

# PFALZ TEETH

written and illustrated  
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a  
**PHINEAS  
PINKHAM**  
howl

*Mice are bad. Trained mice are worse. But trained mice in the hands of Phineas Pinkham made even the long-suffering Garrity turn the color of an Irish flag.*

**A** TRIO OF YANKEE SIGNAL CORPS dough squatted in front of an old line of dugouts between Blercout and Souilly. Dusk was crowding them hard, and they had strayed far from their outfit. Iron rations, supplemented by a can of goldfish, were to be the sum total of their chow. A little dough tackled the tin of cat salmon, and after a hard fight managed to get it open. Almost immediately, however, it fell from his fingers and spilled into the mud.

"Now look what ya done!" a ponderous buddy

roared at him. "Our chow! C'mon, let's climb his frame, Muley. Cripes!"

"Look up there," the little culprit squeaked. "Lookit the Spad—an' look what's comin' down on his neck. The Red Devil! That Spad—it's that crooked looey, Pinkham's crate. It's got big black dots painted on it. A feller tol' me he did it so's it would be hard on the Kraut flyer's eyes. Lookit!"

The drama consumed no more time than it takes a wildcat to make a casualty out of a succulent woodchuck. The bright red Pfalz Scout dropped down

from a high sky shelf like a red hot rivet dropped out of a bucket. The doughs saw the Spad go into a power dive too late to escape a spray of Spandau saliva. Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham's battle crate went into an unhealthy spin.

"I bet that Heinie could drop slugs into a spittoon from two thousan' feet," a stunned dough wagered. "Ya better plug in on the telephone line an' tell somebody to cross that nutty looeey off the books."

The red Pfalz thundered down, took another wallop at the Pinkham crate, then zoomed and clawed toward Germany. Five hundred feet from the dirt, the Spad's nose came up. The doughs saw it slip off on a wing and knife down again.

"There ain't flat ground enough around here to land a go-cart," one of the Signal Corps watchers snorted. "An' to think I was once goin' to join the air force. Huh! Just lookit that bird baby tumble . . ."

*Crash!*

"Well, he didn't make it," gasped the big dough. "Lookit the crate bounce. It's lost its wheels! Well, s'long Lieutenant Pinkham. You was lucky for a long time!"

*Crash!*

"Look out!" yelled the smallest of the three. "He's comin' down here!"

They ducked into a dugout just as the Spad caressed terra firma again on the top of a knoll. The crippled ship came sliding down the incline like a toboggan, loose parts flying in its wake. It piled up against the wall of a dugout, a total wreck.

"Git a spade," ordered the leader of the Signal Corps group, "It's easy to dig a grave here. Let's toss to see who drags out the remains." The three Yanks ventured out of their shelter on hands and knees.

"Hey there, bums!" squawked a voice.

"Cripes, lookit!"

Phineas Pinkham brushed some wreckage aside and stepped out into the clear. His flying-coat was turned completely around on his torso. Wedged under his super-abundance of proboscis were his goggles. From head to foot he was well lubricated with gooey oil. He unwound brace wire from his neck and coughed up an empty cartridge case.

"Huh," exclaimed a grinning dough. "What big teeth ya got, gran'ma. But they didn't git a bite at li'l Red Ridin' Hood, did they gran'ma? Boys, you was shellacked!"

"I would keep a civil tongue if I was you," Phineas snapped. "You're talkin' to an officer. How'll I git to Barley Duck?"

"Why, a street car stops over in front of the drugstore every half hour," came the impolite response.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's enough!" erupted the pilot. "Gimme your names. I'll git respect from ordinary doughs, or——"

"Sergeant John Smith is my name," one offered humbly. "He's Private Tom Jones—" pointing—"an' him, he's Joe Brown."

"Awright," Phineas snorted. "You'll hear more from me later." He weaved an uncertain path toward the south, his undercarriage wobbling like loose wheels on a flivver. The doughs watched him wave an imaginary something from in front of his eyes as he trekked along.

"We don't need t'worry," said one of them. "He don't remember what month it is, even."

Five kilometers farther *en route*, Phineas was hailed by the driver of a passing truck. "Where ya headed, buddy?"

"Sure," replied the roaming pilot. "Ya can drop me off the same place. Which truck'll I git into?"

"There's only one, ya—huh, say, have ya got any coneyac left?"

"Haw-w-w-w!" guffawed the marvel from Boonetown, Iowa. "That's a good one! Did ya ever hear the one about the Scotchman at the clambake?"

"Y-yuh b-better climb in back," the driver of the truck jerked out. "Ha, ha! Don't worry. We'll find your horse again, Emperor. I think Waterloo is only beyond the nex' town."

By the time the truck driver unloaded his passenger in Bar-le-Duc, Phineas had recuperated a bit.

