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**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
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SCOT FREE-FOR-ALL

written and illustrated by
JOE ARCHIBALD

It was the Kaiser's dread "Ogre of the Ozone" who was causing all the trouble. He'd introduced a game of hop-scotch that the Ladies from Hades hadn't bargained on. And when the bullets began to fly, split skirts came back into style. So when the Brass Hats tossed Lieutenant Pinkham in with the kilties, said Pinkham found himself in a tight spot—and you can take that two ways.

FRANCE AND ENGLAND borrowed plenty from Uncle Sam during the years of the Big Fuss and citizens on this side of the big pond are still wondering why they have not paid up.

There was one thing which the Limeys returned in 1918, however, that certain taxpayers wished they had

kept. This was an aviator by the name of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, exponent of legerdemain, prestidigitation, black magic, ventriloquism, and all other such doubtful arts that have been nurtured through the centuries to plague the civilized world.

It all started back in Beauvais, France, during the

Limey preparation for the Amiens offensive, which developed into a prodigious kick in the slats for the Kaiser, if you remember your history. Nevertheless, the boot of John Bull came near missing the empennage of the Squire of Potsdam; and but for a wild stab on the part of the British brain trust, the Krauts might have been gathering beach pebbles near Dieppe in the month of September in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighteen.

Of course, a drowning man will clutch at a floating fragment of the bundle that broke the camel's back, an old maid will hold a burglar down until the minister arrives, and a sorely beset skipper will point his scow to any port in a storm. So it was that the British red tabs reached out for the person of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham when it looked as if the Huns were ready to knock them for a row of pubs. In a big pow-wow at Beauvais one of the Limey officers, who could call the King by his given name and get away with it, laid his cards on the table and exercised his vocal cords vociferously.

"Egad, Hemingway," he blustered, "we're in a bloody, bloomin', blinkin' quandary, old chap. Somethin' must be done or we'll jolly well be pushed into the Channel, if you know what I mean."

"Righto, old thing," was the response from the Limey brass hat whom he had addressed. "Extr'ord'nry meashaws must be taken, General. The blarsted Huns know what we intend to do jolly well before we do it. There was that supply dump at Aillys Noye, old thing. It was blown up no end before you could blink your eye. And the strafin' of the Tommies who were movin' across the bridge on the Somme—I mean to say, awkward, eh what? Now if the bloody Krauts find out about our ammunition supply at Breteuil—do let us do something. Must think, an' all that sort of thing, doncher know. Watch it a bit, what?"

"Bah! Intelligence balmy. Huns makin' a bloomin' joke of the Johnnies. But see here, y'know, I have an idea. Splendid idea, Hemingway. I say—everybody gather around, won't you?"

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS later in Bar-Le-Duc Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham barged through the door of a Frog domicile to be received by a comely *mam'selle* who eyed him with bugging dark orbs. The Yank's brow was clammy and shedding drops of sweat as big as crystal beads.

"Hide me, Babette, mawn cherry," he gasped. "All the Frog cops in Barley Duck an' the A.E.F. are—"

"Now what you have do, *chien?*" Babette stormed. "*Toujours* eet ees you ron from ze gendarmes or *l'homme avec* ze gun or ze knife. Oh! Oh! Babette she mak' wan what you call meestak', for that she peek you for ze sweetheart whan ze meelyun *soldats zey* ees in France!"

"This ain't no time for squawks," Phineas countered. "In ze closeet I must go. If you think you're the only dame in—listen mawn cherry, *vous* ain't seen me, comprenny? Nobody in this *guerre* has a sense of humor. I only sto—I mean borrowed—a Frog flea circus, an' somehow it got into a general's beard. Could I help it? It ain't my fault they g-got loose. The cover come off the glass jar an'—there they arrivez! Don't fergit, Babette. Don't fergit the limerzines and country homes I promised *vous* after ze *guerre*—adoo for awhile!"

Then the miracle man from Boonetown, Iowa, forthwith bounded into a closet and hid behind some old clothes that were hanging there. Babette slammed the door and put a chair against it.

The house shook when a heavy fist banged against the panels of the door a second after she had made it secure. Babette took her time about answering. When she finally opened the door a crack two irate gendarmes pushed their way in. Half a dozen Yankee M.P.'s backed them up and one howled for *mam'selle* to fork over the person of Pinkham.

"Thees ees what you call ze insult!" ululated the French eyeful. "I do not has ze *soldat ici*. To ze generals I tell thees, *oui! Allez vite, chiens!* You theenk Babette she ees not tell ze truth, *non?* Ah, *sacre bleu*, I scratch eet out ze eyes. *Allez!*"

"Never mind the dame, Butch," yelled an M.P. "Bust open that closet. The tomatomato is in here, or my name ain't McGurk! Ouch! Them fleas—I was a sap for goin' into that barber shop. I got 'em on me, I bet. That fat-headed orfiser, lemme git one sock at him! Jus' one. I'll—"

"*Oui*," yipped a gendarme, "break heem down ze door from ze closet, mes *soldats*. Ze general, he cuts ze beard. Ah, *mon Dieu*, he eez ze *jolie* one, *oui*. Come, Lieutenant, you geeve up!"

An M.P. opened the closet door and got down on his knees to paw around among the garments to see if a pair of boots were there. He backed out shaking his head disappointedly.

"He ain't there, the bum," he growled. "I giss the dame's right. He musta beat it some other place. C'mon, we'll git him if it takes us 'til the end of the war."

