

a
**PHINEAS
PINKHAM**
howl



"Marco Polo"

CAT'S SPAD-JAMAS

written and illustrated by
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All the Allied Brass Hats were frantic. For Hauptmann von Heinz—the "Owl of the Ozone"—was raising fifty-seven varieties of Cain along the Western Front, and something had to be done before he perpetrated the fifty-eighth. Yes, it was a job for the famed Pinkham. But when the Boonetown Bam tried to snare the Kraut killer into a dog fight, somebody let the cat out of the bag. And from then on it was cats-as-cats-can!

PHINEAS PINKHAM, Lieutenant, U.S. Flying Corps, was looking over his mail in his hut on the airdrome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron near Bar-le-Duc. His Aunt Tillie Luscom had sent him the last three issues of a magazine that the family back in Boonetown, Iowa, had subscribed to for years—*Frink's Fact, Fancy & Fiction Weekly*.

After thumbing through a few pages, the freckledfaced sky fighter put the magazines aside and ripped open another package that had arrived much the worse for wear. The little bottle he found inside it was intact, however, and Phineas was intrigued by the label. It read: UNDERBY'S UN-DYE.

In smaller print the manufacturers announced: *Anybody can dye. Underby's magic formula shows you how to un-dye. Often we dye our hair or a dress or a pair of shoes. But just put Underby's Un-Dye on anything and it will restore natural color. One crystal will make a gallon of Un-Dye. Works instantaneously or your money back. Large bottle fifty cents.*

"Haw-w-w-w," Phineas chuckled, "always git the latest stuff that's on the market an' be up with the times! That's me."

"Oh yeah?" sniffed Bump Gillis as he came into the Nisson. "I haven't seen you git *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz yet, you great big smart aleck! In fact, he almost got you the last time out. That tracer pretty near boiled an ear off you, Carbuncle Pinkham. It looks like you ought to just give up."

Phineas bristled like a porcupine. "You will eat them words, Bump Gillis," he snorted, putting the bottle of un-dye into his pocket. "I have figured out a way to knock that limberger-eatin' owl right out of his tight pants. I will go out after mess, if Sergeant Casey has got my crate all fixed up." The sleight-of-hand artist plunged his hand into a paper bag at his elbow, felt around a bit, and brought out a chocolate the shape of a beehive. He popped it into his ample oral cavity, chewed lustily.

"Thanks for offerin' me one, ya tight-fisted bum," Bump cracked. "I will not wait to be asked. I ain't always so lucky as to catch you with bon-bons before you git a chance to put arsenic in 'em!" The Scotch-American reached into the bag, pulled out a sweetmeat, dropped it into his mouth, and exerted pressure. Instantly his eyes bulged and his face became the color of a bullfrog's vest. He made a dive for the canvas wash basin, reached for a glass that was standing there half filled with something that looked

for all the world like water. But it was Epsom Salts. Bump Gillis had swallowed a lot of gooey Frog mud mixed with red pepper, and now he'd gone berserk.

"I didn't give it to ya!" Phineas yipped as he leaped up on his cot and held a chair out in front of him to ward off the bric-a-brac that Bump was tossing at him. "You're just a hog, Bump Gillis! Haw-w-w! Didn't that mud look just like real chocolate fillin', huh? You was lucky not to git the one I filled with auto grease."

That made Bump Gillis feel a little weak and his giblets went into an Immelmann. He fled the hut and taxied fast to the medico's shack, leaving Phineas Pinkham to slick himself up before trekking over to the Frog farmhouse for mess.

THERE were a couple of brass hats as guests—and the pilot from Boonetown, Iowa, knew what they would be squawking about even before he took his place at the table. *Hauptmann* von Heinz, who had been dishing out fifty-seven varieties of hell, would have to be stopped.

"Haven't you any flyers who dare to go out after dark, Garrity?" asked a colonel with high sarcasm in his voice.

"You are lookin' right now at the flyer who works while others sleep," Phineas cut in before the Major could answer.

"Haw-w-w! I had an uncle once who could read the date on a dime at twenty paces at the bottom of a coal mine at midnight with no lights on!"

"Will you shut up?" asked the skipper. "Don't mind him, gentlemen," he said, turning to the brass hats. "We are making an experiment tonight. With things as they are now, you know very well that there isn't a flyer on the whole Allied front who is supposed to fly at night. Pinkham is going to try it because he's the only pilot who is crazy enough to do it."

Colonel Meany looked toward Phineas, and since there was a mirror behind the Yankee lieutenant, he caught his own reflection. He threw up his hands with horror and exclaimed: "Gad, Major, I'm filthy! I'll have to wash up before I start to eat. Is there a place handy?"

"I'll show the Colonel, sir," Phineas volunteered to Garrity. "Just outside the door there—Goomer'll give you a dish an' clean towel. Right this way, sir. Be careful of the step, sir."

"Thank you, thank you, Lieutenant," Meany said pompously, following the Boonetown trickster across the big room.

"Dang funny," muttered Garrity, "for him to get polite all of a sudden. Somethin's wrong around here."

