



a
**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl

SCRATCH-AS-SCRATCH-CAN

written and illustrated by
JOE ARCHIBALD

A flank movement by Flanagan started it. Then von Bull horned in. But Phineas knew that a man's best friend is his pooch. And though it isn't news when a dog bites a man, it certainly was when Napoleon, Josephine, Danton, and Dubarry sunk their incisors in poor Rollo.

ACCORDING TO HOYLE, the old authority on the pasteboards of ruination, there should only be one joker in a deck. But the fickle femme known as Fate does not deal her cards according to Mr. Hoyle. She sent the *Rittmeister* Gottfried von Bull

over to Bar-Le-Duc one early morning in June 1918. He was in a Pfalz and he was carrying a particularly insulting missive for Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham. Phineas, Public Joker Number One, sat in front of his hut, after a blistering early patrol, striving to teach a certain canine named Rollo to say its prayers. In

view of Rollo's apparent age it was fitting that the Boonetown Spad pusher should prepare the subject for dog heaven.

Rollo had come into Phineas' life one day unexpectedly. His ancient frame creaked and there was sadness in the pooch's eyes. Once he was thought defunct after a staff car, loaded with officers, nudged him quite prodigiously. Phineas piled rocks on the supposed remains and departed to mourn. But Rollo resurrected himself, somehow, shook loose his stones, and crawled back to the Ninth one sunny morning. Perhaps his hardihood was due to the fact that not a drop of canine aristocracy flowed in his veins. He bore the earmarks of having been reared close to garbage dumps. Rollo's pedigree, if recorded like that of a horse, would have read: By Ashcan out of Dark Alley. Rollo could only have drawn a blue ribbon by being exhibited in a group of unkempt jackals. But Phineas Pinkham and Rollo became closely attached and the canine found sanctuary on Major Garrity's hectic drome.

When Joker Number Two roared over the drome, the pooch laid back its ears and yipped on a minor note. Von Bull's Pfalz spattered the hangars with lead and ventilated the north wing of the Pinkham hut before zooming into the ozone and heading back toward Germany. An obliging groundhog picked up the message dropped by the *Rittmeister* but later Sergeant Casey found something else—a package of the finest looking knackwurst that he had ever seen outside a butcher shop. It had been packed with great care and was tied with a blue ribbon. The impact had ripped some of the paper away and the delectable Heinie fodder was exposed in all its brown-skinned splendor.

"Boys!" chuckled Casey. "Von Bull lost his lunch. Well, it's one time I eat somethin' besides stew!" He hurried to the groundmen's barracks and turned the knackwurst over to the cook.

Meanwhile Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham was reading the Kraut's message. When he finished he let loose a barrage of indignation that sent Rollo scuttling into the hut.

"I am lower than a dachshund's undercarriage, am I? I'm a flap-eared, speckled *dumkopf*, huh? You wait, you hunk of Limburger! So you dare me to fight you on Friday at five p.m., do ya? By-y-y—!" The pride of the Pinkhams had never been in higher dudgeon. A curl of smoke seemed to roll up around the collar of his shirt as he stamped into his hut. Rollo eyed

him warily from a safe spot under Bump Gillis's cot. When Bump came in, Phineas was still sitting there scheming, a wicked looking revolver in his lap.

"That's a goofy lookin' gun," Bump chirped. "What is it?"

"It's a Frog 77 cannon that was stunted at growth," replied Phineas, squinting through the barrel. "Nobody wanted it so I took it, haw-w-w-w-w! Anythin' else you'd like to know, you gabby washwoman?"

"I would like to know how to commit a perfect crime," his hutmate snapped. "An' git that damn pooch out of here! Ya want me scratchin' all night? Git—git out of here, you Siberian herring hound!"

"Anybody who kicks Rollo gets the same as if he kicked me," Phineas glowered at Bump. "I'm warnin' ya, ya nickel nurssr!"

AT NOONTIME it happened! It happened because knackwurst, loaded with black powder, began to sizzle in a pan. There was a terrific upheaval that shook Garrity's pipe out of his mouth as he sat cogitating in his sanctum in the Frog farmhouse. Hunks of lumber rained down upon the pilots when they ran out onto the field. The commissary of the groundhogs' barracks was in quite a mess. A cook was crawling along the ground on all fours as if he were looking for a collar button. An elbow of stove piping dangled over the back of his neck, but he was too dazed to brush it off.

"Somebody—blew up—the joint!" yipped Sergeant Casey, staggering toward the Old Man, his face as black as the inside of a cow. "I bet it was Phin—Lootenant Pinkham. He pi—planted that Heinie sausage where we'd—it's assault—intent to kill—!"

"Why you—you liar!" Phineas howled indignantly. "That is one thing I didn't do. B—But—er—why didn't I think of it? I—you can't prove it, you thick Mick! It was the Von. I bet he thought I'd get it—or us officers would."

And so there was a broad smile on the face of the *Rittmeister* von Bull when he looked at his wrist watch back at the Pfalz hangout.

"Ach," he gutteraled, "*das ist gut!* Twelf by *der* clock already yedt *und der* time *ist*. Maybe *ein* liddle bit lader *und der* Knackwurst it goes bang, *ja!* Ho ho, *der* yoker lam!"

So much for Number Two on the list of skullduggerians. Number Three was sitting, not pretty, in an Allied staff car which came rumbling onto the drome of the Ninth while Major Garrity's groundhogs cleaned up in the wake of the *Rittmeister's* playful visit.



