

LYMAN BAUM

TIK-TOK OF OZ

Lyman Baum
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L. Frank (Lyman Frank) Baum Tik-Tok of Oz

TO MY READERS

The very marked success of my last year's fairy book, "The Patchwork Girl of Oz," convinces me that my readers like the Oz stories "best of all," as one little girl wrote me. So here, my dears, is a new Oz story in which is introduced Ann Soforth, the Queen of Oogaboo, whom Tik-Tok assisted in conquering our old acquaintance, the Nome King. It also tells of Betsy Bobbin and how, after many adventures, she finally reached the marvelous Land of Oz.

There is a play called "The Tik-Tok Man of Oz," but it is not like this story of "Tik-Tok of Oz," although some of the adventures recorded in this book, as well as those in several other Oz books, are included in the play. Those who have seen the play and those who have read the other Oz books will find in this story a lot of strange characters and adventures that they have never heard of before.

In the letters I receive from children there has been an urgent appeal for me to write a story that will take Trot and Cap'n Bill to

the Land of Oz, where they will meet Dorothy and Ozma. Also they think Button-Bright ought to get acquainted with Ojo the Lucky. As you know, I am obliged to talk these matters over with Dorothy by means of the “wireless,” for that is the only way I can communicate with the Land of Oz. When I asked her about this idea, she replied: “Why, haven’t you heard?” I said “No.” “Well,” came the message over the wireless, “I’ll tell you all about it, by and by, and then you can make a book of that story for the children to read.”

So, if Dorothy keeps her word and I am permitted to write another Oz book, you will probably discover how all these characters came together in the famous Emerald City. Meantime, I want to tell all my little friends – whose numbers are increasing by many thousands every year – that I am very grateful for the favor they have shown my books and for the delightful little letters I am constantly receiving. I am almost sure that I have as many friends among the children of America as any story writer alive; and this, of course, makes me very proud and happy.

L. Frank Baum.

CHAPTER 1

Ann's Army

"I WON'T!" cried Ann; "I won't sweep the floor. It is beneath my dignity."

"Some one must sweep it," replied Ann's younger sister, Salye; "else we shall soon be wading in dust. And you are the eldest, and the head of the family."

"I'm Queen of Oogaboo," said Ann, proudly. "But," she added with a sigh, "my kingdom is the smallest and the poorest in all the Land of Oz."

This was quite true. Away up in the mountains, in a far corner of the beautiful fairyland of Oz, lies a small valley which is named Oogaboo, and in this valley lived a few people who were usually happy and contented and never cared to wander over the mountain pass into the more settled parts of the land. They knew that all of Oz, including their own territory, was ruled by a beautiful Princess named Ozma, who lived in the splendid Emerald City; yet the simple folk of Oogaboo never visited Ozma. They had a royal family of their own – not especially to rule over them, but just as a matter of pride. Ozma permitted the various parts of her country to have their Kings and Queens and Emperors and the like, but all were ruled over by the lovely girl Queen of the Emerald City.

The King of Oogaboo used to be a man named Jol Jemkiph Soforth, who for many years did all the drudgery of deciding disputes and telling his people when to plant cabbages and pickle onions. But the King's wife had a sharp tongue and small respect for the King, her husband; therefore one night King Jol crept over the pass into the Land of Oz and disappeared from Oogaboo for good and all. The Queen waited a few years for him to return and then started in search of him, leaving her eldest daughter, Ann Soforth, to act as Queen.

Now, Ann had not forgotten when her birthday came, for that meant a party and feasting and dancing, but she had quite forgotten how many years the birthdays marked. In a land where people live always, this is not considered a cause for regret, so we may justly say that Queen Ann of Oogaboo was old enough to make jelly – and let it go at that.

But she didn't make jelly, or do any more of the housework than she could help. She was an ambitious woman and constantly resented the fact that her kingdom was so tiny and her people so stupid and unenterprising. Often she wondered what had become of her father and mother, out beyond the pass, in the wonderful Land of Oz, and the fact that they did not return to Oogaboo led Ann to suspect that they had found a better place to live. So, when Salye refused to sweep the floor of the living room in the palace, and Ann would not sweep it, either, she said to her sister: "I'm going away. This absurd Kingdom of Oogaboo tires me." "Go, if you want to," answered Salye; "but you are very foolish

to leave this place.”

“Why?” asked Ann.

“Because in the Land of Oz, which is Ozma’s country, you will be a nobody, while here you are a Queen.”

“Oh, yes! Queen over eighteen men, twenty-seven women and forty-four children!” returned Ann bitterly.

“Well, there are certainly more people than that in the great Land of Oz,” laughed Salye. “Why don’t you raise an army and conquer them, and be Queen of all Oz?” she asked, trying to taunt Ann and so to anger her. Then she made a face at her sister and went into the back yard to swing in the hammock.

Her jeering words, however, had given Queen Ann an idea. She reflected that Oz was reported to be a peaceful country and Ozma a mere girl who ruled with gentleness to all and was obeyed because her people loved her. Even in Oogaboo the story was told that Ozma’s sole army consisted of twenty-seven fine officers, who wore beautiful uniforms but carried no weapons, because there was no one to fight. Once there had been a private soldier, besides the officers, but Ozma had made him a Captain-General and taken away his gun for fear it might accidentally hurt some one.

The more Ann thought about the matter the more she was convinced it would be easy to conquer the Land of Oz and set herself up as Ruler in Ozma’s place, if she but had an Army to do it with. Afterward she could go out into the world and conquer other lands, and then perhaps she could find a way to the moon,

and conquer that. She had a warlike spirit that preferred trouble to idleness.

It all depended on an Army, Ann decided. She carefully counted in her mind all the men of her kingdom. Yes; there were exactly eighteen of them, all told. That would not make a very big Army, but by surprising Ozma's unarmed officers her men might easily subdue them. "Gentle people are always afraid of those that bluster," Ann told herself. "I don't wish to shed any blood, for that would shock my nerves and I might faint; but if we threaten and flash our weapons I am sure the people of Oz will fall upon their knees before me and surrender."

This argument, which she repeated to herself more than once, finally determined the Queen of Oogaboo to undertake the audacious venture.

"Whatever happens," she reflected, "can make me no more unhappy than my staying shut up in this miserable valley and sweeping floors and quarreling with Sister Salye; so I will venture all, and win what I may."

That very day she started out to organize her Army.

The first man she came to was Jo Apple, so called because he had an apple orchard.

"Jo," said Ann, "I am going to conquer the world, and I want you to join my Army."

"Don't ask me to do such a fool thing, for I must politely refuse Your Majesty," said Jo Apple.

"I have no intention of asking you. I shall command you, as

Queen of Oogaboo, to join,” said Ann.

“In that case, I suppose I must obey,” the man remarked, in a sad voice. “But I pray you to consider that I am a very important citizen, and for that reason am entitled to an office of high rank.”

“You shall be a General,” promised Ann.

“With gold epaulets and a sword?” he asked.

“Of course,” said the Queen.

Then she went to the next man, whose name was Jo Bunn, as he owned an orchard where graham-buns and wheat-buns, in great variety, both hot and cold, grew on the trees.

“Jo,” said Ann, “I am going to conquer the world, and I command you to join my Army.”

