

Lucky Bucky In Oz – Oz 36

L. Frank Baum

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CHAPTER 1

The Volcanic Bake Shop

CHUG-CHUG, Chug-chug. The engine in the tug boat sputtered monotonously.

Lying in the warm sunshine on the upper deck of his uncle's tug boat, Lucky Bucky looked up into the sky.

Somewhere inside the boat the ship's clock struck eight bells. It wastwelve o'clock.

"Time for lunch, almost," he thought drowsily, watching the engine strain on the long towing line that pulled three barges at a slow speed through upperNew York Bay. The course took them close to the huge bronze figure of the Goddess of Liberty.

The boy looked up reverently into the face of the Great Goddess. She seemed to be looking straight at him and her eyes held an expression of alarm perhaps she was about to speak... when... Bam!!! A terrific explosion . . . a sharp hiss of steam and Bucky shot up into the air with the speed of a rocket! Recovering from his first surprise, the boy looked down and saw, far below him, his uncle's tug boat with a great hole in the cabin roof on the exact spot where he had been lying. He rose higher and higher in the air. The tug boat, the Great Goddess of Lib-

erty and all the familiar landmarks grew smaller and smaller. Gradually they faded completely into the mist.

Bucky lost all track of time as he whirled through space, wondering what in the world would happen next, where he would land-and how. He wasn't exactly pleased with the unexpected situation in which he found himself.

"That old boiler must have burst," he said to himself, uneasily. "Well, I'll just have to make the best of the bust, I guess."

As he soared beyond the highest clouds, he resolutely pulled his sweater close around his neck and buttoned up his coat tightly. On and on he sped.

"Everything so far seems okay," he muttered, "no bones broken. I guess I really am Luck."

From behind the last lazy cloud darted a perspiring cloud-pusher and a barrel-bird half full of star dust.

"Ker-swisssh!" sneezed the large, round barrel-bird, as it flew close to Bucky. The boy tried to steady himself that he might get a better look at the queer thing. "Where do you think you're going, Stranger?" enquired the inquisitive bird.

"Maybe you can tell me, for I haven't the slightest idea," responded the boy as they all shot forward, side by side.

"Bumps and blithers are ahead," warned the barrel-bird. "You had better be careful where you go."

Now they were skimming over an endless pink ocean. Far beyond, rising from the ocean, Bucky noticed the top of a small, active volcano. He was heading straight toward it. He tried to check his speed but he didn't know how to accomplish this.

"If I were you-which I am very thankful I am not I would keep away from that volcano," ventured the bird.

"Don't bother me now with silly suggestions," replied Bucky, trying desperately to brace himself against what he judged was likely to happen. He couldn't stop . . . he didn't even have time to think or to act.

"Here is where Lucky Bucky trusts completely to his luck," he muttered and closed his eyes tight. Then, right up to his neck, he plunged into a soft mass of warm dough. Little bubbles of sour yeast sizzled and burst all around him. One quick glance showed Bucky that he had landed half-way up the slope of the steep volcano. From the crater spurted puffs of fragrant steam, pungent with the strong odor of cinnamon.

"If I'm still alive, I can thank my lucky stars," thought the boy as he twisted his head free from the dough.

He gazed around, holding his breath in amazement.

He heard a babble of squeaky voices above him:

"Goodness gracious sakes!!!" exclaimed one fussy voice. "Bees, bats and buzzards! What's this?" cried another.

From a ridge above the dough, half a dozen flat wooden paddles poked the boy in the back. These paddles were attached to the ends of very long handles and Bucky, who had managed to pull his arms free, grabbed one of the blades with his sticky fingers. He called out:

"You fellows be careful up there . . . stop poking me...

A row of angry faces popped up over the upper ridge.

"Leave our Doughminion immediately," the mouths yelled madly. Again the paddles prodded the boy more savagely. In spite of all attempts to wrench the blade from his hands, Bucky held on grimly, for he was very strong. The struggle became a tug of war and the boy presently felt himself being slowly drawn up, out of the sticky mass, and dropped on the ridge. He saw immediately that a swarm of furious little cooks were pulling desperately on the other end of the paddle. They were dressed in long white coats reaching to the ground. Each one wore a high cook's cap on his head.

"Don't mince matters with us!!!" screamed a fussy master-baker who was wearing an extra large hat.

"Dump the dumpling into the ocean! He's too dumb to be put into a lamb stew!"

As the cooks became noisier, the whole volcano became excited until, at the mention of lamb stew, a stream of potatoes, onions and carrots shot out of the crater. Cries went up for "Parsnips. . . Carrots.. Pumpkins and Peanuts . . . Cabbage and Cake. Mush and Molasses..." And, sure enough, with each order screamed, up from the crater came more and more vegetables for the stew, followed at last by a large mess of mush and molasses that doused over the spotless white aprons of the cooks and made the narrow ridge slippery and dangerous.

Bucky managed to wrench the paddle from the loosened grasp of the bakers, and with it, he poked back at them and chased them half way around the mountain ledge where they vanished from his sight.

Coming suddenly upon a row of ovens, Bucky opened one. Inside the volcanic oven were fragrant pies just turning to a golden brown. Everything about them looked delicious. Sliding his paddle inside, as he had once seen a baker slip his peel, Bucky gently drew out a couple of the pies. His action threw the little cooks

into a loud cry of protest. Defiantly they swung their long scoops and again ordered him to leave their Doughmain.

"What in the mischief ails you fellows?" cried the boy, setting his pies on the ground and swinging his scoop as several determined bakers prepared to attack him. He wasn't going to be pushed back into that dough without a struggle. He dropped the paddle and stood facing the cooks, a sizzling hot pie in either hand. The bakers stopped. . . whispered together, and waited. .