He was a certain individual whom Phineas Pinkham had met on one or two previous occasions. A fly in the Pinkham ointment if there ever was one! The irrepressible jokesmith of the Ninth almost threw a fit when the visitor's unlovely Hibernian visage screwed itself up into a grimace of greeting.

"M-Monk Flanagan!" gulped the Boonetown miracle man. "Oh, you—I thought you was busted for good! You—"

"How dare you insult Major Flanagan?" the new arrival retorted loftily, brushing past the lowly Lieutenant Pinkham as he headed for the farmhouse.

"M-Major Flanagan?" stuttered Phineas, hard on his tail. "Why you was only a dough after I got through with ya the last time. Y-you hunk of—"

"Major Garrity," Monk cracked, "is that the way you teach respect for superiors? I am in the Intelligence Corps now. It is a caution how far you can git in this man's *guerre* if you pull the right ropes. Ha! ha! Who'd ever think I was once an actor, huh? Flanagan and Finnegan, Orpheus Circuit. Ha!"

"There is one rope I would like to pull on your neck," Phineas yipped, "with a hangman's knot in it. Major or no Major, you are still the same fresh mug to me!"

"Look here, Pinkham," Garrity sputtered uncertainly, "you er—keep a civil tongue in your head. Y-You—"

"W-Why Pinkham," Monk Flanagan grinned, "What is that you have inside your shirt? Why I do believe it is—yes it is!"

The Major of the Ninth looked and his eyes revved in their sockets. "Why that's my wallet—you took it out of—Pinkham, you crook!"

"It's a frameup!" protested Phineas. "He lifted that an'—oh, you big wise aleck!" He swung on the Old Man. "Don't fergit who he is. He was vaudeville guy once. A sleight of hand bum. Let me get a punch at that f-fathead. That's the trouble with Congressmen. Even to git votes they make a silk shirt out of a pig's blanket like Flan—"

"I will have you busted for insultin' an officer," Monk Flanagan hollered at him. "Major, put him under arrest or I will report you to Ch—why, it is unthinkable such lack of discipline. I will bust you, too, if you don't arrest this slob!" Suddenly the visiting Major ducked. Phineas had pressed a little button fastened to his lapel. *Squish!* An evil smelling black fluid splattered the countenance of Major Rufus Garrity. The Old Man set himself like an offensive fullback and lunged at Phineas. The pilot from Boonetown, Iowa, sidestepped and the C.O. charged out through the door without opening it. Fifteen minutes later Lieutenant Pinkham was grounded worse than an angle worm.

Rollo let out a howl and zoomed over the fence.

"Now we'll get down to my business here," Flanagan said, his whole big frame one huge gloat over events of the first half hour after his arrival at the Ninth. "Now that I've gotten hunk with a certain mug on these premises. Well, Major, I want the cooperation of the Air Force in getting to the source of the leak on

this side of the lines. Those raids of the Krauts were timed pretty close, Garrity. Might need a Spad or two at short notice. Want your cooperation."

The Old Man rubbed a bump as big as an eggplant on his dome and glared at Flanagan. "You'll get it, Major. Plenty!"

"I—I er—don't like the way you said that, Garrity," the Intelligence officer said. "I—er—maybe I was mistaken. Ha! ha! You meant that I could count on you, eh? We'll find those Heinie spies if it takes us—"

A voice contributed an unsought remark through the window. "You frog-faced bum, you could not find a baboon in Africa. Haw-w-w-w!"

Monk Flanagan ground the enamel from his teeth and swore. "He can't talk like that to me, the freckled mongoose!"

"You forgot to tell him so, I guess," Major Garrity shot back. "Well, Flanagan, you sure came up in the world. No end to what a body can do. Think I'll run for Mayor of Chicago when I go home. Any time you want a Spad, let me know. Still fly them, I suppose?"

"There ain't a bum here who can fly as good," Monk bragged.

"Nuts!" came through the window. Flanagan made a dash for it but suddenly whirled in his tracks. Phineas Pinkham was standing in the doorway.

"Haw-w-w-w! Somebody is insultin' ya, Major! Any errands you want done, Mr. Garrity, sir?"

"Get out!" roared the C.O., verging on a stroke. "I'll just count three and—"

"Don't flatter yourself," Phineas grinned and disappeared.

"I'll kill that guy yet," stormed the Major. "Shake," said Monk Flanagan.

"Nuts to you!" ground out Garrity. "If you're through here, Major—"

"Yeah," said Flanagan, "got to go over an' pick up two more Intelligence officers near Thieblemont. They've been watchin' a certain Frog out there. Over the river, Garrity!"

"If you fall in, just come up twice, will ya Flanagan?" the Old Man ripped out. "Intelligence Corps! Ugh."

"Well, this has been a day!" enthused Major Monk Flanagan as he paused and stretched himself outside the door of the farmhouse. "Got Pinkham busted! What more could a guy ask for?" Just then he spotted Bump Gillis walking across the tarmac. Bump was carrying a bottle and Flanagan hurried toward him.

"Gimme that grog!" Major Flanagan barked. "Need

it for medicine. Doctor's orders! Hah, no back talk! Here's two francs!"

"B-But," stuttered Bump in protest, "I don't want to sell it. I—"

Monk grabbed the bottle of cognac and strode away, laughing uproariously at the sensation of being a Major who took what he wanted on the Ninth's drome.

AT THAT moment Phineas Pinkham was riding furiously along the road to Bar-Le-Due on his bicycle. A hundred yards behind galloped Rollo the faithful. The pooch's tongue was hanging out and dragging on the ground by the time it caught up with its lord and master in front of the house where the Yank's big moment, Babette, abided.

"Go home!" Phineas yipped.