“Impossible!” he exclaimed. “The bun crop has to be picked.”

“Let your wife and children do the picking,” said Ann.

“But I’m a man of great importance, Your Majesty,” he protested.

“For that reason you shall be one of my Generals, and wear a cocked hat with gold braid, and curl your mustaches and clank a long sword,” she promised.

So he consented, although sorely against his will, and the Queen walked on to the next cottage. Here lived Jo Cone, so called because the trees in his orchard bore crops of excellent ice-cream cones.

“Jo,” said Ann, “I am going to conquer the world, and you must join my Army.”

“Excuse me, please,” said Jo Cone. “I am a bad fighter. My

good wife conquered me years ago, for she can fight better than I. Take her, Your Majesty, instead of me, and I'll bless you for the favor."

"This must be an army of men – fierce, ferocious warriors," declared Ann, looking sternly upon the mild little man.

"And you will leave my wife here in Oogaboo?" he asked.

"Yes; and make you a General."

"I'll go," said Jo Cone, and Ann went on to the cottage of Jo Clock, who had an orchard of clock-trees. This man at first insisted that he would not join the army, but Queen Ann's promise to make him a General finally won his consent.

"How many Generals are there in your army?" he asked.

"Four, so far," replied Ann.

"And how big will the army be?" was his next question.

"I intend to make every one of the eighteen men in Oogaboo join it," she said.

"Then four Generals are enough," announced Jo Clock. "I advise you to make the rest of them Colonels."

Ann tried to follow his advice. The next four men she visited – who were Jo Plum, Jo Egg, Jo Banjo and Jo Cheese, named after the trees in their orchards – she made Colonels of her Army; but the fifth one, Jo Nails, said Colonels and Generals were getting to be altogether too common in the Army of Oogaboo and he preferred to be a Major. So Jo Nails, Jo Cake, Jo Ham and Jo Stockings were all four made Majors, while the next four – Jo Sandwich, Jo Padlocks, Jo Sundae and Jo Buttons – were

appointed Captains of the Army.

But now Queen Ann was in a quandary. There remained but two other men in all Oogaboo, and if she made these two Lieutenants, while there were four Captains, four Majors, four Colonels and four Generals, there was likely to be jealousy in her army, and perhaps mutiny and desertions.

One of these men, however, was Jo Candy, and he would not go at all. No promises could tempt him, nor could threats move him. He said he must remain at home to harvest his crop of jackson-balls, lemon-drops, bonbons and chocolate-creams. Also he had large fields of crackerjack and buttered pop corn to be mowed and threshed, and he was determined not to disappoint the children of Oogaboo by going away to conquer the world and so let the candy crop spoil.

Finding Jo Candy so obstinate, Queen Ann let him have his own way and continued her journey to the house of the eighteenth and last man in Oogaboo, who was a young fellow named Jo Files. This Files had twelve trees which bore steel files of various sorts; but also he had nine book-trees, on which grew a choice selection of story-books. In case you have never seen books growing upon trees, I will explain that those in Jo Files' orchard were enclosed in broad green husks which, when fully ripe, turned to a deep red color. Then the books were picked and husked and were ready to read. If they were picked too soon, the stories were found to be confused and uninteresting and the spelling bad. However, if allowed to ripen perfectly, the stories

were fine reading and the spelling and grammar excellent.

Files freely gave his books to all who wanted them, but the people of Oogaboo cared little for books and so he had to read most of them himself, before they spoiled. For, as you probably know, as soon as the books were read the words disappeared and the leaves withered and faded – which is the worst fault of all books which grow upon trees.

When Queen Ann spoke to this young man Files, who was both intelligent and ambitious, he said he thought it would be great fun to conquer the world. But he called her attention to the fact that he was far superior to the other men of her army. Therefore, he would not be one of her Generals or Colonels or Majors or Captains, but claimed the honor of being sole Private.

Ann did not like this idea at all.

“I hate to have a Private Soldier in my army,” she said; “they’re so common. I am told that Princess Ozma once had a private soldier, but she made him her Captain-General, which is good evidence that the private was unnecessary.”

“Ozma’s army doesn’t fight,” returned Files; “but your army must fight like fury in order to conquer the world. I have read in my books that it is always the private soldiers who do the fighting, for no officer is ever brave enough to face the foe. Also, it stands to reason that your officers must have some one to command and to issue their orders to; therefore I’ll be the one. I long to slash and slay the enemy and become a hero. Then, when we return to Oogaboo, I’ll take all the marbles away from the children and

melt them up and make a marble statue of myself for all to look upon and admire."

Ann was much pleased with Private Files. He seemed indeed to be such a warrior as she needed in her enterprise, and her hopes of success took a sudden bound when Files told her he knew where a gun-tree grew and would go there at once and pick the ripest and biggest musket the tree bore.

CHAPTER 2

Out of Oogaboo

THREE days later the Grand Army of Oogaboo assembled in the square in front of the royal palace. The sixteen officers were attired in gorgeous uniforms and carried sharp, glittering swords. The Private had picked his gun and, although it was not a very big weapon, Files tried to look fierce and succeeded so well that all his commanding officers were secretly afraid of him.

The women were there, protesting that Queen Ann Soforth had no right to take their husbands and fathers from them; but Ann commanded them to keep silent, and that was the hardest order to obey they had ever received.

The Queen appeared before her Army dressed in an imposing uniform of green, covered with gold braid. She wore a green soldier-cap with a purple plume in it and looked so royal and dignified that everyone in Oogaboo except the Army was glad she was going. The Army was sorry she was not going alone.

“Form ranks!” she cried in her shrill voice.

Salye leaned out of the palace window and laughed.

“I believe your Army can run better than it can fight,” she observed.

“Of course,” replied General Bunn, proudly. “We’re not looking for trouble, you know, but for plunder. The more plunder

and the less fighting we get, the better we shall like our work.”

“For my part,” said Files, “I prefer war and carnage to anything. The only way to become a hero is to conquer, and the story-books all say that the easiest way to conquer is to fight.”

“That’s the idea, my brave man!” agreed Ann. “To fight is to conquer and to conquer is to secure plunder and to secure plunder is to become a hero. With such noble determination to back me, the world is mine! Good-bye, Salye. When we return we shall be rich and famous. Come, Generals; let us march.”

At this the Generals straightened up and threw out their chests. Then they swung their glittering swords in rapid circles and cried to the Colonels:

“For – ward March!”

Then the Colonels shouted to the Majors: “For – ward March!” and the Majors yelled to the Captains: “For – ward March!” and the Captains screamed to the Private:

“For – ward March!”

So Files shouldered his gun and began to march, and all the officers followed after him. Queen Ann came last of all, rejoicing in her noble army and wondering why she had not decided long ago to conquer the world.

In this order the procession marched out of Oogaboo and took the narrow mountain pass which led into the lovely Fairyland of Oz.

CHAPTER 3

Magic Mystifies the Marchers

PRINCESS OZMA was all unaware that the Army of Oogaboo, led by their ambitious Queen, was determined to conquer her Kingdom. The beautiful girl Ruler of Oz was busy with the welfare of her subjects and had no time to think of Ann Soforth and her disloyal plans. But there was one who constantly guarded the peace and happiness of the Land of Oz and this was the Official Sorceress of the Kingdom, Glinda the Good.