Bucky took time out to eat one of the pies. But before he had finished it, the bakers were consulting again in whispers. He watched them from the corner of his eye.

In a flash they charged again, swinging their paddles dangerously close to his head. With his own weapon he fought back against his assailants, tumbling many of them into the soft dough below.

Though he fought valiantly, the bakers gained ground; step by step, they crowded closer. By sheer force of numbers they surrounded him. The crack, crack of the scoops clashing together could be heard far out over the ocean. Bucky received many smart wallops that made him see stars. The outcome of the fight began to look dark for the boy as the Scrimmage

rose to its climax.

Suddenly, without warning, the tide of battle turned the racket ceased. A piercing call of alarm rang out.

"The Pie Rats!!! The Whale!!! Our Doughmain's in peril!!!!"

All eyes were turned toward the sea. Close to shore the great head of a huge wooden whale came slowly up out of the pink ocean. From beneath the whale's gill a small trap-door flew open, and a gang of rough, weather-beaten pirates scrambled out. They swarmed over the beach and began to climb the steep sides of the volcano, all the while brandishing their long cutlasses and huge pistols.

In their excitement and dread of the pirates, the bakers entirely forgot Bucky, who stood looking on with amazement. The bakers scurried to a higher place on the mountain ridge. Here piles of hard biscuits were stacked like cannon balls.

Each little biscuit shooter took a biscuit on his scoop and expertly sent it whistling down on the head of an invader. Every shot was so well aimed that it found its mark.

Crack! Crack! Smack! went the biscuits accompanied by a chorus of little squeals. A constant stream fell on the enemy. Hundreds of hard, dry, slightly

burned biscuits hummed through the air that day and,
as the invaders continued the assault, so the biscuit
shooters increased the bombardment.

The siege was beginning to fail and the pirates to
waver, without the capture of even a single cruller,
when suddenly, as though to end the attack, the crater
of the volcano belched forth a cloud of black pepper.
Sneezing and coughing, the invaders turned in utter
confusion and fled back toward the whale.

With dignity, the whale slipped away from the shore
and swam out just beyond the reach of the pirates.
There, floating calmly on the serene pink ocean, the
whale paid not the slightest attention to the pleadings
of the crew he had so quietly left to meet their fate.
Majestically swishing his tail, the whale moved slowly
beyond range of any stray biscuits that might pop
from above.

From his high position, Bucky had a splendid view
of the beach, the pirates and the whale. The fun was
over almost as soon as it had begun. Now the pirates
were trying wildly to escape, with no retreat left
them.

Pies gone---hope gone, and whale gone, the Pie Rats
threw down their cutlasses and pistols. They hoisted
a white flag in surrender.

CHAPTER 2

The Wooden Whale

THE volcanic biscuit shooters slid closer to a lower ledge, keeping the fierce pirates at a safe distance with the aid of their long paddles.

"Surrender your weapons!" they demanded, "and we'll make good doughboys of you all. But remember, no tricks. . .

Bucky was thrilled with the outcome of the game and ate another peach pie to celebrate the victory. He smiled to himself as the buccaneers delivered up their weapons, preparing to turn their attention to mixing dough.

With dexterous scoops the shooters sent cutlasses, blunderbusses and all the other weapons far out over the ocean to disappear where the water was deepest.

"Now, hats and boots," commanded the bakers. "Off with them quickly or overboard you'll go.

At this, the pirate captain scowled and refused to give up his wide-brimmed hat fringed with heavy gold. A hard biscuit peppered him, causing him to change his mind, and sullenly he handed over his treasured possession, not doing so, however, until the quick ac-

tion of the paddles had tumbled him into the water.

As he scrambled back to the shore, he saw his hat flung far out to sea.

For many years the little bakers had been annoyed by the raids of these pirates; their pies and buns had been plundered. Never before had retaliation been possible. But on this eventful day, affairs had turned out differently and now the invaders must be fed; there was nothing to do but put them to work mixing their own dough. To repay the pirates for the loss of their fancy clothes, the bakers gave each man a long coat and a high hat when he went to work. At last the buccaneers were earning an honest living.

Pleased with their easy triumph, the biscuit shooters cheered and waved their long pie pokers and Bucky, carried away with his hearty feeling of support in the contest, clapped his hands and cheered with them.

"At-a-boy, Bakers!" he called, for the dousing of the pirate captain had filled him with so much amusement that he could not restrain his mirth: "Duck him again," he shouted.

He was leaning far over the edge in order to better see the proceedings, without realizing his danger. Before he could collect his thoughts, five expert biscuit shooters had planted their shooters beneath him and the snap of their paddles sent him high into the

air over the pink ocean into which he fell with a dismal plunk. Sputtering, he rose to the surface and began to tread water.

"I'm beginning to think this place is made up of doughnuts!" he gasped, expelling the water from his mouth, "what in blazes is the matter with those pie-
kers that they don't know a friend when they see one!"

To his surprise, he was answered by a hollow voice that seemed to come from the water.

"I beg your pardon," said the voice. "I didn't catch your last remark."

Bucky turned. Close beside him appeared the large, dripping head of a whale, his polished mahogany sides glistening like a mirror. Bucky started to swim away as fast as the crawl stroke would take him.

Up again came the great wooden head, this time directly in his course. Bucky turned to the right, then to the left, the jitters getting him as he tried to dodge the monster. But, wherever he shifted, there was the great head to block his return to the volcano. It was useless to try evasion.

The sad, hesitating voice continued to speak:
"Please, now, my young friend, don't be startled at a peaceful old fish like me--I know I'm blunt but that was the style of architecture when I was built.

The whole face of the whale stretched in a friendly grin.

Lucky Bucky extended a weary hand and caught hold of the highly polished brass deck rail that ran around the whale's protruding lower jaw. He hauled himself out of the water and sat down on the deck-jaw to regain his breath and suddenly he recalled the story of Jonah and the Whale!