"Woof-wuff!" countered Rollo sitting on the step.

"Oh, awright, come on," the master of this canine of 57 varieties weakened. So Rollo trailed him up the steps of Mam'selle's. Babette greeted her swain with French enthusiasm and opened a bottle of *vin rouge*.

While Phineas sipped at the Frog liquid nitro, she began a campaign. "*Vous* take Babette *ce soir* to ze circus, *non*?"

"Circus?" Phineas gulped. "There wasn't no sign of a circus any place when I come in. Ha! ha! Thees ees ze joke, nest paw?"

"*Mais non*," Babette replied, shaking her head vigorously. "She ees ze fleas circus, *oui*. Mabbe ze bes' fleas circus from all ze worl' *vraiment*! Prof essair Rene de la Bouillaise, he ees ze bes' trainair of ze fleas in ze worl'. He has ze nam' for ever'wan of ze flea. Napoleon, Josephine, Madame Dubarry, *et Le Pompadour*. *Aussi Danton et Lafayette*. Ah, *voila*! Zey pull heem ze chariot *et zey do le dansant*. Oo la la, she ees *tres magnifique*!"

"Boys, *nous* are already in ze joint," grinned Phineas. "I have always wanted to see a flea do a fox trot. Let's *allez, ma femme*—veet—trays veet. Where ees eet ze circus?"

"I show you," Babette said and reached for her hat.

Rollo dogged the footsteps of the pair until they turned into a small theatre a block from the Cafe de la Vache Rouge. The representatives of many armies and a motley array of townsfolk had already clogged the place. Standing room was at a premium and Phineas and Babette were forced to be content with a view from the doorway. Rollo, however, made his way through a maze of undercarriages and selected

a spot close to the wall not ten feet away from the manipulator of the tiny winged actors the audience had come to see.

Professor Bouillaise soon got down to business. "Mesdames et Messieurs. I have *ici* ze greates' fleas in ze universe. I start off *avec* Napoleon. He weel stan' like ze great Bonaparte when he have look away from ze shore of Elba. Step up an'—*sacre! Mon Dieu!*" The professor dug his fingers into his scalplock and rummaged fiercely. "Zey have go! Ze case she ees come open—I forget! Ah, *sacre bleu!*" He got down on his hands and knees and began to emulate Rollo when that pooch was in his most eager hunting state. "Ever'budy, hunt for ze fleas!"

Feminine shrieks began to pierce the air of the theatre. A hurried exodus began and the place was emptied with incredible speed. Phineas lagged behind, eyeing Rollo closely. The pooch was making a pass at a certain spot on his anatomy with a hind foot. Giving that up, Rollo made a lunge at one shoulder blade with what remained of a mouthful of decrepit bicuspid.

"Yipe, yipe! Ki—yi-i-i-i!" he sang out in protest.

Professor Bouillaise, still on all fours, took a gander at Rollo. His eyebrows slipped up and became lost in a disheveled thatch of hair. "*Mon Dieu—ze chien! Ze fleas—sacre!*" He made a hasty dive for Rollo. Rollo pulled himself together and galloped out into the night, his yipping growing fainter and fainter as he sped on.

"Catch heem, ze *chien!*" screamed the Frog fleamaster. "*Ze chien!*" he howled at Phineas. "Y-You have steal ze fleas. Zo! Thees ees why you have come. Ah, you are jealoos—ever'bodee he ees jealoos for ze fleas. Ah, I get ze *gendarmes!*" The professor was as good as his word. In two minutes a dozen French cops were milling around in front of the theatre, but Phineas Pinkham was already slamming the door of Babette's domicile behind him.

"Whew-w-w!" he gasped. "Haw-w-w! I bet Rollo is huntin' for somethin' to scratch with. Well—"

"*Allez vite!*" shrilled Babette. "Always you mak' ze *tres beaucoup* trouble. *Non* mattair where I go *avec* Phinyas, ze *gendarmes* chase me back *chez moi*. *Vous allez*, Pheenyas, veet! *Mon Dieu!* Bettair I be ze *femme* of ze peekpockets. Lak' *vous* say a *moi*—nuts to *vous!* Pheenyas!"

"Awright," the trickster clipped, "I can get lots of *femmes*. *Vous* are gettin' ze air—comprenny?"

"*Et vous* are gettin' ze fry' pan," Babette threatened, leaping toward the stove.

Phineas got out fast. As he stood in the darkened doorway he could see M.P.'s and *gendarmes* running around as thick as Scotchmen at a free clambake.

"I—I could alibi about the pooch," Phineas gulped. "They couldn't prove I stole them fleas knowingly. But I am A.W.O.L. an'—well it looks like it's the bastille for me. A midget meadowmouse couldn't git through them—ah—er—ugh!"

JUST then the sky pulsated with the churning of *flugmotors*. Dark shapes appeared in the skies over Bar-Le-Duc. M.P.'s started running for cover. *Gendarmes* were already diving into cellars. A siren ripped out and the streets became as empty as a butcher shop in Cork, Ireland, on Good Friday. The Boche Gothas were on the prowl.

Phineas Pinkham seemed to be enjoying it, however. He walked out into the street with the sang froid of Whittier's barefoot boy and headed for the nearest egress from the village. Rollo was nowhere in sight. He whistled once but the pooch did not appear. Then he turned his footsteps toward the Ninth Pursuit, his thoughts on how Monk Flanagan had liked the cognac he took from Bump. Quite a coup that he had remembered Monk's yen for strong brew.

