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**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl

SMOKE SCREAM

written and illustrated by
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Lost battle plans! That's what worried the Brass Hats. But Lieutenant Pinkham, Boonetown's gift to the 9th Pursuit, went out for bigger things—to be specific, something a couple of tons bigger which answered to the monicker of Hungha Tin. All of which led to a riddle which was still bigger, to wit: Which came first, the bruises or the arnica?

WITH SPRING SHOPPING back in the States a thing of the past and the spring drive on the Western Front having been stopped on the Heinie twenty-five yard line, the Allied tacticians went into a prolonged huddle to devise various and sundry tricky plays that would smack through Kaiser Bill's forward wall during the last few months of the big fuss and put the democrats into the end-of-the-war zone.

Kraut brass hats were not taking siestas back of the Hindenburg line. They were doing a little plain and fancy plotting themselves. One very unsportsmanlike idea was to get a set of the Allied signals by tossing a spy into the Yankee backfield. Another was to get the biggest triple-threat man on the Allied side—and to get him good. In other words, orders went out that the neck, not the ankle, should be twisted on the person of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, star of Major Rufus Garrity's Ninth Pursuit Squadron. *Hauptmann*

von Spieler promised dire consequences for Phineas, if he could succeed in luring the Yank into another scrimmage. The Squire of Potsdam had promised a baronetcy to the Von if his bite proved to be as potent as his bark.

It was when the lilacs were starting another successful season in sunny France that the first strand of a web of intrigue began to trail out from the empennage of the trained spider belonging to

that fickle something known as Fate. Captain Howell and his flight came winging back from a fuss with von Spieler's circus late one afternoon, formation intact until they were in the ozone over the town of Sivry. At that point Lieutenant Pinkham dropped out voluntarily. You see, rumors had been rife for the past few days that an elephant was doing his daily stint with a labor battalion, that it was pushing down trees with its powerful noggin and hauling heavy freight to and fro. Losing altitude fast, Phineas peered overside of his bullet-chewed Spad and let his washed-out blue eyes bug out. It was a pachyderm down there and no

mistake. Somebody was seated atop its head and waving something around in the air that looked like a boathook. A turban graced the head of the elephant's pilot and Phineas was no-end flabbergasted.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" he erupted. "What is this *guerre* comin' to? We will have giraffes next for observation posts. I wonder if the bum's a real mawhoot."

Looking back from his own Spad, Bump Gillis, long-suffering hutmate of the irrepressible Pinkham, growled: "That crackpot is down lower than a wine cellar. If he scares that jumbo—ow-w-w-w-w, I can't look!"

The zealot and jokesmith extraordinary from Boonetown, Iowa, had been paying no attention to anything but the elephant. Before he became aware of the wild gesticulations of the men on the carpet, the limb of a tree reached out tore off the end of his Spad's wing. The ship quivered like a Congo senegambian who watches a black leopard cross his path. It spun and gyrated across the real estate for a quarter of a mile, and Phineas prayed all of the way to the bosky dell where it finally pancaked.

The man, who was the biggest pain Major Rufus Garrity had ever had in his neck, lifted himself out of the bucket seat and tested his own personal landing gear for breaks. He did a daily dozen with his arms and grinned when nothing splintered. His head would be all right, he knew, despite the fact that it had banged against the dash hard enough to wash out both the oil and the gas gauges.

"All because of an elephant," he muttered as he disengaged himself from the particles of the wreck. "Now I got to walk home! Oh well, it's better than bein' carried on a window shutter.

I—er—why—Cripes! He-e-e-ey, don't shoot!"

FIFTY yards away a big man who had all the earmarks of a brass hat of importance stood under a tree with a service revolver in his hand. The muzzle of it was shoved into one of his ears and his eyes were shut tight. "One—two—" he counted.

"He-e-e-ey!" shouted Phineas, and he started to run. The officer took an inch of gun barrel out of his aural cavity, swore indignantly.

"Get out of here! Can't a guy shoot himself without



interference? If you hadn't dropped in with that crate I'd have had it over with. You scared me and the first bullet went through the crown of my hat. Leave me alone Lieutenant. I must end it all. One—two—thr—"

Phineas leaped in, yanked the brass hat's arm.

"Now you get out of here, Lieutenant," the rescued one blazed. "You try and stop me again and I will add murder to the suicide. Let go of that gun! I am a superior officer and—"

"Now, now, Brigadier," Phineas argued, "how'd you feel now if that gun had gone off, huh? What would your wife an' kids think? Think of the—"

"How would I know? I never shot myself before. A-h-h-h, cripes! I am ruined, disgraced. I can't ever face the music. Give me that gun!"

"All right," agreed the Yankee Spad wrecker, "here it is. But you will have to fracture your skull with it as I took the bullets out. You hit yourself once or twice an' then you will git discouraged, haw-w-w! Come clean, old man. If a Pinkham can ever help anybody, he is there wearing all the bells of the churches in France."

