

SWISS WHEEZE

written and illustrated by
JOE ARCHIBALD

Everything that goes up must come down! When that derelict rubber cow went high-tailing up into the clouds, P. Pinkham quickly verified the fact that he wasn't the deception that proved the rule. He also demonstrated that he certainly knew his Horace, even though he'd never studied Cicero. And that's how a St. Bernard's "ARF!" came to be translated into the Kaiser's St. Mihiel" OOF!"

LIEUT. PHINEAS PINKHAM started the argument in a Frog grog shop in Bar-Le-Duc. It was an argument having to do with the respective merits of two branches of the air service and the comparative risk attached to each. Phineas orated that the boys who went up under the rubber cows had a lead pipe cinch. Any old woman, he insisted, could climb into a laundry basket and be let up into the ozone by a wire cable.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" guffawed the bamboozler as the argument grew hotter and hotter. He could now almost see smoke coming out of the collar of the captain next to him at the bar—a fellow hailing from a balloon outfit near Lerouville. "You guys git a parachute an' jump when you see a Heinie comin'. Try jumpin' out of a Spad, mawn ammy, just try! It's just sight-seers you are, that's all."

"Don't mind him," Bump Gillis tried to placate

the captain. "It would be a day lost if he did not insult somebody."

"Why they should call the blimp corps 'The Jumpin' Jacks,'" the undaunted exponent of trickery pursued his subject. "But of course the gas companies have got to git somethin' out of the *guerre*, too. Huh, Bump?"

"Make believe I ain't with ya," the Scot sniffed, looking around to see if anybody was offering to set up the next round of drinks.

"Well, I'd like to go up in one just the same," Phineas kept right on. "I would take a good book with me an'—"

"Somebody's goin' to get punched in the nose," Captain Hack O'Toole of the gas bag outfit exploded. And just then so did a cigar that Phineas had proffered him a couple of seconds before. A stream of fire hissed out of the end of it and licked at the short hairs on the nape of the neck of the Frog bartender who was hunting up a bottle of Three Star. The Frog yowled and fell back against the bar, whereupon Phineas irrigated his parched scalp with half a bottle of vin rouge. The son of Lafayette whirled, a bottle of cognac clutched in his hand—and then he saw a vicious-looking, spotted snake wriggle across the wet surface of the bar.

"Aw-w-w-w-wk! *Mon Dieu!*" he shrieked and made a pass at the phony serpent. The bottle came down on the fingers of the balloon skipper. And then the fight was on! Bump Gillis and Phineas Pinkham finally dived through a window and crouched outside in the gloom.

"*Sacre!*" they heard a gendarme inside screech at the blimp captain. "You choke *ze homme, non?* Take zat an' zat an' zat! *Lcse ze t'roat or I br'ak votre tete.*"

"Yeah, awright" Phineas heard O'Toole yell. "Put me in the klink—the same one with Pinkham. An' put a baseball bat in the cell with us—er—Oh, so the mug beat it, huh? Well, he started this. Oh, if I had him in my outfit, I'd send him up in a basket with an anvil tied around his neck. Lay off, you snail eaters! Nudge me with that club ag'in an' I'll take it away from ya an' shove it down your airline."

"He is sore, huh, Bump?" the hidden starter of it all grinned. "Let's allay, nest pass?"

"I don't know why the hell I come in here with you," Gillis growled. "You an' your screwy tricks! An' a limey was just offerin' me a jigger of brandy when you—" He shrugged his shoulders resignedly. "Aw-w-w-cripes! Come on back to the drome before you make France mad at the Allies."

MAJOR RUFUS GARRITY was talking with Captain Howell of "A" Flight and a couple of other pilots when Phineas and Bump walked into the big room of the Frog farmhouse that served as headquarters for the Ninth Pursuit Squadron.

"Bong sour, bums!" Phineas chortled. "We thought we'd git home early see swar—so that we could git lots of rest for the early patrol. Discipline in an army is everything, I says to Bump. He wanted to stay in the bar room but—"

"Oh, you liar!" Bump yipped. "I—er—"

"I expect the M.P.'s any minute," Howell snorted suspiciously. "What did you do now, you big fathead?"

"This time it was not me," the pride of Boonetown, Iowa, declared. "An officer from the Balloon Corps tried to strangle a Frog bartender, and the gendarmes were arrestin' all U.S. officers to get hunk. But me an' Bump was too smart for 'em, wasn't we?"

Bump Gillis looked murderous, but he choked out a weak, "Yeah! Heh! Heh! It's cloudin' up outside, huh? Nice day yesterday, though. The day before—er—well, goodnight, everybody."

"Hm-m-m-m," Garrity cleared his throat. "Fightin' with the gas bag guys again, were you? I hope they get you up in one of those things before this war ends, you—you spotted adder!"

"You can't prove that snake was mine," Phineas suddenly yipped. "It—er—what was that you said, Major? I was thinkin' about somethin' else while you was soundin' off, an'—"

"Sit down—and shut up!" Garrity thundered. "Now, Howell, what was I saying before we were interrupted? Oh, yeah. A lot of the Krauts are beginning to desert. Hear a lot of officers have been interned in Switzerland. Looks like they're ready to admit they haven't got a chance. Anyhow, when we made that drive on the St. Mihiel sector and head toward Metz, the Kaiser will yell 'uncle' and we'll all go home."

"I hear it is a nice place—Switzerland," Phineas observed. "They got dogs there that carry cognac around with 'em. I bet it's an awful job gittin' liquor licenses for 'em, huh? I promised my Aunt Petunia I would bring her home a clock an' a Swiss cheese if I got to—"

"Keep your lip sewed up!" Garrity howled. "Otherwise I'll give you a good start toward the Alps with the toe of my boot. Now, where was I? Yes—well, Metz now, Howell. Pretty heavily fortified. Probably mined, too, in spots. The Krauts would make it tough

if the Allies got to Metz. Last stronghold between Potsdam and Alsace.”

“That is one thing the Air Corps should not have to do,” Phineas horned in again. “The brass hats ought to pardon a few good stick-up guys in the U.S. klinks and bring ‘em over here. There is one in the hoosegow in Iowa who stole the mustard plaster off of the warden’s neck. We could drop him over there and he would lift them plans easy. Just like nothin’ at all. He’s called Black Mike McGoosely.”