In her magnificent castle, which stands far north of the Emerald City where Ozma holds her court, Glinda owns a wonderful magic Record Book, in which is printed every event that takes place anywhere, just as soon as it happens.

The smallest things and the biggest things are all recorded in this book. If a child stamps its foot in anger, Glinda reads about it; if a city burns down, Glinda finds the fact noted in her book.

The Sorceress always reads her Record Book every day, and so it was she knew that Ann Soforth, Queen of Oogaboo, had foolishly assembled an army of sixteen officers and one private soldier, with which she intended to invade and conquer the Land of Oz.

There was no danger but that Ozma, supported by the magic arts of Glinda the Good and the powerful Wizard of Oz – both

her firm friends – could easily defeat a far more imposing army than Ann’s; but it would be a shame to have the peace of Oz interrupted by any sort of quarreling or fighting. So Glinda did not even mention the matter to Ozma, or to anyone else. She merely went into a great chamber of her castle, known as the Magic Room, where she performed a magical ceremony which caused the mountain pass that led from Oogaboo to make several turns and twists. The result was that when Ann and her army came to the end of the pass they were not in the Land of Oz at all, but in an adjoining territory that was quite distinct from Ozma’s domain and separated from Oz by an invisible barrier.

As the Oogaboo people emerged into this country, the pass they had traversed disappeared behind them and it was not likely they would ever find their way back into the valley of Oogaboo. They were greatly puzzled, indeed, by their surroundings and did not know which way to go. None of them had ever visited Oz, so it took them some time to discover they were not in Oz at all, but in an unknown country.

“Never mind,” said Ann, trying to conceal her disappointment; “we have started out to conquer the world, and here is part of it. In time, as we pursue our victorious journey, we will doubtless come to Oz; but, until we get there, we may as well conquer whatever land we find ourselves in.”

“Have we conquered this place, Your Majesty?” anxiously inquired Major Cake.

“Most certainly,” said Ann. “We have met no people, as yet,

but when we do, we will inform them that they are our slaves.”

“And afterward we will plunder them of all their possessions,” added General Apple.

“They may not possess anything,” objected Private Files; “but I hope they will fight us, just the same. A peaceful conquest wouldn’t be any fun at all.”

“Don’t worry,” said the Queen. “*We* can fight, whether our foes do or not; and perhaps we would find it more comfortable to have the enemy surrender promptly.”

It was a barren country and not very pleasant to travel in. Moreover, there was little for them to eat, and as the officers became hungry they became fretful. Many would have deserted had they been able to find their way home, but as the Oogaboo people were now hopelessly lost in a strange country they considered it more safe to keep together than to separate.

Queen Ann’s temper, never very agreeable, became sharp and irritable as she and her army tramped over the rocky roads without encountering either people or plunder. She scolded her officers until they became surly, and a few of them were disloyal enough to ask her to hold her tongue. Others began to reproach her for leading them into difficulties and in the space of three unhappy days every man was mourning for his orchard in the pretty valley of Oogaboo.

Files, however, proved a different sort. The more difficulties he encountered the more cheerful he became, and the sighs of the officers were answered by the merry whistle of the Private.

His pleasant disposition did much to encourage Queen Ann and before long she consulted the Private Soldier more often than she did his superiors.

It was on the third day of their pilgrimage that they encountered their first adventure. Toward evening the sky was suddenly darkened and Major Nails exclaimed:

“A fog is coming toward us.”

“I do not think it is a fog,” replied Files, looking with interest at the approaching cloud. “It seems to me more like the breath of a Rak.”

“What is a Rak?” asked Ann, looking about fearfully.

“A terrible beast with a horrible appetite,” answered the soldier, growing a little paler than usual. “I have never seen a Rak, to be sure, but I have read of them in the story-books that grew in my orchard, and if this is indeed one of those fearful monsters, we are not likely to conquer the world.”

Hearing this, the officers became quite worried and gathered closer about their soldier.

“What is the thing like?” asked one.

“The only picture of a Rak that I ever saw in a book was rather blurred,” said Files, “because the book was not quite ripe when it was picked. But the creature can fly in the air and run like a deer and swim like a fish. Inside its body is a glowing furnace of fire, and the Rak breathes in air and breathes out smoke, which darkens the sky for miles around, wherever it goes. It is bigger than a hundred men and feeds on any living thing.”

The officers now began to groan and to tremble, but Files tried to cheer them, saying:

“It may not be a Rak, after all, that we see approaching us, and you must not forget that we people of Oogaboo, which is part of the fairyland of Oz, cannot be killed.”

“Nevertheless,” said Captain Buttons, “if the Rak catches us, and chews us up into small pieces, and swallows us – what will happen then?”

“Then each small piece will still be alive,” declared Files.

“I cannot see how that would help us,” wailed Colonel Banjo. “A hamburger steak is a hamburger steak, whether it is alive or not!”

“I tell you, this may not be a Rak,” persisted Files. “We will know, when the cloud gets nearer, whether it is the breath of a Rak or not. If it has no smell at all, it is probably a fog; but if it has an odor of salt and pepper, it is a Rak and we must prepare for a desperate fight.”

They all eyed the dark cloud fearfully. Before long it reached the frightened group and began to envelop them. Every nose sniffed the cloud – and every one detected in it the odor of salt and pepper.

“The Rak!” shouted Private Files, and with a howl of despair the sixteen officers fell to the ground, writhing and moaning in anguish. Queen Ann sat down upon a rock and faced the cloud more bravely, although her heart was beating fast. As for Files, he calmly loaded his gun and stood ready to fight the foe, as a

soldier should.

They were now in absolute darkness, for the cloud which covered the sky and the setting sun was black as ink. Then through the gloom appeared two round, glowing balls of red, and Files at once decided these must be the monster's eyes.

He raised his gun, took aim and fired.

There were several bullets in the gun, all gathered from an excellent bullet-tree in Oogaboo, and they were big and hard. They flew toward the monster and struck it, and with a wild, weird cry the Rak came fluttering down and its huge body fell plump upon the forms of the sixteen officers, who thereupon screamed louder than before.

"Badness me!" moaned the Rak. "See what you've done with that dangerous gun of yours!"

"I can't see," replied Files, "for the cloud formed by your breath darkens my sight!"

"Don't tell me it was an accident," continued the Rak, reproachfully, as it still flapped its wings in a helpless manner. "Don't claim you didn't know the gun was loaded, I beg of you!"

"I don't intend to," replied Files. "Did the bullets hurt you very badly?"

"One has broken my jaw, so that I can't open my mouth. You will notice that my voice sounds rather harsh and husky, because I have to talk with my teeth set close together. Another bullet broke my left wing, so that I can't fly; and still another broke my right leg, so that I can't walk. It was the most careless shot I ever

heard of!”

“Can’t you manage to lift your body off from my commanding officers?” inquired Files. “From their cries I’m afraid your great weight is crushing them.”

“I hope it is,” growled the Rak. “I want to crush them, if possible, for I have a bad disposition. If only I could open my mouth, I’d eat all of you, although my appetite is poorly this warm weather.”

