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**PHINEAS  
 PINKHAM**  
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# BAGGED IN BAGDAD

*written and illustrated by*  
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*Off in Harun Al Raschid's sinister land of mystery, Mussulman musclemen had muscled in, hence the Limeys' battle layout didn't look so lush. As for Phineas, both teams in the Big Scrap were after his scalp. For even though Beni Sentmi had scored a neat outfield assist, Mustapha Murad and Rancid Bey were next on the batting list. And they were ready to knock a Bagdad four-bagger right over the fez.*

**I**N THE WORLD WAR a lot of things happened to deflate the ego of the Potsdam Napoleon that no one has been able to figure out to this day. No historian can tell you how the Krauts actually eliminated Lord Kitchener, nor can anyone give you a lucid account of the rubout of the Romanoffs. No one seems to know who really took the rap for the fiasco at Gallipoli. And it is a matter of opinion as to who got the nod at the battle of Jutland.

But the mystery that surviving members of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, U.S. Air Force, that operated near Bar-Le-Duc, France, are still trying to figure out is just how Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham got to messing around in Mesopotamia in the tag end of the war.

Phineas Pinkham sticks to his original story anent his trek into the land of the caliphs. He still has the costume of the Turkish debutante in which he escaped from the hamlet made famous by Harun al Raschid.

His escape was as near to disaster as the enamel on his protruding dental assembly. But that is getting ahead of the story, so we will begin at the beginning.

It was just after Phineas had stuck a thumb into the the Austro pie on the Piave front and had pulled out a plum in the person of a very pestiferous flying Von that the grateful Allied moguls summoned him to Neapolitan headquarters at Padua. After a furlough at the villa of an Italian brass hat, the Boonetown miracle man reported at the aforementioned metropolis. There he was welcomed by the representatives of three armies and they immediately got down to business. A big British red tab did the talking.

“Leftenant,” he said, “you have proved to the satisfaction of everyone that you have a remarkable talent for accomplishing the impossible. There is a sore need for a man such as you in Mesopotamia. The British troops are moving up along the Tigris to take Bagdad but we have word from the British Intelligence there that a squadron of picked Jerry pilots is moving into the area—a bombing outfit that may possibly hide itself near the Jebel Hamrin hills. We—”

“Just tell me how to git there,” the Yankee hero interrupted, “and where will I find my Spad? I am gettin’ tired of drinkin’ Roman red and eatin’ noodles.”

“Uh—er—there will be no flying for you, Leftenant,” the Brigadier went on. “This is more—er—of an Intelligence job. Some one has to get into Bagdad to find out the lay of the land between Bagdad and Mosul—the strength of Turkish troops, the number of guns, and all that sort of thing. But most important of all, we want you to ferret out the Turkish spy, Mustapha Murad. It is a dangerous job, but if you—er—succeed—”

“No flyin’ huh?” Phineas exclaimed indignantly. “Why that is like askin’ a subway guard to go to some caverns on his vacation. But if it is for the Allies, well, I am a Pinkham and do not question orders. I am a stickler for discipline—as you have no doubt heard, sir.”

“Y-yes,” the Limey officer answered, “we have heard, Pinkham.”

“Bagdad, huh?” the Boonetown joker grinned. “That is the burg of the Arabian Nights, haw-w-w-w! I would like to spend a couple of them, as what dames! I would like to know why they wear veils if they are so much. Maybe their pans would stop the clocks so they keep ’em draped, huh?”

“Har-r-rumph!” blustered the red tab. A Yankee colonel of Intelligence lowered his brows, fingered his mustache with nervous digits. “You will take a

boat at Genoa for Port Said,” the red-faced Britisher went on to explain. “From there you will contact our Intelligence officers and make your way by plane across the Syrian Desert. A Bristol will be waiting for you at Port Said. We—er—have made these arrangements ahead for a certain gentleman who—er—did not get back here from across the Austrian lines. Of course, those things happen to—er—spies, Leftenant.”

“Yeah, haw-w-w-w!” Phineas guffawed. “There are some tough Turkish bums between Port Said and Bagdad, too. Also some Arabs, huh? I hope Lawrence is doin’ all right there as—well, I will take the job.”

SO IT was that Phineas Pinkham, carrying a heavy bag filled with various articles necessary to make a man’s face look like it was not, took a Neapolitan rattler across the top of the Italian boot to Genoa, and when he got there he knew how Columbus must have felt a few centuries before. He was starting out for somewhere and it was not even a toss-up that he would ever get back.

“But I have one thing on Columbus,” he chuckled as he embarked on an Allied packet with his credentials, “and that is that there is a place to land on. No flyin’ huh? Haw-w-w-w! That is like sittin’ a mouse down on a hunk of cheese and tellin’ it not to eat any. If I should see a ship lyin’ around idle, it would not hurt to take a little ride. I always wanted to see the Garden of Eden where Eve used to rib Adam, haw-w-w! And I never did believe they could hang up a garden, even in Babylon.”