TWO MINUTES later when the room was rid of the arms of both civil and military law, Phineas Pinkham emerged from the closet and grinned at Babette.

"*Merci, mawn cherry,*" he said, rubbing his jaw. "It was awful chinnin' myself on that wooden pole in there. Boys, *vous* are ze swell actress, mawn petight. When I take you to the U.S. I will geeve eet to *vous* ze knockdown to ze Berrymore fam'ly, haw-w-w-w!"

Babette giggled, then dug a thumb into her ribs and began to wiggle. Then she let out a yelp and tried to get eight clawing fingers to work at a spot on her spinal column. Again she squealed and did a collection of fancy steps about the room. Near the stove she reached out for a heavy skillet and tossed it at her swain.

"Ze fleas!" she shrieked. "*Cochon! Fils of ze vache!* Go, an' if I don't see *vous* for ze hun'ed year, good!"

"That's my luck," Phineas complained. "The only place I kin hide an'—well, awright for *vous*, Babette, I know a lot of other dames that—!" *Cr-a-a-a-aash!* "Missed me. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

"*Oui,*" Babette screamed, "I mees ze firs' time but no two times, peeg!"

But Phineas had already evacuated the domicile of his light of love with the remains of the family's evening meal decorating his tunic and an igloo rising on his head. Three M.P.'s chased him deeper into Bar-Le-Duc, but they lost his trail in the vicinity of a bakery.

All that night Major Rufus Garrity, C.O. of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron and by the same token sorely tried superior officer to the stormy petrel of the Yankee Air Force, directed the hunt for the errant flyer. The Old Man hit town in the squadron car at three in the morning and two brass hats were with him. Every M.P. available scoured the Frog hamlet thoroughly, but it was not until the sun was opening its eyes and roosters were beginning to stretch that the culprit emerged from his retreat and gave himself up.

"Awright, awright," he yipped. "I'm ready for Blois. You never would've got me if they hadn't lit them fires under that bread oven. You can't prove I stole the fleas. How'd I know they'd git loose? Is it my fault that Frog brass hat looked like an Airedale? He can grow another hank of spinach on his jaw. Go ahead—put the han'cuffs on!"



“Shut up, you homely cluck!” Major Garrity roared. “Get in that car or I’ll bend a tire iron over your scalp. You can raise more hell in less time than the devil himself. Here he is, Colonel. I’ve got him!”

A brass hat whose bellows were a bit flattened jogged up and eyed Phineas Pinkham as if the freckle-faced Yank were a long-lost brother. “G-glad to s-see you, P-Pinkham,” he sputtered between quick breaths.

“Come along, old ch-chap. G-got news for you. G-good news. Phew-w. The B-Brit-ish want you. They—”

“I haven’t even seen a Limey in a month,” Phineas immediately protested. “They can’t blame nothin’ onto me. Whatever they said, it’s a lie. I want a fair trial. I know my rights, as I am a U.S. citizen an’—”

“I’ll give you just three seconds to park that carcass of yours in that boiler, Pinkham!” the Major menaced him. “Otherwise you’ll get loaded in as stiff as a frozen haddock. Get!”

Lieutenant Pinkham got.

LATE the next morning the incurable humorist strolled into the Operations Office on the drome of the Ninth with a chip on his shoulder as big as a wedge of pie. “Let’s have it,” he began. “I’m all packed up. Gimme my railroad ticket to wherever it is I’m going, Major. The war is gettin’ too tame in this sector anyway. Haw-w-w-w!”

“Pinkham,” Garrity snorted, “somebody is nuttier than you are, hard as it is to believe. You are going to join a Limey air unit over near Amiens. The British red tabs and Chaumont have been making a deal. You’re to be transferred to the Intelligence Department. Report at Chaumont by tomorrow night to get your instructions. As far as I can figure it out, you’ll be attached to the Limey air squadron near St. Just and you’ll be expected to do little flying.”

The Old Man pawed at his face with both hands then shook his head dolefully. “I had you right this time,” he wailed. “Had you booked for the skids and they were plenty greased. And then they come in here and say they have to have you for the Intelligence! Ha! Ha! You steal a flea circus, get them into a general’s beard—and they want you to join the In—ha! ha! Er—pretty—they water babies over there near the swans, huh? Look at ’em jump from one lily pad to another. Pretty swans. Get some bread an’ we’ll feed ’em. Ha! Ha! It’s nice here away from the office. With the sunset over the honeysuckles an’ bees combin’ my hair with—”

“Ha-a-ah!” Phineas yelled and ran out of the Operations shack. “G-Goomer! Howell—Bump! He-e-ey, the Old Man’s went gaga. Oh, where is everybody?”

After getting a medico in to look Garrity over, Phineas hurried to his hut to find Bump Gillis holding a small bird in his hands. The little Scot looked up at his hutmate then down at the floor where a pan of sizzling liquid was still giving off vapor.

“Look at what you done, you crackpot!” he railed at Phineas. “The li’l bird flew in here to git some crumbs an’ landed right near that pan an’ it knocked off a bottle just as it come in and the thing broke in that pan and then there was a lot of bubblin’ an’—well, it killed the bird! You are a menace to everybody—even wild life. There oughta be a law against ya!”