"I might as well come clean, I guess," sighed the potential suicide. "I'll send the word to Chaumont. I lost a copy of the plans for the big drive that is coming up. No, I didn't lose 'em. I gave 'em away. Yeah, and I don't know why, Lieutenant. I got up last night and said, 'I'll take those plans down and leave them in back of the ruined brick kiln near Sivry.' This morning when I woke up it was like a dream—but I did not have those plans! I went down to the brick kiln and I saw the tracks I'd made so I must have been there. But I don't remember it." He shook his head in a nonplussed gesture.

"Adoo," Phineas said and gulped. "I will send somebody for you. Just sit down right there and hold Helen of Troy's hand as she looks nervous." Under his breath he muttered, "The old boy's cracked worse than the liberty bell."

"Is that so?" raved the brass hat. "I am as sane as you are, Pinkham. I recognize you now, you—"

"Don't say that to anybody else as it would go against you," Phineas grinned. "It has got me licked, Brig—er—sir. Did you have fits when you was young?"

"No!" roared the officer, but his appearance indicated that the fits might start right then and there.

"Uh—er—" Phineas said thoughtfully, "if you tell the brass hats you gave the plans away, you will be shot. Don't be a sap as you can say you were slugged an' robbed. Of course, if you can't show no bruises—but I could give you some, sir. Where they will show, huh?"

The Brigadier saw a hopeful light. "That's an idea, Lieutenant," he said. "But—er—go easy, will you?"

"Boys, you have no idea how this hurts me, my, oh my!" the wanderer from the drome of the Ninth grinned. Then he smacked the brass hat in the eye. His second wallop caught the high officer on the nose and sprung a leak. The brass hat sat down in the mud and mumbled something about a swarm of bees.

"Adoo," trilled Phineas hastily, "I must be goin'. Our reservoir."

THREE stray doughs concealed in the bushes not fifty feet away looked on goggle-eyed. They saw the brigadier get up with effort, do a few uncertain waltz steps, then wave an arm in the general direction of the retreating Phineas. "Th-Thanks, Lieutenant!" he shouted hoarsely. "Thanks!"

"Did ya hear that, Porky?" exclaimed one. "The looey slugs the brass hat an' he thanks him! Somethin's screwy. If a mule come by wheelin' a go-cart, I would not even blink. Boy, is this a gware? C'mon I been needin' a drink an' I'm gonna hunt one down."

Phineas's idea had been to go back and get a close-up of the pachyderm. But a truck rumbled by and it afforded him a lift to the Ninth Pursuit Squadron's drome.

He decided to postpone his visit to the beast with the long prop boss, and so he swung up on the seat alongside the driver.

"Did ya see the elephant?" was his first question as he handed the square-jawed dough a cigar.

"Yeah. It come from Paree. They got a real Hindoo fer a jockey that used to train elyphunts in a circus. When I seen that walkin' blimp the firs' time, I tossed a bottle of grog away an' it broke up against a rock. They'd oughter give a guy notice on them things."

An hour later the dough stopped his truck within a stone's throw of the hangars of the Ninth. "*Merci!*" Phineas grinned, and he jumped down.

"Thanks fer the see-gar, Lootenant," the driver called after him. "It's a knockout." He struck a match.

"You have no idea," Phineas muttered, grinning. A moment later there was a *SWO-O-O-OSH—BANG!* His late chariot slanted off the road, chewed up twenty feet of fence, and knocked over two swaying aspens before it returned to the beaten path. Phineas did not walk. He ran to the farmhouse that was headquarters for Garrity's outfit. The Old Man was waiting for him, and there were no tickets for the Folies Bergere in his clenched fist.

“Have a cigar, Sore-rib,” Phineas chirped.

“Awright,” Phineas cracked, “save your pipes. What do I mean by running out on the flight, huh? I’m a spotted nitwit and if brains was yarn, I wouldn’t have enough to knit a pair of wristlets for a hummin’ bird. Where is the Spad? Don’t you know they cost fifteen thousand dollars? I’ll fix you, you— I will tell you where the Spad is. It is tray passay, as the Frogs say. The elephant scared it and it got away from me. Just try to break me, as only awhile back I saved the life of a bigger officer than you, even. It was Brigadier-General Scruggs and I knew him by the wart on his bugle. Haw-w-w-w! He is a som—a somnam—oh, he walks in his sleep. I should think he’d take carfare to bed with him. Try an’ bust me, and he will tell you a thing or three.”

The C.O. mastered his blood pressure and said evenly: “Your leave came through, Pinkham. See the pretty paper?” Then he tore it up into tiny pieces and let them float to the floor. “Ha! ha! The dames in Parea will have to get along somehow without you. I could burst into tears, Pinkham!”

“Huh, if you are funny,” Phineas sniffed, “I can weave a rug with railroad ties. Haw-w-w-w, I was goin’ to refuse the fortnit’s vacation, as the Limeys put it, because I am needed here in France. There are things goin’ on that I must look into. When do I get delivery on a new Spad?”