"Before we go any further," said the whale in a timid voice, "I'd like to ask you one question. Are you, by any means, a young pirate?"

"I certainly am not!!!"

"That's comforting to know," softly whispered the whale with a sigh and a spout, "now, may I enquire about your Father? Was he a pirate?"

Bucky stared in amazement, then shook his head so violently that drops of water from his hair spotted the spotless rail.

"Definitely NO!"

Some quality in the old whale gave him a feeling of confidence. "And your Grandfather and your Great-Grandfather, were they, by any chance, pirates?" the gentle quizzing continued.

"Never!" cried the boy with plenty of spirit. "My people were all sea-captains and pilots," he added proudly.

"Pilots?" queried the whale, cocking his head suspiciously. "That word sounds too much like 'pirate' for my comfort. You'd better get off, and be quick about it." With that, the whale began to sink below the surface.

"Hold on a minute . . . let me explain," pleaded Bucky, holding tight to the rail with both hands.

Lower and lower settled the whale before the boy's pleading words made him hesitate.

"Let me tell you what a pilot really is! He's an officer who knows all about channels and deep waters. He directs large ships and boats away from danger. Please be reasonable, and don't accuse me again of being a pirate. It's just too humiliating. . .

"Well . . . " faltered the whale as he puffed up to the surface. "I always try to be reasonable and what you say sounds reasonable; pirates are most unreasonable, don't you think, and you don't sound that way."

"Your pirates are the only ones I ever saw," Bucky answered.

"My Pirates!" roared the whale. "What do you mean now by making such an unreasonable remark?"

"I'm sorry..." said Bucky soberly, "sorry to have made such a mistake. I'm a stranger in these parts.

I came from New York and if..."

"Yes, yes," drawled the whale disdainfully, puckering his forehead with anxiety.

"New York is a wonderful city," persisted the boy, "with . .

"Yes, yes, yes," interrupted the whale. "You've never even noticed my wounded eye; just look at it."

A large mark under one eye showed Bucky where a hard biscuit had struck him and knocked off the varnish.

"And look at those biscuit shooters," continued the whale, "driving the pirates to work cleaning up the island and polishing the oven doors. It's a snug little roost they have there on that volcano. Someone ought to write a song about it for me to sing."

"I wouldn't like to live there," Bucky answered, "and we have just as good pies in Chicago or Hacketts-town."

"Stop!" ordered the whale. "Don't start that again and worry me with your impossible stories. As I was saying, that volcano is the finest floating bakery in all the Nonentic Ocean."

"You mean Atlantic Ocean, don't you?" Bucky corrected.

"I mean exactly what I say. Nonentic Ocean, and I cannot understand where you get such funny names

in your head-New York, Chicago, Atlantic Ocean!

There are no such places in the Land of Oz?"

"Do you mean to tell me I am in the Land of Oz?"

Bucky cried.

"You certainly are."

"Then I'm lost! How can I get back home?"

"How should I know? The way you came, I guess..."

"In Oz!" muttered the boy, woefully. "This is terrible. Wild pirates and crazy biscuit shooters."

"You haven't seen half..." suggested the whale ominously. "This ocean is filled with pirates."

"I always thought Oz was a wonderful and friendly land," Bucky said in bewilderment.

"Oh, yes . . . that's true. You are thinking of the Emerald City where Ozma lives in her castle, with the Wizard to help her. You know the Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow. The four gaily colored kingdoms around the green capitol are a long way from here."

"A long way . . . repeated the crestfallen boy. "It looks still longer to Chicago or Detroit or-"

"Don't begin that again, please," said the whale in a superior tone of voice. "Never heard of such places, and what's more, I don't take much stock in what you say. If you are aiming to go anywhere, why, in thunderbust, don't you go to the Emerald City."

There is a city to really talk about. The most mystical, magical city in existence, set in the very center of creation. It's a whale of a country!"

"Have you ever been there?" Bucky ventured to ask.

"What a question!" sputtered the whale in disgust and he spouted a stream of water high into the air, then subsided with an impatient snort. "Since you ask it, I must admit that I've always intended to go, but never got around to it. In fact, I've really been so busy, with one thing and another... beside all this, I don't know how to get there."

"Do you need a pilot? I'm a good pilot." Bucky's voice was eager.

"The very word gives me the shivers."

"How do you like the name of Skipper?"

"I'll take the afternoon off to think it over. I'm tired out. Since those pirates captured me, I've had no rest. For two years they kept me laughing, day and night. What I need is to have a sad spell. You amuse yourself while I take a snooze."

And the whale began to hum a heart-breaking sailor's chanty. He closed his quivering eyes so that Bucky could not see the tears that filled them.

CHAPTER 3

The Jones Cousins

It was evident that the whale did not want to be disturbed.

Bucky stepped quietly to one side, sliding his hand along the smooth handrail until he came to a small door on one side of the whale's head. He opened this door and saw that an old ship's lantern was burning beyond the entrance. Hesitating for a moment, he peered within.

"Make up your mind if you are going in," suggested the whale without opening his eyes, "and, if you do, make yourself at home."

With this encouragement, Bucky stepped quickly through the door, which closed quietly behind him.

The space was built into a cozy, fair-sized cabin with bunks for sleeping. He could see very clearly by the light of the lantern that swung from a heavy chain fastened in the ceiling. Once again the story of Jonah flashed through his mind.

Compact and convenient as the cabin was, everything had been left topsy-turvy by the pirate band. Blankets and pillows were strewn around. Broken dishes and cups littered the floor in careless disorder and clattered from side to side with every pitch of the

floating whale.

