I'll turn the place upside down."

Phineas knew he was snagged. Quickly, he reached into his pocket and drew out two little objects which were wrapped in tissue paper. He unwrapped them and inserted them in his eye sockets. Then he straightened and walked out of his hiding place.

"Lookin' for me?" he growled. The M.P. whirled.

"Yeah. You—ah—er—huh, maybe I was mistaken. I—er—"

The man with the brassard shivered and blinked his eyes several times. He turned slowly and went out, bumping his head against the door jamb. Again he turned, muttered something unintelligible, and was gone. Just then a woman peered down at Phineas from a stairway. She said, "Ugh!" and draped herself over the banisters.

"Adoo!" breathed Phineas, and departed. "Haw-w-w-w-w! That was some investment I made. Well, I must get to my horse."

The Yankee flyer rode onto the drome some time later, deposited the motorcycle in its rightful place, and went to his hut. He bent his energies to an examination of his purchases. The eyes which had scared the M.P. were indeed baleful-looking things. Even Phineas could not look at them for more than a few seconds at a time. On the back of one of the thin concave objects he spotted some lettering. Part of it had been obliterated. "Mes—r" remained.

"Huh," decided the major's Carbuncle, "I bet he was an awful butcher."

Later he strolled over to headquarters to learn that he was very much included in the early patrol.

"We go over with bombs to try an' smack that Heinie supply shed," Howell shoved at him. "I hope you're in the mood."

"I will leave no stone unturned to find Bump," Phineas declared. "Von Beerbum will pay—"

"So far, he has got the sign of every Indian tribe in America pinned on you," Wilson cut in. "Well, Jenny Lind was good once, too. Ha, ha!"

From his place in the corner, Phineas swore prodigiously. He got up and flung out his arms. Captain Howell took one look at him, reached the mess bar in three leaps, dove over it and disappeared completely from sight.

"Ar-r-r-r-agh!" Phineas erupted at Wilson and four other pilots. "Yuh've pushed me far enough, an' somethin' has snapped in my dome! I'll tear you limbs from limbs. I will cut your throats and wade in blood. That's what I want, blo-o-o-od!" He bounded into the kitchen yelling for a butcher knife.

"I'm leavin'," Wilson said weakly. "Did ya see them eyes? The guy's cracked wide open!"

When Phineas returned, the place was empty. He opened his eyes wide and let the false fronts fall loose.

"Bluebeard, you was quite some bum," he observed to the vacant air. As he sat down to relax, he suddenly heard Howell's voice.

"You have him dragged to a nuthouse," the flight leader was shouting.

"Nuts!" Phineas heard the Old Man say, and then the door opened. The major came out.

"H'lo," Phineas greeted him pleasantly, "Ha, ha. I lost my dome for a minute, as Bump Gillis' capture has been quite a shock to my delicate system. You gotta be patient with me as—"

A FLIGHT, depleted a bit, hopped off at dawn. The Spads went out with three Cooper bombs nestling

close to their livers. Everything seemed to go very smoothly until the flight reached a point in the ozone approximately ten thousand feet above the Jerry front lawn. At that point, von Beerbohm and his partners in homicide and skullduggery snarled, hummed a hymn of hate and tumbled down from the sun.

"It's a good thing I changed my paint job," Phineas gulped, as the dogfight waxed hot. "Von Beerbum will not spot me, that is one thing. Haw-w-w-w-w!" Phineas suddenly inhaled the burst of mirth as a Spad piqued at him fast and splintered the boards at his feet with a quick Vickers burst.

"What in—" He coughed and ripped the bombs loose. "Hey, are ya deaf? Can't ya see I'm with ya?"

He flung his own Spad to another part of the hot squabble, kicked a Kraut out of his path and then looked about him to see how the flight was doing. The Pinkham esophagus emulated an accordion as its owner spotted a Camel diving down on Howell.

"Oh, you bums! You dirty traitors! I'll—" And then Phineas keeled over as he saw that Spad cutting in on him again. Seconds later, it sprayed him with more lead, then overshot. Pinkham did not feel very well. He felt worse when von Beerbohm almost washed out his tail feathers.

"I am framed," the Yank' moaned. "That Spad pointed me out. I will not fight another lick."

The Boonetown jokesmith fought his way out and found that he and Captain Howell were in accord for once in their lives, for the flight leader had evidently had more than plenty. The mysterious British Camel shot an elevator off another Spad's tail before the Yanks got over the deadline. It went spiraling down onto Jerry real estate.