Major Garrity drove Phineas out of the house, after which the Boonetown flyer sneaked over to Captain Howell’s hut and put a handful of iron filings in the flight leader’s bed.

FLIGHT “A” took off at dawn. If you had cold the members of the patrol, as they sipped their pre-flight coffee, that they would not hear from Phineas Pinkham again for almost two days, they would have thrown their arms around you and saluted you French fashion. But if you had told them that the message they would get at the expiration of that time would come from the land of William Tell, cheese, and pretty echoes, they would have strapped you to a cot and sent for a noggin specialist.

But that is crossing the Alps before getting to them. We must first tell you about the many things that happened in the interim—

The Heinies proved to be particularly nasty that morning when Howell and his understudies skimmed over the Meuse and took an inventory of the firmament high over St. Benoit, A pestiferous circus of wiener schnitzel gluttons moved in on the same sky shelf with Garrity’s buzzards and immediately began to argue regarding the right of way. Phineas Pinkham tagged the leading Von with a lucky burst, but the Kraut bounced off the sky ropes and countered with as pretty a wallop from his right Spandau as ever was thrown. Pinkham felt his Spad quiver and saw one of his struts dangling like a hang-nail when he got right side up again. Moreover, a loose wire was singing a song in his ear—an aria that had nothing to do with love and kisses. The melody was quite depressing, savoring of life across the River Jordan.

Lieutenant Pinkham rolled out of the path of a Pfalz that Captain Howell had bagged; and then, to shake a Hun off his tail, he hurled his Spad into a turn-about that would have made Immelmann himself jealous.

But still the Von hung on. “He must’ve hooked a

tow rope onto me,” Phineas wailed. “Won’t nothin’ shake that Kraut loose?” Phineas now frantically climbed, then slipped down a thousand feet. The aerial ruse strained the Spad’s back and the top wing started to waggle on its angel bones. A lot of lead had reached the Spad’s vitals, too, and the Hisso started to miss like a cross-eyed Indian shooting at a Pilgrim staggering toward a stockade with a load of home brew aboard.

“It is time to knock off,” Phineas gulped. “I wish they’d use somethin’ else besides bread sticks for Spad struts. Boys, if I walk away from this one, I’ll get an investigation started—ulp! Er—that’s it, mawn ammy,” he pleaded to his mount. “Keep your nose up. You had me scairt for a second. That’s the ol’ fight! Don’t forget we are pals—only five hundred more feet.”

THE personnel of a blimp outfit was watching that Spad flutter earthward. They made bets as to how many pieces the pilot would be in when they picked him up. A tall, husky captain, with charges of felonious assault plastered on the door of his cubicle, spotted the insignia on the mechanical bird and he smacked his lips and blew on his knuckles.

“Let him git out alive! Anyways, so he can stand on one leg as I could not hit a cripple,” he rasped. “Pinkham, huh? Some insignia. An ace of spades being slipped up a sleeve. Always somethin’ up his sleeve, huh? Well, he better git killed outright as I will finish—”

“I can’t look,” broke in a dough by the winch truck and he shut his eyes.

KERWHOP—ZI-I-I-I-ISH! CRA-A-A-A-ASH!

“Stretcher bearers! Stretcher bearers!” They came running. The balloon squadron C.O. led his white-faced pack to the wreck. A wing lifted and a head appeared. A freckled face with eyes a little out of whack stared at the reception committee. Phineas Pinkham spat out a mouthful of oil, then extricated himself from the heap of junk.

“Somebody hurt?” Phineas inquired, ogling the men with the Red Cross brassards.

“My-y-y-y Gawsh!” the blimp skipper gasped. “Tie that one!”

“Was you figgerin’ on givin’ me a ride?” the Spad crasher asked, grinning. “Why, compared to the wrecks I have walked out of, this one is a crate that has passed an insurance test. Where am I?”

“Here, you crackpot!” Captain O’Toole erupted. “Seen any snakes lately? Dropped right into my lap, didn’t you?”

“My! My! It’s you, ain’t it?” Phineas sighed. “What chances does your lawyer give ya, huh? Come on, Cap’n, let’s shake an’ forget it all, huh?”

O’Toole looked at him grimly. He nodded. Oh, yes, he would shake—then bust Phineas Pinkham right on the bugle. The hand he grasped felt cold and lifeless. He jerked at it to get the Pinkham proboscis within range of his cocked left. But the hand came right out of the Pinkham sleeve and the wrist of it was torn and stained red. Tough Hack O’Toole passed out and the stretcher bearers hurried to him. When they had him ensconced upon the litter, O’Toole recovered his marbles and gazed at Phineas woozily. The Boonetown pilot was holding onto his mid-section with both hands and the tears were streaming down his face.

“Haw-w-w-w-w-w!” a far too familiar voice let out.

“Did I fool him? That wax hand that I got in a museum in Paree made him faint like a dame. Haw-w-w-w-w-w!”

Captain O’Toole rolled off the stretcher and picked up a rock. He chased Phineas all the way to Number 6 Balloon Squadron, and when he let the rock go, he missed the bull’s-eye and conked one of his best observers. The noncombatant took a backward flip and sprained a wrist and an ankle, and the medicos quickly told Captain O’Toole that his gas bag specialist would not be able to function properly for at least a week.

“That means we are two men short now,” Captain O’Toole moaned. “Why—!!!” And he let loose such a sizzling torrent of oaths that the blades of grass in the immediate vicinity turned brown.

Phineas only reached into the pocket of his flying coat and pulled out a dog biscuit—one that brought back fond memories of a pooch named Rollo that had wandered onto the drome of the Ninth some months previous. “Here, Fido,” he coaxed the captain, “is this what you are barkin’ for? Haw-w-w-w-w! Well, if you want a pinch hitter, I’d like to take a ride in one of them picnic baskets. I—”

O’Toole’s face lit up. “Oh, yeah? Well, I’d like to give ya a ride in one. I am in a sling now. I’ll go the whole hog or nothin’. You can go up with Lieutenant Libby, Pinkham. We’ve got some spotting to do for the artillery. Or are you kidding me, you big, loud-mouthed baboon?”