"I left my wallet in my sports clothes," he explained, "but here's two cigars. Adoo!" He headed for the domicile of his heartbeat, Babette. A few minutes later, he sat in a comfortable chair, his feet ensconced upon the windowsill of a Frog living room.

"Ah-h, *mon pauvre soldat*," sympathized Babette, dabbing at the Pinkham physiognomy with a cloth well soaked in Witch Hazel. "The face she looks like mabbe ze *chat* she have use' eet for ze landin' place, non?"

"*Oui*," agreed Phineas. "It was the Red Devil, Babette. Oh, that bum! Eet ees not *pas* beeg enough for ze *deux* of us—Europe ees not. Huh, say—about them trained mice, now. You fin' out anytheeng, *oui*?"

Babette shrugged. "Ah, ze *homme* he weel not sell, non. For t'ree year' he say he train ze mouse. He stay wan more week, he tell to me, *mon cher*. Why you not catch *votre* own mouse, eh?"



"Huh!" Phineas sniffed. "Didn't I try? I put wire traps all around the drome. The Old Man fell over one an' skinned his beak. The other fatheads stole all the others an' tossed them down a well. An' they locked up all the cheese on me. Well, it'd take me too long to train 'em, anyways. Jus' think of ze fun I could have had with educated mice. Oh, boys!"

"Wan theeng I have fin' out," Babette offered. "*Ze homme* who own these mouse he ees what you say shell-shock. Las' night *un Boche* sheep come *ovaire*, an' *l'homme* he hide in ze cellar. He jus' come out *ce soir*. An' not one bomb eet was drop."

"Well, well," grinned Phineas. "What would I do without you, mong cherry?"

Lieutenant Pinkham was headed back to the drome an hour later. He passed by the house where lived an itinerant Frog who owned a collection of trained mice. The curious of Bar-le-Duc paid good French *argent* to see them. They were not kept in a cage, but were allowed to roam free and easy in the same room with the human biped who had charmed them.

"An' he never leaves them unless the Boche come over," Phineas chuckled thoughtfully. "Well, he can't say I didn't offer to buy 'em."

GLOOM FLOATED OVER the Ninth Pursuit Squadron in chunks while Phineas was plodding homeward. A report had come in that the Red Devil had smacked down the great Yankee air warrior. A carload of Brass Hats had come onto the drome in the wake of the news. Everybody was huddled together, talking huskily. The Old Man had even tossed his pipe out of the window. It did not seem to taste right.

Bump Gillis heaved a deep sigh and got up. "I'll git that jug of home-made *Schnapps* the old Frog dame give me over across the fields," he said. "We'll drink to Carbuncle. He always said when he went West to drink him a toast an' then say, 'Haw-w-w-w-w!' Oh, I'll git that red son—"

"Get the jug, first," suggested a visiting colonel. "This is quite a blow to you, Major Garrity. I—er—understand how it is."

Bump Gillis went for the *Schnapps*. When he appeared with it, the sad-eyed gathering reached for receptacles. Bump filled a cup and raised it.

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

The assembly drank to what they thought was a departed soul. In an hour, the jug was drained.

"Well, we must be goin'," a Brass Hat said, finally. "Have to get up to the Front, y'know. Relieve those

other men. An—er—hope Pinkham is happy. Well, must be goin'. Too bad—yesh—hic—"

"*Bon swar*, bums!"

Boot leather squeaked. Heads revolved. Bump Gillis emitted a yowl. "You—huh? Will ya ever stay dead? Here I wasted all that *Schnapps*!"

"Pinkham!" thundered Major Garrity. "Why, er—huh!"

"That jug!" the prodigal son yipped. "If ya harmed Clementine, I'll—" He lunged across the floor and picked up the wide-mouthed jug. As he turned it upside down, something slithered out on the table. One of the Brass Hats said "Awk!" and slid into a chair, clutching his diaphragm.

"That's the best spotted adder I ever captured," declared Phineas. "I put it in the *Schnapps* to preserve it until I could git it stuffed. Why—er—what's the matter with you guys? It's awright. Ya didn't hurt it none."

Faces turned the color of an Irish flag. The Brass Hats groped out into open air, staggered toward the medico's hut. Major Garrity swallowed hard, pawed his face and wiped away sweat that oozed out in drops as big as crystal beads. The mess shack emptied fast. The supply of medicine on the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron was depleted before the Old Man could get his share. He had to resort to having his oral cavity swabbed out with petrol. It was quite some time before the war birds and Brass Hats staggered back across the field. When they did, Phineas greeted them with a joyous shout.

"Haw-w-w-w! I giss I fooled ya. That was a rubber snake. I planted it. Haw-w-w-w!"

The Old Man was just emerging from the hangar with a socket wrench clutched tightly in his fist, when the Pinkham voice batted against his eardrums. He took a hop, skip and jump, then balanced himself and let the missile fly. Phineas ducked and started to run. Mob psychology took hold, and everybody else started running.