"I bet Rollo will be home when I git there," mused the prodigal pilot as he headed for the drome. "I must get me some borax and water to drive out the fleas. I—"

BO-O-O-OOO-OOM! The houses on either side of the street shook as if two fighting bull elephants had collided with one another. Another explosion followed seconds after the first. A chimney toppled and Phineas had to be spry in order to escape the flying Irish confetti.

"Huh," sniffed Phineas, "it's the Vons blowin' up Allied grub an' ammo again. If they wait for Monk Flanagan to find the dirty Kraut bums on this side, well—there won't be a cracker even for the doughs to eat or—huh, a Major! I should be higher than Pershin' at that rate. It's a fine *guerre* when a bum like that—"

BO-OO-OOOM! Phineas slapped his hands to his ringing ears and groped toward the outskirts of town. Suddenly two grim-visaged figures loomed up in front of him. One yelled at him and pointed to a wide open space.

"So you're an aviator, are ya? Ha, where were you when the Gothas come over? Is that your Spad out there? Well, hop into it, you—you winesop. Been drinkin' grog while the Gothas blow hell out of—what's your name, you—?"

"Smith!" Phineas yelled as his eyes lined up the Spad that squatted on the real estate not a hundred yards away. "Uh—that's not my—er—oh yeah, I forget things easy. Ha, can you imagine that? I would misplace an elephant if I—right away, sir. I'll get the Spad an' knock the h--- beat them Krauts. Thank you, sir."

"Sounds nutty to me," the infantry officer opined.

"Drunk, that's what," his companion ripped out just as another Gotha egg shook the ground under their feet. "All flyers are drunk or nuts. That egg hit closer. The Gothas are on the way back and if any crates are chasm' 'em, they'll unload the rest of the pills. Let's duck, Nick."

Phineas was climbing into the strange Spad when the Gothas skimmed by overhead. It was too late to chase the Heinies now. Another egg almost struck oil outside of Bar-Le-Duc when the lone Yank finally got the Hisso of the Spad turned over. The power plant was as cold as a stepmother's blessing and it was fully fifteen minutes before the joke professor was in the air.

"It's nowhere near Christmas," he yipped as he climbed toward the milky way, "but Santy Claus came around just the same. Well, they ordered me up. I did not want to take this crate. It was forced on me against my will. Haw-w-w-w-w! Did it make me sore?" He headed eastward in the direction of Vold and a place to set the Spad down for the night. The gas gauge indicated that he had enough pep juice left for practically three hours of flying.

Fifteen minutes after leaving the environs of Bar-Le-Duc Phineas dropped sky space and hedge-hopped over a sleepy Frog hamlet. Outside the town he picked himself out a passable landing field and set the Spad down. That night he slept in the ruins of a brisk kiln dreaming of the things that were going to happen to one Monk Flanagan. He woke up out of a dream in which he imagined Rollo was licking his chin with a file-like tongue. The sun was shining into his eyes when he sat up and looked around him.

"Well it's some flyin' day," the absentee from the Ninth commented sleepily. "I wonder where Rollo is? I've got a good idea where Flanagan is at, though. And then there's von Bull. It ain't right for one guy to have so much on his mind." He dug absently into his pocket and pulled out a little diary. Inside the cover was a calendar. "I got to start gettin' some of it off my mind," he said to himself. Then he let out an ear-splitting howl. It was Friday!

"This is the day the Kraut said he would knock my

ears off!" he wailed. "An' me without my own Spad and nothin' prepared. But a Pinkham never backs down—he fights for his honor!" Suddenly he remembered something. He fished into the pocket of his trench coat and yanked out a gun. A cryptic smile spread on the Pinkham pan. "It's some-thin'. It gives me an idea and that is -all a Pinkham asks." He tested the gv.n that had intrigued Bump Gillis then put it back into his pocket.

"Von Bull," Phineas said solemnly, "the toreador will meet you anon. Sharpen up your horns, you Prussian bum!"

THERE was consternation in Chaumont that day. It spread to airdromes, to every divisional headquarters along the pulsating front and back again. The hidden Allied supply dump near Boucq had been washed out by Gotha eggs—a dump that was camouflaged better than a crow sitting under a black derby hat. Insulation was burned off wires leading to Intelligence officers as the Allied moguls sizzled. Could the Intelligence find a beard in Russia? Could they find a smell in Limburger? Would they like to go around saluting mule drivers for the duration of the war? These and like insults flowed in abundance. And in the Operations office of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron Major Rufus Garrity paced up and down and thought up a fit punishment for Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham. In a corner of the big room outside sat a determined Frog who, by profession, was a trainer of fleas. Moreover, the said Frog had announced his intention of sitting there until Rollo appeared. He had informed the Old Man that he had found out who owned the pooch through a C.O. of a neighboring squadron. It seemed that one of that C.O.'s Spads had been stolen the night before from where the pilot had left it outside Bar-Le-Duc. Of course, it was very convenient for him to have been seized with cramps in the vicinity of the town thereby being forced to land and seek liquid relief, but was it too much to expect to find his Spad where he had left it? Said the Frog in hysterical French-American jargon "Put heem ze wan-two side by each!" The Spad was missing and so was a certain Lieutenant Pinkham.

"He'll get shot this time!" the Old Man ripped out to the audience watching him do the fortieth lap around the big room. "I want to see it. I'll sit there readin' a book when they stand him up against a wall. A deserter—larceny of government property. A fifteen thousand dollar Spad! Maybe he even blew up the groundmen's kitchen. He's in a sling this time for sure."

"I wonder where them spies are at?" speculated

Bump Gillis, completely disregarding the fact of Phineas Pinkham's latest exploit. "They sure had that dump tagged. I got a look at it when I flew over this a.m. They must've laid a baker's dozen of eggs on it. What an omelet!"