“Boys, I have always wanted to go up with one of them rubber cows. I can’t wait.” At this, the members of the balloon squadron grinned in anticipation.

Libby clipped: “Fellows, it is us that gives the war

insurance offices a headache. We lose maybe three gas bags a day. We buried seven observers in one month.”

“I still say it’s a pushover,” Lieutenant Pinkham hollered.

BUT twenty minutes later he was not so sure. He was in the wicker basket with Lieutenant Libby, and the bottom seemed ready to fall out of it any minute. There was a map board, a couple of Lewis guns, and some heavy-business binoculars in the woven car. As the inflated blimp shot higher and higher in the ozone on the wire cable that was being let out by the winch, the basket began to sway and Phineas Pinkham swallowed a dozen times to keep his heart where it belonged.

“How d’ya like it?” Libby yippee. “Ha! Ha! Wait until a Heinie spots us! Cinch, huh? You look as green as a frog’s back already.”

“If I had some knittin’,” Phineas retorted, “I could enjoy myself, Haw-w-w-w-w-w!”

“Watch for Krauts,” Libby barked. “I’ve got to put these ear phones on. I—er—oh-h-h-h-h-h! I forgot to tell ya—that parachute in that case ain’t any good. I meant to tell ‘em to fix it. You will have to hang onto me if we have to jump, Pinkham. Don’t forget!”

“It’s a frameup,” Phineas howled. “I’ll prefer charges of attempted murder. O’Toole knew that. He—”

“He did not. He—look, look! It’s a Fokker. Git that gun goin’!”

Phineas started shooting, but the basket was swaying like an oriole’s nest in the top of an aspen in the wind. He missed the Fokker by a city block and it rushed in with flaming guns.

“I’m gittin’ out,” Lieutenant Libby hollered. “Good luck, Pinkham. Just fall over the edge of the basket an’—so long!” Libby seemed to remember that Pinkham’s chute was out of shape just as he toppled out of the basket. “Pinkham, I f-forgot—oh-h-h-h-h-h-h!”

“You dirty tramp!” the Boonetown jokester howled. “Wait for me—er—well, it’s too late. Now I got to git me that Kraut and then let some gas out!”

Abruptly something gave the gas bag a terrific jolt. The balloon collapsed in the middle, then billowed out again. Phineas clung to the basket for dear life, then lifted his head to look overside. The Heinie flyer had been a bad judge of distance. He was now going to the carpet wing over wing and his tail assembly was a mess. As for the blimp cable, it had been broken and the rubber cow was now going places on its own.

“It has busted loose,” Phineas croaked, his insides freezing up. “I got to do somethin’, or I will travel farther than Sinbad. Let’s see; you pull this cord—”

But it quickly occurred to Phineas, as the gas bag shot on upward, that if he pulled the rip cord to valve hydrogen out of the rubber cow, he would go right down into Hunland—and his life on the Kraut side was not worth the tenth part of a Russian ruble.

Two other Heinies now came knifing through the ozone, but the bag was going up faster than any winged bus could climb. Phineas’ big ears felt as if somebody were driving wooden plugs into them and his breathing was becoming none too good.

“I’ve been in messes,” he groaned, “but this the worst I—oh, well, I am on my way. It is accordin’ to which way the wind blows where I end up. It will either be Norway or Africa.”

Down on the ground Captain O’Toole did not seem the least bit abashed. “There he goes!” he shouted. “And devil take him! He’ll valve the gas out right over the Krauts somewhere. Happy landings, you wise tomater!”

LIEUTENANT PINKHAM passed out when the balloon passed fourteen thousand feet. But when he opened his eyes again, his brain cells were doing business. There was now no sun in the sky. And when he looked over the side of the basket, he saw mountain peaks not five hundred feet below him. In his high-riding basket, Phineas found it was as cold as a cobra’s leerv. The gas now contracted in the cooler clime and the basket was losing altitude fast.

“Boys, it’s the Alps,” Phineas yipped. “If I hear a yodel, I’ll be sure. Have I been travelin’!”

The scenery kept changing, and soon there were big patches of green in the snow blanket below. Phineas spotted a small house on the side of a hill. Then another. The branches of a tall tree finally snagged the basket, and the pilot from Bar-Le-Duc quickly reached for a limb and clung to it while the drifting blimp dragged the basket out from under him. A few jerks later he was sliding down through the branches. He grabbed another limb which broke under his weight and the law of gravity did the rest. He hit snow-covered carpet and went down into it about three feet. When he ploughed his way out, snorting and gasping, he heard a voice banging in his ears. It came from a distant hillside. “O—le-olay-de—dee! Olay—e-e-e-e-e—dee—o lay e-e-e-e-e-e-de-de-e-e-e-e!”

“It’s Switzerland awright,” the snow-covered Yank

grinned. “Maybe I’ll meet that Swiss family named Robinson. Huh? What was that? Nope, it can’t be—I—”

From somewhere nearby there now came a pair of Heinie voices!

“Uh—er—maybe it’s the Bavarian Alps,” Phineas choked out. “Just my luck! Well I—” He pushed back his helmet to give his over-sized ears full play.

“*Ja, ve ist losdt yedt, Rudy. I tell you ve shouldt go nein zo far from der Svitzer’s Haus. Dumkopf!* Already yedt ve gedt losdt *und* you vant ve shouldt go back by Chermany. To gedt idt shodt, *nein?* I stay by here until *der var* it shouldt be gefinished.”

“Who giffs *der* idea ve coom here, *hein?* You, Hans Brautigam, *ja!* Budt, *ja*, ve got back *und* stay by *der* Svitzer. Deserters *ve ist* anyway *und der* Svitzer soldiers would nodt let us gedt ofer *der* border. But anyvays ve would gefreeze oop before ve gedt by *der* Vaterland. *Der* Rumpler *ist* by *der* hillside *mit der* untercarriage off, *ja. Ach, mach Schnell, und* find idt *der* vay back, Hans.”