Three miles away, the joke-smith from Boonetown climbed into the back of a wagon and burrowed deep into a pile of mule harness. Half an hour later, he was back at Babette's door.

"Wh-why, Pheenyas," she gurgled. "*Vous* forgeet eet some-theeng, *non*?"

"Yeah," grinned the freckle-faced pilot. "I forgot to stay here, haw-w-w-w! Have ya get ze chow, *non*? I am tray fameeshed."

While Babette rummaged for the staff of life, Phineas gazed out of the window. Suddenly there came a familiar

sound from out of the celestial reaches—the roar of a prop. A dark shadow appeared over Bar-le-Duc.

“Oh, boys, if it’s a Boche—” yipped the truant from the Ninth, leaning far out of the window. “Aw, it ain’t! It’s only a Frog bat. I know the sound—er—but everybody don’t. Haw-w-w-w!” He whirled from the window and ran to the fireplace. On the mantel reposed a souvenir he had presented to Babette several weeks before, a Heinie potato-masher grenade. Babette came into the room just as her heart-throb was in the act of tossing the grenade far out into the night.

*Bon-n-n-ng!* Phineas’ late lunch crashed to the floor.

“*Nom de Dieu!*” shrieked the *ma’m*selle. “Oh, what you do now? *Vous*—crazee you are.”

“Quick! Donny moy a pertater sack—anythin,” the Yankee lover howled. “Veet, veet!”

In less than a minute, Phineas was out of the house and hurrying down the street. Babette stood in the doorway of her domicile, waving her arms.

“*Sacre! Mon Dieu!*” she shrilled. “*C’est plus mauvais*—oh, oh! Worse are you as grasshoppair for ze sweetheart. *Chien!* What you call eet? *Vous* are ze crack-pottage!”

Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, however, had lost interest for the moment in affairs of the heart. He sneaked through Bar-le-Duc during the excitement caused by the explosion, and in due time came to a house that he had been haunting from the outside for days. He looked in through a window. A lamp was burning, though there was no sign of human occupancy. But there were little four-legged creatures scurrying hither and yon.

Quietly, Phineas lifted the window and dug into his pocket for a lump of dry cheese. He broke it into bits and tossed it inside. Mice flocked to the rodents’ delight. After consuming the cheese on the floor, they hopped to the windowsill and regarded their benefactor with twinkling, expectant eyes.

Phineas worked fast. Soon he was evacuating Bar-le-Duc by devious and secret channels. Finally he climbed into a truck that was lumbering slowly out of town. He was just in time to hear the driver address his buddy.

“Giss I’ll smoke one of them cigars the looeey gimme that cracked up this afternoon. I been savin’ ‘em. Have one, Butch?”

“Yeah.”





Lieutenant Pinkham climbed out of the truck. "Oh, well, it ain't such a long walk," he decided. "Anyways, the Old Man might not be asleep yet."

*Bang!* Phineas ducked into some shrubbery as the truck crabbed from the road.

"He-e-e-ey. Gimme the wheel," a voice yelled. "Ya'll wreck—" *Bang!* The truck went into a ditch and buried two wheels deep in Frog mud. Again the Pinkham scion decided upon running.

"Cripes, I got to cut this out," he gasped. "I can't stand only so much myself."

DAWN FOUND PHINEAS in his hut, taking abuse from Bump Gillis. It was A Flight's turn to do the early chores over the lines. Phineas had but one hour's sleep behind his eyelids, and in consequence looked like the picture labeled "Before Using" on a patent food ad. He drank two cups of strong Java in the mess shack and pried up his eyelids as Major Garrity came storming in.

"Good morning, playboy!" the Old Man sneered. "Hurry back with Captain Howell. I'm goin' to bust you to hell. By the way, was it you who sowed the wild oat in Bar-le-Duc last night?"

"I don't know what you're talkin' about," chirped the splinter in the major's thumb. "I ain't psychic. But go ahead an' blame me, as who else would you?"

"A truck was wrecked outside of Bar-le-Duc last night," Garrity fumed. "The drivers just got in a minute ago. Somebody gave them cigars, an'——"

"Maybe they met a Y.M.C.A. worker," suggested Phineas.

"And a bomb dropped in town, too. It——"

"You'll excuse me, I know," Phineas gulped. "I'll be late for the patrol—er—huh, well—adoo!"

Shortly after, A Flight headed for the lines, every pilot on the lookout for a blood-red Pfalz Scout which had been tearing Allied morale to shreds for many days. It bore no identifying marks. The pilot, dubbed Red Riding Hood, was a lone wolf.

"He's out after Gran'ma Pinkham," Captain Howell had said when the Pfalz made its first appearance, a debut that had cost the Frogs a tidy sum in sky-skimming stock. "He's got a basket of Spandau slugs for Carbuncle. The crackpot better file his buck teeth. Ha, ha!"