With this the Rak began to roll its immense body sidewise, so as to crush the officers more easily; but in doing this it rolled completely off from them and the entire sixteen scrambled to their feet and made off as fast as they could run.

Private Files could not see them go but he knew from the sound of their voices that they had escaped, so he ceased to worry about them.

“Pardon me if I now bid you good-bye,” he said to the Rak. “The parting is caused by our desire to continue our journey. If you die, do not blame me, for I was obliged to shoot you as a matter of self-protection.”

“I shall not die,” answered the monster, “for I bear a charmed life. But I beg you not to leave me!”

“Why not?” asked Files.

“Because my broken jaw will heal in about an hour, and then I shall be able to eat you. My wing will heal in a day and my leg will heal in a week, when I shall be as well as ever. Having shot me, and so caused me all this annoyance, it is only fair and just

that you remain here and allow me to eat you as soon as I can open my jaws.”

“I beg to differ with you,” returned the soldier firmly. “I have made an engagement with Queen Ann of Oogaboo to help her conquer the world, and I cannot break my word for the sake of being eaten by a Rak.”

“Oh; that’s different,” said the monster. “If you’ve an engagement, don’t let me detain you.”

So Files felt around in the dark and grasped the hand of the trembling Queen, whom he led away from the flapping, sighing Rak. They stumbled over the stones for a way but presently began to see dimly the path ahead of them, as they got farther and farther away from the dreadful spot where the wounded monster lay.

By and by they reached a little hill and could see the last rays of the sun flooding a pretty valley beyond, for now they had passed beyond the cloudy breath of the Rak. Here were huddled the sixteen officers, still frightened and panting from their run. They had halted only because it was impossible for them to run any farther.

Queen Ann gave them a severe scolding for their cowardice, at the same time praising Files for his courage.

“We are wiser than he, however,” muttered General Clock, “for by running away we are now able to assist Your Majesty in conquering the world; whereas, had Files been eaten by the Rak, he would have deserted your Army.”

After a brief rest they descended into the valley, and as soon as they were out of sight of the Rak the spirits of the entire party rose quickly. Just at dusk they came to a brook, on the banks of which Queen Ann commanded them to make camp for the night.

Each officer carried in his pocket a tiny white tent. This, when placed upon the ground, quickly grew in size until it was large enough to permit the owner to enter it and sleep within its canvas walls. Files was obliged to carry a knapsack, in which was not only his own tent but an elaborate pavilion for Queen Ann, besides a bed and chair and a magic table. This table, when set upon the ground in Ann's pavilion, became of large size, and in a drawer of the table was contained the Queen's supply of extra clothing, her manicure and toilet articles and other necessary things. The royal bed was the only one in the camp, the officers and private sleeping in hammocks attached to their tent poles.

There was also in the knapsack a flag bearing the royal emblem of Oogaboo, and this flag Files flew upon its staff every night, to show that the country they were in had been conquered by the Queen of Oogaboo. So far, no one but themselves had seen the flag, but Ann was pleased to see it flutter in the breeze and considered herself already a famous conqueror.

CHAPTER 4

Betsy Braves the Billows

THE waves dashed and the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled and the ship struck a rock. Betsy Bobbin was running across the deck and the shock sent her flying through the air until she fell with a splash into the dark blue water. The same shock caught Hank, a thin little, sad-faced mule, and tumbled him also into the sea, far from the ship's side.

When Betsy came up, gasping for breath because the wet plunge had surprised her, she reached out in the dark and grabbed a bunch of hair. At first she thought it was the end of a rope, but presently she heard a dismal "Hee-haw!" and knew she was holding fast to the end of Hank's tail.

Suddenly the sea was lighted up by a vivid glare. The ship, now in the far distance, caught fire, blew up and sank beneath the waves.

Betsy shuddered at the sight, but just then her eye caught a mass of wreckage floating near her and she let go the mule's tail and seized the rude raft, pulling herself up so that she rode upon it in safety. Hank also saw the raft and swam to it, but he was so clumsy he never would have been able to climb upon it had not Betsy helped him to get aboard.

They had to crowd close together, for their support was only a

hatch-cover torn from the ship's deck; but it floated them fairly well and both the girl and the mule knew it would keep them from drowning.

The storm was not over, by any means, when the ship went down. Blinding bolts of lightning shot from cloud to cloud and the clamor of deep thunderclaps echoed far over the sea. The waves tossed the little raft here and there as a child tosses a rubber ball and Betsy had a solemn feeling that for hundreds of watery miles in every direction there was no living thing besides herself and the small donkey.

Perhaps Hank had the same thought, for he gently rubbed his nose against the frightened girl and said "Hee-haw!" in his softest voice, as if to comfort her.

"You'll protect me, Hank dear, won't you?" she cried helplessly, and the mule said "Hee-haw!" again, in tones that meant a promise.

On board the ship, during the days that preceded the wreck, when the sea was calm, Betsy and Hank had become good friends; so, while the girl might have preferred a more powerful protector in this dreadful emergency, she felt that the mule would do all in a mule's power to guard her safety.

All night they floated, and when the storm had worn itself out and passed away with a few distant growls, and the waves had grown smaller and easier to ride, Betsy stretched herself out on the wet raft and fell asleep.

Hank did not sleep a wink. Perhaps he felt it his duty to guard

Betsy. Anyhow, he crouched on the raft beside the tired sleeping girl and watched patiently until the first light of dawn swept over the sea.

The light wakened Betsy Bobbin. She sat up, rubbed her eyes and stared across the water.

“Oh, Hank; there’s land ahead!” she exclaimed.

“Hee-haw!” answered Hank in his plaintive voice.

The raft was floating swiftly toward a very beautiful country and as they drew near Betsy could see banks of lovely flowers showing brightly between leafy trees. But no people were to be seen at all.

CHAPTER 5

The Roses Repulse the Refugees

GENTLY the raft grated on the sandy beach. Then Betsy easily waded ashore, the mule following closely behind her. The sun was now shining and the air was warm and laden with the fragrance of roses.

“I’d like some breakfast, Hank,” remarked the girl, feeling more cheerful now that she was on dry land; “but we can’t eat the flowers, although they do smell mighty good.”

“Hee-haw!” replied Hank and trotted up a little pathway to the top of the bank.

Betsy followed and from the eminence looked around her. A little way off stood a splendid big greenhouse, its thousands of crystal panes glittering in the sunlight.

“There ought to be people somewhere 'round,” observed Betsy thoughtfully; “gardeners, or somebody. Let’s go and see, Hank. I’m getting hungrier ev’ry minute.”

So they walked toward the great greenhouse and came to its entrance without meeting with anyone at all. A door stood ajar, so Hank went in first, thinking if there was any danger he could back out and warn his companion. But Betsy was close at his heels and the moment she entered was lost in amazement at the wonderful sight she saw.

The greenhouse was filled with magnificent rosebushes, all growing in big pots. On the central stem of each bush bloomed a splendid Rose, gorgeously colored and deliciously fragrant, and in the center of each Rose was the face of a lovely girl.

As Betsy and Hank entered, the heads of the Roses were drooping and their eyelids were closed in slumber; but the mule was so amazed that he uttered a loud “Hee-haw!” and at the sound of his harsh voice the rose leaves fluttered, the Roses raised their heads and a hundred startled eyes were instantly fixed upon the intruders.