“*Himmel, Rudy, I don’td know vheie ist. Ve maybe die mit* starving *und*—Look vunce, *mein Freund! Der* St. Bernard dog of *Herr* Zilcher. He finds us, *nein?* Ha! ha! Coom by us, doggie. Rudy, *der* hand hass idt *der* keg arrround *der* neck. *Schnapps, hein?*”

Phineas Pinkham crawled closer to the edge of the woods and crouched behind a big stump. In a little depression in the wintery landscape he saw the two squareheads huddled close together. They were untying a small keg from the neck of a dog that looked as big as a bull calf.

“Some pooch!” the hidden Yank sniffed. “If I had a saddle, I would get back to the Ninth in no time.”

“*Donnervetter!*” the bigger of the Heinies ripped out. “Empty *ist*. Bah!” He kicked at the St. Bernard’s fuselage and it leaped six yards away, letting out a full-throated howl of protest.

“Hey, cut that out!” Phineas hollered. “Come *ici*, old feller, and see what I’ve got for voose. I dunno what your name is in Swiss, but I hereby dub you Horace, which is as good a handle as any. Here, Horace!”

The St. Bernard uttered a joyful howl and trotted toward the miracle man from Iowa. He took a dog biscuit out of the Pinkham hand and munched on it as if he had not eaten since William Tell became apple-knocking champ of the Alps. The pooch then snuggled close to Phineas and looked up at him with big soulful eyes.

“Kickin’ a dog that come out to help ya, huh?” he snarled at the stunned Huns. “Put that keg back on

my pal's collar, or I'll fracture both your skulls with it, mine froinds. Boys, if I dropped in the middle of Borneo, I would find squareheads. Deserters, huh?"

"Ja," the smaller Heinie admitted brazenly. "Und maybe you haff coom yedt for *der* mountain air, *hein?*" he laughed derisively. "Rudy, *das ist* none odder dan *der* oopstartd Pingham! I know *der verdammt* Yankee vhat hass *der* spots ofer *der* face und *der* tooth like *der* wolf."

"Yes, it's me in the flesh," Phineas bowed. "I come over in a blimp that got away. Well, where's this garsong's shack that you are holed up in?"

"Coom, ve show you. Tell idt *der* dog to go hoom vunce und ve coom after in *der* tracks."

"Okay, Horace, allay!" Phineas said, pointing. "Show *der* vay to go home, *oui?*"

The dog seemed to catch on. It trotted away, stopped to look back at Phineas as if to say: "Follow me, ol' timer. If the other bums come, too, I can't help it."

IT WAS a trek of three miles to the abode of the Swiss named Zilcher. He lived in a hut built on the side of a steep slope. Just as they spotted the chalet, Phineas stopped and looked across a deep ravine at a hillside where a three-quarter moon was throwing kisses at the wing of a Kraut two-seater. The iron crosses on the wing stood out boldly, and Phineas turned and said to the plodding Potsdam flunkys: "That's where you cracked up, huh?"

"Ja. Shudt idt *der* vace und go. *Der* dog moofs nodt undtil you moof, *Dumkopf*. Always brudders knows vun also odder vhen dey meet, *ja*, Hans. Ho! Ho!"

"Oh, yeah?" The Pinkham fist shot out.

KERWHOOP!

"Ar-r-r-gh—wuff—wuff!" Horace emitted approvingly, wagging his big bushy tail as Rudy gulped and pancaked into the snow.

"In the ground or in the air, I don't take no guff!"

Phineas said severely, glowering at Hans who had shied away. Then he followed in Horace's wake, his eyes set on the distant hill while his brain began to shake off cobwebs and to percolate evenly. But the gray matter of the Heinies was at work, too, and they muttered and mumbled to each other between gasps as they labored up the slope to Zilcher's. It was quite a bungalow, and when they paused outside the door, Phineas widened his eyes and tossed out: "What's makin' all that noise in there, pretzel snitchers? Click beetles?"

Bong! Bong! Bing-bing! Cuckoo-o-o-o! Cuckoo! Tick-tock—tick-tock! Such cacophony came from within.

"Herr Zilcher ist *der* clock figzer," Hans explained. "He liffs oop here vhere *ist der* qviet."

Zilcher eyed his boarders askance when they entered the hut. He pointed at Phineas and queried: "Anozzer one, eh? All ze soldats zey run off from ze *guerre, oui?*"

"Not me," Phineas snapped. "I got a hold of a balloon an' couldn't let go. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

Zilcher kept a dead pan. Hans reached out to pat Horace and the Swiss pooch let out a growl and almost snapped his fingers off. Horace thereupon snuggled close to the Pinkham undercarriage and panted in friendly

fashion. The St. Bernard knew that there was more dog food in the Yank's pocket. Evidently the type of canine biscuit made in the U.S.A. had it all over the Swiss brand. And Horace had not forgotten that kick in the slats administered by the Kraut. Being almost as large as a baby elephant, he had the memory of one.

"Sit down, *oui!*" Zilcher said. "Ze zoup waits."

"Mercy," said Phineas and sat. "Well, well, it's a long way from the *guerre*, huh, Otto?" he addressed one of the Krauts at random. "Boys, will the Kaiser take a lickin'?"

"Ja? You t'ink zo, *hein?*" countered the smaller Dutchman. "Du hist goofy! Vait vunce undtil *der* Yangkees get by Metz, *ja!*" Rudy nudged Hans in



the ribs and took a folded bit of thin paper from an inside pocket. "Here *ist der* plans by Metz. I find by *der* offizier's car by Saarbruck *und* vas too mooch hurry in to giff again back. Ho! Ho! Op in smoke *der Dumkopfs* go vhen—"

"Yeah?" the Yank tossed back. He took a piece of paper from his own pocket—a map removed from the blimp's basket. It was made of the same stuff as the fragment the Kraut was waving around. "Ha! You think the Boche bums are smart, huh? Well, look at this! Pershin'll draw the Krauts right into a pocket saturated with nitro near St. Mihiel an'—" He laid the folded map close to where the Heinie's lay and pounded his fist on top of it. "Laugh that off, you fatheads!"