But Phineas came back to his chair with Colonel Meany at his heels. The brass hat was running a wet comb through his black hair. And now he sat down—to see the pilots of the Ninth stiffening in their seats as if they had each swallowed a bucket of starch. Meany's black hair was turning gray right before their eyes! The Old Man choked on a chunk of beef and Bump Gillis and Captain Howell almost had to cave his backbone in to dislodge the small portion of cow that had lodged in his windpipe.

"What's the matter here?" Meany asked testily after a moment. "Have you all gone—" The brass hat broke off in the middle of his query, for he had caught another flash of his dome in the mirror. He looked as if he were on the verge of a fit.

"Why—er—Colonel," Phineas yipped, "you cheated the U.S. Government. I bet you was a Civil War vet an' dyed your hair to—"

"Pinkham," Meany roared, "I—I'll make somebody sweat for this. What did you put in that water out there, huh? Speak up before I push my fist down your throat and—"

"I haven't the faintest idea what you're talkin' about," the culprit said innocently. "Goomer must've put some washin' soda in the water an'—well, I'll never forget this to my dye-in' day. Haw-w-w-w!"

The brass hat got very unreasonable then and quit the mess, promising Major Garrity in a loud voice that something would happen to him in the near future and that it would not be a promotion.

"Pinkham," the Old Man of the Ninth stormed after the brass hat's jalopi had left the drome, "I don't know how you did it, but you did—I know that. I—Ha! Ha! Ha! That's the first thing you ever did that I thought was funny. Dyed his hair, did he? He won't dare open his yap about it. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" chimed in the miracle man from Iowa. "Now I will go an' see how the Spad looks. I hope Casey got them crowbars fixed on tight. Adoo for awhile."

Ten minutes later the Pinkham Spad was being trundled out of the hangar. On each side of the snout a heavy crowbar had been wired and there was something attached to the center of the top wing that looked like a big cylinder-shaped laundry basket lying on its side.

"He gets nuttier every day," Captain Howell sniffed.

"He won't make more than fifty miles an hour with all that weight. If he gets up to three thousand feet, he'll be lucky. What's the big idea, Major?"

"How should I know?" sputtered the Old Man.

"They want night flying—and I'd let a guy who got tagged for a bat patrol do anythin' he wanted with his crate. That thing on his wing looks like a balloon chute to me. Yeah, he's got ropes hitched to him, too, the halfwit. Well, he's on his way—if he ever gets off the ground!"

Crowbars were never constructed to aid and abet buoyancy. The Pinkham Spad just cleared the top of a tree on the edge of the field, and a mother oriole called the Yankee pilot everything she could think of in her own bird language as her hangar went into gyrations and curdled potential worm snipers in their shells.

BEFORE we go any further, however, we must let you in on a lot of skullduggery that was being hatched in other parts of the war-tormented Western Front. *Herr Hauptmann* Adolph August von Heinz—he who was known as the "Owl of the Ozone"—was getting into a black Albatross on a drome near Ars. Von Heinz was something such as you used to read about in *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. The Kraut bat flyer could not do anything in the daytime. In fact, he had been born right in the middle of the Black Forest. Before the war he worked night shift in a clock factory and in our modern times he would have been said to be allergic to sunshine. Once, the story went, Adolph got in the sun when he was about two years old—and he immediately broke out with hives.

Seated in his nocturnal war chariot, *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz beamed upon his comrades. Adolph's eyes looked like those of an owl, and when he had his hat off the two cowlicks of hair that stood up on his bulletshaped head completed the effect. He was round-shouldered, too, and even in Germany it was believed that his ancient ancestors had feathers. Yes, *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz was a rare bird, and he was raising more havoc after dark than a pair of minks in a henhouse.

"*Ach! Always Ich bin* zo lonesome. Nobody flies unit night yedt, *und das ist* vhen *der fun ist* droppink *der bombs und* bullets down by *der verdammt* Yangkees in *der* dark. Ha! Now if *das* Pingham—"

SEVENTY MILES away, high in the sky, a great cigar shaped object seemed to be grazing the inverted dome of heaven and scraping stars off it. The great snout split filmy clouds apart and scooted on, its motors purring like so many leopards after gorging on a dusky Ubangi belle in a dark corner of a jungle. It



Pinkham's latest arch-enemy! Hauptmann Adolph August von Heinz—he who was known as "The Owl."

was one of the Kaiser's Zeps flying high over *La Belle France* after a vist to London, and in the control room a Kraut *Kommandant* who would have made Simon Legree look like a sissy was waiting for word from the hanging observation cockpit that had been reeled out below the big Zep's belly. Standing near the winch that held the little car was a small-sized *Schnapps* punisher holding a mouse-colored tomcat in his arms. The Teuton's knees were knocking together and he looked like anybody but Nathan Hale.