Now while Phineas Pinkham was fighting off *mal de mer*—sea-sickness to you—a group of Kraut high mucky-mucks were having a word orgy in Potsdam. *Herr Oberst* von Bockwurst, head of the Wilhelmstrasse snooping agency, was gloating at great length.

“*Ach, der verdammt Englanders vill gedt idt der shock, nein?* Vhen *Herr Hauptmann* von Weisenheimer he stardts to begin droppink *der* bombs vunce, *hein!* Nefer vill *der dumkopfs* findt idt *der* hide-oudt drome. *Mein gut freund* from Turkey, Rancid Bey, he shows by me *der* blace vhen I vas dhere. He has *der* way uf hidink idt *und* only *einen* Cherman he could be smardter as Rancid Bey.”

“*Ja,*” rasped another Heinie, “I know all about idt *der* blace. *Himmel, vas ist* smardt odder *der* Turk. *Und* by Bagdad *ist der gross* Mustapha Murad vhat has zo many eyes as *der* barrel full *mit* needles, *nein?* *Mit der* help uf *der* Gotha bombers, Abdul Humid’s army,



he vill make idt *der* minced meat uf *der verdammt* *Englanders, ja!*" He lifted a stein of Teuton grog. "*Der* Kaiser, Rancid Bey, *und* Abdul Humid, *hoch!*"

"By Bagdad *der dumkopfs* t'ink they vill get, *hein?*" a third Jerry brain truster said. "So vill I gedt by London in *der* morgen. ho ho! *Ach*, I forgedt, chentlemen. *Hoch Herr Hauptmann* von Weisenheimer also yedt. *Mit der* eggs he carries he makes idt *der* omelet oudt from *der* beef eaters, *ja!*"

PHINEAS PINKHAM changed the plans that the Allied brass hats had made for him. Even as *Hauptmann* Weisenheimer was preparing his Gotha hideout in the Jebel Hamrins, the Boonetown air wizard was driving a Rolls that he had found standing outside a bazaar in Port Said. Three miles outside of Cairo he paid a visit to a Limey Bristol squadron and introduced himself. The Britishers regaled him and showed the Boonetown pilot a prize which one of their number had flown in from across the Suez a few weeks previous. It was a Fokker D-7—and that made Phineas Pinkham's hands itch.

"Boys, it is a sight for sore eyes," he exclaimed to a Limey flight leader. "Can it fly?"

"Aye, it jolly well can, Leftenant," the Limey grinned. "Would you care to take it up? The moon is full tonight, eh, what?"

"Yeah," said Phineas. "I will get some flyin' clothes out of the boiler and try the Kraut wagon out."

The Limeys did not know that Phineas had heard about their captured Fokker in British headquarters at Port Said. Neither did they know that the wonder man from Iowa, U.S.A., had brought a package containing a Jerry flyer's suit. Three hours later, when Phineas had not returned with the Fokker D-7, they found it out. A British grease monkey found a note that the Yank had scribbled on a card and stuck against the windshield of the Rolls.

"A fair exchange is no robbery, huh? I took a Fokker and left a Rolls Royce. Tell it to the King if you want to make somethin' out of it. Adoo, chappies. Pip! pip! Cheerio! There is dogs of war in Turkey in Asia. I'm goin' to the land of the Moslems!"

"He knew blinkin' bloomin' well that Fokker was here!" the British flight leader barked. "Blarst his buttons! Pinkham, eh? We jolly well should've known he'd pull our legs an' all that."

Port Said brass hats tore out big gobs of hair. They spread the word the length and breadth of the Blue Mediterranean that Phineas Pinkham had stolen a

plane and deserted. Orders went buzzing to far corners of the near East to the effect that the Boonetown trickster was to be jugged the moment anyone laid hands on him. He had lifted a British general's swanky gas buggy right out of Port Said after having enticed the chauffeur into a grog shop for a snort or two of demon rum.

"The freckled jackass!" stormed a portly "h"-dropping brass hat from Sussex. "Hit's six 'undred miles to Bagdad. Some day a camel will trip over 'is bones, hand that's what. Well, I'm blarsted sure hit's no better than 'e deserves." The red tab took a long brown cigar from his pocket and beamed as he eyed the band which identified it as a Corona, "But 'appy landin's to the blighter. This cigar—" He lighted it and sat back to inhale its delectable aroma. *Bang!* Little balls of fire jetted from the phony cheroot and arched toward a Limey Rolls that was being refueled. *Swi-i-ish!* Two British noncoms hopped clear of the Rolls just as the gas tank blew up.

"Blarst 'is bloomin' heyes!" the red tab roared. "Three thousands pounds up in smoke! An' 'ere we are with only two bloody Rolls's left hin Port Said. I jolly well 'ope the bounder lands right hon top of the Turks when 'is petrol gives hout!" He pawed at the ruined end of his mustache and swore with the finesse of a Yarmouth fishwife.