It did not seem as if either *Herr* Pinkham or the Boche ever would get back to the war for the last act, so what harm could it do for them to take a gander at the maps? When they were exchanged, Phineas' hands made very quick movements and the dim light in the Swiss hut aided and abetted his skullduggery. Zilcher put on the soup and the three truants from the Western Front pitched into it with vim and vigor. While they ate, those nerve-strumming noises came out of the adjoining room. *Bing—bing—bing! Cuckoo-o-o-o-o-o-o! Tick-tock—bing bong!*

"This is a heck of a place for a nervous crackup," Phineas complained. "Do those things ever let a guy sleep?"

AT MIDNIGHT the Yank followed Zilcher to a small upper room. The Boche bunked together in an adjoining chamber, and Horace, the big pooch, curled up near the Pinkham bed and looked at Phineas with large appreciative eyes. It was the first time any eyes had ever looked upon that physiognomy without being bothered by the freckles and tombstone teeth. The Yank looked out of the window at that Boche two-seater and grinned as he started to take off his flying suit. He had left his bulky leather coat hanging near the fire downstairs so that it would dry out. Soon mutterings came from the next room and Phineas tiptoed to the wall and laid his lily-pad ear against it.

"*Ach*, Rudy," he heard, "he falls by our handts yedt. Ve haff to get back by Chermany. Forty t'ousand marks it giffs *und* medals if ve take him by *der* High Command, *nein*? All *ist* forgiffed for *der* runningk away, *ja*. Budt *der* oopstartd, he iss smart. Already yedt I see him look at *der* Rumpler *und* I readt *der* mind, *ja*. You keep *der* vits *und* vatch *das* Pingham. Don't take

noddings from him. Uh—er—Rudy, look at idt *der* map vunce. I haff *der* feelingk—*ach!*"

The Heinie took the map from his pocket and spread it out. Before them was a diagram that meant absolutely nothing to the startled Vons. The plans of the real estate around Metz had vanished.

"*Himmel!* Hans, *das ist der* Yangkee—qwick ve gedt *der*—gedt *der* Luger!"

"*Nein!* *Das ist negut.* Already yedt I know idt *der* hidingk blace. *Das* Horace, *ja!* In *der* keg—*und der* dog bites off *der* handts yedt if ve joost go near, *ach Himmel!* Gedt idt *der* brains to vork *mach Schnell!*"

"Well, they give me an idea," Phineas chortled and he went over to the St. Bernard and pulled a little plug out of the keg. He rolled the stolen map up and forced it in through the opening, then shoved the bung back into place. "Bite the bums when they even look at you, Horace," he told the pooch. "And it gives another dog biscuit in the A.M."

The Heinies plotted and plotted and it was Hans who got the brainstorm. "Listen, Rudy, vunce. *Ach!* Downstairs yedt *ist der* Pingham coat *mit der* dog biscuits, *ja?* *Der* St. Bernard vill follow *der* man vhat has *der* bones. I sneak down yedt *und* gedt *der* bones *und* den ve go oudt to *der* Rumpler in *der* morning. Horace he follows *mit der* mout' vaterink, *hein?* You take off *der* keg vhen I giff *der* dog *das* bone, *ja?* *Und* vhen Horace *ist* went vwhile *das* Pingham eats *der* breakfast, *der verdammt* Yankee afterwards follows him oudt by *der* tracks to *der* Rumpler wich ve fix *mit der* bick sled for skis. *Das ist* worth *der* chance now, *nein?* Ho! Ho! *Das* Pingham he *ist* so smardt yedt. Ve gedt back *der* plans by Metz *und der* Yangkee *mit* alts! Ve be heroes insteadt of deserters. *Ja*, Rudy?"

"*Ach*, iff *der* Rumpler don't vork *mit der* sledt, *ach*, Hans."

"But vhen *der* var *ist* ofer efen *und* ve go back, ve will gedt shot anyvays, *Dumkopf.* Ve take *der* chances *mit der* Rumpler on *der* snowslide. *Ja*, for *der* Vaterland, Rudy! *Hoch der* Kaiser vunce more! If ve *ist* killed, also *ist das* Pingham *und* statues vill go oop for us *Unter den Lindens!*"

Tucking himself comfortably into bed, Phineas muttered: "I'm away ahead of you *zwei* bums." And then he went to sleep.

BACK on the drome of the Ninth, gloom was hanging thick in the room of the Frog farmhouse used as a gathering place for the pilots.

"Well," growled Garrity, "that's that. Who'd ever

think he'd 'go out' that way? Well, when they court martial O'Toole, I'll see that he gets shot or hung, the big slob. It was a frameup."

"Wanta make a bet?" Bump Gillis snapped.

"Pinkham'll come in here in a week or two ridin' one of them jinrickshaws an' dressed in a mandarin's suit!"

"This is not a time for joking, Gillis," the Major cracked. "A brave man has 'gone west.'"

"Oh, yeah? He never would look at a compass, that crackpot!" Bump snorted. "Any takers?"

"Poor Carbuncle," Howell jerked out. "Do we send his trunk back home?"

"I don't touch it," Bump declared. "It's liable to haul off and kick me." He tramped out still unconvinced that Lieutenant Pinkham was a thing of the past.

DAWN in the land of perforated cheese. Hans and Rudy saw to it that they got downstairs first. Rudy said to Zilcher: "Ve take idt *der* valk, *ja*. It giffs *der* abbetite for breakfast, *hein?*"

"*Oui, oui,*" the Swiss nodded and ducked back into the kitchen.

"I open *der* door off *der* Dumikopf's room," Rudy whispered, "*und* show *der* bone by Horace *und* his head sticks right oop. I see *der* vater by his mout' coom. I bedt you *mein* life he cooms after us vhen ve get not far off. *Mach Schnell,* Hans."

Up in the Pinkham boudoir Horace was fighting with himself. This freckled friend who still snored had not offered him any more dog biscuits. Those other human bipeds were loosening up. Horace got up, grunted, and flopped down again. His palate was tingling and he smacked his lips. Well, after all, he said to himself in good dog language, dog biscuit in the chops is worth two in a Pinkham pocket. And maybe the Kraut had not really meant to boot him in the caboose. Horace succumbed to the coaxing of his gastronomic assembly and walked out of the room. He looked back a little dubiously, then continued on his way downstairs.