The Old Man grabbed the first thing his hand lit on and threw it across the room. It was a chair. And when it banged against Glad Tidings Goomer’s shins, the mess attendant yipped painfully and tossed a tray loaded with bowls of hot soup high into the air. Captain Howell and Lieutenant Gillis dove under the table, but Bump had been too slow in the get-away. Loud wails emanated from him as he leaped suddenly and cracked his head against the table top. He was dripping soup and stringy noodles when he crept into sight again. Howell exercised his vocal cords by running through his vocabulary of swear words as he glimpsed the front of his tunic which was well irrigated with consomme. And Glad Tidings, in a daze, crawled toward the kitchen wondering why the Old Man had assaulted him.

“That is what comes of losin’ a guy’s temper,” observed Phineas judicially. “It is no way to promote morale. I guess I will eat in my hut as I have a snack or two which Babette gave me last night.”

Major Garrity tore into his office and slammed the door. In two minutes he came out again with a lot of

personal belongings clutched to his chest. He took the stairs two at a time and was down a few minutes later with a big leather bag. Watching from a vantage point, Phineas was thoroughly enjoying the proceedings. The Major had never gotten so far toward quitting before. As he was pulling on his coat a car pulled into the drome of the Ninth and disgorged three brass hats who stalked into the farmhouse like the members of a jury.

“Uh—er—going somewhere, Major?” queried the first, looking at Garrity with a quizzical expression.

“Heh, heh,” the Major tossed out weakly, “No-no, sir. Just got back. Got some laundry here that I had done in Bar-Le-Duc. Come right in, gentlemen.”

The brass hats needed no invitation. They were already crowding the C.O. toward his operations office for a powwow. Phineas Pinkham, who never missed anything, thought he knew the reason for the funeral countenances on the boys from headquarters. Other things were of greater importance to the Boonetown pilot at the moment, however. He had promised to bring Babette a bottle of amica for her grandpappy’s lame back. The aged Frog had made a quick *descendu* from an apple tree.

Phineas also yearned to get a look at that elephant. Furthermore, he wanted to be alone to think about Brigadier Scruggs and to wonder why a man would simply get an idea out of a clear sky to walk over to a brick kiln and toss war plans away as if they were peanut shells.

LIEUTENANT PINKHAM left the drome of the Ninth on a squadron mechanical bug with the E.O. and Sergeant Casey in pursuit as far as the road that pointed toward Sivry. There was still an hour left of Gallic twilight and Phineas figured that the pachyderm might be doing its stuff right up to dark. He rode into the scene of activity to find the elephant still toiling for the cause, and three perspiring doughs told him that there was going to be an air squadron on the spot as soon as a few more small trees and rocks were cleared away.

“They’re gonna have bombers come here,” a toiling patriot puffed. “Don’t git too close to the elyphant, lootenant, as it ain’t no kitten to fool with.”

Phineas climbed off the motorcycle, strode over to the spot where the pachyderm was having a brief respite. The Hindu mahout made it do a curtsy, then slid to the ground. He began to rub a lame shoulder.

“If you are stiff in the joints, Sore Rib, I have got

what it takes here to make you like new. It is somethin' that would take the squeak out of a rockin' chair!" As he spoke, Phineas eyed the elephant warily. The animal looked at the Spad pusher with equal distrust and trumpeted alarmingly.

"Ah, I am ver' grateful, Sahib," the pachyderm jockey said. "I will try thees what you have got weeth you. Hungha Tin he push me ver' hard wan time today. You have a care, Sahib. Hungha Tin he is be was sansiteeve elephant, yes."

Phineas produced the bottle of arnica from his pocket, yanked out the cork. As he handed the bottle to the Hindu, he looked around him. Not far away were the rest billets of a swaim of doughboys. At the edge of the shell-bitten Frog village was a house surrounded by several imposing Yankee gasoline buggies and Phineas guessed it was Divisional Headquarters. A sudden hoarse cry from the mahout jerked the Yank's head around. Phineas jumped a foot from the ground when he saw the elephant snagging the bottle of arnica from the Hindu.

"Stop it!" he yipped as the animal raised the bottle to its mouth by means of its pliable trunk. "Tell him it ain't grog. Oh-h, if that stuff ever hits its stummick—! Run, everybody!"

The pachyderm had dumped half the contents of the bottle down its throat before things began to happen. Hungha Tin let out an indignant ear-splitting blast and stiffened like a mad bronc. Its eyes rolled and its huge torso shock as if there were a dozen electric eels inside of it. Then the elephant charged toward Phineas. But by the time he arrived, Garrity's pestiferous patriot had vacated the spot. He knew that a pachyderm gets slowed up trying to negotiate a hill and so he had picked one that had a tall tree poking out of its crown. Halfway up the tree, Phineas looked back to see Hungha Tin tossing two doughs out of the way as if they were milkweed stalks. The mahout was sitting on the ground, his turban askew and his brain on a merry-go-round from a lusty clout on the scalp from the elephant's trunk.