Red Riding Hood had always appeared at the very time that an Allied pilot hoped he would not. The Heinie strafer usually took keen delight in hiding in the sun, while a nice messy dogfight was going on. When he spotted a crate marked by the concentric

circles of democracy limping out, he would pile down fast to preach the doctrine of Horace Greeley with his Spandaus.

G.H.Q. wanted something done about it. Why, a Yankee caravan was not safe on the Frog roads at night. And had not two colonels been peppered with eggs hatched by the Krupp family while riding to Nancy in a nice new automobile? Red Riding Hood had become a pest, and no mistake. The big Allied aces had been given more than ordinary inducements to knock him off. Somehow, the job had proved to be as simple as finding a tiny soap flake in a barrel of rice.

Von Bountz and his *Staffel* came spitting down out of a cloud bank like big hunks of sleet when Howell reached the area he was supposed to sweep clean of Heinies. Phineas sideslipped his Spad out of the sky chute down which the Boche leader was racing, and got in a couple of straight jabs at a Jerry's mid-section which appeared in front of his prop boss. Bump Gillis got the Albatross on the rebound and flattened it for the full count. Captain Howell was lucky with a Vickers uppercut, and another Heinie consequently folded up. It looked like a field, day for the democrats. But along came Red Riding Hood—and as usual, Phineas Pinkham drew the red ship's steely wrath.

"Oh, you won't git gran'ma today," the Boonetown joker chortled. "Yes, I have nice teeth an' hope to bite into my usual mess with them at noon. Aw-w-w-w, cripes! He-e-ey, Bump, where are ya? Howell, ya fathead, can't ya see I'm barreled? They're a couple of pals! Oh, well!"

Kraut lead sprayed the Spad as Phineas tried to lift it up by its boot straps. The red ship overshot him and bored through a great smoke column that marked the obituary of a Junker.

When the red ship came out of the smoke cloud, Phineas was pounding down on its tail. The reason for the Pinkham break was apparent. Red Riding Hood was convulsed in the pit. The heir of the mighty Pinkhams could see that the smoke had temporarily knocked the Heinie's respiratory assembly out of whack. Looking up quickly, the Kraut saw that Phineas had ripped mayhem through his top wing. He winged away fast, went into an Immelmann, then began to climb.

After quite a chase, Phineas got near enough to the Boche to see the red ship's pilot yank a handkerchief out of his pocket. He daubed his face with it as he sideslipped out of the path of another Pinkham blast. The prop wash jerked it loose and sent it fluttering into the ozone. As it came directly for the Yankee crate,

the handkerchief looked as big as a bed sheet. Then it disappeared as if swept away by ghost fingers.

Red Riding Hood got mad, then, and hopped to the Pinkham neck by a maneuver that was never written into a Jerry flying book. It looked like curtains for gran'ma. Bump Gillis and his flight leader, Captain Howell, having chased the other Vons home, espied Phineas Pinkham's plight in the nick of time. They chased Red Riding Hood back into the sun and lost him there.

"Phew-w-w-w-w-w!" breathed the Boonetown wonder, recently dubbed gran'ma. "I know now how a guy feels who gits snatched from the electric armchair by a gov'nor. I better treat Bump better than I have been. Gosh, it's funny how I love that guy, Howell, all of a sudden. Haw-w-w-w!"

Back on the drome, Bump Gillis and Captain Howell looked at Phineas Pinkham with baleful optics as the pilot from Boonetown clambered out of the Spad.

"Well, gran'ma has turned to a wolf, now," the rescued flyer snapped. "Red Ridin' Hood, huh! He'll wish he never even heard of a nursery rhyme. I—er—what's that?" He had caught sight of something white dangling from the undercarriage. Investigation revealed it to be a torn handkerchief, in one corner of which was embroidered the crest of a well-born Teuton family.

"Look," Phineas gulped. "It can't be. I—it says von Mannheim! Why, I knocked that Jerry down. He's in the bastille over across the Channel. Huh, well, what d'ya know?"

"Maybe he's got relatives," suggested Howell. "People have them, at times. Looks like you nicked him, Phineas. There's red spots on the nose linen."

Gran'ma Pinkham snatched the memento of Red Riding Hood from the captain's hand. He looked at it closely.

"Why—er—Ah, well, I giss I'll git along to my hut. I want to be alone for awhile. Haw-w-w-w! It's just a touch of the sun. I'll be awright."

IN THE PRIVACY of his hut, Phineas gave A the square of linen his minute attention.

"I don't believe it," he repeated over and over. "It ain't so. But—huh—it's as plain as the nose the Boche used it on, though. Well, Red Ridin' Hood, you an' me will meet again, an' you'd better carry a horse shoe in the goodies you bring to gran'ma, as you'll need it. Haw-w-w-w-w! I feel like Columbus when he discovered things for the firs' time." By the art of

legerdemain, he pocketed the handkerchief without Bump Gillis' seeing it. Bump had just sauntered in.

"Well, we saved you ag'in," the Scot growled.