"Shtop idt *der* shagink vunce," the Zep's boss snapped. "Katzenheimer, you haff idt *der* parazhoot, *hein?* Ach, *Gott!* When it giffs *der* vord ve are ofer Vaubecourt, you yoomp *mit der* Katz, *ja. Deutschland uber Alles!* For *der* Vaterland, *Dumkopf!*"

"*Ja wohl!*" Katzenheimer nodded. "Budt vat if *der* zhute opens nodt?"

"Den you go right quick to *der* *Wilhelmstrasse* und complain aboutd idt," chuckled the Zep skipper. "But it vill open, *mein Freund. Der* Katz shouldt haff to gedt down, as zo much *ist* by *der* stake, *ja. Der* Allied Intelligenz *der* sharp eyes haben. *Der* little plans showink all *der* important spots behind *der* *Amerikaner* lines should ready yedt be, und vunce it cooms by Chermany und *der* High Kommand—*poof!* *Mit* von Heinz knowink vhere *ist* he shouldt drop idt *der* small bombs und *der* Gothas *der* gross vuns, *ach der* Tag idt cooms! *Das ist der* komical Katz, *ja.* He's afraid uf *der* ride by *der* airplane, but he don'd giff no nefermind aboutd ridink in *der* Zeppelin. Ho! Ho!"

NOW just a mile away from that Heinie hydrogen hack, Phineas Pinkham was arching through the ozone looking for the spit of von Heinz' exhaust. Imagine his surprise when he spotted that Zeppelin so far off its course. For a moment he wondered if he had fallen asleep and was having a nightmare. He pinched himself, decided he was awake, and got down to business.

He went up as far as he could go, then dived and took a poke at the black cross that was splashed across the Zep's dorsal region. Nothing happened. Meanwhile Heinie machine gunners sprayed lead at him, made him back up his Spad for a minute. Again Phineas came at the cigar and tried to peel off its wrapper with tracers. Then his Vickers hopelessly jammed and his Spad had to take a lot of Boche lead through its wings.

"Well, I'll see what kind of filler that stogie has got, anyway," the Yankee bat flyer decided. "That is one cigar that will not get back into the box. Here I come,

you sausage eaters!" And Phineas pointed the Spad straight at the Zep, gave the Hisso full throttle.

Inside the Zep the Boche skipper howled for more speed. The little Teuton with the tomcat in his arms got his signal and stepped down through the trap with a black parachute streaking out behind him pennon fashion. In the machine gun pit aboard the gas bag a pair of Heinies frantically waved their arms at the Spad plummeting toward them as if to shoo it away. At exactly the right moment, Phineas Pinkham bailed out of his ship and the chute in the basket on the top wing went with him. He bounced off the big Kraut cigar's shortribs just as the Spad hit the Zep like a red hot rivet smacking an Idaho baked potatoe. One of the crowbars zipped through the dirigible's giblets like a lancet, kept on going to terra firma where it went right through the top of a Yankee truck that was heading toward Vaubecourt.

"Cripes," howled the dough who was driving the bus, "they're even thro win' crowbars—them Boche. They—look, Pooley—up there! It is a Zep, an' it's breakin' in half! It's gonna fall in the Meuse, I bet. Boy, it's on fire now! Whatinell is one of them cigars doin' over here, huh? L-Loo-ook o-o-ou-t!" A piece of something whanged against a tree close to the truck that had been braked to a teeth-jarring stop. It was a chunk of Spad, and the doughs saw big letters painted on it. PINKH—they read.

"That crackpot flyer rammed it, that's what!" a dough choked out. "Well, he's got wings now that he won't never be able to take off. What a guy! Wow! Look at that thing hit! Yo-o-ow!"

CRA-A-A-ASH!

The Zep splatted into the Meuse and enough steam to boil all the rice in China belched toward the moon. Not more than a mile away, *Herr Hauptmann* von Heinz, scared out of his skivvies, turned tail and headed for home.

"*Ach du lieber!*" he moaned. "*Das* vas fir me, *der* rammink *mit der* Spad und *das* Pingham vas *der* doer. *Der* deffil he *ist*, but now he *ist der* deffil vas *ist* deader as *der* mackerel fish. Ach, *Gott!*"

Then the news spread over the front faster than a scandal in a fishing village. A Heinie Zeppelin had swung off its course, had been driven by the wind over the Western Front where Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham had smeared it over the landscape like cheese on a cracker.

Later, in a Yankee Divisional H.Q. near the Meuse, a pair of truck drivers told officers about the piece of

Spad that had nearly sideswiped them on the road. They embellished their tale with the bit about the crowbar that had stabbed right through the heavy top of the truck, washing out a lot of corned willie.

And on the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron Major Garrity crossed the name of Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham off the roster and ordered the R.O. to concoct a fitting message of sympathy to send to the surviving Iowa Pinkhams. Even so, Bump Gillis and Captain Howell had their doubts, but they went around gathering wildflowers to construct a floral piece to place on the Pinkham grave once word was received as to where it was located.

"I think he ought to be buried near the Meuse, don't you, boys?" opined Garrity gruffly.

"Huh, then no horses could drink the water afterwards," snorted Bump Gillis. "Maybe he's got a bottle of Prussic acid in his pocket that'd bust open!"