"Boys," Phineas gasped, "what a mess! How would I know the big mutt was an old soak? Oh-h-h-h-h!"

Trumpeting like an army of Philistines, the elephant slanted from the trail that led up the hill and headed for the outskirts of Sivry. Three squads of doughs tried to trip it with a rope, but the pachyderm ploughed through their midst and sent them tumbling all over the landscape like ten-pins smacked by a bowling ball.

Hungha Tin's giblets were on fire and no mistake! When it got to a small duck pond, it drew great draughts of water into its trunk. Fifty members of the A.E.F. closed in on it and Hunkha Tin turned and half-drowned five of them with a stream of aqua pura that would have done credit to an efficient hose company.

By that time the elephant was even more riled. It started toward the house where the brass hats were huddling. Chairs and rocks and everything throwable began to bounce off its tough hide. To evince displeasure at this reception, Hungha Tin rose up in wrath and brought his two big front tootsies down on the top of a Yankee automobile which had just pulled up. The driver deserted the wheel and left the brass hats in the rear seat to shift as best they could. Phineas shut his eyes when the boiler folded up. He opened them a second later to see the elephant loping toward Sivry, leaving havoc behind.

Shaking and sweating, Phineas scrambled down from his lofty refuge. "Babette sure will be sore about the arnica," he sighed. "And they can't blame it on me!" But the pilot from Iowa was wrong again, for the mahout was coming after him, boathook slicing the air around his head.

"Make a pass at me with that," Phineas hollered, "and I will kick you right back to the Ganges, you hunk of dark meat! Lay off. Come just one step—"

"You mak' Hungha Tin ver' mad, Sahib. Look what do, yes? No wan he will dare for catch heem. Listen, he mak's the noises. Oh, he weel not forget. Hungha Tin, if he sees you some time once more—"

"He will be easy to see first," grinned Phineas. "It is no mouse to lay in hidin' for me. Bong swar, my frand, I must *allez*."

The mahout sat down and groaned. He took a tin box out of his pocket and opened it up. There were cigarettes inside which looked alien to Phineas. They were long and thin and the paper which covered them was the color of the mahout's epidermis. He held them out to the Boonetown pilot and apologized for flying off the handle.

"My fran', I am ver' sorree. You smoke, yes, Sahib?"

Phineas accepted one of the strange looking smokes and allowed the mahout to light it for him. He dropped it and started away in a hurry, however, when he saw a knot of brass hats making their way across the clearing. Darkness was getting as thick as a lumberjack's winter union suit when he kicked the engine of the squadron motorcycle over.

BACK at the Ninth Pursuit, Phineas found the Old Man and the pilots in a dither. He was not long in finding out the reason. Scruggs had reported the loss of the Allied signals and diagrams of trick line-punching plays. The plans had to be recovered at all costs. The Air Force was to play its part by being ever on the alert for Heinie ships that might come over after dark to pick up the Kaiser's snooper. Intelligence officers were flocking to the sector in big bunches. Scruggs, said Garrity, had been unable to identify his attacker and Chaumont was getting ready to bust him wide open.

"Well, I do not see why I should worry about it," said Phineas airily. "I got to go to my hut and catch up on my reading. I have had a trying time, garsongs. If you hear things about me, do not believe them, as a lot of bums are always blamin' things onto me."

"What has that fathead been up to now," Garrity rumbled. "I'll kill him if—"

More trouble moved in on the Ninth. Fate's trained spider was getting along famously with its web of skullduggery. The twin power plants of a Gotha began to whip the ozone into a frenzy. The telephone jangled in the Operations office. The adjutant called Major Garrity, and the C.O. hollered into the instrument just as the Jerry hellbird upstairs laid two eggs.

"Hello—yeah? Hurry up, as we're getting bombed right now," he barked. "Wha-a-a-a? He tried to poison an elephant? It ran away? Stepped on a general? Who—Pinkham? The—what?" *CHA-A-A-A-SH!* *BANG!* "Ugh—er—hear that, Colonel? That wasn't my watch dropping. Hurry up—yeah? He did? Pinkham or the elephant? Listen—" *BLA-A-A-AM! CRA-A-SH!* "Hear that one, Colonel? It shook my liver. I'll arrest him—sure. But where will I put an elephant? Pinkham? Oh y-yeah, I got mixed up. Whaa-a-a?"

BLA-A-A-AM! The telephone jumped right out of the C.O.'s hand. He left it where it hit the floor and dove under the table.

When the raid was over, Garrity counted noses. The human ones were intact, but two Spads and half of a hangar had been chewed up. Sergeant Casey tottered into the Frog farmhouse still trembling and displayed something the Gotha had dropped along with the eggs. It was a message to Phineas Pinkham from von Spieler, who apologized for not delivering the letter personally. He wanted *Herr Leutnant* Pinkham to know that he was to be knocked loose from his galluses if he ever dared to show his hcmely face in the sky over Boche real estate.