"Shut up!" Garrity bayed. "Who asked you?"

"Poor Pinkham," sighed Captain Howell, "he better get himself killed to cheat the U.S. courts."

"This is one time he don't crawl out," erupted the C.O. "Stealing a Spad! Deserting! Insulting a Major! Stealing fleas!"

"It was the pooch," Bump protested, belatedly defending his hutmate. "Maybe you think Carbuncle carried each flea over to Rollo and hid it in the pooch's fur coat."

"All of you—get to h--- out of here!" erupted the Major.

THE *Rittmeister* Gottfried von Bull climbed into his Pfalz bus at four-forty-five and began to goose the Mercedes power plant. Just before he took off, the Heinie officer instructed his *Staffel* cronies to get either a strong cell or bouquet of posies ready as he was going to get the upstart, Lieutenant Pingham one way or the other.

A tall, monocled Kraut, who had flown once with a Teuton named Mannheim, clipped sardonically, "*Der duck-links don't count idt already yedt before der Mudder duck hatched ist vunce, ja!*"

"Zoak *der* headt, Heinrich," shot back von Bull. "*Auf Wiedersehn!*"

Phineas Pinkham took off from his private tarmac at about the same time as the Heinie ace. Both crates drilled over to the sky ring at about the same speed. So they must have reached the same spot above the fighting ditches at the same time. Such was the case. Von Bull bellowed like the bovine for whom he was named and he immediately began to heat up his Spandaus. Phineas said a prayer, hoped for the best. The red bandanna that flew from his tail irked the *Rittmeister* as much as a red flag riles a horned ruminant in a Spick bull arena.

But the battle was of short duration. The Spad took two bursts to the midriff and Phineas began to reel around the sky ropes.

"*Ach, sooch ein flyer ick ben!*" von Bull complimented himself. "*Der easy mark du bist, Herr Pingham. Hah!*"

Phineas side-slipped a thousand feet, straightened out, then made a pass at the plummeting Pfalz. The Vickers expectoration would have rung a bell on a

cuspidor if it had been tied to von Bull's right wing tip. The *Rittmeister* climbed, went into a loop, and thundered down on the Yank again. But his quarry was heading for the linoleum. Von Bull squinted through his goggles, saw that the prop of the Pinkham war bus was swinging idly. The motor had conked.

"*Gott mitt Uns*," von Bull chortled and dove. "Sooch *ein* fight! *Der* guns get varmed oop, *nein*. *Und* down he goes by *der* Cherman side. Ho! ho! I gedt idt *der* decorations from *der* Kaiser—*ja*."

Meanwhile Phineas was eyeing the terrain that was leaping at him. There was no sign of Jerry troops down there. It was one of those spots that Mars forgot to paint with his gory brush—a stretch of mosaic that did not fit into the schemes hatched up by Kraut brass hats. The flyer from Boonetown picked out a level stretch and swooped down. Von Bull's Pfalz was only fifty feet up when Phineas got out of the Spad's pit. Spandau slugs kicked up divots around him and he began to dance like a tenderfoot in a Klondike saloon.

"You dirty pig knuckle swiller!" he yipped, making a dive for a tree. He was crouched close to it when the *Rittmeister* strode up, a Luger very much in evidence in his right fist.

"*Wei Gehts!*" he mocked. "So! *Das ist* Pingham. So easy yedt, *a-ch!* How *ist* you shooldt all *der* odder Chermans down *mitt*? *Mitt der* dricks maybe, *ja*? *Und* where *der* dricks *ist* at, *Leutnant*? *Ach*, *der* gun you haff, *hein*? By *der* pocket maybe. Take idt from *der* pocket *mitt der* barrel, *Mein Herr*. Oddervise I shooldt. Keep away. Zee I hear how you gedt idt *der* odders *mitt der* drick gun, ha, budt me I am *der* shmart feller. Efen vunce I don't gedt idt fooled. *Mach schnell*, *Schweinhund!* *Der* gun."

His prisoner did as he was told, removing the gun from his pocket and holding it by the barrel. He took three steps toward von Bull. "Boys, ain't you smart?" he breathed in mock awe.

The *Rittmeister* reached out.

SWO-O-O-O-OSH! A liquid fire hit him in the eyes. He let out a bellow and pulled the trigger of the Luger. But Phineas Pinkham went into his shortribs, head down. Von Bull lost all the ozone in his bellows and sat down hard. The tip of the Pinkham left ear was a little frazzled.

"That was close, oh boys!" the resourceful Yank whipped out. He dragged the *Rittmeister* over to the Spad and dumped him to the sod. Von Bull stared into the barrel of his own gun when he got his lungs inflated once more.

"Git on that wing, you fathead!" Phineas ordered him. "Or I will ventilate your dome. Haw-w-w-w-w! My motor did not quit. And that was some gun. It fires backwards. There is a button on the end of the barrel that you push—haw-w-w-w! The syringe on the inside of the barrel—git up on that wing, you bum, or I will shoot you in cold blood like I killed a Heinie yesterday."

"*Ach Himmel!*" whimpered von Bull, his eyes straying swiftly. But he got to the Spad's wing in a hurry when Phineas took aim with the Luger.

"A dead German brings more bounty," the Yank told him. "Guess I better shoot you anyways as—"

"*Nein, nein!*" gulped the *Rittmeister*. "Haff *der* mercy!"

A patrol of Heinies reached the spot two minutes after the Spad was in the air. Phineas yelled: "You can jump now if you want to, von Bull, haw-w-w-w! It is only three thousand feet. Of course, if you don't land on your dome you will get hurt."