“I – I beg your pardon!” stammered Betsy, blushing and confused.

“O-o-o-h!” cried the Roses, in a sort of sighing chorus; and one of them added: “What a horrid noise!”

“Why, that was only Hank,” said Betsy, and as if to prove the truth of her words the mule uttered another loud “Hee-haw!”

At this all the Roses turned on their stems as far as they were able and trembled as if some one were shaking their bushes. A dainty Moss Rose gasped: “Dear me! How dreadfully dreadful!”

“It isn’t dreadful at all,” said Betsy, somewhat indignant. “When you get used to Hank’s voice it will put you to sleep.”

The Roses now looked at the mule less fearfully and one of them asked:

“Is that savage beast named Hank?”

“Yes; Hank’s my comrade, faithful and true,” answered the girl, twining her arms around the little mule’s neck and hugging

him tight. “Aren’t you, Hank?”

Hank could only say in reply: “Hee-haw!” and at his bray the Roses shivered again.

“Please go away!” begged one. “Can’t you see you’re frightening us out of a week’s growth?”

“Go away!” echoed Betsy. “Why, we’ve no place to go. We’ve just been wrecked.”

“Wrecked?” asked the Roses in a surprised chorus.

“Yes; we were on a big ship and the storm came and wrecked it,” explained the girl. “But Hank and I caught hold of a raft and floated ashore to this place, and – we’re tired and hungry. What country *is* this, please?”

“This is the Rose Kingdom,” replied the Moss Rose, haughtily, “and it is devoted to the culture of the rarest and fairest Roses grown.”

“I believe it,” said Betsy, admiring the pretty blossoms.

“But only Roses are allowed here,” continued a delicate Tea Rose, bending her brows in a frown; “therefore you must go away before the Royal Gardener finds you and casts you back into the sea.”

“Oh! Is there a Royal Gardener, then?” inquired Betsy.

“To be sure.”

“And is he a Rose, also?”

“Of course not; he’s a man – a wonderful man,” was the reply.

“Well, I’m not afraid of a man,” declared the girl, much relieved, and even as she spoke the Royal Gardener popped into

the greenhouse – a spading fork in one hand and a watering pot in the other.

He was a funny little man, dressed in a rose-colored costume, with ribbons at his knees and elbows, and a bunch of ribbons in his hair. His eyes were small and twinkling, his nose sharp and his face puckered and deeply lined.

“O-ho!” he exclaimed, astonished to find strangers in his greenhouse, and when Hank gave a loud bray the Gardener threw the watering pot over the mule’s head and danced around with his fork, in such agitation that presently he fell over the handle of the implement and sprawled at full length upon the ground.

Betsy laughed and pulled the watering pot off from Hank’s head. The little mule was angry at the treatment he had received and backed toward the Gardener threateningly.

“Look out for his heels!” called Betsy warningly and the Gardener scrambled to his feet and hastily hid behind the Roses.

“You are breaking the Law!” he shouted, sticking out his head to glare at the girl and the mule.

“What Law?” asked Betsy.

“The Law of the Rose Kingdom. No strangers are allowed in these domains.”

“Not when they’re shipwrecked?” she inquired.

“The Law doesn’t except shipwrecks,” replied the Royal Gardener, and he was about to say more when suddenly there was a crash of glass and a man came tumbling through the roof of the greenhouse and fell plump to the ground.

CHAPTER 6

Shaggy Seeks his Stray Brother

THIS sudden arrival was a queer looking man, dressed all in garments so shaggy that Betsy at first thought he must be some animal. But the stranger ended his fall in a sitting position and then the girl saw it was really a man. He held an apple in his hand, which he had evidently been eating when he fell, and so little was he jarred or flustered by the accident that he continued to munch this apple as he calmly looked around him.

“Good gracious!” exclaimed Betsy, approaching him. “Who *are* you, and where did you come from?”

“Me? Oh, I’m Shaggy Man,” said he, taking another bite of the apple. “Just dropped in for a short call. Excuse my seeming haste.”

“Why, I s’pose you couldn’t help the haste,” said Betsy.

“No. I climbed an apple tree, outside; branch gave way and – here I am.”

As he spoke the Shaggy Man finished his apple, gave the core to Hank – who ate it greedily – and then stood up to bow politely to Betsy and the Roses.

The Royal Gardener had been frightened nearly into fits by the crash of glass and the fall of the shaggy stranger into the bower of Roses, but now he peeped out from behind a bush and cried

in his squeaky voice:

“You’re breaking the Law! You’re breaking the Law!”

Shaggy stared at him solemnly.

“Is the glass the Law in this country?” he asked.

“Breaking the glass is breaking the Law,” squeaked the Gardener, angrily. “Also, to intrude in any part of the Rose Kingdom is breaking the Law.”

“How do you know?” asked Shaggy.

“Why, it’s printed in a book,” said the Gardener, coming forward and taking a small book from his pocket. “Page thirteen. Here it is: ‘If any stranger enters the Rose Kingdom he shall at once be condemned by the Ruler and put to death.’ So you see, strangers,” he continued triumphantly, “it’s death for you all and your time has come!”

But just here Hank interposed. He had been stealthily backing toward the Royal Gardener, whom he disliked, and now the mule’s heels shot out and struck the little man in the middle. He doubled up like the letter “U” and flew out of the door so swiftly – never touching the ground – that he was gone before Betsy had time to wink.

But the mule’s attack frightened the girl.

“Come,” she whispered, approaching the Shaggy Man and taking his hand; “let’s go somewhere else. They’ll surely kill us if we stay here!”

“Don’t worry, my dear,” replied Shaggy, patting the child’s head. “I’m not afraid of anything, so long as I have the Love

Magnet.”

“The Love Magnet! Why, what is that?” asked Betsy.

“It’s a charming little enchantment that wins the heart of everyone who looks upon it,” was the reply. “The Love Magnet used to hang over the gateway to the Emerald City, in the Land of Oz; but when I started on this journey our beloved Ruler, Ozma of Oz, allowed me to take it with me.”

“Oh!” cried Betsy, staring hard at him; “are you really from the wonderful Land of Oz?”

“Yes. Ever been there, my dear?”

“No; but I’ve heard about it. And do you know Princess Ozma?”

“Very well indeed.”

“And – and Princess Dorothy?”

“Dorothy’s an old chum of mine,” declared Shaggy.

“Dear me!” exclaimed Betsy. “And why did you ever leave such a beautiful land as Oz?”

“On an errand,” said Shaggy, looking sad and solemn. “I’m trying to find my dear little brother.”

“Oh! Is he lost?” questioned Betsy, feeling very sorry for the poor man.

“Been lost these ten years,” replied Shaggy, taking out a handkerchief and wiping a tear from his eye. “I didn’t know it until lately, when I saw it recorded in the magic Record Book of the Sorceress Glinda, in the Land of Oz. So now I’m trying to find him.”

“Where was he lost?” asked the girl sympathetically.

“Back in Colorado, where I used to live before I went to Oz. Brother was a miner, and dug gold out of a mine. One day he went into his mine and never came out. They searched for him, but he was not there. Disappeared entirely,” Shaggy ended miserably.