"This is no time for such remarks, men," Garrity chided the Scot. "Haven't you any heart at all?"

But Bump only raised his eyebrows. It still had to be proved to him.

NOW not far from Bar-de-Luc Phineas Pinkham had hit the linoleum after drifting through the ozone seven or eight miles from the point where he had bailed out. He fell on his angelbones and was dragged to the edge of some woods. Then the chute billowed out again and he had to wind his long legs around a small sapling to stay put. He had just worked his way out of the harness when his big ears suddenly fanned out. A sound came from above his head and over to the left where the trees were thickest.

"ME-E-E-EOW!"

"Huh," grunted the Yank, getting onto all fours, "here kitty! Nice kitty. Here Kitty!"

But the sound did not come again. The Boonetown pilot got to his feet, started walking a little stiffly out of the woods. "I know I heard a cat," he insisted. "They can't tell me I didn't. Well, I wonder which is the way to Barley Duck? I—" He stopped short, let out a yelp. Not ten feet in front of him was a Kraut fresh from the ill-fated Zep. He could tell by the funny hat the fellow wore, for it looked like a Limey sailor's skypiece.

"*Kamerad!*" gutturalled the Heinie. "From *der* Zebblin I coom vunce. I fall oudt—*und* hidt idt *der* tree. *Ach Gott*, sooch business, *hein?*"

"Well, it ain't no taffy pull," Phineas chirped. "You're either a rubber man from India or an awful liar. Have you walked this far already from that wreck?"

An' say, Heinie, did you hear a cat—*der* Katz—holler, huh?"

"*Nein*. You take me for *der* brizoner, *ja?* *Ach*, zo sick *Ich bin* from *der* fightink yedt. I am Rudolph Kenzenheimer, *ja!*"

Phineas scratched his head. Something was rotten even if he was a long way from Denmark. Nothing made sense. Getting closer to the Kraut he saw that there were scratches on the man's face.

"Well," he said, "goose step double quick, Rudy, and make it schnappy. I'll turn you over to an A.E.F. cop and get you off my hands toot sweet. Haw-w-w-w!"

And Phineas did just that, then made his way back to the drome of the 9th. He arrived at 4 a.m.—to find a big horseshoe, made of green pine branches and interwoven with whatever wildflowers were available at that particular time of year, tacked to the door of his hut.

A sentry peered at the prodigal who was folded up in the sidecar of a motorcycle and scratched his unshaven jaw with a bayonet.

"You're supposed to be dead, Lieutenant," he complained. "They already got plans for your fun'ral to-morrer. Huh, this is a fine kettle of smelts."

"Oh yeah?" howled Phineas. "Ain't that a shame? I bet they even divvied up my socks an' things already. Let me out of this mechanical bug! I'll show—"

Just then the Old Man poked his head out of an upper window of the Frog farmhouse and yelped: "What-inell's goin' on down there?"

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" guffawed his bad penny. "Am I in time to be a pall bearer, Major? What did you get my coffin lined with—silk or thistles? Well, here I am—in the pink—after snipin' that Kraut flyin' stogie. Yip-e-e-e-e-e-e-e!" He bellowed in conclusion. And the result was quite satisfactory, for pilots leaped out of their beds and poked their heads out of the doors of the huts in Buzzards' Row.

"I knew it!" ejaculated Bump Gillis disgustedly. "He ain't dead. Nothin' could kill that numbskull. If he drank cyanide, he would gain three pounds."

Old Man Garrity slammed the window down, went back to bed. Phineas walked into his hut and began to peel off his clothes. "Aw-wp!" he yawned, looking at the floral piece that Bump had tossed into a corner. "A fine thing—an' you bums knowin' how I hate daisies. Even when I am dead ya want to give me hay fever. Haw-w-w-w! Well, bong sour, Bump, toodle—oo, an' all that!" Whereupon the Pride of the Pinkhams hit the hay.

THE brass hats did not make much of a fuss over Phineas Pinkham smacking down the Zep. Oh, they promised him a medal and a week off when he chose to take it, but they still insisted that von Heinz—Allied Enemy Number 1—was still loose.

Also another important matter had come up. The brass hats wanted a certain set of plans that were supposed to be in the hands of a snooper from Wilhelmstrasse. Three months before, the Allied brain trust had snagged a couple of Heinie stool pigeons trying to get through the lines and into Belgium, but they had nothing on them but cognac breaths. One of the Krauts had laughed right into a big Yankee brass hat's prop boss.

"Ach!" he had spouted maddeningly. "Noddink vhat you Dumesels could do vill stop *der* paper *mit der* locations uf all *der Amerikaner* billets, airdromes, subbly dumps, *und alles*, from gettink to *der* High Kommand yedt. Zo smardt *ist der* scheme I vish you chentlemens shouldt sometime know about idt. Zo after *der* var, maybe in *zwei, drei* mont's, ve tell you—*und* vill you laff *mit* stiches! Ho! Ho!"