PINKHAM'S gas gave out in an oasis in the Syrian Desert after the Fokker had flown its three-hour gas limit. A caravan chanced to be approaching when Phineas stepped out of the pit and ankled toward a water hole that was cooled by a cluster of palms. When he had drunk his fill, he sat down and waited for the line of camels to trickle up. A big Arab with skin the color of polished mahogany got down from his ship of the desert and hurled a lot of gibberish at Phineas.

"No comprenny, Sinbad," chirped the pilot from Boonetown. "How about doin' business, huh? It's a towin' job I want. Three camels could drag that buggy if—" He took a bunch of cigarette and soap certificates from his pocket and began to bargain, "*Ici* is a thousand francs, *Herr* Sheik. Boys, what would could you do on Saturday night in Bagdad with that dough, huh?"

Now the Arab's name turned out to be Beni Sentmi and the swarthy son of the dunes told Phineas to talk English and cut the kidding as he used to kick a ball in rugby for Oxford.

"That is phony monee, my fran," Beni said severely. "Ze jork, yas? But you are not German, so I halp you. You have a card to identify you, perhaps?"

“Sure,” grinned Phineas. “I will show you my credentials, Benny. Boys, if I went to the north pole I would meet an eskimo who had called signals for the Notre Dames. Here you are, my fran”

So it came to pass that Beni Sentmi agreed to tow the Pinkham air bus behind three of the Arabian beasts of burden and for the first and last and only time in the big fuss, three camels towed a Heinie Fokker out of a distressing situation. Phineas, in due time, arrived at a Limey outpost between Kerbela and the little Mesopotamian village of Birs Nimrud. A cockney corporal in khaki shorts pawed at his eyes when the camels arrived dragging the Jerry Fokker. “Strike me pink!” the Londoner gulped. “Alfie, yer sees wot I sees, don’t yer? Blimie, Annie was right, she was. Drink ayn’t no good fer a bloke when yer gits ter see things like—wait until the Myjor sees hit. Gor blimie, Alfie!”

“Hit’s the blarsted ’eat!” husked the other Limey. “Hit m’y be a blinkin’ mirage, wot?”

Phineas got everything straightened out. He wrangled enough petrol out of the tank of a British armored boiler to last him two hours. While the pep juice was being drained out of the ground wagon, a British Major put the Yank through a grilling that would have made a third degree in a big town police station seem like a game of charades.

“I am of the Intelligence,” Phineas cracked. “I am here to locate the drome of the Hopman Weisenheimer in them Jebel Hamrins as nobody else seems smart enough in this *guerre*. Has the Von been bombing lately?”

“Has he? He’s jolly well been raising merry hell, Pinkham! Outside of Kut last night he broke up a bridge, washed out three armored cars—Intelligence are you? Hah! No Jerry agent will ever suspect you, Pinkham. Well, if you want to use the British drome as a base, it is over by Mahaw. Bristols there have been flying all day, trying to spot the Gotha hideout. Isn’t a trace of an airdrome in the Jebel Hamrins. Think myself it’s a false rumor whispered within hearing of Mustapha Murad, the Turk’s prize snooper. Glad you’re here, Pinkham. Have heard no end of things about you. Incredible things. Worse than the Arabian Nights. Hmph!”

“I will go into Bagdad and save the Allies,” Phineas declared.

“I jolly well think you’re balmy, Leftenant.”

“It’s a good thing somethin’ is balmy here,” Phineas retorted. “I have never been in a hotter place. Well, adoo bums—er—gentlemen! I am on my way, toot

sweet. Time and tide and bill collectors wait for nobody. A Pinkham goes forth again to make history.”

The British Red tab notified the air drome near Mahaw that Phineas Pinkham would arrive there in a Fokker and that they were not to belt him with slugs when they saw him coming. The Yank had his own ideas, however. He flew up the Euphrates and enjoyed the scenery that Nebuchadnezzar used to rave about when he was running the chamber of commerce in Babylon.

“Turkey in Asia, huh?” Phineas grinned as he skimmed low toward Bagdad. “I must git Babette a rug before I go back, haw-w-w-w! Uh—er—boys, it is quite a town ahead!”

BAGDAD! City of mystery, containing the tombs of old Moslem brass hats. The objective of countless caravans. The city of the caliphs where a man can get a throat cut for a couple of dinars, or kopeks, or whatever legal tender the citizen used. A city of magic that is the Mecca for skullduggerians such as Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham of Major Rufus Garrity’s Ninth Pursuit Squadron far away in France.

“I’m all atwitter,” the errant Yank tossed into the ether as he skimmed over the city. “Well, look out, Mussulmen, as Phineas Pinkham, the Don June of the Occident, is near. Lock up the harems, you bearded bums, as if your dames see me—haw-w-w-w-w!”

Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham passed two Kraut crates in the ozone north of Bagdad. They looked like Aviatiks to Phineas, and he was about to start feeding them lead when he remembered that he was not in a Spad. The Heinie waved to him and Phineas kept on going toward the Jebel Hamrins, the undulant hills above Samara. Here Phineas took a pair of Heinie binoculars from their case in the D-7’s office and lifted them to his alert peepers. The astute Boonetown marvel then circled for several minutes before tagging a patch of Ottoman real estate. Staring at the bucolic scene below he wondered if there were anything in reincarnation, wondered if he had been there before. There was an old stone house three thousand feet below flanked by foliage that was a mixture of green and rust in color. A limpid little lake was set in the center of a green sheep lea like a turquoise laid on a carpet.