"Would you be able to think up a reason why? I'm damned if me an' Howell can."

"Why, you like me, that's why," Phineas was prompt to reply. "Now don't bother me, as I have to write a letter to Red Ridin' Hood. I must tell her I am havin' a bad spell an' wish she would bring me some goodies."

"You're just plain nuts," Bump exploded. "Say, what's in that trunk now? What've you got the holes bored in it for? I been hearin' funny sounds like a file scrapin' at somethin'."

"It's to air my socks," explained the glib pilot. "What you hear is your brain softenin'. Will you lend me a pen an' ink an' some paper an' an envelope? I can write."

An orderly interrupted shortly with a message to the effect that Phineas Pinkham was wanted very much at Wing headquarters.

"Tell the ol' termater I can't wait until I git there," the recipient of the order responded. "Now, what've they found out? Hmm!"

As he hustled toward the Frog farmhouse that served as headquarters for the major, Phineas spotted a mule in the road that passed by the drome. A funny-looking wagon was attached to the mule. At sight of it, qualms seized the resourceful Phineas, and he paused outside of the Old Man's sanctum to gird his loins for verbal battle.

He walked in and saluted smartly—too smartly. There was an individual stamping around and waving his fists. Major Garrity was dodging them with the artistry of a Jim Corbett.

"*C'est l'homme! C'est l'homme!*" the little Frenchman screeched as Phineas appeared. "He ees the man what have steal ze mouses, *oui!* I would sell zem *non*, an'—*douze*—twelf mouses—they go pouf! All of zem I know—Danton, Robespierre, Louis, Charlemagne, Marie Antoinette, Du Barry, Jeanne D'Arc, La Pompadour——"

"Oh, is that so?" yipped Phineas. "Well, search my hut. I insist, major. I will not stand for such affrontery. Search my hut!"

"Oh, yeah?" growled the major. "You wouldn't insist if the mice were there, you lunkhead. Think I'm that dumb, huh?"

"Why—er—Bump Gillis will tell you I always said you was awful smart, sir," Phineas assured the C.O. earnestly. "This Frog is tray nuts. Why, what'd I do "with mice, I want t'know?"

"You've got me there, you crackpot," Garrity gritted. "If they was squirrels, now, I'd—"

"*Sacré bleu!*" yowled the Frenchman. "Ze mouses I want. I go to Foche— Persheeng—Poincare! While I am scare' ty ze bomb, I hide in ze cellair. All ze time when I hear ze bomb I hide."

Major Garrity's eyes narrowed. Phineas' Adam's apple did a couple of nosedives in his throat, and his feet itched to set long-distance records.

"A bomb, huh? Pinkham, you—you—I get it! You hand over those mice within Twenty-four hours or, by cripes, I'll—"

"It's a frame-up," protested Phineas. "I'm sick of bein' a fall guy. This Frog is beaucoop gaga. I can prove——"

"*Nom du chien!*" came a burst from the Frenchman. "Justeese I deman'. I am ze *pauvre homme* who make' ze liveeng *avec* ze mouses. *Mon Dieu!* I starve——"

"I hope so," cut in the sire of jokes. "Well, I giss I'll *allez* along. If anythin' more comes up——"

"Twenty-four hours!" barked the C.O., "or Blois! Now, Frenchy, *allez* veet—vamoosez *vous*. Gettez out. Beat it! You're not allowed *ici*, anyhow. Aw-w-w-w, cripes!"

Bump Gillis had overheard. He approached Phineas Pinkham on the way to the hut.

"I got to have twenty francs, *ce soir*, Carbuncle," he insinuated. "I know you'll give them to me. An' you won't press for payment hard, neither."

"Like hell——"

"Ah—ah, holes in the trunk, Carbuncle," Bump cautioned his hutmate, eyes raised innocently to the cumulus ceiling. "I kin keep still at times, but——"

Lieutenant Pinkham dug down. "It's plain, everyday extortion!" he expostulated. "You nickel-nurser!"

"I would be happier if it could be murder," Bump assured him, and walked away with the *argent*.

Phineas went to his hut and wrote a letter. A very strange grin appeared on the Iowan's unlovely countenance as he wrote:

"Dear Red Riding Hood:

Grandma wants you to come and see her. Instead of in the house in the woods, she will be in a Spad over Thiaucourt. Wednesday at four. Just counting the hours.

LIEUTENANT PINKHAM,  
Alias the Werewolf."

Late that afternoon, Phineas handed the missive to Wilson, leader of C Flight. It reposed in a coffee can well ballasted with a chunk of brick. A diminutive parachute had been rigged to the can.

"When you get over that squarehead outfit near Pagny, just drop it," Phineas issued instructions. "It'll somehow git to the Red Devil. Haw-w-w-w! I have other things to do."

"Who is this one for?" Wilson spat. "The Kaiserina?"