Hans and Rudy trudged through the snow. Their bullet heads were pulled down in the collars of their coats, for there was a distinct bite to the Alpine air. Hans looked back when they were halfway to the hillside where the Rumpler waited.

"*Ach,* loogk vunce! Ho! Ho! Dost *ist der* St. Bernard vhat cooms. Zilcher he put *der schnapps* in last night. I see him, Rudy. Idt giffs *der* varm *Schnapps und der* map, *ja*. Ve start varmingk oop *der* Rumpler so it *ist* ready."

Phineas Pinkham was looking out of the window, a wide grin splitting his homely face. He turned and started to pull on his clothes. But before he went out of the room, he picked up a small pasteboard box on the cover of which was printed the words:

LITTLE MOMENTS WITH MORPHEUS.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" he guffawed. "Don't take nothin' from the Yangkee as he iss filled *mit* tricks, *hein?* But if Horace offers them something, well, that is an other thing. The pooch should give up something for his biscuits. Boys, I wonder will that crate take off on that sled they hitched onto it? I always wanted to try it myself, but there wasn't any snow in France. Boys, dogs are fickle—even Horace." He went downstairs whistling and told Zilcher he was going to follow Horace as he did not trust the Krauts.

"They're liable to make sausages out of him," he declared. "Compreenny? I do not trust them bums. It is a good pooch an'—"

"*Oui.* I do not weesh to lose thees *chien*. Once he gets ze scent, he nevair loose her. Sometimes I am almos' freeze when I tak' ze clocks down in ze weentair an'—"

"I have ze Scotch collie once, *aussi,*" Phineas said, grinning as he drew on his heavy coat. "It stepped on a cent once and wouldn't move until a blizzard come. Well, adoo, Monsoor! If I ever have a watch go wrong, I'll send it to you." The Yank minced away singing: "*Up in the clouds so-o-o-o high—until they reached the sky-y-y-y-y! Oh de laye-e-e-e-e! Laye-e-e-e-e-e! laye-e-e-e-e-e! Oh le o-o-o-o-laye-e-e-e!*"

"Cuckoo cuckoo cuckoo!" sounded a clock back in the Swiss chalet.

The Krauts were huddled by the Rumpler when Phineas Pinkham crossed the ravine and climbed the hill. The prop was turning over slowly and Horace sat waiting for his dog biscuit. Hans whispered: "Now I giff *der* bone *und* you take idt off *der* keg. *Geschnell,* Rudy!"

"*Ja,*" and Rudy unstrapped the tiny grog barrel with great haste as Horace craned his neck for the tidbit. While Horace was crunching on the bone, Hans took the small bung out of the keg and tipped the keg to his lips. Glug—ug—ug—glub!

"Listen, vunce," Rudy protested, "zome of *der Schnapps* shouldt be left for me, *Dumkopf.* Safe idt zome for me, Hans."

"Ah-h-h-h-h, Rudy, *das ist gut* for varming *der* cold insites. Here *ist der* keg. Slow it runs because *der* map gedts in *der* vay of *der* hole. Ve drink *der Schnapps und*

get *der* map—*und* den ve gedt *das* Pingham. *Ja!* He cooms like *der* fly by *der* spider, *hein?* Smart *ist?* But *der* Chermans dey *ist* smarter like anyt'ing."

"*Wie Gehts!*" Phineas called out to them. "Looks like Horace is offa me, huh? Well, er, isn't that some sled ya got under that crate? Gonna fly it vunce, yas?"

"Ve wass," Rudy fenced, "but *der* mind ve change when we gedt here. *Ach, das ist* maybe *der* crackoop ve get *und*—"

"Haw-w-w-w-w! I could take it off, I bet," the Yankee plotter chuckled, baiting the Krauts. Horace hung his head as the Pinkham eyes flayed him.

"*Ja,*" Hans beamed, "I bedt *mein* life you couldt. Me *und* Rudy say 'Only *das* Pingham couldt fly *der* Rumpler *mit der* sledt. So ve gedt in *der* back *und* you fly oudt to vhere *ist der* Allies *und* ve gedt to be brisoners vunce *und der* *Staffel Kammandant* he t'inks me *und* Rudy vas shooted down in *der* bick fight insteadt of runnink away from *der* var."