“Uh—er—” the miscreant gulped. “Look at its feathers—they’re all greenish. I never saw a sparrer with green feathers, Bump. Why—huh, it was only sal ammoniac in the pan as I was makin’ a solution to give Sergeant Casey. He says he’s got a bronchial ailment. My Aunt Prudy, she used to use it. It loosened up her pipes fine. You oughta hear her holler now. Now that stuff that fell into it—it bubbles, huh?”

“Git that stuff outa here!” Bump yelled. “I ain’t goin’ to git poisoned in my sleep if I know it.”

NOT far from La Capelle a Kraut-confiscated hamlet on the Oise, the C.O. of a Gotha outfit was revelling in his lair with several of his potent egg droppers. The overgrown Prussian with the black beard would have drawn quite some bounty if delivered on the hoof in the middle of Trafalgar Square or the Place de la Concorde. The Allies and noncombatants who had felt the bite of his Gotha cargoes for two years had dubbed him “The Ogre of the Ozone.” Mothers kidded babies into taking their Castoria by just mentioning his name. Doughs cursed him every time they saw a Heinie bomber over their noggins. He was getting into everybody’s hair and the Allies were mightily sick of him. *Hauptmann* von Ganseneffer was his tag—an overgrown Heinie with a beard the shape of the business end of a spade and as black as the coat of a Halloween cat. The walls of his neck were on a line with his cheek bones and when he moved he waddled like an orangutan.

“Ja,” he boomed, “I can’t wait for *der* Taube idt shouldt coom. If *der* message it has vhat says where *ist der grosser* ammoonition doomp from *der* Allies, ve haff *der* komical fun, *hein?* Ach, if vunce I couldt meet

das Pingham! Maybe idt giffs by me *der* moofink by *der* zector where *ist* he at if I catch idt *der* doomp, *ja*, *und* shpoil idt *der* beefeaters' Amiens offensive, *ja!* *Der* High Kommand promised dat. *Ach*, I go ofer *und* blow him oop in *der* liddle bieces, *hein?*" There was one little Heinie in the room who had his doubts, but he kept them to himself. Only too vividly did he recall his survival of a Gotha washout after Phineas Pinkham had tagged it with a sky rocket. Where ignorance is bliss, the Kraut mused, it would be a shame to wise anyone up.

The scene changes again. Let us now look in at a crossroads near Triacourt, another Frog town not far from Bar-Le-Duc. A motorcycle rider is handing a long black cigar to a dough on a truck.

"T'anks, buddy, fer the gas. Here's a rope a orfiser gimme. Said a flyer handed it to him in Barley Duck. Him nor me don't use 'em. It's yours, buddy."

"Thanks. I'll keep it 'til I git a chance to smoke in peace an' quiet. Yeah. Looks like it cost a dime, huh? Lookit the band on it. Got a pitcher of a king or a duke or somethin' on it. Wit' a beard. Well, over the river, buddy. I gotta git up to the Lines."

PHINEAS PINKHAM left the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron the next morning. Just before he loaded his luggage into the outfit boiler he turned and waved to Major Garrity.

"Well, adoo. Goodbye, ol' thing, an' a cheerio. Pip pip! Not 'alf bad, what ol' baked bean? Rippin', by jove, an' all that. Jolly, no end. Over the Thames, old custards! Haw-w-w-w! Pip pip!"

"Get going before I mash you up!" Garrity bayed. "*Intelligence!* If that's what they call the stuff inside your dome, I am glad to be a moron. Don't delay him, guys. Let him get to hell outa here. And if the Limeys get what I think they'll get, they better not come squawkin' back to me. Of all the blinkety blank blanked—!"

"Olive oil, bums!" the departing one trilled. "But I'll be back. Cheerio, ol' tomaters! I will think of you while havin' my spot of tea. Haw-w-w-w!"

Bump Gillis wound up with a sledge hammer that the Frog farmer had left when he decamped from the house which the Ninth now used for headquarters. But when he let go, Lieutenant Pinkham's "haw!" was all that remained of the Major's pain-in-the-neck—and that was fast fading in the distance.

SQUADRON 24, Royal Flying Corps, was a strange outfit. The leading Hun belter of the squadron was

Captain Angus McTavish, who wore dress kilts when he was at ease. There were two Scotch ackemmas in the outfit. Moreover, the leader of "A" Flight was half Scotch and it was said he had a terrible time with his hands. One wanted to dig into his pocket when the drinks were in sight and the other kept pulling it out. In addition, a company of Scotch Highlanders was billeted not far from St. Just, hence this locale was considered the tightest spot north of the town of Conpienge.

It was into this setup that Phineas Pinkham found himself anklng one sultry evening in July. Terrible noises seemed to be coming from the mess shack and he stopped and dropped his bags just as a Scotch mechanic came up.

"Must be a cat fight," the Boonetown Bam yelped. "Do they fight at night, too? I am a light sleeper."

"Hoot mon!" retorted an ackemma. "An' dinna ye ken the skirl of the pibroch? 'Tis Captain Ian Macintosh giein' a whirl to his bagpipes, mon. He oft visits the lads, he does that, an'—"

"Haw-w-w-k!" Phineas guffawed. "Scotchmen, huh? I bet some of them sounds is mice squeakin' in their pocketbooks. Grab the baggage, Sandy, me fine lad!"

The mess shack of the "Four and Twenty" was in festive mood when the 9th Pursuit pilot walked in. And the Yank borrowed by the Limey red tabs laughed when he heard the men chorus "The Campbells Are Cornin' Hur-rah! Hur-rah!"