"Challengin' me, huh? What I will do to that fathead! I—"

"Shut up, you big tomaters! I want to hear about that elephant," stormed Garrity. "What did you do to it? Come clean. They have twelve charges against you. Poisoning an elephant. Destruction of property. Assault—"

"Oh yeah? They're nuts!" Phineas said indignantly. "I was carryin' some arnica for Babette's grandpa and the elephant stole it and drank it. That is my fault, huh? If a cyclone happened now and my hut blew into your face, you would arrest me for attempted murder, wouldn't you? Well, that is my story and you are stuck with it."

"You are under arrest," the Old Man bayed.

"If you would just oil your tonsils, you could beat that elephant in a yellin' bee," Phineas retorted. "I will not stay here an' git abused. Adoo."

All that night the groundhogs worked diligently to fill in the Gotha bites. Phineas lay on his cot reading a book entitled: *LOVE FILTERS AND POISONS OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE—and Their Antidotes*. And while he was reading he thought of *Hauptmann* von Spieler and ground his big buck teeth so that Bump Gillis could have sworn a dog was gnawing at a bone under his cot.

"I will git that bum," Phineas muttered. "Pinkhams and elephants don't ever forget. He is the biggest mucky-muck in the Kraut air corps and he's a lucky bum, as I have knocked him down twice. The third time it will be for keeps."

A STRANGE story trickled along the front the next morning. On a Frog drome near Commercy a squadron pilot had walked out of his hut on the preceding night and asked for a Spad. He had told his C.O. that he had to go out and meet his master and that it was a secret. All of six Frog war-birds had been needed to hold him down until the phobia lost its grip on him.

"Somethin' spooky around here," Phineas yipped when he heard the news. "First it's Scruggs, then—the place is haunted or they have been sniffin' hop. Huh—er—master, eh? Goin' to meet him. Some bum wanted a crate to git out of the sector, that is what! An' that Frog was goin' to—ugh! I have got my spine all curled up out of shape."

But the imported pachyderm had nothing on the brass hats when it came to bragging about a memory. They came onto the drome of the Ninth headed by the general who had been stepped on. Old Man Garrity

was informed that Phineas Pinkham was to be kept out of the air so that there would be no chance of a Kraut spoiling a court martial. The C.O. was also told that the elephant was still at large and might be responsible for further destruction of life and property.

"I want a jury trial," Phineas blustered. "You have no case against me. You better think it over as if anybody is smart enough to get the war plans back, it has to be a Pinkham, and I am the only Pinkham in this war. I'll write to Pershin' tonight. Maybe even President Wilson. Awright, I'll fight to the last."

"You are still as grounded as a fish-worm with paralysis," the Major stormed. "Don't you ever dare walk within ten feet of a crate on this drome or I'll declare open season for the U.S. gunners on you!"

"Awright, awright, now let me alone," Phineas said with lavish disgust. "Don't blame me if the U.S. and England and France get licked by Labor Day. Adoo, monsewers!"

Mournful, the Boonetown patriot watched Captain Howell and four other buzzards including Bump Gillis take off for the mid-afternoon patrol. He felt a sinking sensation in the region of his pantry at the thought that he might have gotten into his last Kraut jam in the sky shelves above the jittery front.

He was still sitting on an upturned ammo case in front of "B" Flight's hangar when "A" Flight came winging back. There were just four Spads, and when they got down they seemed to have only an even chance of reaching the line intact.

"You didn't do so good, huh?" Phineas remarked to Howell when the flight leader climbed out of his crate. "Haw-w-w-w! You could strain orange juice through that bus. Where's O'Malley?"

"He's trying to talk Heinie right now, you fresh ape," the captain barked. "Seventeen or twenty of the Boche fell on our necks because they figured you were with us. You're poison even when you're not doin' anythin'. I hope they get evidence enough on you to hang you! And I want to know who painted your name on the bottom of my Spad."

"I guess it's haunted here, too," said Phineas. "Last night I had a dream that I did somethin' like that. I giss I am bewitched, too, haw-w-w-w-w!"

The day wore on. Just before the last patrol came back to the fold the Boonetown pilot skipped down to a little gully in back of the line of Nissons and yanked a bicycle out of the bushes. He rode it across a cow pasture and got onto the road that would lead him to

Bar-Le-Duc. Inside of an hour he was walking along a dark street toward Babette's domicile. In front of a buvette that he had to pass was a familiar individual leaning against a lamp post and playing a spine-curling piping tune on a long reed. It was the mahout garbed in his native headpiece, a red tunic and a pair of Limey khaki shorts. His shoes were dangling from his shoulders and he stood in stockinged feet.

"Bong swore," Phineas greeted him. "All you need is a basket of snakes. What've you heard from Hungha Tin if anything? Fancy meeting you here."

"Ah, good eveneng, Lieutenant Peenkham," replied the mahout, bowing low. "I mak' the music of India. I am lonesome for the *nullahs* of my native countree, Sahib."