Howell made a reckless landing, jumped out of his Spad before it stopped rolling. The Old Man swore at him as he watched the other ships jockey into place overhead.

"I've had enough," Howell shrilled. "The Allies are fighting us, too. Ask Carbuncle Pinkham! A Spad almost nailed him. A Camel jumped on my neck. Call up the Wing—"

"That's right," Phineas yipped as he came running up. "For once Howell is right. Even I'll admit it."

"You mean to tell me that Allied ships shot at you?" Garrity scoffed.

"They didn't toss us cookies," Phineas hollered. "I won't go up one single flight, of stairs until somethin's looked into. That is final. We strike!"

Captain Howell nodded. Three other startled pilots

stamped up, took off their helmets and slammed them down.

“We quit!” was their chorus.

“Ain’t I got trouble enough?” stormed the Old Man. “Can’t you think up something else? What did you do—waste those bombs?”

“Why, no,” Phineas retorted loftily. “I stopped off an’ hid mine in a hollow tree. I hope the moths don’t get at them, haw-w-w-w! You’re the one bein’ silly, now.”

“Pinkham, you’re busted!” thundered the major.

“What can I call you to get the same thing?”

Captain Howell tossed at him. “Pinkham is lucky.”

Major Garrity turned and stumbled toward the stone house. Phineas could not believe that the C.O. was crying, but he had to admit the major was making some awfully funny sounds.

Toward midafternoon, Phineas, in the midst of a chore, was rudely disturbed by an orderly. The orderly conveyed the major’s request for an interview with Lieutenant Pinkham at his earliest possible convenience. Phineas threw Bump Gillis’ last shirt into the trunk and trudged out, wiping his brow.

“Pinkham,” the Old Man barked as the pilot from Boonetown saluted sloppily in front of the rostrum of the Ninth Pursuit, “you will get into a Spad in just ten minutes and fly over the lines. I want to see if those Allied ships take a shot at you again.”

“Haw-w-w-w,” was Phineas’ trumpetlike retort, “ya forgot somethin’, didn’t ya? I am busted!”

“My memory hasn’t been up to snuff lately.” Garrity grinned savagely. “I have no recollection of disciplining you, my great big brave flyer. You get ready and hop to it!”

“What sport you would get experimentin’ with lockjaw germs on guinea pigs,” Phineas sniffed.

“Compared to your ticker, a landlord’s heart is made of custard. You would use a live bullfrog for a pin cushion.”

“You got your orders,” blared the major. “Outside, before I—”

“I’m. out!” hollered Phineas.

Twenty minutes later, Lieutenant Pinkham looked no bigger than a housefly buzzing against the roof of the world. He circled a couple of times and then a fly swatter, powered by a Hisso motor, made a lusty swipe at him. It was a Spad put out by the same factory which had made his own battle wagon, and the maneuvers of the pilot at its controls seemed glaringly, nauseatingly familiar to Phineas Pinkham.

“It ain’t so,” he croaked, ducking a burst. “I am a liar! It can’t be.”

Nevertheless, the Spad came roaring at him, ejected a pound or two of steel-jacketed slugs, then pulled up just in time to prevent a merger. Phineas, irked to the quick, got down to serious business. He tried things with the Spad which he had never tried before, and it nonplussed the pilot of the other crate to such a degree that he forgot to duck a very important punch.

“Take that,” gritted the unbeatable Yank, theoretically wiping his hands after a good job well done. “Now, we will see who you are, you Judas Iscariot!”

He watched the Spad hobble down like a Civil War veteran descending the steep steps of a fire tower. Just before the ship caressed the carpet, it straightened out and landed like a duck filled with buckshot.

“FOOL with me, huh?” yelped Phineas, and lost altitude fast.

He picked himself a spot to land—the middle of a square in a ruined Frog village. Billed Yankee doughs were running toward the conked ship in a stream as thick as an ant trail. Two officers grabbed Pinkham when he climbed from the cockpit of his ship.

“What’s the big idea?” they wanted to know. “Shootin’ down a Spad! Why—why, it’s Lieutenant Pinkham. Why, you—playin’ jokes, huh? Well, you went too far this time.”

“Sew up your mugs,” the flyer yipped. “I want to get that Kraut. The dirty wolf in a sheepskin coat! The bum!”

But the man who was leaning dazedly against the wreck of the Spad bore no more resemblance to a Teuton than a Congo headhunter. He gaped around, one hand digging into his scalp. Phineas made a leap toward him, swore in amazement and sat right down on his fuselage.