Yes, Chaumont had been using up all the aspirin supply in France ever since getting wind of this latest Kraut connivery. The Allied bosses had been moving supply dumps from one place to another, had shifted troops and whatnot until there were no places left to put them. They hired every Frog Rembrandt, every interior decorator and theatre scene shifter from the Channel to the Alps, to camouflage the points of importance. But there was no use in pouring the woodpile over the Senegambian when the enemy had already spotted the gentlemen with the ebony epidermis.

Two days after the folding up of the Kaiser's Zep, Captain Howell took "A" Flight out to get a gander at the Heinie backyard, and the Boche met them in a swarm and almost cooked their goose. Phineas Pinkham, having been excused from flying due to the fact that the Spad manufacturers had been a little late with new models, sat in his hut reading one of the issues of *Frink's Fact, Fancy & Fiction Weekly*. His attention was centered on a column bearing the heading: THINGS WE BET YOU NEVER KNEW. There was a paragraph or two there pertaining to the remarkable comeback proclivities of the domestic feline:

Mrs. Wofford B. Squidd, of Split Lip, Kansas, claims the oumership of a cat that no doubt holds the American record for returning long distances to its home. After having been lost out of a moving van, the said Squidd

feline walked forty-eight miles through unfamiliar territory in three days and eleven hours to appear on the porch of the Squidd's new abode in Split Lip. The records show that only one other feline Sinbad has beaten the Squidd cat's mark. A tortoise shell tomcat named "Marco Polo" oivned by a German family in Frieburg, Germany, was made the subject of a Teuton cat fanciers' experiment and teas taken sixty miles away from its home in a sack. It was dumped into the middle of a thick forest—but in five days "Marco Polo" a little lean around the shortribs, arrived back home meowing for its dish of milk.

"Huh," Phineas sniffed, "anybody'd think that was somethin'! Why I will write in an' tell 'em about our cat, 'Houdini.' He was thrown into the drink in a potatoe sack with an anvil tied to 'im, an' he comes back the next day covered with cockleburrs an' carryin' a woodchuck in his mouth. Huh, I—" The Yank hesitated, read the story over again, and scratched his noggin. "Why— er—I always said this magazine was the best we ever subscribed for. I— Haw-w-w-w! Anyhow, it's worth try-in' ! I only hope Babette'll be home tomorrow night."

Lieutenant Pinkham went out of the hut. Bump Gillis' Spad was coming in and it went into a ground loop. A tail fin spun through the air and almost cut Phineas Pinkham's throat. Captain Howell was landing a Spad that could have been used as a gravel sieve. Two other ships came in and the pilots jumped out of the pits as if there were time bombs under the seats due to go off any minute.

"Bong mattin', bums!" trilled the Boonetown pilot, grinning broadly at Bump and Flight Leader Howell. "Are the Kraut buggies shootin' shrapnel? No Spandau guns made such a mess as that! Who won?"

"Wellington!" snapped Howell. "Who do you think? Why right now I feel like cutting the throat of the first guy who pokes a finger at me."

"Just say one more thing," Gillis chimed in threateningly, pulling out a spanner wrench, "an' I will need a criminal lawyer!"

"Tsk! Tsk! You are very touchy, aren't you, girls?" Phineas sniffed. "Well, in a couple of days I will make everythin' safe for the Democrats, as while you was upstairs I was catch-in' up on my reading. I don't see how anybody can be anythin' but a moron if he doesn't read once in a while. Bong apray middy for now, bums!" He swaggered away and Howell caught Bump's arm just as he was about to heave the w'rench.

"Lemme go!" howled the Scot. "I pricked my finger

twice makin' that wreath for him an' I don't see why we wasted our time."

OVER on the Jerry side of the big fuss, *Herr Hauptmann* Adolph August von Heinz was keeping an appointment with a bunch of Kraut *Herr Obersts*. It was late in the afternoon, but von Heinz wore cheaters with black glass in them.

"You are very sure, *Herr Hauptmann*?" a Heidelberg graduate asked The Owl. "Der Cherman from der Zebblin who yoomped oudt as der Spad hidt idt? Ja?"

"Ja, *Excellenz*. Noddink can I nodt see by der dark night yedt. Blain as der nose by der vaze I see idt der parachoot open oop, ja! Das Pingham, I bedt you *mein* life, he yoomps alzo—right after der man in der Zebblin yoomped."

"Ach Gott sie dank!" breathed an *Herr Oberst* between snorts of *Schnapps* big enough to drown a wild boar. "Haff der liddle dringk, *Herr Hauptmann*, und Hoch der Kaiser mit uns, hein? Der Tag ist closer

as yestertag. Vunce cooms idt der blans of der Yangkee back area und ofer you go mit der Gothas. You show dem der vay aroundt, hein? Ho! Ho! Das Pingham! Vun time ist he don'dt play der trick und der vorm turningk, ja!"