"I bet they're some dames," the Yank grinned. "C'mon inside an' I'll git you a snort. I'll swap you one for two of them smokes you use, Sore Rib. Them cigarettes are pips. Name your poison."

Phineas and the little man from the land of magic, cobras, and curries had quite a tete-a-tete. The Hindu boy proved himself a two-fisted brandy consumer and showed his appreciation of the Pinkham generosity by handing the trickster from Boonetown three of his favorite cigarettes. He told Phineas they had come from the abundant supply of a maharajah for whom he had been wont to prod elephants to and fro in the teak country of Burma. Phineas was in the act of lighting one when a Yankee pilot staggered into the buvette. He took three long drags of smoke into his lungs, then jumped up, brushing the backs of his hands across his eyes.

"O'Malley!" gasped Garrity's stormy petrel. "You ain't dead?"

"Huh—oh, hello Carbuncle," the Irishman said through a healthy brogue. "I wasn't sure fer awhile. This bullet scratch on me head had me out fer awhile. I just got downstairs before I passed out complete. The Spad's about three miles from here an' I been walk-in'. I figgered I'd had enough of the dam thing for one day. Have a drink? What—who's the fortune teller?"

"This is a Hindu friend of mine," Phineas said. "Ah—er—you say you left the Spad?"

"I did. An' I've it alone. I know what you're thinkin'."

"Why, O'Malley, you misjudge me," said Phineas with an injured air. "I'm under arrest, so would I steal your ship an' git into more trouble? Don't be silly, haw-w-w-w!" Thereupon he took seven more long pulls at his brown-papered cigarette and turned to the

mahout. “Adoo. I have a date with a *mademoiselle*—and she ain’t got a friend. Good evening to you one and all.” He sauntered out of the buvette like an Indian prince might have stalked out of the Taj Mahal.

HALFWAY to Babette’s something strange happened to Phineas. He felt obligated to someone. An inner voice urged him to chuck it all and take O’Malley’s Spad over to the Kraut side and set it down. The Yank who had always done his own thinking and acting felt as if somebody else were dressed in his skin and operating for him. An exuberance of spirit, a willingness to cooperate entirely alien to Phineas, had him in a balmy state. Without his own volition, Phineas turned away from his proposed line of flight to Babette’s and hied to the spot where he had left his bicycle. Aboard the two-wheeled affair he headed in the direction of O’Malley’s Spad and he did not stop to wonder how he knew where the spot was located. All he knew was that he had to get into that Spad and fly it over to Germany. He was going to drop down into the laps of the Krauts and give himself up. It was the thing to do, intoned the voice inside of him.

Lieutenant Pinkham found O’Malley’s Spad right where the Irishman had left it. A little gang of Frog peasants and doughs were looking it over. He leaped clear of the bicycle and walked to the sky wagon with purpose in his stride.

“Somebody help me here. I am under big orders and must get to Germany at once. Contact and make it snappy.”

“It’s Pinkham an’ he’s potted,” said a dough. “Germany, he says. Don’t he remember he’s mad at the Krauts? Well, he’s an ossifer an’ I gotta obey orders. Git out of the way while I hang onto that prop. It looks as if a wire or two is loose on this buggy. Ready, Lootenant?”

Phineas nodded and switched on. The Hiss leaped to life and the pilot warmed it to the task ahead before he shot across the bumpy field.

“All I know is I got to do it,” he mumbled. “I can’t seem to remember how I learned to fly one of these, but I am doin’ all right so far. Wonder why the Heinies want to see me so bad?”

If the Boonetown hero had looked in a mirror he would have wondered what ailed his optics. At the right time the strangely acting Phineas lifted the Spad off the ground and headed it up through the ozone to five thousand feet. Nobody had told him that he was to set that crate down in a field near the Alsatian town of

Ars but it was in his brain cells to do just that because he had to obey the voice which was keeping up a rapid fire jabber inside his cranium.

Now in the ether, not far from that hostile dorp, *Herr Hauptmann* von Spieler was on his way home from a poke at a flight of D.H.4’s that had been trying to bomb a Kraut railhead. He spotted the lone Spad and signalled his flight to follow him so that they could get a lesson in the technique of hanging up confirmations. Lieutenant Pinkham ignored the Boche and pointed the nose of his Spad toward a small church steeple. Spandau bursts cut across his bows, zinged through the fuselage two feet behind his bucket seat. Waves of doubt began to wash over Phineas when the ground came up to meet him. His brain groped for a reason for his being where he was. But then he lapsed into obedience to that strange urge that was driving him on.

“Why—er—somethin’s wrong,” he choked out when the wheels of his Spad kissed a sheep pound. “I am with the Krauts. Where—how—er—? Sure, give me time. I’m landin’ ain’t I? But I don’t know—er—” He felt as if someone else’s hand were easing the stick back when he set the crate onto the ground after the third bounce. This time it stayed put and as the wheels stopped moving a veil seemed to be lifted from the Pinkham brain.