“Bump Gillis! You—why, say it ain’t so, Bump! What was you shootin’ at me for? What do you mean by—”

“Carbuncle,” stuttered Bump, “how did I git here? The last I remember I was in a Krauts’ nest lookin’ at a big squarehead with a long black beard. How—where am I?”

“You’re right where they make up firin’ squads, you nickel squeezer,” yapped his hutmate, drawing close. “This morning you were with the Heinies shootin’ at Howell an’ me an’— Bump Gillis, I am arrestin’ you, an’ you will not get a lawyer. You come with me right



to Major Garrity. I am hurt to the quick, Bump. To think that you—why, it’s—fancy you—I can’t believe it!”

“Aw, Carbuncle, I’m tellin’ ya straight,” argued the Scot. “When I smacked just now, my dome seemed to shake somethin’ loose that felt like a ton of scrap iron. I guess I must’ve had amnesia or somethin’, huh?”

“Don’t talk to me, you crook!” snapped Phineas. “The A.E.F. judge will work on you. You’re worse than Benedict Arnold, even. Where is your thirty cents they paid you, Judas Gillis?”

“Pinkham,” interrupted a dough, “when I first took a look at this fellow after the crackup, he had a look on his map like an M.P. we picked up in Barley Duck last night. We—”

“Huh?” gulped Phineas. “Er—well, come on, Bump.”

Back on the drome of the Ninth, Lieutenant Pinkham turned his prisoner over to Major Garrity. Again the Old Man withstood a stroke.

“The least we will do is shoot you, Gillis,” he berated the errant flyer. “You’re arrested.”

“But I tell ya,” protested Bump, “the last I remember—”

“After ya git shot,” Phineas encouraged him, “ya won’t feel it, like as if they just pulled out your wisdom tooth. Haw-w-w-w, Bump, did ya see a guy in a Camel fightin’ with the Krauts, too?”

“Y-yeah,” Bump acknowledged, “an’ it was a Limey an’ no fake. Just before I met the Heinie with the beard I saw him, an’—”

“Major Garrity,” snapped Phineas, “there’s dirty work afoot, and it ain’t slowed up by bunions. I’m goin’ to volunteer to risk my life an’ limb for my country an’ Bump Gillis.”

“We—we’ve got to bomb that Heinie grocery and men’s furnishing store!” yipped the C.O. “I can’t spare even you, and that is being shorthanded to the limit. You wait until I give orders, you unhung hero!”

“You know, major, I’m gittin’ to dislike you,” observed the Old Man’s supreme itch. “Come on, Bump, as you’ll find mercy here like you were a Police Gazette in a Baptist Church pew.”

Phineas did not sleep well that night. His hutmate kept waking him with a blood-curdling yell.

“That’s three times now,” groaned Bump. “They say, ‘Ready—aim—’ but I always wake up before they holler ‘Fire!’ Aw w w w, cripes! Carbuncle, I am an innocent man.”

The pilot from the plains of Ioway got out of his tumbled bed and dressed slowly. Just before dawn, he left the hut and scampered toward A Flight’s hangar. Sergeant Casey and two ack emmas were inside, prying sleep-drugged optics to keep them open.

“Quick, get my Spad out!” yipped the lieutenant. “You can see how desperate I am.”

“Looka here, loot—ah—er, yeah—yeah!” Casey croaked. “Don’ gimme them looks—ugh! Right away, loot!”

Major Garrity heard the Hisso roar a few minutes later and leaped out of his bed. In bare feet, he minced across the splintery boards to the window and saw the Spad roar across the field.

“To hell with him!” he growled sleepily and crawled back into the warm covers.

“The axe murderer’s eyes sure fooled Casey,” the fleeing pilot grinned as he gunned toward Germany. “I got a hunch, Bump, and it is bigger than the guys who went to Notre Dame.”

A Kraut observer spotted Phineas Pinkham’s plane as it skimmed over the lines. He buzzed the Heinie telephone exchange to life, interrupting the *Rittmeister* von Beerbohm in the middle of a big snore.

“*Der Spadt* iss idt, *ja?*” he muttered. “Already idt gets kaput! I go vunce oop! *Ach*, I have the feelink as maybe idt giffs Leutnant Pingham. *Himmel*, I bedt you *mein* life! *Dumkopf!*” he barked at his Teuton slave. “*Mach’ schnell mit* mine coat! *Du bist* more slower as the snail!” He emphasized his displeasure by batting the valet in the ear with a hand as delicate as a two-pound cut of sirloin steak.