"Only pirates would be so untidy," Bucky thought as he stumbled over a rope that had become entangled in the wheels of a silver cannon. Everything seemed out of its place and this was annoying to the boy who had been trained to the strict order of his uncle's tug boat. It didn't take him long to make the cabin ship-shape; to fold the blankets, pick up the broken rubbish, and collect in one place a great number of interesting trappings that the pirates had left was the work of but a few moments. And while busy with the tidying, he had time to explore every interesting corner.

At the rear of the cabin were a number of doors. They looked as if they might lead to closets. He opened one and found that it was piled to the ceiling with pies that the pirates had stolen. Apple, blueberry, mince and pumpkin pies, great stacks of them together with cinnamon buns, biscuits and crullers. All were arranged in perfect order and wrapped in oil paper to keep them fresh.

Recalling the whale's invitation "to make himself at home," Bucky helped himself to a handful of delicious crullers.

"Can anything beat my luck?" he thought as he bit into one.

Rummaging around in his search for dry clothes, he

pulled an old, iron-bound sea chest from under the table. It was filled with odds and ends, including a fine red coat trimmed with gold braid. It was just his size.

Hidden under the clothes were gold trinkets and jewels. At the bottom of the chest he found a flat box, marked-

Meddle with us and you

may EXPLODE T.D.H. AND F

It was exactly what to expect to find in a pirate's chest and the boy's fingers itched to open it. Finally his curiosity got the better of him and he lifted the lid.

Inside were four silver doorknobs marked Tom, Dick, Harry and Flummux. Closing the box he returned it as quickly as he could, covering it carefully with the clothing. He shoved the chest back under the table.

"Better leave that alone. It might spoil my luck," Bucky said to himself and turned to other fascinating things. Over each bunk was a clock with dials to regulate the length of sleep, from a cat nap of three minutes to a long sleep of three weeks.

After all he had been through, he felt completely worn out, although it was not yet bedtime. He knew he could sleep twelve hours at least. "I'll take a

chance," he said and set the clock, jumped into the bunk and was soon fast asleep.

Exactly twelve hours later he awoke to find himself sprawled on the floor, for the bunk had tilted downward and slipped him out very gently. At first, Bucky was slightly dazed, then the events of the day before and the peculiar working of the clock all came back to him in a flash. He opened the door, just a crack, to make sure his memory was right. Then he stepped out into the sunshine.

4 "Happy daybreak!" greeted the whale with a wide smile of welcome.

"Sunshine to you!" answered the boy, "and how is your sadness?"

"Really I can't tell you how a little sadness spunks me up. What a relief it is after years of monotonous laughing. From now on, I can tell you, I'll feel better without those disgraceful pirates crowded inside my er-er-cabin! To be stuffed, week after week, with ridiculous buccaneers! Indeed, my friend, it is a happy day for me to have you here." The whale paused, and then continued, giving an embarrassed little cough: "By-the-way... we have never been properly introduced. Allow me to present myself-my name is David. What do you call yourself?"

"My friends call me Bucky-my last name is Jones

Bucky Jones, to be exact."

"Now isn't that the strangest thing?" drawled the whale. "My last name is Jones, too. I wonder if we are related. Cousins - or, at least, second cousins. Bucky and Davy Jones! We should get along swimmingly. Ho! Ho!!"

"If you are willing to take a passenger, I cannot think of anything that would be more fun," said the boy, seating himself on the rail and gazing up into the whale's honest face.

"You have come aboard as my friend. My cabin is yours. You will be my bosom friend."

"That's fine! I certainly thank you. I'll try to make myself useful."

"It's a bargain!! Let's get started-and be careful that you don't fall overboard," suggested big Davy as he flipped himself around and started for the shore at a speed that almost took away the boy's breath.

"Why such a hurry?" faltered Bucky.

"I want to catch something!"

"Catch something? What?"

"The high tide," laughed Davy.

The pink spray flew high on either side as the whale plunged forward, lightly skipping from wave to wave.

His swift spurt soon brought them in sight of land

where, to the west, towering cliffs rose straight out of the ocean. No beach was to be seen; nothing but rough, forbidding rocks. To Bucky it seemed impossible to find a foothold anywhere on that rock-ribbed shore.

The whale was more familiar with the coast. Without the slightest hesitation he swung himself into a hidden opening that the boy had not noticed. With just enough room to squeeze through, he squeezed.

The tide was running in at a great rate! This helped them go forward.

"Hold fast now," warned the whale. "If I get a good start, I can do it easily." He doubled his speed and the water seethed and boiled under him.

They were in a small river where the water tumbled down a mountain slope with the thunder of a cascade. Gaining headway every second, Davy bore through the rushing rapids that roared from the heights above. With the good management that came from a clear head, the great whale splashed and wriggled his way up and up until he finally reached the top of the slope. He was breathing in gasps but grinning happily. Now that the danger was past, the boy rubbed the water from his eyes and looked about him. From this point, the river continued down hill, but the water ran up.

Leisurely, Davy floated down.

"Few travelers get through this Up-hill-down-hill River. Quite a stunt for an old fellow like me. Don't you think so?" asked the whale, well pleased with himself. "All you need is confidence. Just a little confidence..."

"And plenty of action," added Bucky.

"You are quite right. Action-plenty of action-that's it precisely; you have the right idea."

Davy waited to get his breath back before he spoke again. "I once pulled a lot of Dollfins up here. They still live here. In fact, they have established quite a school for themselves. I'd like to have you meet them."

On the down-hill side of the River, Davy swam with a lazy stroke, pointing out to his passenger places of interest in the distant, rolling hills. He seemed proud of the surrounding country but to Bucky it looked bleak and desolate.

"You see the top of the next hill? That is where we'll find the Dollfins."

Again the River began to run up-hill. This was a longer stretch and at times it seemed to Bucky as though they would never make the grade. But the whale did it, and they drifted into the quiet water of

a large lake.