"An' I bet they're late as usual," he chortled. "The Spads are about shellacked before those crates ever show up. Hi, bums! I'm Phineas MacPinkham. And how are all the Ladies from Hades?"

Angus McTavish, C.O. of the Limey outfit, growled and thrust his lantern jaw into the Pinkham physiognomy. "So it's you, is it, mon? I haired ye were cornin'. Ye're a right green lad an' if it's trouble ye want, we'll gie ye aplenty. Ye've coom te the richt place fair a clout in the lug! Laddies, ye're meetin' of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham for the fairst tame an' I'm nay blamin' one of ye that starts laughin'. Ha! Ha! Er—did ye say ye were settin' up the drinks, noo, mon? Ye didna forget?"

"Nope," the freckle-faced Yank exposed all his ivories in a broad grin. The big Scotchman with the bagpipes looked at him dourly as he walked up to the mess bar. Ian Macintosh made it quite plain without a word that he did not like the Pinkham map. He blew a raucous note out of his bagpipes and then set the tubed apparatus aside.

“The best in the house!” Phineas yipped. “It’s a braw bricht moonlicht nicht toniecht so all right ye kin drink. Haw-w-w-w! And say, have you seen the Kraut egg tosser lately, laddies? Got you scairt outa your kilties, huh? And don’t you git housemaid’s knee weariri them things?”

“I didna like the last remark, Lieutenant Pinkham,” Macintosh snorted. “An’ I dinna think I’m thairsty the nicht. Ye’re talkin’ to Ian Macintosh, ye mutton mug, an’ I’m the best bagpiper in all Scotland. Coptain Macintosh o’ the Queen’s Own, Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, ye hear?”

“It’s some music,” Phineas gurgled, swallowing his third glass of brandy. “I have heard wagon wheels without no grease play Annie Laurie better. Come on, men, drink up! Let’s have a song, huh? Like—

*“Oh-h-h I gie a wee duck twa Dor-r-r-r-is,
Just a wee duck or tw-a-a-a-a-a!
I gie a wee duck to Dor-r-r-r-r-is,
Afore I ganged twa war-r-r-r-r—haw-w-w!”*

“Bah!” grunted the pibroch swingster, tossing half a crown onto the wet surface of the bar. “Gie me a stiff one! Up to this nicht ’twas nae a bad war-r-r-r!” he birlled.

THE freckle-faced object of his disdain grinned and turned half around. He had been doing that with every drink. Part of his brandy was gone from his glass when he faced the mess attendant again. He poked a finger at the half crown that the Macintosh had flung to the bar.

“Huh,” he said, “you spendin’ all that, Coptain? Did I get the name right?”

“Ye did, ye homely weasel,” the Macintosh snapped and reached for his change. He dropped it into a small sack in his sporran and Phineas Pinkham was no end intrigued.

“That front-hung pocketbook looks more like a whitewash brush,” he commented. As he spoke he slid his finger across the bar’s wet surface, then pressed down on something. “Them kilts are some outfit but. you must get an awful draft in your empennage when you ride a Camel, haw-w-w-w-w!”

Major Angus MacTavish, the C.O., was now getting hot under the collar, too. Then as he took a step toward Phineas to give him a lecture, the Pinkham voice clogged his ears:

*“O-h-h-h-h, I love a lassie, a bony, bony lassie,
She’s as thin as thin as the paper on the wa-a-a-a-al.
She’s cock-eyed an’ she’s lazy,
She stutters an’ she’s crazy,
Bu-u-u-t she’s my Scotch high-ba-a-a-all!”*

“Shut your mouth, ye hear me, Lieutenant?” the C.O. thundered. “Ye’ll take orders like any other officer in this squadr-r-ron, ye understand that? An’ if ye sing one mair song like that about the Scotch lassies, I’ll—”

“I say—er—sir,” Phineas interrupted. “Any of the kilties aroond here keep hens?”

“This is a war-r-r-r, ye dunderhead!” the Major blasted at him. “Who would be r-r-raisin’ poultry? Are ye daft, mon?”

“Er—fergit it,” the tormenter grinned. “Where do I sleep, huh? I’ve got to get up early an’ take up a Campbell—I mean a Camel—as I want to look over the sector. I am of the Intelligence an’—”

A Limey pilot, slightly blotto as the result of the Pinkham big heartedness, coaxed Captain Ian Macintosh of the Argyles to blow out a tune on the pibroch before he took his leave.

“Come, old chap, jush one. A little tune on the jolly old windbag. Pip pip! Righto, Captain?”

“Sur-r-re, me lad,” Major MacTavish chimed in with anticipation, “it gives me goose pimples when I hear the pibroch, Macintosh. Dinna ye mind the fresh Yank. Play the one about Wallace when he licked the English at—”

“I say now, old thing, no bloomin’ Scotchman ever licked the English in a fair fight,” a British red tab put in, his low jaw jutting out. “Any Scot who says so is a—”

“What are ye aimin’ to call me, Boffington, what?” Angus MacTavish boiled. “If ye want to find oot, mon, if a Scotchman can lick—”

“Haw-w-w-w! All I know is that the English cut off your Queen’s head,” Phineas put in. “That was a dirty—”

“Aye, they did thot!” the C.O. yipped. “An’ remember Flodden Field. I can thrash any—”

“Oh, you can, eh? Look ’ere now, MacTavish, don’t poke your fist in my—”

“An’ they cut off Wallace’s head, too,” Phineas suggested, sidling away.