“*Herr Leutnant* Pingham shouldt shoodt idt *der* big liverwurst full *mit* holes,” the servant muttered, “*und* I vill laugh *mit* splits by mine sides. *Himmel*, sooch a fatheadt!”

Phineas Pinkham, however, did not shoot von Beerbohm full of holes. The Von ace lanced up with one of his blue-bloods and flushed the Spad out of the mists with a Spandau crossfire that depreciated

the Yankee crate at least forty per cent on the Allied ledgers.

The top wing of Phineas’ Spad was ventilated like the music roll of a player piano as Phineas sideslipped a thousand feet, and he felt his scalp lift like that of an indignant porcupine. There was quite a strain at the strap under his chin as his helmet was pushed up. He smelled leather burning and coughed as phosphorous crept into his nostrils. Something lay in his lap. Phineas picked it up and heaved it over his shoulder. It was a spent tracer bullet.

“Haw-w-w-w! That’s the first time!”

The Jerry mosaic was coming up to greet him as if he were somebody arriving to pay off the mortgage on it. Phineas looked back and saw the grim Heinie Harpies crowding him close.

“What a hell of a fuss ya’d made if I hadn’t wanted to land. You’re just bloodthirsty like all the papers say. Well—” He rolled in fast, skidded to duck a line of Jerry trucks, then made a figure eight on the ground that could not have been matched by an ice skater.

“WEE, gates, bums!” Phineas chortled as he climbed out, a little dizzy. “Have ya got the key to the town? Haw-w-w-w.”

“Pingham! *Gott im Himmel!* Vait vunce so *der Rittmeister—*”

“If the Dumlcopf giffs one moof, shoodt him. *Mit* tricks *und* foolishments yedt, he gedts away odder than vunce. *Ach!*”

“I ain’t got nothin’ up my sleeve now but an elbow,” grinned the captive. “I am kapoot!”

“So-o-o-o-o-roo!” a gloating voice cut in. “I gedt you already yedt. The smardt vun iss idt I ben, Pingham, *hein?*”

“All you Vons only think you’re smart, haw-w-w-w-w!” Phineas intimated. “Is breakfast on the table, or do you bums still eat? I hear the Kaiser’s pantry is empty like Old Mother Hubbard’s. You look peaked, von Beerbum! I wish they wouldn’t switch signposts around, as I lost my way.”

With a feeding omitted, Phineas was led to the Staffel commander in a hurry. The *Rittmeister* pushed the Yank toward him and laughed.

“The prize porker, *Excellenz*, *hein?*”

“For you it giffs medals, *Herr Rittmeister*,” a big Teuton with a hairless dome rumbled. “Take him away *und mach’ schnell—nein—*stop! The idea I haff. Lock *der Leutnant* by the stable *mit* our cow. *Herr* von Sproutz shouldt meet him, alzo. Funny, iss idt, *ja?*”

“Ho, ho,” guttural von Beerbohm. “Idt fills me *mit* stiditches. Chust like the odders, *hein?* Pingham vill bomb idt *der* Allied airdrome, *und*—Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Jokes *mit* screamingk!”

“What’s the joke, you sourkraut sniffers?” Phineas bristled. “I’d like to laugh, too. Haw-w-w-w!”

“Oudt!” barked the Staffel commander. “By the stable. I vill call idt. *Herr* von Sproutz!”

So a few minutes later Phineas found himself incarcerated with a bovine in a smelly shack on the edge of the Kraut field. He looked out of the window and gulped. A British Camel and a D.H.6 were standing out in the middle of the Jerry drome. Squareheads were fooling around the D.H., and Phineas saw that they were fastening bombs under the wings.

“The dirty bums!” he snorted, turning to the cow. “I bet you even hate to make milk for these Krauts. Huh, if I can find a pail, I’ll have breakfast. Haw-w-w-w! I wish they’d send a hen in here, too.”

The Yankee captive, however, found that the cow had already given until it hurt. Hunger gnawing at his giblets, Phineas went to the window again to look out. His eyes bulged. Across the field were coming the Staffel commander and a tall Heinie wearing a beard cut in the shape of a spade.

“So Bump wasn’t a liar, for once,” he erupted. “Well, I got an idea. He looks like Bluebeard, and—boys!”

Phineas left the window in a hurry and threw himself down into a corner on a pile of musty hay. He looked very dejected when the bearded squarehead came in.