"Look, look!" he cried. "There is one of the little giddyheads now! She sees me!" and Davy bellowed a greeting that echoed among the hills.

CHAPTER 4

The School of Dollfins

IMMEDIATELY, hundreds of little wooden heads popped up out of the lake. Eagerly they swam toward the big, good-natured visitor.

These pretty, doll-headed figures were something like old-fashioned mermaids. They had fish tails, sure enough, but every time they moved their wooden arms or their necks they squeaked.

Such a babble and chatter Bucky had never before heard as came when the Dollfins clambered over the whale's polished back.

"Meet my friend Bucky Jones," said Davy turning one eye toward the boy and the other in the direction of the girls. "He's a passenger as well as my friend."

Turning their wooden heads toward the boy, they stared with wide, painted eyes.

The whale continued to speak: "My friend is a stranger in these parts-he's a pilot and an experi-

enced traveler-and, also, he is a cousin of mine-and-"

"That's enough!" squeaked one of the Dolifins. "So many things all in ONE BOY? I can hardly believe it."

A round-faced Doll took hold of Bucky's hand. A little dimple in her fat, painted cheek was something she wanted everyone to see. With her round, painted eyes close to the boy's nose, she gazed vacantly over his head. By the time she had finished shaking his hand, Bucky's fingers were numb with cold.

Although the Dollfins were pleased, they were also puzzled. Certainly they were not elated as they crowded around the boy.

"At last," they sighed in a half-hearted way, "you have brought us our playmate."

Hundreds of disappointed eyes glared at the astonished boy.

"Well-now-not exactly-" faltered Davy.

"I guess we'll have to make the best of it," the Dollfins interrupted. Though their manners were not cordial, they came a little closer to Bucky. One straightened his necktie; another slicked his hair. "The first thing we will do is change his name to Ducky."

Gently he eased them away, as politely as possible,

but one little giddyhead clung to his arms with so much enthusiasm he hardly knew what to do. This persistent little doll got one cold hand down his back, and with the other, she grabbed his hair and held him tight.

Roughly, Bucky shook her loose and she squeaked:

"That's no way to play!" Her painted eyes snapped saucily as she gave the boy a push and turned angrily to the whale: "He's too rough.

They all began to cry, in chorus: "Why didn't you bring us a girl to play with? This is only a boy-we want a girl!"

The poor whale was so embarrassed his eyes rolled uneasily from side to side.

"Listen to me, my little friends. Quiet, please. My cousin Bucky is my pilot. Pilots are forbidden to play with dolls when on duty." The whale turned to Bucky. "Isn't that the truth?"

"Those are the facts," the boy answered briefly.

"Bosh with your facts-we want a playmate, and he has to stay here and play with us whether he wants to or not," shrilled a fat little Dollfin clapping her wooden hands angrily to add force to her words. "Of course we prefer a girl but we'll condescend to take this boy as a poor substitute."

"Oh, no, no-" The whale's voice was firm. "I'll find a girl for you some other time."

"That's what you've promised us for years but you have not kept your promise."

"This awful boy will stay right here with us until you bring us a nice girl, and that's a fact for you!"

Bucky had stepped to one side during this argument.

The whale whispered to him out of the side of his mouth: "Get into the cabin quickly and lock the door.

If they ever get inside, good-bye to everything."

One step forward and the boy was surrounded by chattering dolls trying to pull him into the lake. He began to sing: "Old Mother Hubbard-she went to the cupboard-" Another step; he kept on singing the old song-"When she got there-the cupboard was bare!" His hand was on the door, and the dolls waited expectantly for him to show them a cupboard.

But he turned the knob quickly and darted inside, slamming the door and finishing the song as he slid across the floor, which gave a sudden tilt downward.

For, with a playful lurch, Davy had washed the Dollifins overboard and dived to the bottom of the lake.

Through the thick sides of the whale, Bucky heard him say:

"Some other trip, I may bring you a girl."

With each flit of the whale, Bucky slid back and forth across the floor.

"Can all this be real?" he thought, "Or am I dreaming? No, I'm not dreaming. I'm wide awake-" he decided when his head struck a heavy mahogany beam. "A bit fantastic, maybe, but very real-" He was convinced of the reality as he clung to the beam, not knowing what to expect next.

By and by the floor became level.

Davy rose to the surface and lolled happily in the bright sunshine. He had left the dolls far behind and was making good time as he churned the blue surface of the lake into sparkling ripples.

Through a crack in the door, Bucky made sure that the dolls were gone before he ventured on deck.

"I've seen all kinds of fish but those Dollfins are extraordinary, aren't they?" he asked, still bewildered.

"Don't get upset by a little fuss like that. From what I've been told there are tougher problems to be met than Dollfins before we get to where we are going."

"The question is-where are we going?"

"No question about it; we are going to Oz."

"Oz? I thought we were already in Oz!"

"In a way, yes-but mostly no! Of course, you understand that we are only on the outside edge. Everything will be different when we get inside this really truly wonderland. I am only a determined old whale,

I know, but I intend to see all the marvelous things I have heard about."

The boy's expression showed his indecision. "I'd like to go along with you," he said, "But I can't make up my mind. If it's anything like I've seen so far, I'd rather go back home."

"I'm not forcing you to come," replied the whale. "I can put you ashore if you prefer."

"Don't bother. I'll go with you," Bucky said hurriedly. "You are the only person I've met in this queer place who is not queer."

"I've lived here a long time," the whale responded. "Longer than I would like to admit. And you, my dear cousin, are the only one I've ever met that I would ask to pilot me to Oz."

The wise old whale at last won his way and an agreement was reached. The only sure information he could offer to his pilot was the general direction. They must travel west. From that alone they mapped their course.

This progress in their plans put the whale in an excellent humor.

Straight ahead were high mountain peaks rising directly in their path.