IT WAS a good fight while it lasted. In fact, Colonel Boffington of His Majesty’s forces had a shanty over one eye when they finally pulled Captain MacTavish off his frame. And the Scottish chief had a nose that glowed like a pomegranate when he offered to set up the drinks and let bygones be bygones.

“Pinkham,” a Limey pilot flung out, “you started the fisticuffs, didn’t you? Egged them on, by gad if you didn’t!”



“Here, here,” Ian Macintosh roared seeming to enjoy the brawl. “I’ll gie ye a tune, Angus. After ye listen to somethin’ fine an’ sad, ye’ll shake hands with the Major. Here ye are, me lads—”

E-e-e-e-ek, E-e-e-e-e, Yi-yi-yi-i-i, E-e-e-e-ek!

WHOO-O-O-OSH! An amber flood fountained out of the lower pipe and smacked MacTavish square in the pan.

The C.O. pawed at his eyes. Ian Macintosh stopped putting pressure on his bellows, poked his nose into the mouth of one of the musical tubes.

“Brandy!” he hurled out. “’Tis enough. I’m gangin’ awa’ from here, MacTavish! Brandy in me pibroch, eh? I’ll settle wi’ ye, laddies. Ye wait an’ see. Pinkham! Ye did thot!”

“Awright, you nickel euddler, blame me,” the accused stormed. “But just tr-ry an’ prove it, haw-w-w-w-w! If I had my way, I would pour molasses into that vacuum cleaner. Hey, you left some change on the bar, Macintosh. He-e-ey, ain’t you ashamed? A Scotchman leavin’ money around! It is unnatural, haw-w-w-w! This is a swell sector. I never had such fun. Good night, Coptain!” Then Phineas swaggered out, leaving Angus MacTavish chewing his mustache and jumping up and down until his sporran hit him in the face. He swore he would get in touch with Brigade and have Lieutenant Pinkham thrown over into the Boche trenches along with a couple of Mills bombs. But then MacTavish remembered that he had his orders from the red tabs and he was stuck with them.

MILES away where the Meuse trickled past Lerouville a Yankee truck driver was unloading cases of corned willie into supporting trenches when a shavetail came up and sniffed at his breath.

“Drunk ag’in, huh?” the looey blared while guns boomed along the jittery front. “Listen, you don’t know wftat ya’re doin’ hardly. I’m goin’ to report you. Take his name, sergeant!”

“Listen, er—*hic*—sir. I got a toothache an’ coneyac was all that’d stop it. I—er—have a cigar, *hic*—sir.”

“Don’t try to bribe me, you—er—pretty good-sized one, huh? Rolled tight, too. Looks like the rope cost fifteen cents. Well, the next time I see you cock-eyed, I’ll—”

“Yesshir, t’anks, shir,” the dough said and staggered back to the truck.

In the meantime the Limey Squadron gave Phineas Pinkham a bunk in an old stable that once had held livestock. And their memory still lingered on. The miracle man from Iowa sat on a cot and poked at something that he held in the palm of his hand. That something was bits of cracked corn and the Pinkham brain was puzzled. Suddenly he thought of his brief powwow with the Limey C.O. during which Angus MacTavish had enlightened him about the raids on the Allied supply dumps and concentration centers. The canny Scot had hinted that the Krauts seemed to know just exactly when to come flying over to raise all kinds of merry hell.

“Aye, mon,” the C.O. had said, “an’ the Boche ken

just when to let the bombs drop doon. Hoot, mon, ’tis verra verra serious, Lieutenant Pinkham!”

“If it’s a spy, I’ll find him,” Phineas had promised. “The best laid plans of Boche an’ men oft gang alee, me lad—er—sir. Haw! Already I’m gettin’ a clue.”

“’Tis daft ye are!” the C.O. had blazed. “Gie oot o’ here!”

Nevertheless, Phineas hopped into a Camel early the next morning. Headed toward the Kraut real estate, the Flight, led by a Limey, Captain Llewellyn Boyles-Rhyse, could look down upon the layout where the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders were ensconced.

“They sure have bright kilts on, them penny stranglers,” Phineas soliloquized. “They better keep out of pastures where Frog bulls are. Boys, it is hard to understand, as they have thistles in Scotland; too. Them things don’t feel like marshmallers even when you sit on them with pants on. Well, it is no skin off my shins. Ho—hum, I thought this was a tough—”

Br-r-r-r-rp! Rr-r-r-r-at-a-tat-tat!

The Camels started to scatter like quails flushed up by a setter. Phineas Pinkham found out that he just had to rub the stick in the Camel’s office to make the crate do handsprings and back-somersaults. Even he could not change over from a Spad to a delicate-control Camel over night and not worry about the difference. Even so, the Limey sky buggy’s unexpected tantrum no doubt saved the Pinkham epidermis during the first two minutes of the tiff between the Limeys and six Fokker Tripes. Huns sat in their pits bug-eyed as they watched Phineas put his bus through maneuvers that had never been outlined in their sky manuals. One of them caught Phineas with a burst as the Yank slid overhead upside down, and the Pride of the 9th saw that one of his struts was a bit wobbly when he flipped over on even keel. The Boonetown wonder’s feet, cheated of a lot of blood for several seconds, felt as cold as a walrus’s boudoir and he wondered whose right pedal extremity he used when he kicked rudder to get away from a diving black-and-white striped Tripe.