“I leaf him by you, *Herr* von Sproutz,” the *Herr Oberst* grinned. “In ten minutes I vant he shouldt leadt the D.H. ofer, *ja?*”

“*Ja*,” a voice as deep as a mine shaft exulted. “*Herr* von Sproutz nefer fails. Leaf me *mit*.”

The door banged to.

“Gedt idt oop, Yangkee *Schwein*,” barked the *Herr* von Sproutz. “Giff *ein* loogk! Gedt idt oop!”

Phineas got up. His eyes stared at von Sproutz. The German’s baleful optics widened and his board shook.

“*Ach, Himmel!*” The Kraut’s hands went limp at his sides and he became as stiff as a bronze stag on a Gay Nineties’ lawn. “Master,” he tremored, “I vail’ your commands.”

“Boys!” breathed Phineas, tottering on his dogs. “In another second he would have had me. Well, the Frog was right. These glimmers—well, I hope there ain’t no mirrors about—haw-w-w-w! I get it, now. *Herr*

von Sproutz, you walk out ahead of me and show me where you have the Allied aviators hid. You hear me, you big fathead?”

“*Ja, ja!* After me follow vunce, *und* ve go.”

“Lead on, Mac von Duff,” Phineas ordered him peremptorily. “You’re my slave worse than Uncle Tom.”

A group of Krauts in front of Staffel headquarters guffawed as *Herr* von Sproutz, walking like a somnambulist, led Phineas Pinkham across the field.

“Giff *ein* look!” yipped von Beerbohm. “I could see dot *Leutnant’s* eyes shine from here, yedt. He iss hibnotize, *hein?*” He started to walk out toward Phineas and the hypnotizer.

“Wave your hand at them,” Phineas intoned. “Wave them back, slave!”

Von Sproutz obediently raised his arm. Von Beerbohm fell back. The squadron commander barked at the *Rittmeister*.

“You vant idt the shpell shouldt broke, *Dumkopf?* The ships, they iss ready yedt, *nein?*”

“*Ja*, they vait the Allied pilots. Ho, ho!”

Von Sproutz led Phineas to a small cubicle, opened it and went in. The Yank stared into the faces of two bewildered flyers who seemed to have awakened from a sound snooze.

“Where are we?” they gulped. “Who—why, Phineas Pinkham, you traitor! You homely, double-crossin’—”

“Haw-w-w-w!” gurgled Phineas, removing the phoney eyes. “You woke up when I put this squarehead into dreamland, that’s what. Shut up, an’ listen! You see them ships out there? Well, there’s bombs on ‘em, and you were goin’ over to wash up a Yankee flyin’ field. Make out you are still gaga and follow me. I am going to the Camel. I’m to show you the way, as I am hypnotized, too. Get it?”

“Yeah,” said one. “That guy with the beard. Why, you—I get it! Boys, you’re a panic. Lead the way, Carbuncle. We’ll follow.”

“Von Sproutz, show the boys to their ships, or do I have to bat you one?”

“*Ja*, master!”

In front of Staffel headquarters, von Beerbohm and the *Herr Oberst* laughed and pointed.

“There they go vunce, ho, ho! *Und* vhen back they coom, ve shoodt *Herr* Pingham, *nein?*”

“Did I say *nein?*” chuckled the *Rittmeister*. “Ve Chermans! *Ach, Gott mit uns!*”

PHINEAS walked to the Camel like a A robot, hands at his sides, knees stiff. He climbed in, got it to roaring.

When he took off at the end of the run across the field, he saw the D.H.6 leap the chocks. A broad grin bisected his freckled face as he got to two thousand feet and waited. Then off to the right he saw a low rambling structure surrounded by Heinie trucks.

"The Heinie storehouse!" he yipped. "What a setup!" He waved to the D.H.6, then stabbed a finger toward his find. The two-seater responded.

A few moments later, von Beerbohm made a funny sound and tugged at his superior's belt.

"Somewhere idt iss wrong," he yowled. "Giff vun loogk! They go nodt ofer the lines, but ofer the dump. *Ach, Himmel*, to the ships!"

The Staffel commander dashed over to where von Sproutz stood, and grabbed him by the neck.

"*Was ist?*" he yelled.

"*Ja*, master!" intoned von Sproutz. "Anyt'ing you shouldt say idt, *ja!*"

The *Herr Oberst* swung the man around and looked into his eyes.

"*Gott!*" he gurgled. "Pingham—he hybnitized *Herr* von Sproutz. *Donner und Blitzen!* A deffil he iss. To the ships!"