"Don't give them a thought," the words fairly oozed from Davy. "Mountains are nothing for me to cross

with you to pilot me! Now, cousin, you'd best build up your strength. Go right into the cupboard and get yourself a big mince pie!"

Before Bucky had finished eating the juicy pie, there came to his ears the sound of a roaring torrent of clear green water dashing wildly over the cliffs above him.

CHAPTER 5

The Map

JUST you and I together," chuckled Davy. "We're off!! Where no pirates will catch me nor again turn me into a wild, floating hotel."

"Say the word and I'm ready. You'll find me a fairly good pilot," crisply replied the boy, taking his place by the rail at the front of the deck.

"It's likely to be cold where we are going. You had better get a warmer coat," advised Davy. "I don't feel the cold; in fact, I have never felt the slightest shiver in my timbers. But you are made of raw meat, even if you are my cousin.

After a quick search of the cabin Bucky returned with the pirate's red coat. While looking for it, he had accidentally come across a powerful spy-glass. Opening the coat, he held it with the lining out, close to one

of the whale's eyes.

"What do you suppose this is?" he asked.

They were both puzzled by the coarse stitching worked in some kind of pattern; then, as the design became clearer, they saw to their great joy that it was a roughly sewn map of the Land of Oz. Someone who had been to the wonderland had stitched the chart.

"Jumping Jingo! That's what I've been looking for all my life!!" thundered the whale, spinning around in circles. "At last, at last, we are on the right track. Don't lose that coat, whatever you do. If you lose it, we are lost, too."

Bucky shook his head: "I don't see how I could be lost worse than I am, so it doesn't make much difference. Let's get started," he said.

"Righto! Hold tight!! All speed ahead!!! Here we go!" Like a streak of lightning, Davy churned toward the waterfall. He leaped into it, swimming faster than the swirling water fell. Up and up he leaped with tremendous effort until he slid over the high brink at the top of the highest mountain.

The summit was covered with ice and snow, and not a drop of deep water, but Davy managed to slip easily over the frozen crust until they had reached the very highest point. From this height a beautiful hill sloped

gently downward for miles and, as far as they could see with the naked eye, it was blanketed with snow.

Davy's wooden eyes fluttered with delight. Bucky was thrilled. Never had either of them seen such a dazzling land of snow.

"What a honey of a hill to coast," said Bucky as he studied the scene. "Eight miles, I bet, without a break."

"Let's have another look at the map in your coat," said Davy.

Slipping off the garment, Bucky held it before the whale who carefully studied every stitch for a long time without saying a word. Then:

"Kinda clumsy work, don't you think?" Bucky asked.

"It's better sewing than I could do," answered Davy, quietly examining every detail.

"You may be able to check-up with this spy-glass," suggested Bucky, extending the glass to its full-length and holding it to the whale's eye. "Can you see anything?"

"Oh! little Jonesie-my own dear cousin. I can see it all!" Davy answered, giving a great gulp.

Taking his turn at the spy-glass, the boy stood still, amazed and entranced at the glittering radiance of the City-a gem of sparking green crystal.

"You are right, Davy, old boy," cried Bucky, slap-

ping the whale's side. "You win."

Far below, the edge of the snow mountain melted into a dense forest and beyond the dark mass of trees a river followed a direct course through brush and rough rocks to disappear from their sight. Broken, desolate country stretched for many miles and still farther away the solid ground became a wide desert that seemed to completely surround the land the travelers were seeking.

Bucky spread his coat on the deck, looking carefully at every stitch in his endeavor to find out just where they were. He put his finger on the spot and showed it to Davy.

"See-we have just passed through the Rose Kingdom and are now in the land of Ev. Straight ahead is marked 'The Domain of the Gnome King' and then -a deadly desert. That doesn't look so good!"

"Not thinking of turning back, are you?" Davy demanded.

"Me? Turn back? Do I look like a pifflepuff? No! Let's start!"

"What on earth has happened?" fumed the whale as he humped his back and frantically twisted his body only to find himself stuck.

At the same time the boy could feel that his feet

were snow bound. Yank and strain as he would, Bucky remained firmly held to the spot with icy fingers.

CHAPTER 6

Over the Hump

"MAYBE we have been a little impulsive, to come so far away," Davy's voice was anxious as he felt cold clutching fingers crawling up his sides, and saw them climbing up Bucky's legs.

Desperately he wrenched himself this way and that, giving impotent grunts. In vain they struggled. Both were frost bound.

"No use to flutter, big boy," whined a chilling voice from a flurry of snow. "You are now in the power of the Zerons. Don't try to tear yourselves apart in that absurd manner. Just consider yourselves ice-olated forever, both of you."

Drifts of Zerons piled around them; nipping, pinching and biting cold Zerons!

"Fairly and squarely you've been caught. Stop that squirming or we'll freeze you stiff," the Zerons called as they stung Bucky.

"I'll be jiggered if I let a lot of little jiggers like you freeze me out of Oz," bellowed the whale.

"Quiet!" ordered the Zerons in icy tones. "You are ice-olated now, you big fish, not jiggered."

Every moment the adventurers' plight became worse. Davy was nearly covered with the frosty little snow-men. Bucky felt their cold fingers pinching his ears and nose. His arms were stiffening, making him powerless to brush off the Zerons.

Try as they would to break away, they could not succeed. Each was equally helpless. The boy cast a despairing look at Davy whose big eye winked playfully and whose broad mouth stretched into a wide grin. The whale took a deep breath.

From the top of his head a heavy stream of water spouted and fell over the Zerons in a warm shower. Instantly every Zeron melted away. With a nervous shrug the big whale broke loose, and Bucky was also freed. Slowly they began to slide down the side of the mountain in the direction of Oz.

"Boy-Oh boy!" shouted Bucky as their speed increased by leaps and bounds.