“They ain’t pushovers on this sector,” he gulped when he saw more holes appear in his lower pinion. A Hun then flew across his line of flight and he fed Vickers lead into it. Yet nothing happened. “Why don’t they load these guns?” he yelped. Just then a sudden burst of Archie blammed over his head. It was the forerunner of a hundred black puffballs and the Limey flight leader signalled for the Camels that were left to make a run for it. Phineas looked back and saw

another circus of Boche drilling in. He had to back-stick to get above the Hun barrage of old iron.

BLA-A-A-AM!

Spent iron rained down on Lieutenant Pinkham. Also something fell into his lap and began to wiggle. He spat a feather out of his mouth, then saw that a bird was beating its wings against his knees. Blood flecked the instrument board and Phineas saw that Hun Archie had knocked off part of the pigeon's undercarriage. He grabbed the stricken bird and held it close to his chest while he dodged the Hun A-A fire.

"Poor li'l feller," he talked to it as he got into the clear with the frazzled Camel. "One of them hunks of iron did it. I bet you are a carrier pigeon an' belong to the Krauts."

Lieutenant Pinkham then proceeded to get downstairs as soon as it was convenient. He landed the Camel on a bumpy stretch of pasture land between Breteuil and Montdidier and let it roll to a stop near an abandoned old Frog farm.

"Let's go, mawn ammy," he said to the pigeon. "We've got to fix you up, li'l feller, as you can't lose much more of that *vin rouge*."

In the farmhouse the resourceful Yank produced a first aid kit from his pocket. After awhile he had the bird's wounds cleaned and bandaged. He was about to set his feathered friend down on a pile of old feed bags when he saw something caught in the claws of the bird's good foot. When he carefully detached it, he found it to be a brightly colored thread from some sort of coarse material.

"Huh," Phineas grunted, "I sure wish you could talk so's you could tell Papa whether you was goin' out or cornin' back, li'l feller. Well, I'm goin' to fix you up a leg now, as once I saw a wooden leg on a parrot that a sailor had in Brest."

For an hour the Yankee jokesmith worked on a piece of soft wood with a jackknife. Then he removed a lace from one of his flying boots and attached it onto the tiny leg he had fashioned. The pigeon fluttered its wings in protest when he finally fastened on the finished product.

"Guess I ain't much of a doctor," he mumbled.

PHINEAS then turned his talents to thinking about the bombing von Ganseneffer and the shellacking of the Allies. He would have to disguise the pigeon some way in case a Potsdam snooper happened to be in the vicinity of the Limey drome. With the heir to the Pinkham fortunes, to think was to do. He brought

out an oilskin case from his flyings coat pocket and set it down on the floor. Then he built a fire in the old stove and reconnoitred for water. He found it in a well outside the kitchen door but still had to find a pot in which to do his dabbling. A voluminous closet produced a couple of them and a few minutes later the flyer was putting some sal ammoniac into boiling water. Then he added a dab or two of quicklime.

Next he took the pigeon up and covered its head with a cloth, then held it over the fizzing liquid for several minutes. Phineas coughed and wished he had a gas mask but he pei'sisted. The pigeon wriggled and wriggled until the operation was done. When the Boonetown flyer held the bird up to the light, its plumage had become like Joseph's coat of many colors. The worker of the miracle nodded with satisfaction and placed the victim on a heap of feed bags. The solo operator then went out to the barn and searched for hen rations. He managed to scrape up some corn in the bottom of a feed bin and carried it to the pigeon.

While the winged nondescript pecked at the cracked maize, Phineas leaned back against the waff and did some more thinking. His agile mind leaped to Seneca's story about how a Christian slave, one Androcles, came upon a lion with a sliver in its foot. Androcles pulled the splinter out of the lion's undercarriage and when they met again years later in the Roman arena, King Leo tried to kiss his former benefactor. Also the scion of the Pinkhams remembered the elephant that never forgot and he figured that a pigeon probably could be grateful, too. There was one way, he decided, that the bird could have gotten that piece of thread in its claw.

Phineas stayed in the farmhouse all that day and the next. And soon the pigeon began to become oriented to life with a wooden leg; indeed, on the second day it took a couple of turns around the farm kitchen after a very light lunch. It was hobbling up to Doctor Pinkham just as the sky outside shook with the thunder of Bentley-Rotaries. Two Camels landed and the pilots came up to the house.

"Cheerio, Pinkham, ol' chap," one of them greeted the Yank. "We jolly well figured you were washed up an' all that. What?"

"I didn't ask you nothin'," Phineas retorted. "Beat it, you tea sniffers, as I am intelligencin' around here. Tell Angus I'll see him in no time. Adoo, pip pip, an' all that rot."

"Balmy," was the concensus of the Limey pilots as

they trudged back to their Camels. “Where did he get the bloomin’ bird with the wooden leg? He’s a queer Johnny. He didn’t have the bird when he took off on that show yesterday.”

When they had gone, Phineas drew a scrap of paper and a stub of a pencil from amongst the junk in his apparently bottomless pockets. Then he scribbled out a message in his best printing. It read:

Froissy. Der Montag. Vier Uhr.

“That ain’t bad Kraut,” he grinned, admiring his handiwork “Four in the A.M. Monday over Froissy. The *Taube* will git the idea when I tie the message to it, won’t you, mawn amy?”

The pigeon apparently did. The show had to go on whether it had a wooden leg or not. And so *der Taube*, being a good trouper, went toward Hunland when Phineas Pinkham released it into the ozone.