“Maybe it’s the Garden of Eden,” he ventured a guess. “I wonder if there’s good eatin’ apples in it. Well, I—er— huh! What’s come over me? I have never been here before. I will go back to Bagdad and see Mustapha Murad. With the photograph of a *Fraulein*

in my pocket and some papers I took from a Von once, I should pass as one of the Kaiser's boys."

Lieutenant Pinkham landed his Fokker alongside of an ancient caravan road and hopped a double-decked old horse car that was lurching into Bagdad.

"Wee gates," Phineas said to the driver. "How's business, *mein Freund*?"

The Moslem chauffeur shrugged and shook his head. Phineas said no more. Twenty minutes later Major Rufus Garrity's itinerant Spad pusher was breathing the smells of Bagdad. He wandered through narrow, crooked streets, a lot of which had been arched over with brick or with coarse matting spread overhead to ward off the rays of the sun. Once he stopped and looked up at a tiny barred window. A veiled Moslem deb peered down at him through the Yashmak eye holes with orbs as black as a Pittsburgh twilight.

"*Bon swar*, Fatima," the Yank called out. "How about a movie, huh? I—"

A swarthy Moslem barked at him, reached into his belt and wound his fingers around the handle of a knife that would have slit the throat of a hippo with one sweep. Turkish epithets showered Phineas and the Boonetown jokester went his way with goose bumps covering him from undercarriage to prop boss.

"The Moslems must be awful jealous," he observed to himself, turning into a tiny shop. Here he picked up a hookah, one of those water-cooled smoking pipes of the Orient. The thing intrigued him and he hied to a dark spot at the end of a crooked street and sat down on a stone stairway.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure in Intelligence," he grinned. "If I meet Must Hava Murad and Rancid Bey, I might have my troubles." Producing some tobacco from his pocket he proceeded to cram it into the bowl of the hookah. He tamped it down, next shoved three small pellets into it and covered them with another thin layer of tobacco.

Phineas then wrapped up the hookah and thought out his next move in Near East skullduggery. He could not get that little patch of ground in the Jebel Hamrins off his mind. It seemed that he had looked on it before. He wished fervently that his think tank wasn't so roily. A sigh escaped him and he shook his head with frustration as he walked back along the crooked Bagdad street. Every so often he would sidle up to hawk-eyed natives and whisper:

"Must Hava Murad. The sun dips low over the tomb of Kadir, the sheik. Allah and the Kaiser be praised!"

After awhile one pair of Moslem optics widened.

They looked at the stiff mustache pasted above the upper Pinkham lip, noted his Prussian uniform, the iron cross that dangled from the Boonetown marvel's chest. Then a Moslem sotto voce chirp lifted the Yank's scalp: "*Effendi*—follow thou quietly in my footsteps."

THE TURK led Phineas through a maze of crooked alleys that would have made a mouse dizzy. Finally he led the way up a flight of stone steps that was as crooked as a corkscrew and ushered Phineas into a large room that smelled of musk and Turkish tobacco. Sitting in a big carved chair that a caliph might have once owned was Mustapha Murad, the brain trust of the Kaiser in Bagdad. Mustapha Murad had a pair of eyes that made Phineas Pinkham think of graveyards and crematories. He had a nose as hooked as the carving knife affixed to his belt. A black spade beard abundant enough to secrete a litter of hunting dogs adorned his swarthy face.

"*Guten Abend!*" Phineas began, exercising his limited Teuton vocabulary. He took two steps forward, tripped, and pancaked on Mustapha Murad's hookah, rendering it defunct.

The Turk swore rich Moslem oaths and thundered: "*Canaille!* Fool! My vary bast hookah. Ze onlee wan I haff. Pardon, *Effendi*. I lose my tampair. You are from Berlin, yas?"

"The sun dips low over the tomb of Sheik Kadir," replied Phineas. "I am apologize for smash op the pipe, *mein, Freund*. Id is *ein* present, Mustapha. I buy him wan, two, mabbe free minoots ago, *mein Freund*. Yours it is." He made a low bow and proffered the hookah he had bought in the bazaar.

Mustapha Murad thanked Phineas effusively, ordered a Nubian slave to bring in a lot of Turkish refreshment. As he waited for the grub, the Turkish agent eyed Phineas closely. Under his gaze the Yank took something from his pocket and peeled paper off it. The Boonetown pilot inserted the stick of gum through his lips with trembling fingers. Cold chills were riding him hard. The semi-dark place smelled of lotus and tube roses and Phineas could imagine how gravel would sound banging down against the top of a coffin—his coffin. Mustapha Murad smiled, but the Yankee Intelligence operator did not see the smile. Suddenly the Turk leaned forward and picked up the small ball of crumpled paper that Phineas had dropped. He spread it open absently and read:

QUIGLEY GUM

The Chew the Choosey Chewers Chew!