“For goodness sake! What do you s’pose became of him?” she asked.

“There is only one explanation,” replied Shaggy, taking another apple from his pocket and eating it to relieve his misery. “The Nome King probably got him.”

“The Nome King! Who is he?”

“Why, he’s sometimes called the Metal Monarch, and his name is Ruggedo. Lives in some underground cavern. Claims to own all the metals hidden in the earth. Don’t ask me why.”

“Why?”

“Cause I don’t know. But this Ruggedo gets wild with anger if anyone digs gold out of the earth, and my private opinion is that he captured brother and carried him off to his underground kingdom. No – don’t ask me why. I see you’re dying to ask me why. But I don’t know.”

“But – dear me! – in that case you will never find your lost brother!” exclaimed the girl.

“Maybe not; but it’s my duty to try,” answered Shaggy. “I’ve wandered so far without finding him, but that only proves he is not where I’ve been looking. What I seek now is the hidden passage to the underground cavern of the terrible Metal

Monarch.”

“Well,” said Betsy doubtfully, “it strikes me that if you ever manage to get there the Metal Monarch will make you, too, his prisoner.”

“Nonsense!” answered Shaggy, carelessly. “You mustn’t forget the Love Magnet.”

“What about it?” she asked.

“When the fierce Metal Monarch sees the Love Magnet, he will love me dearly and do anything I ask.”

“It must be wonderful,” said Betsy, with awe.

“It is,” the man assured her. “Shall I show it to you?”

“Oh, do!” she cried; so Shaggy searched in his shaggy pocket and drew out a small silver magnet, shaped like a horseshoe.

The moment Betsy saw it she began to like the Shaggy Man better than before. Hank also saw the Magnet and crept up to Shaggy to rub his head lovingly against the man’s knee.

But they were interrupted by the Royal Gardener, who stuck his head into the greenhouse and shouted angrily:

“You are all condemned to death! Your only chance to escape is to leave here instantly.”

This startled little Betsy, but the Shaggy Man merely waved the Magnet toward the Gardener, who, seeing it, rushed forward and threw himself at Shaggy’s feet, murmuring in honeyed words:

“Oh, you lovely, lovely man! How fond I am of you! Every shag and bobtail that decorates you is dear to me – all I have is

yours! But for goodness' sake get out of here before you die the death."

"I'm not going to die," declared Shaggy Man.

"You must. It's the Law," exclaimed the Gardener, beginning to weep real tears. "It breaks my heart to tell you this bad news, but the Law says that all strangers must be condemned by the Ruler to die the death."

"No Ruler has condemned us yet," said Betsy.

"Of course not," added Shaggy. "We haven't even seen the Ruler of the Rose Kingdom."

"Well, to tell the truth," said the Gardener, in a perplexed tone of voice, "we haven't any real Ruler, just now. You see, all our Rulers grow on bushes in the Royal Gardens, and the last one we had got mildewed and withered before his time. So we had to plant him, and at this time there is no one growing on the Royal Bushes who is ripe enough to pick."

"How do you know?" asked Betsy.

"Why, I'm the Royal Gardener. Plenty of royalties are growing, I admit; but just now they are all green. Until one ripens, I am supposed to rule the Rose Kingdom myself, and see that its Laws are obeyed. Therefore, much as I love you, Shaggy, I must put you to death."

"Wait a minute," pleaded Betsy. "I'd like to see those Royal Gardens before I die."

"So would I," added Shaggy Man. "Take us there, Gardener."

"Oh, I can't do that," objected the Gardener. But Shaggy again

showed him the Love Magnet and after one glance at it the Gardener could no longer resist.

He led Shaggy, Betsy and Hank to the end of the great greenhouse and carefully unlocked a small door. Passing through this they came into the splendid Royal Garden of the Rose Kingdom.

It was all surrounded by a tall hedge and within the enclosure grew several enormous rosebushes having thick green leaves of the texture of velvet. Upon these bushes grew the members of the Royal Family of the Rose Kingdom – men, women and children in all stages of maturity. They all seemed to have a light green hue, as if unripe or not fully developed, their flesh and clothing being alike green. They stood perfectly lifeless upon their branches, which swayed softly in the breeze, and their wide-open eyes stared straight ahead, unseeing and unintelligent.

While examining these curious growing people, Betsy passed behind a big central bush and at once uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure. For there, blooming in perfect color and shape, stood a Royal Princess, whose beauty was amazing.

“Why, she’s ripe!” cried Betsy, pushing aside some of the broad leaves to observe her more clearly.

“Well, perhaps so,” admitted the Gardener, who had come to the girl’s side; “but she’s a girl, and so we can’t use her for a Ruler.”

“No, indeed!” came a chorus of soft voices, and looking around Betsy discovered that all the Roses had followed them

from the greenhouse and were now grouped before the entrance.

“You see,” explained the Gardener, “the subjects of Rose Kingdom don’t want a girl Ruler. They want a King.”

“A King! We want a King!” repeated the chorus of Roses.

“Isn’t she Royal?” inquired Shaggy, admiring the lovely Princess.

“Of course, for she grows on a Royal Bush. This Princess is named Ozga, as she is a distant cousin of Ozma of Oz; and, were she but a man, we would joyfully hail her as our Ruler.”

The Gardener then turned away to talk with his Roses and Betsy whispered to her companion: “Let’s pick her, Shaggy.”

“All right,” said he. “If she’s royal, she has the right to rule this Kingdom, and if we pick her she will surely protect us and prevent our being hurt, or driven away.”

So Betsy and Shaggy each took an arm of the beautiful Rose Princess and a little twist of her feet set her free of the branch upon which she grew. Very gracefully she stepped down from the bush to the ground, where she bowed low to Betsy and Shaggy and said in a delightfully sweet voice: “I thank you.”

But at the sound of these words the Gardener and the Roses turned and discovered that the Princess had been picked, and was now alive. Over every face flashed an expression of resentment and anger, and one of the Roses cried aloud:

“Audacious mortals! What have you done?”

“Picked a Princess for you, that’s all,” replied Betsy, cheerfully.

“But we won’t have her! We want a King!” exclaimed a Jacque Rose, and another added with a voice of scorn: “No girl shall rule over us!”

The newly-picked Princess looked from one to another of her rebellious subjects in astonishment. A grieved look came over her exquisite features.

“Have I no welcome here, pretty subjects?” she asked gently. “Have I not come from my Royal Bush to be your Ruler?”

“You were picked by mortals, without our consent,” replied the Moss Rose, coldly; “so we refuse to allow you to rule us.”

“Turn her out, Gardener, with the others!” cried the Tea Rose.

“Just a second, please!” called Shaggy, taking the Love Magnet from his pocket. “I guess this will win their love, Princess. Here – take it in your hand and let the roses see it.”

Princess Ozga took the Magnet and held it poised before the eyes of her subjects; but the Roses regarded it with calm disdain.

“Why, what’s the matter?” demanded Shaggy in surprise. “The Magnet never failed to work before!”

“I know,” said Betsy, nodding her head wisely. “These Roses have no hearts.”

“That’s it,” agreed the Gardener. “They’re pretty, and sweet, and alive; but still they are Roses. Their stems have thorns, but no hearts.”