DAWN near La Capelle. Von Ganseneffer and his brain trusters eyed the pigeon that stood on the table in their midst. “*Ach, ve Chermans,*” laughed the Kraut bombing expert. “*Das ist* from our agent, *K-Drei, und vhat ein man fir smartness yedt! By der Taube* he puts colors for *der* disguise *und so der Allied Intelligencer gedts no suspicions uf der Taube, hein? Zol Breteuil ist der place vhefe ist der ammoonition, hein? Froissy, vier Uhr der Montag. Ho! Ho!*”

“Yes, *und der Taube* vas gesmacked by *der* shell, *Herr Hauptmann,*” a Heinie said. “*K-Drei* fixdt him oop.”

Then hours passed. And late that day the pigeon got back to Phineas. The trickster from Iowa grinned when he saw it slanting in for a landing on its repaired undercarriage. “Haw-w-w-w! Pigeons are grateful. You come right back to Androcles Pinkham, didn’t ya, mawn amy? That’s the ol’ fight! Not a bad landin’ for that wooden leg, either. So you bring me a message, huh?” He removed the tiny cylinder, drew out a bit of thin paper, and spread it open. There he read:

Sehr Gut! Fleishbruhe Um Vier Uhr Morgens.

“It’s beef broth they will git at four in the A.M.,” Phineas translated out of his little book entitled SPEAK GERMAN IN TWO WEEKS.

ON THE drome of the Squadron 24, Major Angus MacTavish was burning up. He even threw a shilling against the wall of the Operations shack. “Bah! The mon’s daft. I canna spare one Camel and the bloody Yonk keeps a ship out on the French moors an’ sits nursin’ a blasted pigeon. I’d gie a pound o’ somebody’s

monney to hae the balmy Yonk pitched oot on his lug. Intelligence, ba-a-ah!”

“Colored bir-r-rd wi’ one leg, aye?” Captain Ian Macintosh grinned. “Hoot mon, it must be a parrot. I suggest ye get wor-r-rd twa Br-r-rigade, Angus. Weel, I must be gangin’ away. Good nicht twa ye.” An hour later Phineas Pinkham walked in, having been given a lift by a British fourgon. “A bonny nicht to ye, lads!”

The Scotch mess monkey jumped a foot and spilled brandy on the C.O.’s sleeve.

“Haw-w-w-w!” the Yank grinned. “The drink’s on ye, MacBum—er—Major! If you hay a minoot or twa, I would like tay speak wee ye in the office.”

“Tis aboot time, ye dunderhead!” yowled the C.O. “Gie in there wi’ ye!”

Phineas Pinkham then held a powwow with MacTavish lasting half an hour. When he had finished his inside story, the Scot scratched his chin and grinned reluctantly. “Ye are a smar-r-rt lad, Pinkham. I’ll do thot. On Monday mor-rnin’ at the cr-r-rack of dawn there’ll be enough Camels in the air-r tae blow the Boche all the way back tae Ber-r-rlin. Have a wee drink, Lieutenant.”

“Boys, you’re wreckless with your grog,” Phineas said when the C.O. poured out some brandy. “That would not wet a gnat’s foot. Well, cheerio, pip pip, an’ here’s tay Annie Laurie, haw-w-w-w!”

Time passed. Over in the St. Mihiel sector at eleven forty-five that night a Yankee looey and three doughs wriggled toward the enemy trenches to get a line on Boche plans for the succeeding day. A star shell tagged them on the very brink of a Kraut ditch and a dozen Heinies leaped on their necks, capturing them on the hoof. In a dugout a *Herr Oberst* searched the looey and appropriated a long black cigar bearing a fancy band. “*Ach, ein zeegar, ja!*” he grunted.

A Hun with mud and barbed-wire scratches on his face sat in a corner. He was a flyer and had been forced down within his own lines during a sky fight earlier in the day. “Your *Excellenz,*” he said, “I giff *zwanzig* marks fir *der zeegar. Der Hauptmann* von Ganseneffer he vould make idt by me *der Kapitan* if he get joost vun *Amerikaner zeegar.*”

“*Zoldt, Herr Leutnant,*” the *Herr Oberst* grinned. “*Der zeegar* he *ist* yours.”

More time passed and Monday hit the Amiens sector. At three in the morning every Limey squadron within a radius of fifty miles were warming up Camels. Over near La Capelle, two Hun bombers were being loaded with hell drops. *Herr Hauptmann* von

Ganseneffer stood near his big crate sniffing at a long black cigar that a Heinie Fokker pilot had handed to him not so long before.

“*Ach*, I smoge him after yedt I getdt idt *der* beef broth, *ja!*” he promised himself. “*Ach, das ist gut!*” He drew in a long breath of sweet aroma.

Aero motors churned the skies later and sleepy doughs swore in the trenches as the Gothas bored toward Froissy. Camels from seven outfits lifted their skirts and waddled across tarmacs. At three forty-eight the Gothas got over Froissy and dropped some altitude. Huns at toggle racks looked down at the Frog mosaic and smirked. And then the sky was alive with Camels, diving, rolling, and stabbing with Vickers tongues at the Boche bombers. Von Ganseneffer tried to make a run for it while tracers streaked across in front of his paling pan. One singed his beard. Another bit the end from the big black cigar he was chewing and ignited the dry weed. Off to the left a Gotha was in the throes of some kind of a fit as the result of Vickers poisoning. It began to wobble toward the carpet.