Night crept in on Bar-le-Duc, and Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham arrived there hard on its heels, piloting a mechanical bug that he had confiscated without consulting the proper authorities back on the drome. He drove it past Babette's maison and grinned when he saw there was a light in the Frog damsel's window. Skidding his motor bike around in the mud, he ruined the uniforms of a couple of Frog shavetails, then rode fast toward his favorite *estaminet* with the threats of the French Looeys ringing in his big ears.

In the *estaminet* Phineas put a couple of good snorts of cognac under his belt, felt in the pocket of his trench coat for his ammunition, then sallied forth into the night. He disappeared into a back alley, opened a package, then proceeded to fill his pockets with its



contents, even sprinkling some of it in his hair. Finally he jammed some of the stuff down into his boots, then put the remainder back into his trench coat.

"Nice breeze blowin' tonight, haw-w-w-w!" he chuckled, tossing a handful of the hayseed-like stuff up into the ozone.

On a back fence a pair of tomcats who were measuring each other for a haymaker suddenly sniffed at the air and pulled their punches. The first feline to come out of a crouch me-e-e-eo—o-wed—then hopped off the fence followed by its sparring partner. Not far away another mouse sniper came out of a deep snooze as if a hornet had backed into its empennage. It sniffed at the ozone, did a two-step, then legged it through a Bar-le-Duc back street.

Phineas Pinkham was now walking down a very prominent right of way in the Frog town with a dozen or so cats at his heels. They hopped on his undercarriage and hung on. One even got up to his shoulder and began to lick at his ear. Out of doorways, off back fences, and out of dark places the feline population of Bar-le-Duc swarmed to the trail of the Boonetown miracle man. The representatives of three armies plus a number of Frog civilians crowded the sidewalks to watch the sight with bugging eyes.

ME-E-E-EO-O-OW! YA-R-R-R-R-ROUGH! PUR-R-R-R-R-R-R!

"What is that crackpot flyer doin'?" a Yankee colonel coughed out. "I've heard of the Pied Piper of Hamlin leading all the rats out of town but—"

"Ha! Ha!" laughed a dough, "it's the pie-eyed Pinkham of Barley Duck! Look at them cats come!"

"*Ici*—chatties," Phineas coaxed the felines, throwing a handful of cat opium into the ozone. Some of the stuff went in through an open window where a mouse-colored cat was just being let loose from a leash. Bits of catnip settled down on its nose and it let out a gurgle, sprang for the window, then leaped from the sill to a tiled roof. A white-bearded Frog yelled for it to come back.

"*Ach!* Er—*sacre bleu!* Halp! Gendarmes! *Ze homme steals ze chat!* Gendarmes!" He rushed out of the room dived down a flight of stairs, and catapulted into the street. But the tomcat had gotten too big a whiff of the coke of catland and was already shinnying down a gutter pipe.

Phineas Pinkham had reached the steps of Babette's domicile when the mouse-colored rat destroyer joined his feline army. The Boonetown pilot did not bother to knock on the door of his weak moment but pushed

right in. Forty-seven varieties of cat barged into the Frog house, a dozen of them clinging to the Yankee plotter.

"*Sacre Nom de Dieu!*" screeched Babette. "*Chats!* All ze *chats* in ze—Pheenyas, you air crazee, *oui!* Shoo, *chats!* Shoo!"

"Stop!" yipped Phineas. "Don't pick up that broom, Babette. It's Intelligence stuff I'm doin', mawn cherry! Ceasez-vooz! Here, chatties, have ze chatneep. *Oui!* *Oui!*" Holding his light of love by one arm, Phineas tossed all the catnip he had left into the air and on the floor. The felines sprang for it, turned somersaults, played leapfrog, and went into all sorts of contortions as they lapped up the herb.

"*Zis ees ze dernier* straw what she br'aks off ze camel's back, you crazee *homme*," Babette wailed, making passes at felines that leaped, spun, and cavorted all around her. "I call ze gendarmes! I put you in ze bastille. E-e-e-e-ek! Open ze door, toot sweet, Pheenyas. *Vous moi* hear, *non?* Nevair do I believe what ze ozzer soldats have say about *vous*, *mais* now I know shee ees bats in ze steeple *vous avez, oui!*"

"Oh, fairmay ze booteh!" Phineas tossed out. "I got to find a cat, comprenny? Look! Most of 'em have had enough. Haw-w-w-w! They are goin' out the winder. Four of 'em have bells on, Babette, an' those we got to keep id, savvy? Help me catch 'em!"

"All ze kind of nuts to *vous!*" snapped Babette. She swung the broom, literally lifted two of the felines out through the window with a lusty thwack on their tail assemblies. Outside, the gendarmes and M.P.'s were pounding on the door. Phineas sprang to the window, closed it, then grabbed the struggling, clawing Babette and tossed her into a closet. He slammed the door on her, braced a heavy chair against it.

"Oh, I keel *vous!*" her muffled voice squawked above the cries of the cats and the bedlam in the hall. "Crazee—cuckoo—peeg—*chien!* *Cochon!* Neetweets—gendarmes!"