The Princess sighed and handed the Magnet to the Shaggy Man.

“What shall I do?” she asked sorrowfully.

“Turn her out, Gardener, with the others!” commanded the Roses. “We will have no Ruler until a man-rose – a King – is ripe enough to pick.”

“Very well,” said the Gardener meekly. “You must excuse me, my dear Shaggy, for opposing your wishes, but you and the others, including Ozga, must get out of Rose Kingdom immediately, if not before.”

“Don’t you love me, Gardy?” asked Shaggy, carelessly displaying the Magnet.

“I do. I dote on thee!” answered the Gardener earnestly; “but no true man will neglect his duty for the sake of love. My duty is to drive you out, so – out you go!”

With this he seized a garden fork and began jabbing it at the strangers, in order to force them to leave. Hank the mule was not afraid of the fork and when he got his heels near to the Gardener the man fell back to avoid a kick.

But now the Roses crowded around the outcasts and it was soon discovered that beneath their draperies of green leaves were many sharp thorns which were more dangerous than Hank’s heels. Neither Betsy nor Ozga nor Shaggy nor the mule cared to brave those thorns and when they pressed away from them they found themselves slowly driven through the garden door into the greenhouse. From there they were forced out at the entrance and so through the territory of the flower-strewn Rose Kingdom, which was not of very great extent.

The Rose Princess was sobbing bitterly; Betsy was indignant

and angry; Hank uttered defiant “Hee-haws” and the Shaggy Man whistled softly to himself.

The boundary of the Rose Kingdom was a deep gulf, but there was a drawbridge in one place and this the Royal Gardener let down until the outcasts had passed over it. Then he drew it up again and returned with his Roses to the greenhouse, leaving the four queerly assorted comrades to wander into the bleak and unknown country that lay beyond.

“I don’t mind, much,” remarked Shaggy, as he led the way over the stony, barren ground. “I’ve got to search for my long-lost little brother, anyhow, so it won’t matter where I go.”

“Hank and I will help you find your brother,” said Betsy in her most cheerful voice. “I’m so far away from home now that I don’t s’pose I’ll ever find my way back; and, to tell the truth, it’s more fun traveling around and having adventures than sticking at home. Don’t you think so, Hank?”

“Hee-haw!” said Hank, and the Shaggy Man thanked them both.

“For my part,” said Princess Ozga of Roseland, with a gentle sigh, “I must remain forever exiled from my Kingdom. So I, too, will be glad to help the Shaggy Man find his lost brother.”

“That’s very kind of you, ma’am,” said Shaggy. “But unless I can find the underground cavern of Ruggedo,¹ the Metal Monarch, I shall never find poor brother.”

¹ This King was formerly named “Roquat,” but after he drank of the “Waters of Oblivion” he forgot his own name and had to take another.

“Doesn’t anyone know where it is?” inquired Betsy.

“*Some* one must know, of course,” was Shaggy’s reply. “But we are not the ones. The only way to succeed is for us to keep going until we find a person who can direct us to Ruggedo’s cavern.”

“We may find it ourselves, without any help,” suggested Betsy.

“Who knows?”

“No one knows that, except the person who’s writing this story,” said Shaggy. “But we won’t find anything – not even supper – unless we travel on. Here’s a path. Let’s take it and see where it leads to.”

CHAPTER 7

Polychrome's Pitiful Plight

THE Rain King got too much water in his basin and spilled some over the brim. That made it rain in a certain part of the country – a real hard shower, for a time – and sent the Rainbow scampering to the place to show the gorgeous colors of his glorious bow as soon as the mist of rain had passed and the sky was clear.

The coming of the Rainbow is always a joyous event to earth folk, yet few have ever seen it close by. Usually the Rainbow is so far distant that you can observe its splendid hues but dimly, and that is why we seldom catch sight of the dancing Daughters of the Rainbow.

In the barren country where the rain had just fallen there appeared to be no human beings at all; but the Rainbow appeared, just the same, and dancing gayly upon its arch were the Rainbow's Daughters, led by the fairylike Polychrome, who is so dainty and beautiful that no girl has ever quite equalled her in loveliness.

Polychrome was in a merry mood and danced down the arch of the bow to the ground, daring her sisters to follow her. Laughing and gleeful, they also touched the ground with their twinkling feet; but all the Daughters of the Rainbow knew that

this was a dangerous pastime, so they quickly climbed upon their bow again.

All but Polychrome. Though the sweetest and merriest of them all, she was likewise the most reckless. Moreover, it was an unusual sensation to pat the cold, damp earth with her rosy toes. Before she realized it the bow had lifted and disappeared in the billowy blue sky, and here was Polychrome standing helpless upon a rock, her gauzy draperies floating about her like brilliant cobwebs and not a soul – fairy or mortal – to help her regain her lost bow!

“Dear me!” she exclaimed, a frown passing across her pretty face, “I’m caught again. This is the second time my carelessness has left me on earth while my sisters returned to our Sky Palaces. The first time I enjoyed some pleasant adventures, but this is a lonely, forsaken country and I shall be very unhappy until my Rainbow comes again and I can climb aboard. Let me think what is best to be done.”

She crouched low upon the flat rock, drew her draperies about her and bowed her head.

It was in this position that Betsy Bobbin spied Polychrome as she came along the stony path, followed by Hank, the Princess and Shaggy. At once the girl ran up to the radiant Daughter of the Rainbow and exclaimed:

“Oh, what a lovely, lovely creature!”

Polychrome raised her golden head. There were tears in her blue eyes.

"I'm the most miserable girl in the whole world!" she sobbed. The others gathered around her.

"Tell us your troubles, pretty one," urged the Princess.

"I – I've lost my bow!" wailed Polychrome.

"Take me, my dear," said Shaggy Man in a sympathetic tone, thinking she meant "beau" instead of "bow."

"I don't want you!" cried Polychrome, stamping her foot imperiously; "I want my *Rainbow*."

"Oh; that's different," said Shaggy. "But try to forget it. When I was young I used to cry for the Rainbow myself, but I couldn't have it. Looks as if *you* couldn't have it, either; so please don't cry."

Polychrome looked at him reproachfully.

"I don't like you," she said.

"No?" replied Shaggy, drawing the Love Magnet from his pocket; "not a little bit? – just a wee speck of a like?"

"Yes, yes!" said Polychrome, clasping her hands in ecstasy as she gazed at the enchanted talisman; "I love you, Shaggy Man!"

"Of course you do," said he calmly; "but I don't take any credit for it. It's the Love Magnet's powerful charm. But you seem quite alone and friendless, little Rainbow. Don't you want to join our party until you find your father and sisters again?"

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"We don't just know that," said Betsy, taking her hand; "but we're trying to find Shaggy's long-lost brother, who has been captured by the terrible Metal Monarch. Won't you come with

us, and help us?”

Polychrome looked from one to another of the queer party of travelers and a bewitching smile suddenly lighted her face.

“A donkey, a mortal maid, a Rose Princess and a Shaggy Man!” she exclaimed. “Surely you need help, if you intend to face Ruggedo.”

“Do you know him, then?” inquired Betsy.

