

"Dear me!" said the Scarecrow dolefully. "What a mess I'm in!"

"Never mind, my friend," returned the Tin Woodman, "I'll send you to my Imperial Laundry, and you'll come out as good as new."

"Won't I be mangled?" asked the Scarecrow.

"No, indeed!" was the reply. "But tell me, how came your Majesty here? and who are your companions?"

The Scarecrow, with great politeness, introduced Tip and Jack Pumpkinhead, and the latter personage seemed to interest the Tin Woodman greatly.

"You are not very substantial, I must admit," said the Emperor. "but you are certainly unusual, and therefore worthy to become a member of our select society."

"I thank your Majesty," said Jack, humbly.

"I hope you are enjoying good health?" continued the Woodman.

"At present, yes;" replied the Pumpkinhead, with a sigh; "but I am in constant terror of the day when I shall spoil."

"Nonsense!" said the Emperor—but in a kindly, sympathetic tone. "Do not, I beg of you, dampen today's sun with the showers of tomorrow. For before your head has time to spoil you can have it canned, and in that way it may be preserved indefinitely."

Tip, during this conversation, was looking at the Woodman with undisguised amazement, and noticed that the celebrated Emperor of the Winkies was composed entirely of pieces of tin, neatly soldered and riveted together into the form of a man. He rattled and clanked a little, as he moved, but in the main he seemed to be most cleverly constructed, and his appearance was only marred by the thick coating of polishing-paste that covered him from head to foot.

The boy's intent gaze caused the Tin Woodman to remember that he was not in the most presentable condition, so he begged his friends to excuse him while he retired to his private apartment and allowed his servants to polish him. This was accomplished in a short

time, and when the emperor returned his nickel-plated body shone so magnificently that the Scarecrow heartily congratulated him on his improved appearance.

"That nickel-plate was, I confess, a happy thought," said Nick; "and it was the more necessary because I had become somewhat scratched during my adventurous experiences. You will observe this engraved star upon my left breast. It not only indicates where my excellent heart lies, but covers very neatly the patch made by the Wonderful Wizard when he placed that valued organ in my breast with his own skillful hands."

"Is your heart, then, a hand-organ?" asked the Pumpkinhead, curiously.

"By no means," responded the emperor, with dignity. "It is, I am convinced, a strictly orthodox heart, although somewhat larger and warmer than most people possess."

Then he turned to the Scarecrow and asked:

"Are your subjects happy and contented, my dear friend?"

"I cannot, say" was the reply. "for the girls of Oz have risen in revolt and driven me out of the emerald City."

"Great Goodness!" cried the Tin Woodman, "What a calamity! They surely do not complain of your wise and gracious rule?"

"No; but they say it is a poor rule that don't work both ways," answered the Scarecrow; "and these females are also of the opinion that men have ruled the land long enough. So they have captured my city, robbed the treasury of all its jewels, and are running things to suit themselves."

"Dear me! What an extraordinary idea!" cried the Emperor, who was both shocked and surprised.

"And I heard some of them say," said Tip, "that they intend to march here and capture the castle and city of the Tin Woodman."

"Ah! we must not give them time to do that," said the Emperor, quickly; "we will go at once and recapture the Emerald City and place the Scarecrow again upon his throne."

"I was sure you would help me," remarked the Scarecrow in a pleased voice. "How large an army can you assemble?"

"We do not need an army," replied the Woodman. "We four, with the aid of my gleaming axe, are enough to strike terror into the hearts of the rebels."

"We five," corrected the Pumpkinhead.

"Five?" repeated the Tin Woodman.

"Yes; the Saw-Horse is brave and fearless," answered Jack, forgetting his recent quarrel with the quadruped.

The Tin Woodman looked around him in a puzzled way, for the Saw-Horse had until now remained quietly standing in a corner, where the Emperor had not noticed him. Tip immediately called the odd-looking creature to them, and it approached so awkwardly that it nearly upset the beautiful center-table and the engraved oil-can.

"I begin to think," remarked the Tin Woodman as he looked earnestly at the Saw-Horse, "that wonders will never cease! How came this creature alive?"