"Boys, that's fast thinkin'," Phineas enthused. "Sure,

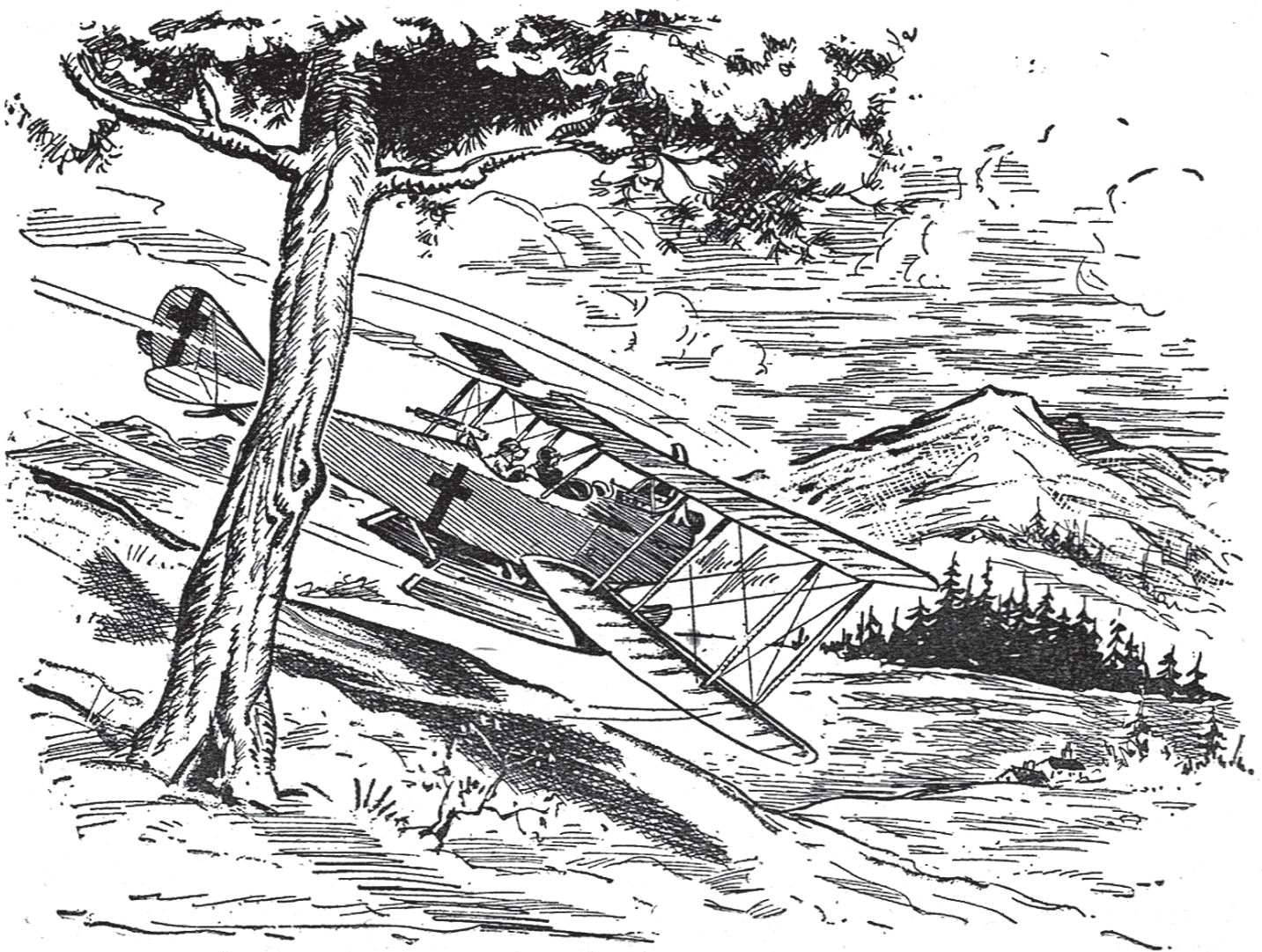
mine froinds, but I got to get the feel of the controls first, huh? I'll git into the pit an' look around."

"*Ja,*" chuckled Hans in an aside to Rudy, "ve giff by him *der* gun in *der* headt when ve get oop *und* he flies us by *der* Vaterland. *Das* Pingham *ist* nodt smarter as us. Then aw-w-w-w-wp!" he suddenly yawned. "Too early yedt I gedt oop, *ja.* Aw-w-w-w-wp!"

Rudy's mouth opened wide, too, in a sudden contagion of yawning. His eyelids looked as heavy as the war debt. He leaned against the Rumpler's wing and started to snore.

"Lizzen vunce," Hans began, his spine crawling, "R-Rudy, ah-h—er—y a w-w-w-w-wp! Rudy—Dumko—ah-h-h-h-hp! *Das* Pingham—*sehr* rotten *ist*—zomevhere *und*—"

"Well, that's that," grinned the Yank, dusting his hands off. "Horace, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for fraternizing with them Krauts! Well, I got one dog biscuit left for ya—" He climbed out of the pit and picked up the keg. He tied it around



the pooch's neck and then climbed back into the Rumpler. "Contact, Horace, as here goes nothin'. Adoo, Horace—er—okay, come on, old pal of mine. Look!" The Boonetown, Iowa, patriot held up the last dog biscuit.

"Ar-r-r-r-r-fl!" The St. Bernard made a leap into the rear pit. Phineas handed him the biscuit and then got out of the Rumpler to swipe a helmet and goggles from Hans' pocket. He fixed it onto Horace's head and strapped it down the best he could.

"Ar-r-r-r-r-rf!" yapped the big pooch, wagging his tail.

"Contact is right," Phineas yipped. "We're ready for the hopoff right now, Horace. Hold your breath. What happens next is liable to be most anythin', as I have never skied with a sled. I wish I had them sticks with spikes on the ends of 'em, Horace." Phineas clamped his big teeth together, gave the Rumpler full gun. The rusty sled runners screeched, the Kraut power plant roared, and down the incline catapulted Phineas and Horace. The deep sleeping Hans and Rudy spun away from the wing and went down the slope in the Rumpler's wake, rolling over and over like curled up groundhogs.

The two-seater skidded and Phineas' scalp sprouted a lot of white hairs. The left wing tip missed a tree trunk by the width of a cigarette paper and Phineas' mouth was filled with snow. Suddenly, just as the Rumpler seemed about to go into a ground loop, buoyancy came to its wings and it was in the air. The power plant kept perking and the nose of the Rumpler clawed for the crests of the lower Alps.

"Ye-e-e-eow!" howled Phineas after jettisoning a snowball from his mouth.

"We made it, Horace!" He looked around to see the St. Bernard ducking down into the office. Then Phineas' familiar "Haw-w-w" went drifting out over Swiss real estate. "Well, they was smart, them bums," he enthused, "gettin' Horace out of that room and makin' him foller them to this crate. Haw-w-w-w-w! They laughed when the fly walked into the spider's parlor—they didn't know it wore brass knuckles. I knew they would take nothin' I give 'em, but when Horace give 'em the *Schnapps* with sleep pills in it, it was a horse of another garage. Smack a Pinkham with a Luger an' dump him in the Rumpler minus his buttons, huh? I fooled 'em. But I had to get 'em to start the power plant turning over for me. Boys, what a *guerre!* They would let me fly them to France. Oh, yeah? Why—huh—I wouldn't believe a Kraut if he sat on the roof of a Bible factory. Wanted forty thousand marks, did

they? Well, a lot of Vons have thought of that—an' lost! Haw-w-w-w-w!"

The touring Yank took a look at the compass. "North by West we want it, Horace," he bawled at his canine observer. "We should get somewhere near home before the gas gives out. You'll have fun in France, as you should see the swell Frog poodles. M-m-m-m-m! O-o-o-o-la-la! But look out for them femmes, Horace, as they're all gold diggers. *Oh—lee-oh-laye-e-e-e-e-e-e!*"

THINGS were happening in the Allied backyard. Chaumont was wondering how they could get the lowdown on the Heinie carpet around Metz. Before plans were launched to push that far, the Allied brain trust would have to have some sort of an inkling as to what they were getting into.