Blam! Crash! Kerwham!

The *Herr Oberst* held his hands over his eyes. He did not take them away until von Beerbohm and four Heinie crates had sliced up into the clouds. But they got there too late. The D.H.6, with Phineas in the lead, was leaping in long strides toward Allied lines.

"Bummer!" bellowed the *Herr Oberst*. "I will gedt idt you some day yedt!" He turned on von Sproutz and conked him on the top of the head with a big fist. "Smardt you bin vunce!"

"Uh—or—where idt iss?" gulped von Sproutz, pawing at the ozone in front of his eyes. "*Ja*, Pingham, you look at me vunce—you—vhy, where *ist?* Where *ist* the stable? *Donnervetter!*"

"Bah," exploded the *Herr Oberst*. "Go away vhere idt iss I don' shouldt see you efen *mit* a sky telescope."

On the drome of the Ninth, Major Rufus Garrity was pacing back and forth, hither and yon, like a man who had lost a collar button. No one dared to speak to him. The Old Man clutched a gun in his hand.

"If he ever dares to land on this acre," he blasted, "I'll—Oh, just let him dare!"

Somebody let out a yell. Garrity stiffened, looked up into the firmament. Two ships were coming in. Captain Howell

Jumped up and down like a carpenter who had just aimed a hammer at a nail and landed it on his thumb.

"One's a Camel!" he shouted. "I know that ship! Phineas has done something again."

"It'll be the last time," growled the C.O., making sure his gun was fully loaded. "It's the Camel that broke the straw's—it's the last back—Cripes! I'm not responsible. No jury will—"

Phineas Pinkham tore in, missing a hangar by a whisker, and brought the Camel down and gunned it toward the major. Garrity flattened himself on the ground and shot a hole through the lower wing of the ship as it flashed by over his head. Howell disarmed him before he could shoot again.

Phineas jumped from the Camel, waited until the other crates had landed, and looked toward the spot where Howell and two pilots sat on their C.O.

"You can let Bump go, as I can explain," the Boonetown marvel hollered. "These bums were with him an' thought they was Krauts. They was hypnotized by a guy with a black beard, too. Boys! I just give the big beaver the eye and he went out like a light. I didn't tell you about my collection of eyes, did I? Oh, h'lo major, why don't you git up?"

Jaw sagging, Major Garrity blinked up at the pilots who had climbed out of the D.H.6. "Is that baboon tellin' the truth?"

"The eyes have it!" chortled Phineas. "That is some joke, huh?"

"By jove, Pinkham," the Limey pilot said, "you jolly well took us out of a tight spot. Clever, no end, Pinkham ol' chap. The King is about to hear of this."

"Would you mind lettin' me in on it, too?" Garrity thrust in. "I am only boss here, y'know, ha, ha! But if you'd stretch a point and tell me anyway—come on, you freckled mongoose, spit it out!"

Professor Pinkham reached into his pocket and pulled out two thin concave objects. He turned his back and put them into place over his own washed-out blue glimmers. Then he whirled on Garrity.

"This is how—"

"Ugh—*cr-r-r-ripes!* Er—P-Pinkham, take 'em off! I—"

The miracle man obeyed and proffered them to the Old Man. "We was s'posed to come out an' bomb a Yankee drome," he explained, as usual the center of attraction. "They put bombs on the D.H., there, but we unloaded them on the Kraut haberdashery shed, sir, instead of bringin' 'em home. I hope you ain't too angry, but we are young an' rash—"

The major looked goggle-eyed at Phineas Pinkham and the two pilots he had brought in.

“Y-you did? Why—er —Pinkham, I wish I’d stop misunderstanding you, ha, ha! I guess it’s my age creepin’ up on me.” He turned the things Phineas had handed him over in his hand. The partly obliterated lettering showed up.

“M-E-S—R,” he spelled out. “Pinkham, I bet that means Mesmer. He was the guy who invented hypnotism. Where did you get them?”

“An’ that Frog said they was copies of the throat cutter’s peepers!” yelped the prodigal. “I been gypped. Boy, when I find that fatheaded old termater—I got to go to Barley Duck, as I paid twenty-five francs, an’—”

Major Rufus Garrity shook his head and moaned. “What’s the use? Somebody let Bump Gillis out!”

“Wait!” Phineas cut in. “Not yet. First I got to get over to the hut and slip a box under his bed as it is a surprise package. Haw-w-w-w! I will still get a laugh in spite of them Heinies.”