"*Donnervetter!*" swore the Kraut and he clung tenaciously to a strut.

The gas in the Pinkham Spad really gave out within three miles of Bar-Le-Duc. The flying wonder made a dead-stick landing, sidewiped an apple tree, and deposited his prisoner fifty feet away in a ditch filled with oozy mud and water. Von Bull was fishing a little green frog out of his collar when his captor reached his side.

"*Gott im Himmel!*" gasped the *Rittmeister*. "*Besser ist der* bullet. Almost I gedt idt drowned by *der* untersea boadt *und* I join *der* air service. *Und* now I gedt idt drowned almost yoost *der* same. *Ach*, *der* Deffil you are."

Phineas grinned at the compliment as he took a coil of strong rope from his pocket. "I'm going to tie you up like New York traffic on Saturday night, von Bull, as you are my acquittal in a Yank courthouse. I will go to Barley Duck for a snort or two as do I need nourishment? Oof widderson. I will be back to get your corpse delecty this evening sometime. Make yourself comfortable the while."

PHINEAS did not quite reach Bar-Le-Duc before he met a very familiar friend. The ancient Rollo was skidding along the rough road on his empennage when Phineas first espied him. Then he let out a yip, twisted his torso double, and began digging his teeth into his right flank.

"Why, I see you still have company," observed the pooch's master by adoption. "Maybe it's Napoleon

who is biting you. Or Madame Pompadour givin' you a dig, haw-w-w-w!"

Rollo seemed overjoyed to see Phineas Pinkham, his pal. His woebegone headlamps looked up at his master as if to say: "Have a heart! Get these walking pinchers off my carcass, will you?"

Phineas patted the pooch lovingly and pointed toward Bar-Le-Duc. "Follow me, old pal. I will get some

flea exterminator from Babette. Come on, Rollo, shake a leg." Abruptly he stopped. His hand, groping down into a deep pocket, closed over something which he yanked out. In the light of day it turned out to be a dirty paper-bag. "Now, Rollo, ain't this surprising? This is the stuff I put in Glad Tidings Goomer's biscuit flour only last Tuesday. It guarantees to chase anythin' that crawls, up to an alligator. Let's get over here in the ditch, old boy, an' we'll apply the antidote. Ha, ya trust me, don't ya Rollo? Haw-w-w-w-w, nothin' else alive does. Now just stand still."

To Rollo the cure seemed worse than the fleas when Phineas rubbed the lotion into his scraggly hide. The pooch felt as if ten attacks of hives had decided to give him their entire attention. No sooner had he been decorated with the antidote than he put his tail between his legs, let out a yowl, and zoomed over a fence. Phineas stood still and watched the hound of many breeds disappear through the door of an apparently abandoned Frog hut a hundred yards away. Then he sat down to scratch his head.



"Huh," he exclaimed, "Rollo didn't seem to like it. Well if it don't kill the fleas, it will kill the pooch. Either way he won't suffer any more."

Phineas waited awhile. A strange sound that made his eardrums twitch ended his waiting. The disturbance seemed to come from the place where Rollo had sought shelter. He thought he heard somebody swear and he was sure about Rollo's

indignant yelp. A moment later the pooch high-tailed it cut of the place and ki-yied as though it had met the ghosts of its doubtful ancestors. Phineas whistled and Rollo whirled, skidding around on his caboose. The hound exhibited extreme pleasure about something despite the fact that someone had so recently given him a swift kick. Coming up to Phineas, Rollo sat down, tongue dangling and bellows working overtime.

"Why, Rollo, ya don't scratch any more," grinned his master. "Haw-w-w! Well, we chased them fleas all right. I bet Napoleon is lyin' in state some

place. We did the trick, old boy, haw-w-w-w! Guess somebody lives there, huh?" Phineas jerked a thumb toward the Frog hut. Rollo gazed at him in sage silence after a brief "Woof!"

"Let's go on home, then," said the adventurer. "I got me a von to square things. Huh? You're hungry? Haw-w-w, I could eat a bone myself. We'll visit in Barley Duck first."

The pride of the Boonetown Pinkhams approached Bar-Le-Duc with caution. He managed to slip through

the streets unnoticed and get into Babette's house. The French *mademoiselle* eyed him truculently with one dark glimmer. The other caressed a heavy pot that hung on a nail by the stove.

"*Vous retournez, oui?*" she shrilled. "More of ze trouble you have bring, *non?* Ze *chien*—outside you leave heem. Ze fleas—"

"Aw, they're all allezed," grinned her suitor. "The evidence is all washed up. Babette, I am trays hongree—so hongree I could *mangez ze cheval aussi* some *vaches*. How about chow, huh? Boys, I weel marry voose and take voose back weeth me for jus' wan san'weech *avec* eggs and corned Willie."

"*Oui*—I geeve heem to *vous*. Ah, Pheenyas, you air ze—what you call zem—ze berrees, *non?* Id, I geeve to you ze kees."

"Haw-w-w-w!" chortled Phineas, his tongue in his cheek.

OVER at the Ninth Major Garrity was talking into the 'phone. "Huh—you say that Spad was found outside of Bar-Le-Duc? Out of gas, huh? The same Sp—huh? Nobody in it? Say, what's the idea? You kidding me? Listen, maybe I'm only a Major but even a Brigadier can't kid me. This morning, you said—what? I am, am I?" Why you—I resign so listen. You're a jug-headed, overstuffed—"

Six miles from Bar-Le-Duc a man wearing the uniform of a Major of Intelligence lay in the back seat of a car sleeping soundly. At the side of the road sat a corporal chewing on an oat straw.