“Uh—er nice evenin’,” Phineas clipped uneasily. “How’s Abdul Humid’s army doin’, *mein Freund*?”

Mustapha Murad, eyes as cold as an Eskimo fish pool, yanked a big cord that dangled near his elbow. “Pig!” he cracked at Phineas. “*Canaille!* Smart you are, Lieutenant Pinkham! Once I see you in Paris, yas, my fran’. No Cherman chews the American gum! No real Cherman would wear the heavy uniform of the flying corps in thees wrarm climate. Naw!”

“Naw yourself!” Phineas tossed out. “—er—lemme show you I am sidin’ with Allah. I brought a Koran with me.”

A door opened. Another Turk entered. He was, if possible, more forbidding looking even than Mustapha Murad. Phineas found out soon enough that it was Rancid Bey, Mustapha Murad’s yes-man and chief cutter of throats and eliminator of undesirables in Bagdad.

“In mabbe five minoot, my fran’,” Mustapha Murad rasped, “I have eet your t’roat cut. Rancid Bey, I have eet here ze Ally spy. He ees clumsy peeg.” Mustapha laughed very nastily. “Ees better they sand ze goat or ze peeg for match wits with Mustapha Murad.”

Phineas thought fast—faster than he had ever used his thinking apparatus in his life. To his mind came recollection of the great story teller of the Arabian Nights, Scheherazade. He recalled the tale of the Moslem Sultan who, after finding that a wife had been two-timing him, resolved to show the weaker Moslem sex where they headed in. Thereafter the Sultan married a new wife every day and had her throat cut twenty-four hours after the ceremony. But the aforementioned Scheherazade figured to save the women of Bagdad from being exterminated, so she volunteered to marry the Sultan. On the night of her wedding the Moslem dame told her murderous husband a thrilling story—but she left it unfinished. And the old Sultan couldn’t think of rubbbing her out until he heard how the gripping tale ended. Then every day this wise daughter of Allah continued to leave the yarn she spun hanging fire until finally the Sultan agreed to stop killing off the fair sex if his latest wife would promise to allay his suspense by kicking in with the final gag lines of her narrative.

Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham would try anything once. He had to. How else stall for time? So he forced out his familiar guffaw and proceeded with: “Well, let’s be fran’s until it is time for the pig sticking. Listen, I have a riddle that I bet you can’t answer, haw-w-w-w-w! A Persian horse trader had five horses an’ only

two stalls and the Shah caught him out ridin’ with his wife one day. The old boy says he would not have the horsetrader bumped off—killed to you, my frans—if the said horse trader could put the five horses in the two stalls. And the stalls would only hold one horse on a pinch at that. What is the answer?”

Mustapha Murad looked at Rancid Bey. Then, as he assembled the hookah gift from Phineas, he started to think. Phineas chuckled inwardly. Mustapha, as he had hoped, was a sucker for riddles. Mystery, the Yank had figured, ruled the Near East. Already Rancid Bey and Mustapha Murad were sucking smoke from the hookah into their respective bellows and thinking hard.

“Thees ees var’ good riddle, *Effendi*,” admitted Rancid.

“Ze horse trader he put zem in ze stalls at deefereent times, yas?” ruminated the Kaiser’s Moslem representative. “Ze Shah he deed not say—?”

“Nope,” Phineas interrupted. “He deed say all the nags was to be in the stalls at once. You are not even warm.”

THE fate of the Limey advance along the Tigris was hanging on this momentous riddle. Cobbe and Marshall were slowly worming their way toward Bagdad. Heinie bombs from the hidden drome in the Jebel Hamrins were dropping down upon them. Phineas thought he could hear those nitro eggs break as he sat there eyeing the Turkish brain trust. His keen Yankee brain was telling him something else, however. His ivories came together with a click. That bucolic scene over in the Jebel Hamrin! The stone house, the limpid pond. Chuckling inwardly, the pilot from Boonetown commended Turkish ingenuity. But, he thought, they had not reckoned with a Pinkham.

The minutes wore on. Mustapha Murad and Rancid Bey were now betting each other all the racing steeds they owned that each would guess the answer first. And still they sucked in the smoke of the tobacco from the hookah—and their eyes grew heavy as bookends.

“Good old Sherryzaddy!” Phineas whispered, shaking his head each time the puzzled Turks guessed wrong answers.

Dawn was creeping through a single barred window. Rancid Bey’s noggin was dropping. His chin now threatened to merge with his breastbone. Mustapha Murad laughed.

“Too moch theenk mak’ heem sleepy, yas. But I find eet ze answer before ze muezzin he call out ze prayer. A-w-w-p!”



Rancid Bey, Phineas thought fearfully, must have been weaned on the fruit of the potent poppy. Maybe he should have put in six pellets. The soporific fumes were still battling to pull down the shades over those piercing black peepers.

El Rancid sent out a couple of Nubian page boys to hunt up some Turkish Einsteins. They came back in due time and pow-wowed with the mystified Mustapha Murad and Rancid Bey. They took some drags at the hookah tubes and then started their gray matter to churning under their fezzes.