“*Gott im Himmel! Der drick ist!*” howled the Hun as he tried to coax more pep out of the lumbering bomber. On the ground below bombs broke up as frenzied Heinies jerked them loose from the Gotha. Von Ganseneffer, gag now, puffed furiously on a cigar. He was not even aware of it being lit when—

BLOOEY!

A streak of fire shot out of the cigar and set doped fabric aflame. The slipstream did the rest and von Ganseneffer, with the frayed remnants of the trick stogie jutting out from his blackened face, yelled “*Donnervetter!*” and tried for a fair catch at Frog dirt.

His big bomber finally cracked up near the Limey drome at St. Just and a bunch of Britishers managed to pull von Ganseneffer out of the wreck before he was barbecued. They propped him up against an apple tree while he made a few passes at the scraps of cigar dangling from between his clenched teeth. The band dropped off and fell into his lap.

“*Ach, Gott!*” he mumbled. “*Was ist das, hein?*”

A curious Limey groundhog picked the band out of the Kraut’s lap and flattened it out. On the underside of the band were the printed words, “If lost, return to P. Pinkham, Barley Duck, France.”

“Strike me boomin’ pink!” the ackemma choked out. “ow in ’ell did that blarsted Pinkham ’and that to the Boche?”

The cigar band was shown to von Ganseneffer who immediately became a mental case. “*Das Pingham!*” he

raved. “Nefer did I seen *der dumkopf* loafer *und* now—*ach Himmel!*”

JUST then Phineas Pinkham jumped out of the Limey squadron car with MacTavish and four other Britishers at his heels. A motorcycle shot in carrying Ian Macintosh who almost fell out of the sidecar when he saw von Ganseneffer in the light of the burning Gotha. Phineas had a pigeon in his hand, a pigeon with dyed plumage and a wooden leg. The Yank set the bird down and it immediately hopped toward Macintosh, fluttered its wings, and clawed at his sporran with its good foot.

“Arrest the spy,” Phineas clipped. “That bagpipe blower. Haw-w-w-w!”

I made that pigeon go hungry for the last day an’ a half—but it knows where it can get fed. Grab that guy with the skirt!”

“Wha-a-a?” yelped Angus MacTavish. “Pinkham, ye mean that—?”

“Yep. He’s got bits of cracked corn in his pouch. He’s a pigeon man. That’s his pigeon in disguise, haw-w-w! When it landed in my Camel it had a leg shot off and when I got downstairs and looked at it closer, I picked a thread out of its toe nails. It come off the plaid kilt of Ian Macintosh, or whoever this Hun spy is. Grab his sporran, Angus, as—”

“*Ja-a-a-a!*” roared the Ogre of the Ozone. “You send by me *der* wrong message, Rudolph! *Dumkopf. Der* trap I fall into *und*—” But the Ogre of the Ozone trapped his lips too late.

“The mon lies,” Ian Macintosh croaked. “*Der dum*—the mon—”

“Make up your mind what dialect you want, you pigeon nurser,” Phineas hollered. “Haw-w-w-w! I began to smell limberger when you left your change on the mess bar the other night. No Scotchman—”

“But the cigar, lad,” Angus said wonderingly to Phineas as the fake Scot was trussed up. “How did ye—?” He held out the band to Phineas.

“Why—er—huh—ye’ve got me there!” the hero of the hour grinned, dumfounded himself for once. “But it’s mine all right. I remember givin’ it to—er—haw-w-w-w! It’s a caution how things git ’round. Well, if I hadn’t dyed the pigeon, the spy would’ve figured it was his an’ he would’ve ducked, huh? Well, if ye laddies don’t mind, I would like tay hay me some sleep. That’s free, ain’t it, Angus?”

“Mon, ye’re sae fresh I kind o’ like it,” the C.O. of the Four and Twenty beamed. “Ye can hae anything

a MacTavish has got, that is wi' the exception of me pocketbook. Let's gang back to the squadr-r-r-ron, laddy. Aye, I moost call Br-r-r-igade."

IAN MACINTOSH owned up after a going over at the Limey squadron. His real monicker was Rudolph Klotz and he had been a Scotch impersonator on the Kraut vaudeville circuit before the war broke out. When his quarters near Compiegne were examined, his oversized bagpipe was found. Built inside it was a *Taube's* boudoir. Under the floor was a small sack of crushed maize and several slips of thin paper which had been destined to bear messages to the Kaiser's boys.

With everything washed up, a message came through from Chaumont that Phineas Pinkham was now a captain in the Intelligence Service. The

Boonetown pilot turned pale, then looked around him wildly. "Who is my superior here besides Angus—er—Major MacTavish, huh?"

"Why I am, Lieutenant," a red tab said, drawing up his stomach. "Oh quite, ol' thing! But let's forget that, eh, ol' chap? Pip pip! How about a jigger of brandy, what? Right?"

BLOP! The red tab landed on the seat of his pants and Phineas folded his arms and glared at all present. "That's that," he said. "It's against the law to hit superiors, huh? Haw-w-w-w!"

"See here," the grounded red tab gulped as he rubbed his chops. "I say now, what did I say that—why er—damme, I'll break you for this, my man. I'll—"

"That's the idea," Phineas said. "You catch on easy. Haw-w-w!" Major Rufus Garrity's thorn returned to his own drome two days later—still a mere lieutenant.