The gendarmes and M.P.'s barged in just as Phineas corralled three cats. The Boonetown miracle man was very indignant. "Stay where you are, voose brass-buttoned bums, or Pershin'll hear of this. I have got a spy here, I bet. Don't make a sound, as I have got to do somethin' *ici*. An' don't let that dame out, as she let one suspect get loose already. Huh, you'd think she had somethin' to git sore about."

The civil and military cops froze where they were in spite of their better judgment. Phineas Pinkham was down on all fours coaxing a trio of cats out from

under the stove. "*Ici—nice chatty! Ici, mon amis. Lookit who geeve eet to voose, ze catneep, oui!*"

TWO of the cats crawled out, crept a little cautiously toward Phineas. Their bells tingled as they moved. The one that remained puzzled Phineas—for a moment. Then he grinned triumphantly at the gaping M.P.'s and chortled: "Haw-w-w-w! They laughed when I spoke to the cats in French, but when I—watch me, bums!"

"*Comst du hier, Katzy—Katzy! Raus mit! Comst du hier, Katzy!*"

"*Me-e-ow! Pur-r-r-r-r!*"

Out from under the stove crept a big mouse-colored tomcat with a bell as big as a horse chestnut hanging from its neck. But it only made half the sound that the bells on the other mouse hunters made.

"Haw-w-w-w!" enthused Phineas, "It only understands Heinie. Boys, I was sure I heard a cat out in the woods the night I knocked off the Kraut Corona-Corona. It's quite a magazine, *Frink's Fact, Fancy & Fiction Weekly*. Coom, Katzy—*Vorwärts*, Marco Polo!"

While Babette was kicking the plaster off the walls of the closet and the dumbfounded M.P.'s stared, the wonder of the A.E.F. took a small bottle out of his pocket and pulled the stopper out with his teeth.

"Git me that basin there," he yipped. "Fill it with water. Haw-w-w-w-w!"

An angry, bristling individual with a white goatee broke through the restricting arms of the Frog and U.S. law and demanded that Lieutenant Pinkham give back his cat. But when the freckled pilot looked up at the mustached arrival he howled: "Arrest that guy! He's a Heinie stool pigeon. Hold him, as I am goin' to give him the same works I give the cat!" Thereupon Phineas dropped a crystal into the basin of water. He dipped the rear end of the squirming protesting mouse-colored tomcat into it, held it there for several seconds, then released it.

A gendarme gulped: "*Sacre! The colair she ees different, oui! Voila!*"

"Underby's Un-Dye! Fifty cents a bottle!" Chirped the man of the moment. "This cat is a tortoise shell. Haw-w-w-w! The Krauts are very thorough, huh? They figured maybe somebody would remember about Marco Polo an' recognize him if they saw him—so they dyed his hair. Marco Polo is the great Kraut come-back cat, an' it was goin' to go back to where a *Herr Oberst*, or somebody, would take charge of this bell around its neck."

Then Phineas unfastened the tabby cat's collar and proceeded to examine the little bell. It came apart in the middle and a small ball of very thin paper dropped out.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" he enthused. "Bring eet id ze bum who says he's a Frog, toot sweet! I'll show you his whiskers are as much a fake as Marco Polo's."

Yankee M.P.'s dragged the protesting citizen of Bar-le-Duc to Phineas Pinkham's side, and the inimitable magician poured half of the contents of the basin down the sputtering captive's face. Almost immediately his goatee and eyebrows became as black as Major Rufus Garrity's chances to succeed Woodrow Wilson as President of the U.S.A.

"Presto!" chirped Phineas. "Drag the bum to the icebox an' call G.H.Q." He slipped the ball of paper into his pocket and followed the stunned members of the French police force and the A.E.F. cops out into the street.

Back in the house, Babette's muffled screams became louder. But everybody including Phineas Pinkham had their thoughts monopolized by far more important things than an imprisoned femme. The half tortoise, half mouse-colored tomcat struggled in Phineas' embrace, made lusty passes at him but to no avail. Having had its full of catnip, Marco Polo was determined to trek back to where it had come from or its reputation would not be worth a plugged 'pfennig across the Rhine.

PHINEAS put up at a hotel in Bar-le-Duc, demanding privacy while all the insulation on Frog wires began to burn. The news hit Chaumont. The Allied brain trust was told that Lieutenant Pinkham had captured one of the Kaiser's greatest snakes-in-the-grass. To an Intelligence office in Bar-le-Duc the bearded Teuton looked very much like Baron Grounz, the slippery Eel of the Elbe, who had not been seen anywhere around since the battle of the Somme.

Major Rufus Garrity came into Bar-le-Duc with half his flying personnel to bask in some of Pinkham's reflected glory. Frog and Yankee brass hats crowded the door of the Pinkham suite demanding to know what he had found in the cat's bell. The C.O. of the Ninth joined them just as Phineas opened the door and let a cat out of his room. The feline trotted past the officers, bell jingling.