“No, indeed. Ruggedo’s caverns are beneath the earth’s surface, where no Rainbow can ever penetrate. But I’ve heard of the Metal Monarch. He is also called the Nome King, you know, and he has made trouble for a good many people – mortals and fairies – in his time,” said Polychrome.

“Do you fear him, then?” asked the Princess, anxiously.

“No one can harm a Daughter of the Rainbow,” said Polychrome proudly. “I’m a sky fairy.”

“Then,” said Betsy, quickly, “you will be able to tell us the way to Ruggedo’s cavern.”

“No,” returned Polychrome, shaking her head, “that is one thing I cannot do. But I will gladly go with you and help you search for the place.”

This promise delighted all the wanderers and after the Shaggy Man had found the path again they began moving along it in a more happy mood. The Rainbow’s Daughter danced lightly over the rocky trail, no longer sad, but with her beautiful features wreathed in smiles. Shaggy came next, walking steadily and now and then supporting the Rose Princess, who followed him. Betsy

and Hank brought up the rear, and if she tired with walking the girl got upon Hank's back and let the stout little donkey carry her for awhile.

At nightfall they came to some trees that grew beside a tiny brook and here they made camp and rested until morning. Then away they tramped, finding berries and fruits here and there which satisfied the hunger of Betsy, Shaggy and Hank, so that they were well content with their lot.

It surprised Betsy to see the Rose Princess partake of their food, for she considered her a fairy; but when she mentioned this to Polychrome, the Rainbow's Daughter explained that when Ozga was driven out of her Rose Kingdom she ceased to be a fairy and would never again be more than a mere mortal. Polychrome, however, was a fairy wherever she happened to be, and if she sipped a few dewdrops by moonlight for refreshment no one ever saw her do it.

As they continued their wandering journey, direction meant very little to them, for they were hopelessly lost in this strange country. Shaggy said it would be best to go toward the mountains, as the natural entrance to Ruggedo's underground cavern was likely to be hidden in some rocky, deserted place; but mountains seemed all around them except in the one direction that they had come from, which led to the Rose Kingdom and the sea. Therefore it mattered little which way they traveled.

By and by they espied a faint trail that looked like a path and after following this for some time they reached a cross-roads.

Here were many paths, leading in various directions, and there was a signpost so old that there were now no words upon the sign. At one side was an old well, with a chain windlass for drawing water, yet there was no house or other building anywhere in sight.

While the party halted, puzzled which way to proceed, the mule approached the well and tried to look into it.

“He’s thirsty,” said Betsy.

“It’s a dry well,” remarked Shaggy. “Probably there has been no water in it for many years. But, come; let us decide which way to travel.”

No one seemed able to decide that. They sat down in a group and tried to consider which road might be the best to take. Hank, however, could not keep away from the well and finally he reared up on his hind legs, got his head over the edge and uttered a loud “Hee-haw!” Betsy watched her animal friend curiously.

“I wonder if he sees anything down there?” she said.

At this, Shaggy rose and went over to the well to investigate, and Betsy went with him. The Princess and Polychrome, who had become fast friends, linked arms and sauntered down one of the roads, to find an easy path.

“Really,” said Shaggy, “there does seem to be something at the bottom of this old well.”

“Can’t we pull it up, and see what it is?” asked the girl.

There was no bucket at the end of the windlass chain, but there was a big hook that at one time was used to hold a bucket. Shaggy let down this hook, dragged it around on the bottom and then

pulled it up. An old hoopskirt came with it, and Betsy laughed and threw it away. The thing frightened Hank, who had never seen a hoopskirt before, and he kept a good distance away from it.

Several other objects the Shaggy Man captured with the hook and drew up, but none of these was important.

“This well seems to have been the dump for all the old rubbish in the country,” he said, letting down the hook once more. “I guess I’ve captured everything now. No – the hook has caught again. Help me, Betsy! Whatever this thing is, it’s heavy.”

She ran up and helped him turn the windlass and after much effort a confused mass of copper came in sight.

“Good gracious!” exclaimed Shaggy. “Here is a surprise, indeed!”

“What is it?” inquired Betsy, clinging to the windlass and panting for breath.

For answer the Shaggy Man grasped the bundle of copper and dumped it upon the ground, free of the well. Then he turned it over with his foot, spread it out, and to Betsy’s astonishment the thing proved to be a copper man.

“Just as I thought,” said Shaggy, looking hard at the object. “But unless there are two copper men in the world this is the most astonishing thing I ever came across.”

At this moment the Rainbow’s Daughter and the Rose Princess approached them, and Polychrome said:

“What have you found, Shaggy One?”

“Either an old friend, or a stranger,” he replied.

“Oh, here’s a sign on his back!” cried Betsy, who had knelt down to examine the man. “Dear me; how funny! Listen to this.”

Then she read the following words, engraved upon the copper plates of the man’s body:

SMITH & TINKER’S

Patent Double-Action, Extra-Responsive,
Thought-Creating, Perfect-Talking

MECHANICAL MAN

Fitted with our Special Clockwork Attachment

Thinks, Speaks, Acts, and Does Everything but Live

“Isn’t he wonderful!” exclaimed the Princess.

“Yes; but here’s more,” said Betsy, reading from another engraved plate:

DIRECTIONS FOR USING:

For THINKING: – Wind the Clockwork Man under his left arm, (marked No. 1).

For SPEAKING: – Wind the Clockwork Man under his right arm, (marked No. 2).

For WALKING and ACTION: – Wind Clockwork Man in the middle of his back, (marked No. 3).

N. B. – This Mechanism is guaranteed to work perfectly for a thousand years.

“If he’s guaranteed for a thousand years,” said Polychrome, “he ought to work yet.”

“Of course,” replied Shaggy. “Let’s wind him up.”

In order to do this they were obliged to set the copper man upon his feet, in an upright position, and this was no easy task. He was inclined to topple over, and had to be propped again and again. The girls assisted Shaggy, and at last Tik-Tok seemed to be balanced and stood alone upon his broad feet.

“Yes,” said Shaggy, looking at the copper man carefully, “this must be, indeed, my old friend Tik-Tok, whom I left ticking merrily in the Land of Oz. But how he came to this lonely place, and got into that old well, is surely a mystery.”

“If we wind him, perhaps he will tell us,” suggested Betsy. “Here’s the key, hanging to a hook on his back. What part of him shall I wind up first?”

“His thoughts, of course,” said Polychrome, “for it requires thought to speak or move intelligently.”

So Betsy wound him under his left arm, and at once little flashes of light began to show in the top of his head, which was proof that he had begun to think.

“Now, then,” said Shaggy, “wind up his phonograph.”

“What’s that?” she asked.

“Why, his talking-machine. His thoughts may be interesting, but they don’t tell us anything.”

So Betsy wound the copper man under his right arm, and then from the interior of his copper body came in jerky tones the words: “Ma-ny thanks!”

“Hurrah!” cried Shaggy, joyfully, and he slapped Tik-Tok upon the back in such a hearty manner that the copper man lost his balance and tumbled to the ground in a heap. But the clockwork that enabled him to speak had been wound up and he kept saying: “Pick-me-up! Pick-me-up! Pick-me-up!” until they had again raised him and balanced him upon his feet, when he added politely: “Ma-ny thanks!”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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