"Yas, *Effendi*," one Ottoman orated finally. "I have heem. Ze horse trader he tak' ze horses from ze stable an' put heem in new stable weeth beegair stalls, huh!"

"You're as cold as a Borgia's kiss," remarked Phineas. "It was the only stable the Persian David Harum had. There wasn't any lumber to build another one as the Shah cut down all the woods in Persia to make it harder, ha w-w-w-w-w!"

"Ah-h, Allah, give us the weesdom of Harun al Raschid," intoned Rancid Bey, taking another pull at the water dudeen. "Three horse traders, *Effendi*, you say, eet, yas? Ze Shah say he put ze wife into wan stall weeth—aw-w-w-w-wp! Ze stalls—t'ree of tham go into the horses two times, yas."

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" Phineas laughed inwardly.

"Rancid is gittin' ready to go bye-bye. Everybody give up?" he asked aloud.

Mustapha shook his head. His eyes looked like two hyphens one on either side of his swarthy eagle beak. Rancid Bey sat propped up against some cushions, eyes closed as tight as a bank at midnight. Phineas, with goose pimples still rising, guessed that the pair of erudite Moslems whom Rancid Bey had brought in were used to Rancid acting that way when he did heavy brain work.

Five more minutes. Plenty more yards eaten up by the Limeys as they plodded toward the city of the caliphs.

The two late comers, a little groggy themselves by now, got up and bowed low to Rancid and Mustapha. "We go to wise Sheik Hassan Aikh. He know averyt'eeng, my fran's."

"*Bon Mosque!*" chirped Phineas. "Allah is great! Adoo!"

The curtains parted, closed again. Phineas turned to the brain trusters of Bagdad and whispered: "Give up now, huh?"

Mustapha Murad had to give up. He had torn a lot of strands from his beard. His eyes were almost closed and his hair was rumped into something resembling a crow's nest. Finally the Turkish brass hat admitted



sleepily: "I geeve up—yas, my fran', how ees thees—five horses—he gat in—ze—two stall, yas?"

"Why, the trader first made 'em into horse radish!" said Phineas. "Haw-w-w-w-w!"

"*C-Can-aille!*" Mustapha Murad said weakly, rubbing at his eyes. He pried them open and took a look at Phineas. He looked at the hookah, smacked his lips. Mustapha Murad then tumbled to the fact that he had been crossed by the hookah. His sleepy brain cells told him that there had been something in that bowl besides tobacco. Sluggishly he dragged out his curved knife, made a dive for the Boonetown trickster. But his knees buckled and he reeled like a hill billy slap-happy with moonshine.

"Davil you are! Peeg!" the Moslem gurgled like the hookah. "All ze—time I t'eenk of your treecks—yat I let—you tal' ze story while ze opium—" But before he tumbled down alongside the snoring form of Rancid Bey, Mustapha Murad yanked the heavy cord.

IT WAS time for Phineas Pinkham to take it on the lam. He charged out through the door. A big Senegambian made a swipe at him with a blade the size of a Times Square beer sign. Phineas lost a lock of hair only. He played hide and seek with Mustapha Murad's flunkeys for almost half an hour before he barged into a room where a sloe-eyed daughter of Mohammed was getting set to don a veil.

"*Pardonnez moi,*" yelped the fugitive. "It is for the Allies. I must have eet ze spare tea gown if you have one, sister. *Aussi* a veil and some slippers. You mak' eet ze one peep out of voose and I weel cut off ze head, comprenny?"

The Moslem deb did not. She was about to exercise her shrill pipes when Phineas grabbed her and clapped a big hand over her mouth. As gently as he could under the circumstances the Boonetown miracle man tied the swarthy belle and gagged her with her own veil. Then he rummaged around until he found the articles of apparel that he needed. Ten minutes

later Phineas flowed out of the boudoir of the harem with swaying hips and a pair of simulated shy eyes that were visible through the holes in the veil. A big Senegambian flunkey, armed to the teeth, met him halfway down a winding staircase. Mustapha Murad's servant bowed low and the phoney houri from Boonetown, Iowa, minced on with light fantastic toes down the stairs and into the street.

Lieutenant Pinkham made his way through a maze of Bagdad alleys and chanced to stalk past a bazaar with as much feminine grace as his gangly masculine frame would permit. High spirits were gripping at the moment. Those Turkish bums would not wake up before lunch, he was sure of that.

"Allah is great," he enthused. "Boys, am I good? I have counted a dozen sheiks who have given me the eye. Well, adoo, all you bums in Bagdad. It's been the thousandth and second Arabian Night, huh? Out the way, peeg! It's a Moslem dame who walks abroad."



NOW Fate has a habit of stepping into things and kicking over the apple cart. Unfortunately Phineas' feminine Moslem helmet got jerked loose near a bazaar and the Boonetown jokesmith stood in full view of the gabbing populace as unlovely as a hyena standing beside a

brush fence.