The gentle, gliding motion was a glorious sensation. With never a jolt to break the rhythm, it felt like flying through the air. It would be a long slide and they kept headed in the direction of the river. Over slightly raised humps they cleared the ground and

landed each time in the drifts below, gaining speed with every leap.

Striking a more elevated ridge, they cleared it and came down with a bump. Then another, and another, each a little longer. Each time the whale uttered a loud "Ooomph" when he landed with a thud twenty feet below.

Their mad rush soon increased to a breakneck speed. To slow down or stop was beyond their power. The sudden bumps became more violent. Bucky could hear the plates smashing and rattling inside the cabin.

"Oh, for an anchor," he thought, seeing danger ahead. "Steer to the right!" he screamed as they approached the edge of a high cliff.

Not a second too soon the bulky whale veered to one side, then shot along the dangerous edge to a more gradual slope.

"Let me pilot you," insisted Bucky when he had caught his breath after that scare. "Now ease to the left; that's enough!"

He directed as they continued their way safely along the foot of the cliff, avoiding many dangerous crashes.

By going Quiggley-Diggley back and forth, they checked their perilous descent yet still went along at a good, fast clip. Passing the half-way point, they zig-zagged safely from side to side. Under perfect

control, they skimmed the deep snow, eyes set on the river below.

It took exactly eleven minutes to make the slide which covered nearly eight miles.

One final lurch-a hissing splash-and they were safe in the river. The whale breathed a deep sigh of relief and held it for a long time.

"Umph!!" he finally blew it out. "Rough road-very rough road. There is nothing like a nice soft river under you, I'm finding out."

"I prefer a nice soft bed-dry and warm," said Bucky with a yawn.

"Suit yourself," replied the whale gaily, "so long as you aren't looking for it on the other side of the snow mountain. Though it was bumpy in spots, it's easier sliding down than climbing back." He rested a little on the smooth water. "That mountain must be three miles high," Davy continued, turning one eye back over their tracks. "Do you see what I see?"

"If you see giddyheads, I see them too. And they are following us!" answered Bucky in despair.

Sure enough, skiing on their fish-tails came the Doll-fins-Evidently the whole school was taking a holiday. With shrill peals of laughter they swayed over the light snow, leaping high into the air or spilling into

drifts, but always following the definite trail big Davy
had left behind.

Bucky watched their descent with growing alarm
as he nervously paced the deck.

"I do not intend to be a plaything for a lot of wooden
headed dolls!" he exclaimed. "I'd rather risk the burn-
ing desert! Yes!! Twenty burning deserts! Ahoy!
Let's be on our way at once."

Without another word they started down the stream.
They bumped over hidden rocks, squirmed through
seething rapids and wriggled themselves across shal-
low stretches before they floated peacefully at last
in the quieter bosom of the river that carried them
into the dense forest. Here they were hidden from
view.

"I hope those giddyheads get back to school before
nine o'clock tomorrow morning," said Davy as he
settled himself in a little cove, to close his eyes bliss-
fully and doze off into a snooze after all his exertion
--leaving Bucky, the pilot, in charge of the expedi-
tion.

CHAPTER 7

Beginning a Long Journey

FINDING himself alone in command, Bucky decided to get under way again and soon discovered a simple way to steer the whale. By stepping either to the right or to the left, his weight caused the sleeping fish to turn in the desired direction.

He worked out of the cove and into the narrow part of the river where he had no trouble navigating. As far as he could see there were no boats to dispute his right-of-way.

All he had to do was let the current carry them along. The afternoon drifted away. The only sound that Bucky heard was the drowsy voice of Davy occasionally murmuring snatches of sea songs in his sleep. Other than that, no excitement came to break the monotony of drifting down the dreamy river.

Then Bucky noticed a large bubble floating toward him.

When it came quite close, it burst; and as it burst, it uttered the word "Stop!"

"Just an empty word," thought the boy and continued on his course.

His serenity was interrupted by the sight of four larger bubbles floating straight toward him.

In quick succession each one exploded, popping with a commanding ring, and each uttered a different

word-"Final-warning-turn-back!"

"Quite impossible," answered Bucky and let the whale drift.

From somewhere ahead a whole string of bubbles quickly appeared, larger and more determined bubbles, bursting with warning and threats.

"Heave to! Stop! Go no farther! Or else--" These sharp, explosive words awoke the whale. When he slid open his eyes, he realized that something was amiss but he did not allow the disturbance to halt him.

More and more bubbles rose to meet them, popping and sputtering sharp commands. Still they kept going ahead until they were surrounded on every side and finally were completely covered. This dimmed their light and shut off all view of the river. They were compelled to stop. Both Joneses were speechless with surprise while the bubbles piled over them.

Without any particular reason, Bucky began to answer the bubbles and noticed he had started them sputtering a lot of trifling talk, using empty words that exploded themselves into nothing and out of the way.

Davy, noticing this also, joined with Bucky and gaily had his say. This added to the gabble of popping words. With every word the boy and the whale ut-

tered, a bubble answered and left an empty space where it had been. The faster they jabbered, the faster the empty gabble disappeared. Word for word they exploded hundreds of hollow words with all the empty talk that came into their heads. This battle of words became a din of long-winded jabber without much meaning.

"Bam-Bam~puff-" burst the glib words into nothing. Bucky and Davy were gaining ground, using so many words that they popped and puffed a clear space in front of them. They talked faster, blowing up bubbles faster than they came to replace the ones already exploded. Presently this continual talk cleared the air enough that the journey could be continued.

"We talked them down all right," said Bucky.

"Talked them hollow," chuckled Davy.

Coming again into the open spaces, they noticed two bright bubbles following them. Davy slowed down to wait. When at last the bubbles had caught up with the whale and come close enough so that their voices could be heard, they called out.