"Why, the very idea! You know we ain't been introduced," Phineas chided him. He walked away on his own business.

CLOSE TO THE TIME for the evening repast, Glad Tidings Goomer, mess attendant, compared to whom a snail was a racing whippet, reported a dire shortage of *fromage de bris* to the mess sergeant.

"Why, there was a whole five-pound chunk of roquefort here this mornin'," the non-com exclaimed. "There's somethin'——"

"I seen Lieutenant Pinkham sneakin' out of the kitchen 'bout a hour ago," Glad Tidings said innocently. "I just sort of mention it——"

The news reached Old Man Garrity. Mice! In person, the major legged it to the Pinkham hut. But the cubicle was unoccupied. In front of a hangar, he met Bump Gillis.

"Where's that spotted hybrid with the big ears," he bellowed. "That fat-headed, rusty-domed whoozle?" He stopped because he ran out of names.

"I giss ya must mean Pinkham, huh?" Bump said mildly.

"No!" barked the red-faced major. "I'm lookin' for Mary Pickford. Don't git fresh, lieutenant."

"He went off an hour ago," Bump said. "On a bicycle," he added as an afterthought.

It was true. Phineas had. Outside of Bar-le-Duc, close to his private landing field, the elusive pilot cached a suspicious-looking package. Before he returned to the home fires, he paused at the edge of a stream to wash his hands.

"It's funny how the mem'ry of roquefort lingers so long," he soliloquized, then grinned. "Oh, boys, haw-w-w-w!"

Major Garrity, despite the fact that he tacked Phineas' undercarriage to the carpet in Wing headquarters for an hour, failed to shake the pilot's defense. A firm of lawyers from Philadelphia would have quit sooner than the C.O.

"An' don't fergit," the jokesmith flung back over his shoulder as he finally walked out, "that the best laid plans of men an' mice oft gang alee, as the Scotchman said."

"You remember!" Garrity gurgled in a strangled



voice. "Twenty-four hours! I'm out to get you this time, you—" The slam of the door drowned out his diatribe.

All the next day, reports kept coming in that Red Riding Hood was raising more hell along the front. G.H.Q. sent out sarcastic memos to air squadrons. They inquired as to whether the pilots had grown homesick and bought steamer tickets.

"After tomorrer night they won't worry," Phineas said mysteriously at mess. "It's Wednesday, tomorrer."

"Ash Wednesday," augmented Howell with a nod. "So what, you human horoscope?"

"Ash, huh?" Phineas gulped. "I hope that don't mean Spad ashes. Oh, well, more anon. Haw-w-w-w! I hear Red Ridin' Hood is worth five hundred U.S. frogskins on the hoof, boys. That'd give me a start in business after the *guerre*. I'm thinkin' of startin' a mail-order novelty house. Well, I've had my fill, so I'll just toddle away."

Ash Wednesday proved to be anything but a lucky date on the calendar for the Allied air combine. Morale preferred took another nosedive. Red Riding Hood had bagged a Camel and had knocked off a two-seater. Phineas Pinkham felt a little quivery as he made plans for his four o'clock encounter over Thiaucourt.

Driven to desperation, Major Garrity had given his consent to a Pinkham solo. There was a chance, he had reasoned, that Phineas would not walk back from this one. Concerning the air knight's hop-off, there was little ado. A few of the squadron pilots watched him tear across the field, then hied to the Frog farmhouse for a poker game.

"Who cares where he's goin'?" muttered Captain Howell. "So long as he doesn't come back."

Phineas passed low over Bar-le-Due, then slid down

to his landing field a mile beyond the town. There he performed a strange ritual. In the bottom of a small flour sack, he secured a heavy, flat piece of iron in such a fashion that it could not come loose. He then retrieved a heavy paper box from the bushes where he had cached it, and transferred the contents to the sack. Phineas was particular to tie the sack so that its cargo could not escape *en route*.

Digging deep into his leather flying-coat pocket, he brought forth a small bottle labeled:

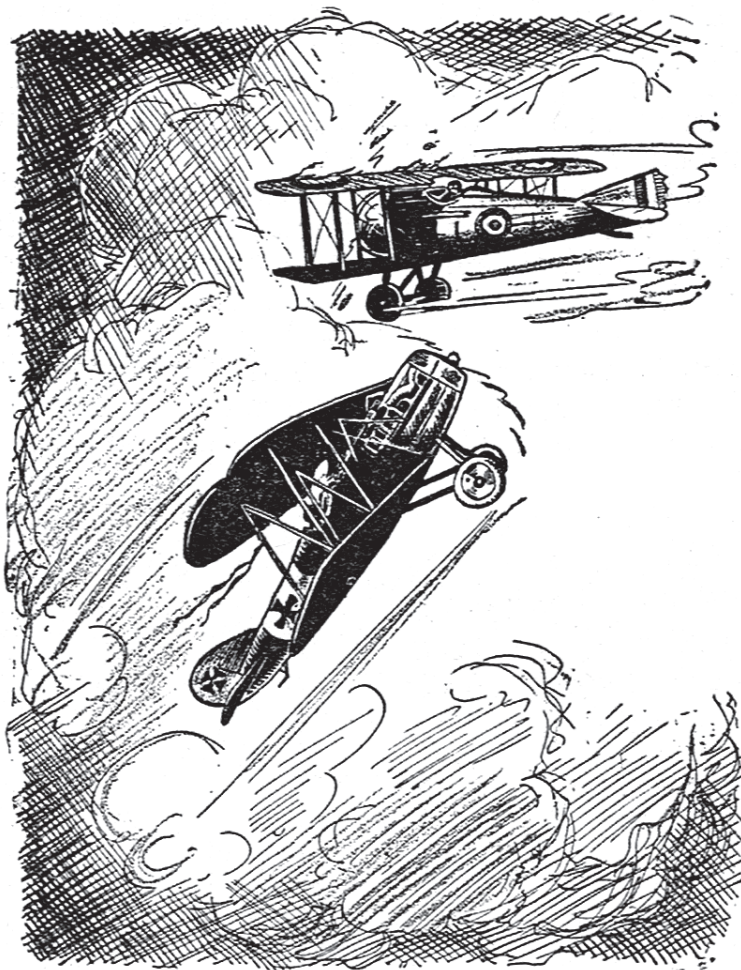
MERLIN MUCILAGE  
HAVE FUN WITH  
YOUR FRIENDS  
WILL HOLD AN  
ELEPHANT  
TO THE FLOOR

With great care, Phineas spread the gooey stuff on the bottom of the sack which now resembled a horse's feed bag, due to the flat chunk of iron that he had used to stretch the fabric taut. His work done, the dean of jokers moored the sack to the side of his Spad and climbed into the pit.

"I hope I ain't mistaken," he observed to himself, heading for Thiaucourt. "Red Ridin' Hood might've borrowed the handkerchief. Well, a Pinkham generally finishes what he starts. There's one way I will be sure."

It was only a matter of minutes between Boche and Yank air layouts in a fast crate. Phineas was over Thiaucourt almost before he was aware of it. He circled high over the Frog town several times, but Red Riding Hood was nowhere in sight.

"If that Heinie didn't git my message—" He looked at his watch. The hands gave him four-ten. Five minutes later, Phineas evinced impatience. He was like a palpitating swain being stood up at the corner drugstore by the one and only. Another minute dragged past. Then, out of the skies over Hunland came the red crate. The Mercedes power plant was wide open like a cow-town saloon in 1900.





"Late, huh?" grinned the reception committee of one. "I giss I wasn't mistaken. Well, I'll say a short prayer, an'—"

During the next three minutes, Phineas Pinkham lived longer than Methuselah. Never before had he encountered such a whirling sky dervish. The red Pfalz would have made Richthofen himself look like a primary school kite flyer. Red Riding Hood was calling on grandma with a vengeance. The Boche would have flown a dragonfly dizzy. Phineas' Spad was shedding epidermis fast. Its torso was so full of holes it could not have held gravel.

"Maybe I was wrong this time," the Boonetown patriot gulped as he zoomed out of the path of slugs in the nick of time. "Huh, even John L. Sullivan had to lose sometime. But I will go down with a smile like all the Pink——why, somethin's wrong!"

THE RED CRATE was circling underneath the Spad. The pilot was pounding at his guns with a frantic fist.

"Jammed!" chortled Phineas. "An' I can't shoot. Boys, it is a temptation. Huh! I will git a rest, though. I—why, what ails me? I can't shoot but— Haw-w-w-w-w!" He swept down on Red Riding Hood. The worried pilot waved a hand and tapped the Spandaus.

"Oh, I won't shoot!" yipped Phineas agreeably. "Gran'ma only wants to give you a present." He jockeyed to a position just above the Pfalz, maintained the same speed as the Red Devil. His wheels were hardly a foot above the Pfalz' top wing when he reached into his pocket for a jackknife, leaned over the side of the pit and cut the lines holding the mysterious sack. Simultaneously, Phineas goosed his engine a bit. The weighted sack dropped, and Lieutenant Pinkham backsticked. Spandaus cackled as the Spad nosed up, and a big family of slugs peppered the fuselage, splintering a mid-wing strut.

"Why, the dirty bum! It was a trick. Why—" Phineas took a look down, then grinned so widely that the strap of his helmet creaked.

Red Riding Hood saw that thing on the wing and stunted, trying to shake it loose. The prop-wash whipped the loose end of the sack until the flimsy string broke loose. The sacking streamed out and ejected some strange-looking objects. One brushed against the Boche pilot's face and slithered back into space; then another—still another.