Then hell broke loose in that corner of Bagdad. Phineas Pinkham did not tarry to ask the price of Turkish paste in the little shop in front of which he had been unmasked. He started running and finally dived into a darkened doorway where a beggar crouched to rest his aging bones. In ten minutes, Phineas, bent over like a rheumatic orang outang, slithered out into the turmoil that he had created himself. He held out a shaking hand for pieces of Moslem silver and made his way slowly toward the outskirts of the city. Turks kicked him around. The flat side of a scimitar whacked him on the tail assembly and he almost stepped out of character to



retaliate. Bagdad continued to be a howling bedlam as its indignant citizens sought to ferret out the unbeliever who had dared to impersonate a daughter of Mohammed.

Meanwhile Mustapha Murad and Rancid Bey slept peacefully near the hookah four miles distant. Generals Cobbe and Marshall, having restored the scattered marbles of their advancing troops after a raid from the hidden Gothas, continued on their way toward Bagdad. Another raid, the Limey red tabs knew, might hold back the advance for days. If the Heinie eggs dropped on their supply dump north of Kut—. The red tabs cursed *Hauptmann* Weisenheimer as they urged the Tommies on. History was being written with Phineas “Carbuncle” Pinkham doing a lot of the penmanship.

Hitching himself along to the outskirts of the Turkish metropolis, Phineas finally reached the spot where he had left the Fokker. A pair of Kraut flyers had landed Aviatiks not far from it and were looking the Fokker over with interest. One held up something he had discovered near the ship. It turned out to be a dog-eared book that Phineas Pinkham had dropped. With bulging eyes the Kraut *Leutnant* read: FOOL YOUR FRIENDS AT PARTIES BE THE MOST POPULAR MAN IN YOUR SOCIAL SET FOR ONLY A DIME!

“*Himmel! Das* Pingham! *Der* oopstardt he *ist* by Bagdad. *Mack Schnell*, Rudy. Oudt *mit der* pit yedt, Fritz. Shudt idt off *der* modor!”

Fritz was in a hurry and he did not shut off the motor. The Mercedes was still ticking over when the Krauts started running for a staff car that had slowed down so that its occupants could look things over.

For an aged beggar Phineas Pinkham suddenly became very agile. He leaped into the Fokker pit and set the power plant to roaring. Turkish brass hats tumbled out of the Jerry boiler. The Teuton Aviatik pushers tried to get back to correct things, but the Fokker was rolling away before they could find breath to swear. Guns boomed. A Turk threw a scimitar, and it stuck in the upper wing of the D-7 and stayed there.

“Adoo bums!” hooted Phineas. “Haw-w-w-w-w! I go to get some bombs to drop on *Hauptmann* Weisenheimer. Boys, do I catch onto things!”

THE personnel of a Bristol squadron near the Mesopotamian hamlet of Hiilah got shocked out of their appetites that morning when the Fokker came mooching down to their drome. Pilots left their tents and one or two took a shot at the alien craft before they saw the strange figure gesticulating in the pit.

“Blarst my eyes!” exclaimed a Limey captain. “It’s an old man. His rags are flyin’ back in the slip stream. In a Fokker. Fancy!” But Phineas didn’t look fancy when he ran up to the goggle-eyed Britishers and ripped off a long white false beard.

“I’m Lieutenant Pinkham from. Barley Duck in France,” he yipped. “I have spotted the hidden drome. Boys, do them Ali Babies think they’re smart! Lead me to the commandin’ officer. I want to lead a raid *ce swar* over into the Jebel Hamrins before it gets too dark. Where’s the bum who bosses you cheerio chappies, huh?”

Phineas contacted the brains of the airdrome a short time later. Colonel Parker-Carr was no end amazed when he heard the tale of the recent Arabian Night. He hardly credited his senses when the intrepid Yank told him of his pow-wow with Mustapha Murad and Rancid Bey.

“Incredible,” the brass tab gulped. “Don’t pull my leg now, Lieutenant. I’ve heard of you, y’know.”

“Haw-w-w-w-w!” Phineas guffawed. “Bigger officers than you wouldn’t ever believe me. But I will show you bums. If you want the city of Bagdad, I would order me, if I was you, to lead some Bristols over to them hills, as if the Hopman ever tags that supply dump of yours, oh boys! Will the King get a setback?”

“Very well, Pinkham,” Colonel Parker-Carr growled. “It shall be done, but if this is one of your crack-brained stunts and we waste bombs on a lot of rocks, I’ll have you put in irons. There has been a message from Port Said. You stole a car, disobeyed orders—”

“It’s a lie!” Phineas protested. “I bet Mustapha Murad was behind that. I bet he heard I was comin’ an’—”

The Mesopotamian day dragged on. The sun lowered and dusk was about to start painting a lot of shadows on the real estate of the land of Harun al Raschid. Six Bristols, bombs strung under their bellies, began to purr out in front of the big canvas hangar. Phineas Pinkham, clad in the uniform of a Royal Flying Corps officer, got into the control pit of one of the two-seaters and scratched his bare knees.