"Step aside, bums, as Marco Polo is on his way ag'in," chirped the inimitable Yank. "Haw-w-w-w! No, you're not boiled, Rufe—er—Major. The cat is

one color up front and another in the rear. It's that Underby's Un-Dye that I—well, has anybody sent for Pershin' yet, huh? I have got a map here with the location of every supply dump, ammo dump, airdrome, Chic Sale house, and everythin' in the U.S. backyard. Boys, it is quite a narrow escape the Allies had, huh? It seems that a Pinkham steps out in every *guerre an'*—”

A brigadier-general brushed past Major Garrity, stamped up to the Boonetown wonder. He told Phineas who he was, demanded the evidence found on the Eel of the Elbe.

“Awright, awright, it's the cat's whiskers, huh?” beamed Phineas. “Here are the papers, haw-w-w! Well, I threw my Spad with the crowbars tied on it at the Zep instead of von Heinz—but I will get him next. Listen, bum—er—gentlemen, when I bailed out of the crate, a Heinie jumped at the same time an' he was holdin' a cat. So later I tumbled to how the Krauts might be workin' things. Then I says to myself that the plans are ready to get shipped or they would not have sent Marco Polo over, huh? Haw-w-w-w! The tomcat is on his way back an' I hope a shell don't get all of its nine lives before it arrives. Will they have a cat-aleptic cat-aclysm at the cat-acombin' I give 'em! It is a cat-astrophe to put in their cat-alog. Haw-w-w! Maybe I oughter talk a little slower so's you can cats-up with me, huh? Boys, am I hot!”

“Er—Lieutenant,” the brigadier said weakly, “you have just about saved the whole war for the Allies. Chaumont will—”

“Aw, you're nuts!” broke in the Boonetown pilot with a grin.

Major Garrity pawed at his face, glanced at the brass hat, and wondered if he would really throw the chair at Phineas. “Ah—er—yeah, you're a hero, all right, Carbuncle, but—er—let's go back to the drome before—”

“Sure,” Phineas agreed, “I guess there ain't anythin' I forgot to do, haw-w-w-w!”

The Boonetown pilot was wrong, however. Seven blocks away, a disheveled, wild-eyed mademoiselle finally got out of a closet and reeled toward a cupboard. She seized a butcher knife big enough to slice a cow in twain with one vigorous sweep, then went after Phineas Pinkham, the irrepressible Iowan.

“Ah, *mon Dieu! Sacre!*” she yipped. “In ze closet ze cochon weez ze spots on ze face he t'row Babette, *n'est ce pas?* All ze chats in France he have breeng dam *chez maison*. Bah! Ze peeg, ze *chien!* I fin' heem an' I

cut heem in ze petit pieces! Poosh me in ze face, eh? Ze bum!” Babette spotted Phineas just as a big A.E.F. boiler whisked him away. The Frog flapper jumped up and down with rage, then threw the kitchen sabre at the departing jalopi. It described a curve in the ozone, shot right through the crown of a gendarme's chapeau, and parted his hair the wrong way. One look at what she had done sent Babette flying back home where she locked herself in the closet voluntarily.

THE story is not quite ended. Marco Polo, two days later, walked across a devastated stretch of linoleum just behind the Jerry lines, his bell tinkling merrily. A pair of Boche looked out through a hole in the side of a ruined house. One gulped, and then guttured: “You see vhat I see, *hein? Der Katz ist* half of vun kindt *und* half anodder. *Donnervetter! Nie mehr Schnapps* I drink, Otto. *Der nex' t'ing ist* I see vill he *der kangaroo mit* feathers, *ach!*”

Twelve hours later the Jerry tomcat reached the headquarters of a Jerry division near Saarbrucken, its ribs sticking out so much that it could have been used for a washboard. It let out a prodigious howl and a big bullnecked squarehead opened the door. He gave the feline a onceover, then leaped a foot into the air.

“*Ach du lieber, mein Herrs!*” he yelled back into the room. “*Der Katz ist* Marco Polo, he *ist* back. Baron Grounz he haff never failed, *nein!* Loogk vunce!” He picked up the cat. “Back vhere idt started oudt from. Sooch *ein Katz, hein?* Budt part of *der* dye idt veers off *und* giffs *der* komical loogk.”

“Open up *der* bell, *Dumkopf!*” thundered a big Boche brass hat. “*Das ist der* blans by *der* bell, *Schmaltz!*”

A torturous minute passed, then Schmaltz said: “*Ja*, here *ist der* vay ve vill vin *der* var. *Ja*, giff a loogk vunce, *Excellenz!*”

The Kraut brass hat took a good look. The message, when laid flat, said *Warning. Bring fifty thousand marks an' leave it in the hollow tree near the old red mill at midnight or I will kidnap the Kaiserina. Haw-w-w-w!*—*Leutnant Phineas Pinkham.*

“*Gott! Himmel! Donner und Blitzen!*” erupted His *Excellenz*, wiping from his brow beads of sweat that almost bounced when they hit the floor. “*Ach du lieber!* Somet'ing it has vent wrong. *Das* Pingham—oh—ow!” His *Excellenz* passed out just ahead of *Herr Oberst Schmaltz.*