“What am I doin’ here?” he said out loud. “It was that grog, I bet. I got to git out—oh-h-h, it’s no use!” Half a dozen Kraut infantrymen were crowding him close. Overhead, six of *Hauptmann* von Spieler’s planes were circling. The boss of the Jerry circus himself came down and shot in for a neat landing twenty-five yards away from the Spad.

“Von Spieler!” Phineas yowled and jumped out of the pit. “The big bum! Oh, what happened to my dome? I remember meeting the mahout—then O’Malley—after that—let me be, you pigsticker!” he yelled at the Boche doughs. “Am I putting up a fight, you fatheads?”

“Ho ho!” chuckled *Hauptmann* von Spieler. “Ofer he coons *und* makes idt *der* landink. *Ach, Gott!* *Leutnant* Pingham, you see idt *der* Luger by *mein* hand, *nein?* Yoost wink *der* eye vunce *und* I shooldt you full *mit* holes like *der* Sviss cheese yedt. I haff you, *ja!* *Und* I haff nodt forgedt idt *der*—”

“Well I give myself up, you big sausage glutton,” the captive snapped. “I wish somebody would tell me why before I git shot.”

Von Spieler let out a booming laugh. “*Ach*, I bedt

you *mein* life I know, *ja*. Ho! ho! *Das* ist funny. *Der* tricks you like, *hein?* Veil, *der* Faterland hires *der* shpy vhat knows more uf *der* tricks odder *Herr* Pingham, *ja*. Ho! ho! I can't stop from *der* laughs, *nein*. Search him, *Dumkopfs*, as I haff *der* bick idea."

THREE burly Krauts advanced on the Yank. Just as they reached for him there was a mighty roar and a trampling of underbrush off to the left. Out of the woods bordering the sheep pasture came a pachyderm gone haywire. Its trumpeting blotted out the sound of big guns along the front. Eyes fixed upon the person of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, the elephant charged with its trunk out straight.

"*Himmel!*" Kraut doughs dropped ordnance and headed for shelter. Von Spieler made for a tree and leaped for an overhanging branch just as Phineas started going away.

"Boys, it sure is right about elephants. They don't ever forget. Hungha Tin still tastes—that—arnica. Well, it's a pretty dirty wind that don't blow somethin' nobody's way. Think fast, Phineas, as here is—" He leaped to the pit of von Spieler's Albatross, then jumped out on the other side. Hungha Tin lumbered right over the bus, leaving it like a broken match.

"Haw-w-w-w!" laughed Phineas as he headed back to his Spad.

The Boche were sprawled all over the field trying to take pot shots at both elephant and Yank. The Boonetown pilot got into the Spad three seconds behind a bullet that smashed the altimeter to bits. He gave the bus the gun. Von Spieler yelled from where he was hanging from a limb for somebody to stop the prisoner. The pachyderm, trumpeting hard enough to crumple the walls of three Jerichos, tried to nudge the rolling Spad but missed by the length of one of its tusks.

"Haw-w-w-w!" laughed the fugitive. "I am away, knaves. Adoo!" The Spad swept past the tree where von Spieler had taken sanctuary. The limb to which he was clinging cracked just as the Yankee crate pulled out and the boss of the Heinie circus came down right onto the top wing of the high-tailing Garrity owned bus. "Who asked you to ride?" yipped the pilot. "Haw-w-w-w! It is turning all the tables in the *guerre*, huh?"

"*Gott!*" von Spieler croaked as he hooked his fingers over the wing edge. He knew that to let go would be disastrous to his frame. Mentally he kissed twenty thousand marks goodbye, also an Iron Cross and a baronetcy. He hung on for dear life while Phineas

climbed to seven thousand. Four Boche battle wagons crowded the Spad but the blue-blooded Vons were loath to let the Spandaus roar for fear of washing up von Spieler. One finally decided that *Hauptmann* von Spieler mattered little when weighed against the objectives of the Hindenburg line and the aspirations of the Squire of Potsdam. He started pumping lead, and von Spieler felt his hair rise up. When a lock of it flopped over his eyes, it looked as white as an angel's heart.

"*Nein,*" he groaned. "Stop vunce, Rudy! Heinrich, Karl, *ach*, chentlemen!"

"It would be just my luck for one of the bums to be mad at him," Phineas complained. "Uh—er—well, haw-w-w! The other fatheads are stoppin' the shootin'. Boys, is this a panic! But I would like to know what happened to my dome. I hope that elephant comes back as I will wash it with cow's milk every day and git a manicurist to file its tusks." Something occurred to the Yank, and he fished into his tunic for the two cigarettes that had not been smoked. With them came a folded sheet of thin paper. "Why—that wasn't there when—" Phineas felt something snap inside his head. The stolen plans—he was sure of it. How had they gotten into his pocket? It was getting plain now. The Heinie spy had concealed them on him and willed him to fly over to Germany so the Boche could get their hands on the trick Allied plays. What a coup that bum had almost made! Delivering plans on the precious torso of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham!