"I did it with a magic powder," modestly asserted the boy. "and the Saw-Horse has been very useful to us."

"He enabled us to escape the rebels," added the Scarecrow.

"Then we must surely accept him as a comrade," declared the emperor. "A live Saw-Horse is a distinct novelty, and should prove an interesting study. Does he know anything?"

"Well, I cannot claim any great experience in life," the Saw-Horse answered for himself. "but I seem to learn very quickly, and often it occurs to me that I know more than any of those around me."

"Perhaps you do," said the emperor; "for experience does not always mean wisdom. But time is precious just now, so let us quickly

make preparations to start upon our Journey."

The emperor called his Lord High Chancellor and instructed him how to run the kingdom during his absence. Meanwhile the Scarecrow was taken apart and the painted sack that served him for a head was carefully laundered and restuffed with the brains originally given him by the great Wizard. His clothes were also cleaned and pressed by the Imperial tailors, and his crown polished and again sewed upon his head, for the Tin Woodman insisted he should not renounce this badge of royalty. The Scarecrow now presented a very respectable appearance, and although in no way addicted to vanity he was quite pleased with himself and strutted a trifle as he walked. While this was being done Tip mended the wooden limbs of Jack Pumpkinhead and made them stronger than before, and the Saw-Horse was also inspected to see if he was in good working order.

Then bright and early the next morning they set out upon the return Journey to the emerald City, the Tin Woodman bearing upon his shoulder a gleaming axe and leading the way, while the Pumpkinhead rode upon the Saw-Horse and Tip and the Scarecrow walked upon either side to make sure that he didn't fall off or become damaged.

CHAPTER XII

MR. H. M. WOGGLE-BUG, T. E.

Now, General Jinjur—who, you will remember, commanded the Army of Revolt—was rendered very uneasy by the escape of the Scarecrow from the Emerald City. She feared, and with good reason, that if his Majesty and the Tin Woodman Joined forces, it would mean danger to her and her entire army; for the people of Oz had not yet forgotten the deeds of these famous heroes, who had passed successfully through so many startling adventures.

So Jinjur sent post-haste for old Mombi, the witch, and promised her large rewards if she would come to the assistance of the rebel army.

Mombi was furious at the trick Tip had played upon her as well as at his escape and the theft of the precious Powder of Life; so she needed no urging to induce her to travel to the Emerald City to assist Jinjur in defeating the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman, who had made Tip one of their friends.

Mombi had no sooner arrived at the royal palace than she discovered, by means of her secret magic, that the adventurers were starting upon their Journey to the Emerald City; so she retired to a small room high up in a tower and locked herself in while she practised such arts as she could command to prevent the return of the Scarecrow and his companions.

That was why the Tin Woodman presently stopped and said:

"Something very curious has happened. I ought to know by heart and every step of this Journey, yet I fear we have already lost our way."

"That is quite impossible!" protested the Scarecrow. "Why do you think, my dear friend, that we have gone astray?"

"Why, here before us is a great field of sunflowers—and I never saw this field before in all my life."

At these words they all looked around, only to find that they were indeed surrounded by a field of tall stalks, every stalk bearing at its top a gigantic sunflower. And not only were these flowers almost blinding in their vivid hues of red and gold, but each one whirled around upon its stalk like a miniature wind-mill, completely dazzling the vision of the beholders and so mystifying them that they knew not which way to turn.

"It's witchcraft!" exclaimed Tip.

While they paused, hesitating and wondering, the Tin Woodman uttered a cry of impatience and advanced with swinging axe to cut down the stalks before him. But now the sunflowers suddenly stopped their rapid whirling, and the travelers plainly saw a girl's face appear in the center of each flower. These lovely faces looked upon the astonished band with mocking smiles, and then burst into a chorus of merry laughter at the dismay their appearance caused.

"Stop! stop!" cried Tip, seizing the Woodman's arm; "they're alive! they're girls!"

At that moment the flowers began whirling again, and the faces faded away and were lost in the rapid revolutions.

The Tin Woodman dropped his axe and sat down upon the ground.

"It would be heartless to chop down those pretty creatures," said he, despondently. "and yet I do not know how else we can proceed