Red Riding Hood dropped the stick, threw up gloved fists and let out an unearthly screech. A diminutive animal with a long tail was frantically

striving to maintain a foothold on a strut. The wind tore it loose, and it bounced against Red Riding Hood's chest and landed in the pit. Another tiny rodent clung fast to the pilot's knee.

"Ee-e-e-e-ek!" Red Riding Hood let the stick go, then grabbed it and jammed the throttle home. The Pfalz headed for the Allied lines, but the Boche did not seem to care a whoop.

"Haw-w-w! guffawed Phineas as he chased the Boche ship. The Pfalz' nose dropped, and Red Riding Hood's sole idea seemed to be loss of altitude as fast as gravity would accomplish it.

"Aw-w-w-w-wk!" the Kraut yowled. "*Himmel! Gott mit leedle defils!*" A tiny rodent scrambled up the front of the Jerry pilot's red flying coat and burrowed inside. "Ee-e-e-e-ek!"

"Haw-w-w-w-w-w-w!" Phineas was convulsed. "This is maybe the funniest *descendu* I ever was the cause of. Boys! Lookit the crate dive. Look at Red Ridin' Hood! Haw-w-w-w! I know it ain't hives. It's killin' me! Here comes gran'ma, an' her teeth is sharper than Pfalz ones. Yo-o-o-w!"

The dreaded red Pfalz dived for a road clogged with Yankee doughs and scattered them as if a weasel had dropped into a yard full of plump fowl. It kept on going toward a pasture spotted with cows, swept over it, banked around raggedly and skidded to a landing. Phineas saw it hit, bound across the bumpy turf like a gazelle, and then become wedged between two gnarled apple trees.

Yanks stampeded across the pasture as Phineas nosed down. He almost washed out a squad of the doughs as his undercarriage kissed the carpet. The Spad buckled like a comedian feigning two trick knees. A wing caved in, and the tail fin dropped off.

"It's a good thing I come down when I did," Phineas yipped, and clambered out of the pit.

Doughs stopped running and stared at the Boche who tore away from the wrecked Pfalz. The pilot's helmet was off. Long flaxen hair streamed back into the breeze. Phineas gave chase.

"I was right!" he howled. "It was a *Fraulein!* She's tryin' to git her coat off. Why, she is headed for a well. Stop her, you bums!"

*Fraulein* Mannheim, however, was not to be stopped just then. Screeching like a Comanche Indian, she gained her objective, ripped a board covering loose and dropped down out of sight.

*Splash!*

Phineas and the doughs got the female ace out

after much difficulty. They applied first aid and then sat her up against the wall of a Frog barn. *Fraulein Mannheim*'s first reaction was to hit Phineas Pinkham with a dornick as big as her fist.

"Bummer!" she yipped. "*Das* Pingham, *Ja?* *Ach, Himmel!*" She picked up another rock.

"Hold the dame's hands, can't ya?" yelped the object of her wrath. "I can't bat her, y'know that." He ducked the rock, then popped up grinning. "Haw-w-w-w! Well, it seems your fam'ly an' mine can't git along, huh? Camels didn't make you even blink, but you are just like all dames under the skin. Afraid of mice. Now, ya better just come along quiet, or I will have to tie you up, *Fraulein*. It is pretty eyes you got, Red Ridin' Hood. An' what pearly teeth you have!" He reached out to help the bedraggled female to her feet. *Fraulein Mannheim* almost bit his finger off.

"That's enough! Dame or no dame. Tie her hands, bums!"

Major Garrity and the buzzards of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron had experienced many a shock during their association with the great Phineas Pinkham. But when the Boonetown pilot ushered *Fraulein Mannheim* into the Frog farmhouse later that night and introduced the ranting female as Red Riding Hood, they caved in like hay before a scythe.

Glad Tidings Goomer had to get spirits of ammonia to bring the Old Man to.

"Huh!" Phineas explained. "That wasn't blood on that handkerchief I found stuck to my Spad that day. That was lip rouge! Haw-w-w-w! An' when she made me wait over Thiaucourt almost fifteen minutes, I was sure it was a dame. Did you ever hear of one bein' on time unless she was goin' to buy a hat? Well, I says, if she is a dame, she won't like mice. Yeah, it was me, major. If I hadn't got them mice, who would've saved the Allies? Go ahead an' tell Chaumont. See how far ya git! Haw-w-w-w! I had twelve of them mice. I says I ought to git at least two in Red Ridin' Hood's lap. Well——"

*Fraulein Mannheim* lashed out with a boot and aimed at Phineas. She missed him, however, and made contact with the major's skin. Then, folding up like a jackknife, she butted Bump Gillis in the lunch basket.

"*Schwein!* Bummers!"

Phineas got into a neutral corner and began to applaud.

"Boys, I hope the Heinies ain't got a panther over there that they're teachin' to fly. Well, gran'ma is hungry." He grinned at Glad Tidings Goomer. "Bring me somethin', as Red Ridin' Hood lost her basket of goodies on the way over. Haw-w-w-w-w!"