Three miles from Bar-Le-Duc, Phineas set the crate down with only a gill of gas in the tank. *Hauptmann* von Spieler slid off the wing, flopped to the grass. Phineas wondered if he had been carrying some crystal beads on him somewhere because they were rolling all over the ground. Then he saw that they were globules of sweat from the Von's brow.

"*Himmel. Gott sie dank.* Nefer *der* dirt shmells so sweet, *nein!*" the Boche ace grunted. "*Donnervetter!*"

"*Wie gates*, you big squarehead!" chortled the Yank. "How *ist* it *der* ride, *hein?* Now just sit still until I figure out somethin'."

The freckled warbird then took a cigar and a long piece of wire from his pocket and sat down on a rock. He poked the wire through the stogy lengthwise until the cheroot was almost a hollow cylinder. Then he minced the two brown-papered cigarettes and set about the laborious task of cramming that tobacco into the hollowed-out cigar. When the job was completed to his satisfaction, he put the cigar



back in his pocket and muttered something about the cleverness of certain branches of the human race.

"Now, Hoyman," he addressed his prisoner by a new name, "I have a journey to make on the bicycle and I've got to tie you to a tree. I hope no squirrels start gnawing at you so the Old Man will not believe it's you when I make the delivery. I've got some rope in the bike's tool chest that'll do the trick. Now git up, All-Brick, and walk to the tree so I won't have to drag you. *Allez* now. Veet veet, or I'll bumpez voos on ze dome *mit* this rock, *comprenez?*"

Hauptmann von Spieler was beyond argument. He was fit to be tied—and that is what Phineas did to him. Then the Yank climbed aboard his bike and rode into Bar-Le-Due. In a dark corner of the buvette sat the Hindu mahout. His dark visage seemed to get bleached out when he spotted Phineas.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" the Boonetown pilot laughed. "I got dizzy an' had ro come down again. I giss I got to step this flyin'. How's my frand, huh?"

"Good evening, Lieutenant," the swarthy one from the banks of the Ganges said. He eyed Phineas warily.

"Let's have a snort," suggested the Yank. "Here's a cigar, *mon frand*." He gave one to the dark boy and took a similar one out to smoke himself. The mahout accepted a light, laughing silently at the innocent look on Phineas

Pinkham's face. He smoked slowly until the cigar was half consumed. Suddenly his eyes began to shine like two sapphires nestling in a bed of black velvet.

"Come on, Mahout," ordered Phineas, "follow me."

"Yes, Sahib. You say—I do."

"Haw-w-w-w-w!"

AT nine-thirty that night Major Rufus Garrity and his pilots tore out of the farmhouse when they heard a big car come tearing onto the drome as if it were trying to beat a flock of Gotha eggs. It pulled up in front and three brass hats, a Kraut flying officer, a dark-skinned, sleepy-eyed nondescript wearing a turban, and Phineas Pinkham tumbled out.

"Bong swar, bums!" grinned the last-named cheerily. "Meet *Herr Hauptmann* von Spieler and the maw-hoot who sits on elephants. He has owned up that he is a Hindu blue-blood who hates the Limeys and came over to work for the Kaiser when and where he could. He stole the plans from Scruggs after he had fogged his dome with *dhatura*."

"With what?" gasped the Old Man. "Where've you been? O'Malley said you stole his Spad and—I'll—"

"Keep your skivvies on," Phineas told his commanding officer. "*Dhatura* is what the Hindu thugs use to kill guys with, but the mawhoot here used it different. It's a lot like capsicum seeds and it makes a bum forget who he is and he does everythin' anybody

tells him to without knowin' why. It's in a book and I will let you read it when I'm through. Here are the plans that the mawhoot planted on me so I'd fly over to Germany and deliver them. I guess that is all, only I am hungry. What did you have for mess?"

"Yes, Garrity," said an Intelligence man, "that stuff smoked in a cigarette kind of does things to a man's brain. Hypnotizes him. This Hindu sat back and used telepathy. Now we understand why that French flyer wanted to go over the other night. Why—Pinkham has really done something this time. He saved the whole drive."

"Don't start on me," Phineas tossed out. "I didn't take a Spad from this drome, haw-w-w-w! An' I left it where I found it. Well, Mawhoot here looks like he's gettin' his marbles back. I doped up a stogy with that Hindu hop, but I couldn't bring in the elephant as there wasn't room. When he saw me, he did not forget me. Ask the Hopman as what he did to his battle wagon was a caution. Adoo, as I am a bit dizzy."

"Cripes," Garrity groaned. "Er—Colonel, just sit down and kind of tell it to me slowly. The elephant—was hypnotized? Pinkham smoked a cigar full of hop, and the mahout got O'Malley's Spad by mistake and found the plans? Then von Spieler tried to stop Pinkham and hung onto the Spad's tail all the way here to—"

"Now take it easy, Major," said the brass hat soothingly. "Men, get him to bed; give him some quinine. He's burning up!"