“Gosh, I don’t blame the Limeys for flying in their skivvies here,” he said with a grin just before the take-off. “I could fry an egg on my right leg now. But it will be hotter for *Herr* Hopman Weisenheimer, haw-w-w-w-w-w! It’s a caution. What a good thing that I remembered that time I went to the house of the Mayor of Boonetown to fix a gas leak, haw-w-w-w-w-w!”

In the Jebel Hamrings, three Gothas were getting loaded up with gas. Bombs were being put into the racks. *Herr Hauptmann* Weisenheimer was beaming as he strutted around the big crates and he talked like a parakeet.

“*Ach*, tonight *ist der* vashup, *mein* *Freunds*. Ve undrop *der* eggs on *der* doomp—*und* bang! Ho! ho! Efen *das* Pingharn bumper could do nodding vas he here. *Mach Schnell*, Chentlemen. *Der* Kaiser waits for *der* news in *der* *Morgen*. *Ach*, *der* camouflage ve haff used. *Ach*, ve Chermans! Ve—”

BLA-A-A-A-AM! BA-A-A-A-AN-N-NG!  
CRA-A-A-A-ASH!

“*Himmel! Donnervetter! Was ist? Der* bombs. Run vuneel!” *Herr Hauptmann* Weisenheimer suited action to the order while he bellowed to his men. “*Gott*, dey find oudt!”

Jerries ran to rock shelters while Allied bombs blew the camouflage to bits. Hundreds of Persian and Turkish rugs spread over the secret drome, rugs and carpets, that had been pieced together to form a fake mosaic which had fooled the Limey birdmen, littered the sky then rained down to earth again.

BLA-A-A-A-AM! BLO-O-O-O-OEY! KERWHA-A-A-A-AM!

*Hauptmann* Weisenheimer felt his insides backfire as he saw two Gothas blow up before his eyes. A chunk of rock banged down on his cranium and the Gotha master laid down to snooze for the duration of the raid.

With jubilant pilots at the sticks, the Bristols swung around and went back toward Hillah. Three Aviatiks tried to block their way home, but they only took a terrific kicking around for their pains. There was nothing that could stop the beef eaters and Phineas Pinkham from getting home. They were in fine fettle and did not know their own strength. The hidden drome was wiped out as completely as a spot before a housewife’s busy floor mop.

Back in the Limey mess hall, after toasts had been drunk to Phineas Pinkham and the family in Windsor Castle, the British C.O. spoke up:

“Leftenant, I say, tell us how you did it, old chap! Blarst it, you’ll be in Parliament for this.”

“Haw-w-w-w-w!” the hero of the moment grinned. “I spotted that place through some field glasses I found in the Fokker. Well, I thought I saw something in the make-up of that place that I’d seen before. It all looked like natural scenery at first, but then the sorta design of it kept running through my head. It made a pattern, I finally figures out—the same

as in a rug the Mayor of Boonetown back home owns. I wondered where I’d seen it before and all at once I remembered. It wasn’t done with mirrors—it was done with Turkish rugs. That was some camouflage the Ali Babies used, huh? Only they couldn’t fool the Pinkhams. Well, it has been another swell Arabian Night, ain’t it? Pass the chutney, old thing!”

Over in the Jebel Hamring, *Herr Hauptmann* Weisenheimer was crawling out of a pile of rocks and rubbing his noggin. His fingers, pawing at the ground, struck against something which turned out to be a small wooden box. The label on it announced that it contained, “LICORICE BUGS. NO END OF FUN. PUT THEM IN YOUR FRIENDS’ SOUP,” it suggested to the purchaser. “They are a howl!”

The Teuton felt sick. He eased his torso flat to the soil of Mesopotamia and contemplated the mess that he had made of things in the Near East.

“*Ach, Gott! Das* Pingharn. How he gedts here, how? *Ach, Himmel!*”

NEWS of the latest Pinkham coup spread far and wide. As if the exploit had not been incredible enough, war correspondents added to it. Major Rufus Garrity and his buzzards near Bar-Le-Duc were told that Phineas had even stolen Abdul Humid’s fez and had shipped it to Buckingham Palace as a present for the Queen. He had starched it, the story ran, and had made it into quite a presentable plant pot.

Phineas denied nothing when he finally arrived, weeks later, at Bar-Le-Duc. He salaamed deeply to his C.O. and dumped some souvenirs of Bagdad on the table.

“Bong swar, bum *efiendis*,” the miracle man grinned. “How is all the Spad Sheiks, huh? Hello, El Bump! Haw-w-w-w!”

“Uh—er—ugh—” began Garrity. “Welcome—er—back, Phineas. “We—er—duck everybody! Run!”

BLA-A-A-A-AM! CRA-A-A-ASH! KER-WHA-A-A-AM!

The welcoming committee scattered like pool balls at the break. Phineas Pinkham dived under the Ninth Pursuit Squadron’s car and grinned as Gotha bombs broke up all around him.

“Haw-w-w-w-w!” the Boonetown patriot enthused. “There is no place like home!”