In Bar-Le-Duc, a court martial was to be held just twenty-four hours hence and Captain O'Toole of the Sixth Balloon Squadron was to be the victim. A judge-advocate happened to come along after Phineas Pinkham went soaring into the far reaches, and Chaumont had demanded that O'Toole be busted as soon as possible. The quota of officers were forthcoming, hence O'Toole was ready for the skids.

Major Rufus Garrity, Captain Howell, and Lieutenant Gillis sat with other witnesses against O'Toole in the beginning ceremonies when the Judge-Advocate opened court.

"Well, Captain," the head of the shellacking board shot at Hack O'Toole, "do you deny that you willfully and with malice aforethought sent Lieutenant Pinkham up in that balloon knowing that there was only one parachute in working order? What?"

"I forgot. The fat—I mean the Lieutenant—was braggin' about it being a pushover to ride in what he called our picnic baskets. So when he landed in our laps an' asked to go up in one, I says well, I am short of men an'—"

"It was a frameup," Major Garrity interrupted with a snort. "He wanted to get hunk with Lieutenant Pinkham because of an innocent brawl in an estaminet here. Lieutenant Gillis will back me up on that. It was murder. Poor Pinkham—"

"Harumph!" rumbled the man in charge. "O'Toole, there doesn't seem to be any extenuating circumstances. It seems that it is my duty to find you guilty of sending Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham to an untimely—er—what's all that racket out—?"

An M.P. barged in from outside the door. "Boche plane! Overhead! Looks like a raid—"

The Judge-Advocate and Major Garrity got under the table first. Gillis and the other officers pancaked and crawled toward the exits. But no “eggs” broke up. Only that buzz of a Heinie power plant was evident over Bar-Le-Duc. A brass hat dashed and yelled: “Come on, take a look! That crate up there hasn’t got any wheels on it; it’s got a sled. And there’s a dog with, a helmet on sittin’ in the back seat—barking!”

“Major, consider yourself under arrest!” the Judge-Advocate thundered as he clambered to his feet. “The impudence of you comin’ in here drunk!” He got to a window and looked out. “Good heavens! It’s comin’ down. It has got runners on, and it is a dog in the rear pit or I’m a—” The austere brass hat turned and fled from the room with the rest of the benzine board hard on his tail.

The streets of Bar-Le-Duc were crowded with gaping spectators. “Come,” Major Garrity hollered. “The squadron car! He’ll land just beyond the town. He’s got to. The prop is dead. What in the devil—?”

The jilopi of the Ninth Pursuit got to a level patch of ground outside Bar-Le-Duc just as the Boche two-seater hit a muddy tract of carpet and went into a squishy ground loop that splattered mud all over the place. A gob of it gagged the Old Man just as he jumped out of the car.

PHINEAS PINKHAM felt every tooth in his head give at the roots and he was sure his ribs had telescoped his head, but when he became a little more rational he saw that he was peering out through a couple of struts. He eased himself out of the wreck and yelled for the St. Bernard. “Hey, Horace!”

“Here, Lieutenant,” the Judge-Advocate answered. “Ha, must know me, whoever he is, Garrity. Hallo there—you hurt?”

“Huh?” Phineas gulped. “What do you think? Hey, Horace!” The pooch dragged itself out of the mud and leaped over to his pilot. He said “Arf! Arf!” and shook mud all over the brass hats’ immaculately clean uniforms.

“I don’t believe it,” Garrity gulped. “Phineas Pinkham with—he goes out in a runaway balloon an’ comes back in a Kraut two-seater! With a—St. Bernard—in the pit—with a Heinie helmet on. An’ runners instead of wheels an’—er—”

“Pay me!” yipped Bump Gillis. “Pay me. I—er—was only kiddin’ but—”

“Here, Horace,” hollered the prodigal. “Show the nice mans what you have in the keg.” He leaned over

and unstrapped the tiny barrel and took it to the squadron car. There he got a tire iron out of the tool box and smashed the staves of the keg. Out came a sodden piece of rolled up paper which he handed to his C.O., bowing very low. “It’s the plans of the linoleum around Metz, Major. I got it off the Heinies I met in Switzerland. I was goin’ to bring you all some nice presents, but I did not have a chance to stop off. Haw-w-w-w-w!”

“Ar-r-r-ruf!” observed Horace.

“Keep your shirt on, ol’ feller. It takes time to send for dog biscuits. If there’s a shin bone of a cow at the drome, Glad Tidings Goomer’ll give it to you, though. Hello, Captain. It was quite a trip in the rubber cow. You basket riders ought to be ashamed to take pay for such work, huh!”

“Oh, yeah? Well, I owe you a good slug in the nose, you—ow! Get him off a me! There goes my leg—owowowow!”

“That is enough, Horace,” Phineas scolded the pooch mildly. “You had a good bite.” The St. Bernard let go of O’Toole’s anatomy reluctantly and hung its head.

“Incredible, all this,” the Judge-Advocate finally observed, sitting down on the running board of the car. He counted his fingers and then asked Garrity if he could see a mule with a straw hat on some distance away. The Old Man nodded and the Judge-Advocate smiled with relief. “Think we’ll forget all about O’Toole,” he said. “After all if he hadn’t put Pinkham in that balloon—”

“Aw, now I’m sorry I got back,” Phineas complained. “That is just my luck. They might’ve shot O’Toole. I wish I’d thought of that. Well, a guy can’t think of everything.”

“Maybe you’re a hero,” growled Hack O’Toole, “but I’m still goin’ ta sock you in the jaw if it’s the last thing I—!”

“Horace!” yelled Phineas in a hurry. “Git the bad mans!”

Gr-r-r-r-rummph!

FIVE minutes later, Hack O’Toole was high up in a tree with a lot of his skivvies showing.

“It is quite a pal I have here, bums,” Phineas Pinkham said as he strolled toward the car. “I hope that is a lesson to everybody.” He eyed Garrity as he spoke. “Haw-w-w-w-w-w!”

“Sir,” the Old Man said weakly to a brass hat from Chaumont, “do you think there’s a chance of my—er—getting a transfer?”