"Huh, all las' night he slept an' all tuhday—the crackpot! He don't say where he's goin' so how can I take him there?" The dough was growling with disgust. "I sit here until the sap wakes up. This *guerre* is gettin' screwier by the minute."

Meanwhile, Phineas gorged himself on the fare offered by Babette, then indulged in a smoke. The girl sat on the floor beside him, looking up into his face. It did not seem to bother her. "Ah—when we go over to ze *Etats Unis* we make heem ze beeg *chateau avec* ze garden. *Aussi ze poissons d'or* in ze beeg pool. An' we have six automobeels lak' you have geeve to me ze promisee. Ah, Pheenyas, *c'est tree bon, non?*"

"*Non* is right," her freckled swain agreed. "Ah—er—haw-w-w! I'm some kiddier! Anyways we'll have four hacks an'—" He swallowed hard and got up. "I must have been scalded when I told the dame that," he muttered to himself. "Boys, if Sadie Wilkins ever knew, she would bat my ears off. Gosh, what van blank

makes me say them things easy. It's all her fault as she makes me drink it." He went to the window and looked out.

A big car was pulling up in front of an *estaminet* across the street. Two officers got out. One suddenly stopped and dug his fingers into the collar on his tunic. The other was twisted half around in an attempt to reach a shoulder blade with clawing fingers. Both men stopped, shook themselves, eyed each other. In the doorway of the Frog bar room they halted and made passes at various portions of their anatomy.

Meanwhile, the observant Phineas lent an ear to a small inner voice that was trying to make itself heard. Suddenly his lower jaw dropped as his thoughts travelled. Rollo had been driven out of that Frog hut by somebody. A determined boot had propelled the pooch into the open spaces—and that boot had not been worn by a spook. At that moment Phineas felt extreme regret that dogs cannot talk. The exterminator had driven Rollo's little aggravators out of his fur coat. And where had they found sanctuary? In somebody's clothes—uniform? Lieutenant Pinkham's brain flashed him a possible dazzling truth. He leaped away from the window and headed for the door.

"*Attendez vous*, Pheenyas!" yelled Babette. "*Pourquoi* you *allez* so queeck? Pheenyas!"

"Adoo!" the pilot flung back and was gone. Rollo fell into step with his master outside.

"Crazee crackpot!" the light of love flung after their departing figures. "Lak' ze flea on ze *chien* ees he. *Ici* ees he—then *ici* he *n'est pas*—bah!" She picked up a chair and slammed it down again as if it were defacing Phineas' already homely countenance.

Phineas Pinkham walked into the *estaminet* as casually as if he were a member of the Yankee Flying Corps in good standing. The two officers who stood at the bar drew his attention. They seemed to be having quite a time with their drinking. They would take a gulp, then squirm as if the Frog brew had been filled with needles. First one glass, then another, would go down while the officers' fingers dug into various spots on their anatomies. Their conduct reminded Phineas of his first visit to a monkey cage in a zoo.

Suddenly a voice yelled: "Get him—arrest him! That's Lieutenant Pinkham!"

Three ugly M.P.'s surrounded Garrity's pet peeve but Phineas surprised them by making no move. In fact, he seemed pleased about it and every jaw in the place dropped limply.

"Just in time, haw-w-w-w!" he chuckled. "Git them

two Heinies over there by the bar. The ones that are scratchin'. They're spies. Get the bums before—"

"Why—" one of the officers gulped, "he is crazy. We are American officers. We—" One stopped digging knuckles into his ribs. His face was as pale as the dicky of a penguin and he reached for a gun. Phineas picked up a bottle, tossed it quickly. It bounced off the man's pate and he went down with his eyes changing places. The M.P.'s ganged the other masquerader and tapped him into a state of coma. Then Phineas walked over and eyed something that was crawling up the neck of one of the prone men.

"Git me an empty bottle quick," he yelped. "It's the proof that they're Heinies. Huh, where are them Intelligence officers? It's lucky I happened in here or there would be more Yankee dumps blown up. It's always a Pinkham who has to come to the rescue. Hand me that bottle, you with the flat bugle."

"Don't git fresh with me," the M.P. cracked.

"Shut up or you will be busted," Phineas told him severely. "Now does anybody know where the professor is who trains the fleas, huh?"

A booming voice thundered: "Pinkham, you big lug! Step right out here; you're under arrest."

"Why it's Mister Garrity," remarked the object of the Major's wrath. "Fancy meeting you in a place like this. A barroom. Tsk! tsk! tsk! Huh, and Bump Gillis and Captain Howell. I will report you to the Temperance—"

"You want to know where the professor is, do you?" stormed Garrity. "Well, he's waitin' out at the drome with a shotgun. If he ever gets a peek at Rollo—"

"Oh, yeah?" snapped Phineas. "Well Rollo is a hero. He'll get a crow *de guerre* instead of buckshot. He caught the Heinie spies. There they are, sittin' against the bar. Huh, Rollo unloaded his fleas on them. Haw-w-w-w! With my help. It was a dead give-away."

"Wha-a-a-a?" stammered the poor C.O. from deep down in his diaphragm. "You—Rollo—captured—they're the spies who are—why, don't you kid me, you fathead! I've been gettin' enough kiddin' the last twenty-four hours to— Arrest him! He's a deserter."

"Oh, yeah?" said Phineas with his favorite retort. "I was only out knockin' off the *Rittmeister* von Bull today an' gettin' the spies. Could you shoot me for that? Haw-w-w-w-w! Just ask Pershin."

"You—you got von Bull—too?" Bump Gillis rasped in an extremely weak voice. "Wh-where is he?"

"Oh, I got him in storage," replied the hero of the moment from the heights of superiority. "I will deliver

him on the hoof in due time. Now somebody go over an' git Professor Marsellaise, or whatever his moniker is. Tell him if he will come very fast, he will git his flea circus back. Haw-w-w!"

WHILE a car rocketed at full speed toward the Yankee drome, Phineas Pinkham sat down near Rollo and enjoyed the limelight. "That's the way it happened," he rambled on with his tale. "I was walkin' toward Bar-Le-Duc with Rollo. I put somethin' on him that made his hide sting and he made that Frog hut in four jumps. Pretty soon he come out yippin' as somebody—one of them fake Yankee brass hats—kicked him in the slats. But I saw Rollo didn't have the fleas any more, so me and him come in here to Barley Duck as we was hungry. I was eatin' chow in Ba—er—my dame's house when I saw these tomaters get out of the car in front of here. They looked like something was bitin' 'em all over as they was digging into their fuselages. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

He paused to gloat over his prisoners. "Well, I says, why would two officers be hidin' in that Frog hut if they was the real McCoys? An on the other hand, a lot could be seen from there by a couple of Krauts packing field glasses. I says how could fleas leave Rollo so fast and climb up into their torsos? Because, I figure out, the fleas come out of their dugouts under the pooch's hide in a hurry when the exterminator sank in. They jumped off Rollo—ever see them fleas jump, sir?"

Garrity shook his head.

"They jumped into the uniforms the spies was changing into, that's what," Phineas guessed proudly. "I bet there is two real U.S. Intelligence men tied up over in that place. They're probably the two Monk Flanagan was looking for near Thieblemont. He didn't git there, so they went out lookin' for him and got caught by the spies. I bet I'm right." The prisoners were too dazed by the massaging their heads had had to deny anything Phineas said. One even nodded and jerked out "*Himmel!*"

"Why didn't Flanagan get there?" Major Garrity wanted to know.

"Why Major? I don't know everything," replied Phineas innocently. "Why, if I did, I would be a general, or—"

"I give up," sighed the Old Man. "Go on."

"Well," the flyer who had talked himself out of many a situation went on, "I bet Monk—er—Major Flanagan is drunk somewheres as he is the biggest grog hoister since—"

"Listen here, Pinkham," a Brigadier blustered, "you're talking about your superiors. You—" An M.P. came in then and saluted. He had a scared looking corporal behind him. The M.P. said the dough wanted to speak to the Brigadier.

"Well," growled the brass hat, "let him."

"I—er—sir," stuttered the dough, "I —er just drove an officer in here. I th-think he-he might be dead. He's been cut cold since yesterday. He didn't tell me where to drive him before he fell asleep, an' I been waitin' out there about six miles for him to wake up. But, I says, I better drive him in to Barley Duck an'—"

Phineas Pinkham gazed at the ceiling with interest. Major Rufus Garrity looked at Pinkham. Everybody else went outside to see who was in the car. Finally Phineas and his C.O. went out, too. It was Monk Flanagan and no mistake. He stirred a bit when the Brigadier reached into the car and shook him. Finally Flanagan yawned so wide it seemed as if he would split his head open. He blinked, rubbed his eyes, blinked again.

"Where am I?" he forced out over a tongue that was as thick as a piece of tripe. "Who—what—?"

His arch enemy, Lieutenant Pinkham, pointed to a bottle in the seat beside Flanagan. "I told you he was oiled," he announced.

"So! Drunk on duty, are you?" the brass hat yelped. "And those spies—get him out of there and put him in the klink. I'll break this guy wide open."

"Fool with me, will ya?" Phineas said under his breath.

"What'd you say?" barked Garrity.

"Oh, I must've been gathering wool for my next overcoat," countered the freckle-faced pilot. "Haw-w-

w-w-w! If you'll excuse me, I will borrow a car and go out to pick up my Von. He's kind of expectin' me. I need the *Rittmeister* to own up to them loaded wienies that blew up the groundhogs' kitchen! And maybe there are two officers tied up in that Frog hut.

Before Phineas and Major Garrity got into a car, Professor Rene de la Bouillaise barged into town. He was all agog as he ran into the *estaminet* with a glass jar in his hand.

"Ah—zere ees Napoleon!" chortled the flea trainer joyously. "Come to Papa, Danton—don' you run away, Lafayette. *Sacre! Ah, merci beaucoup*, ever'bodee. You tak' off ze clothes from ze *hommes*. Six leetle fleas zey are miss'. *Mon Dieu*, if Madame la Pompadour she is *tres mort*, I sue ze armee of ze *Etats Unis*. *Voila! Discardez ze clothes! I mus' fin' Madame—*"

"Let's *allez*," proposed Phineas. "We got those errands to do, Major, Haw-w-w-w-w! Did you hear somethin' sir?"

It was Monk Flanagan's bull-like voice. Between two burly M.P.'s he was being roughly escorted to the nearest klink. The sight of Phineas Pinkham had driven him gaga.

"You done this to me, you fresh yap. I'll get you yet. Monk Flanagan never forgets—when I git out of this—"

"Gr-r-r-r-r! Yurp—yurp!" said Rollo.

"Don't you bite him, Rollo," Phineas cautioned his mutt. "Come away from Monk. D'you want to git hydrophobia? Haw-w-w-w!"

"I'll git hunk! You planted that bottle on Gillis. You had it all—"

"Tell it to the Judge, Major Flanagan!" Phineas called after him. "Come on, Rollo. Here Rollo!"