"Good-bye!" they puffed and were gone.

"Good-bye-and bless your hearts-and thank you.

You are the only sensible words I have heard so far!"

Davy called back as they started off again at a good

smart speed.

"I wonder where all that vacant talk came from," remarked Bucky.

"Some talkative sorceress, I suppose, who has learned to boil her idle conversation in a witch's caldron and put it on the air for anyone within hearing."

"Why should anyone do such a useless thing?" Bucky wanted to know.

"How should I know?" the whale answered wearily. "You'll find the woods are full of half-cracked-jim-cranks. That's the reason the practice of witchcraft and sorcery is forbidden by the Rulers of Oz." The whale's voice brightened. "I haven't the slightest doubt but what we'll meet others before we reach Oz. But we can thank your lucky stars that we are on the rivers instead of the mountains, for the mountain witches are the worst." Davy grinned at his companion. "Go inside and get another handful of crullers. That may cause you to think of Oz where anything you desire you can have by just wishing for it."

"That seems altogether too easy," mused Bucky.

"Of course, but nobody is going to make you wish for anything if you don't want to. You can suit yourself. Everyone who gets there stays forever." As he spoke, the whale swung around a curve of the river away from the bank to avoid the branches of a droop-

ing willow that brushed the water.

"It may be a very swell place," admitted the puzzled boy, "But you can bet your boots I won't stay for-ever-"

"I'd take that bet if I needed boots. You know, I wasn't built to wear such things. Let me tell you, Little Jonesie, it's much more difficult to get into Oz than it is to get out. Especially an individual of my size," the whale answered with a note of misgiving in his voice.

"Never mind, big boy, I'll stay with you to the end or die in the attempt."

"Die? What do you mean? Nobody ever dies in Oz. You live forever-"

Bucky scratched his head and was thoughtful:

"That's good news! Very good!"

The trailing boughs from the trees along the shore became thicker; wisps of mist and little flickers of light shone through the leaves. Strangely enough, they had not seen a single dwelling.

"Kind of a lonely place, don't you think so, Davy?"

"I've been in much lonelier places than this; many and many's the time."

"What are Oz prisons like?" Bucky asked.

"Prisons!!!" exclaimed the astonished whale burst-

ing into a roar. "Please get this straight. In the Emerald City they never heard of a prison. The City is ruled by Queen Ozma, the kindest and most thoughtful ruler in the world. The great Wizard is her most trusted adviser and on special occasions the powerful Glinda is ready to help. All they think of is how to make everybody happy. You'll see for yourself."

"Where does this wonderland begin? So far, I haven't noticed much kindness in the people I've met; except you, of course," said Bucky, trying impatiently to free himself from a long willow wand that had looped itself around his neck.

"You must remember," began Davy, "that we are now in the wildest wilderness of all Oz and may have to overcome a few obstacles. I recall stories the pirates used to tell-wild stories-I didn't believe them at the time but-" he paused.

"But what?" questioned Bucky.

Davy never finished the story, for the shadowy willows made a swoop with their long loops across the deck. Bucky was too quick for them as he took a firm hold on a branch and broke it off.

On both sides of the river, the willows began to weep and wail, swinging out toward them with long, clutching arms.

"Send them to Tickle Bender!!" they shouted, and

shoved the whale down the stream. From tree to tree Davy was propelled with violent pushes. "Wait till Tickle get you-Ohoo-Ohooo," wept the willows swaying closer to the travelers to give them one last violent shove. And the great fish with his lone passenger was swept out of the woods.

They came out into a land of dry rocks and low bushes.

The current of the river seemed suddenly to stop flowing. Then, just as suddenly, it started again. At times they would stand still for a whole minute, then shoot forward when a huge wave rushed them.

The willows had stopped weeping and begun to laugh. "Wait till Tickle gets you," they cried. "He'll tickle you plenty!"

"He seems to tickle you more than he does us!" yelled Bucky as a parting shot. The wave that carried the whale grew higher and higher.

It rose to such a height that it was ready to break and crash into a breaker but instead of doing that, the frothy spray formed itself into a head. The water was so clear that Davy and Bucky could see fish swimming and darting about inside of the watery skull.

"How do you do?" asked Bucky, greeting the odd looking creature.

"How do I do what?" grumbled Tickle.

"Why-whatever you do do," the boy answered, a little confused.

"Just imagine such a question-how do I do what-ever I do do? And why should I tell you what I do do -or don't do?"

"Maybe I shouldn't have asked you in the first place," apologized Bucky, still more confused.

"First place? First place? What's that?"

"I suppose the head of the river is the first place," answered Bucky impatiently. "We expect to find out."

"I certainly am the head of the river, and anything else you'll never find out. It's none of your affair."

"Come, come-" joined in the whale, "this do-do talk is getting us nowhere."

"You are perfectly right," gurgled the watery head as the water surged through his face and long whiskers.

Several long, liquid fingers appeared out of the waves and began to tickle the whale in his ribs. But Davy only squirmed a little-not much-because the nerves in his wooden boards were not very sensitive.

Tickle was enraged to see the whale take his tickling so calmly and he rose higher and higher, lifting Davy with him. His face turned into foam with the fury of the rising water rushing forward into a seeth-

ing breaker. The gushing spray carried Davy forward with the speed of the wind.

Bucky locked his arms tightly around the rail -
"come what will, I'll stick with Davy."

They began to fall. Down-down into a deep opening in the earth. The river roared with glee as it disappeared carrying them both into an underground cavern.

Everything became dark and noisy.

"Looks like nowhere," snorted Davy Jones.

CHAPTER 8

The Army Resigns

ALONG the broad boulevards of the Emerald City and through the smaller streets, the houses were awakening.

Some stretched their tall chimneys like arms or widened their front doors to the breaking point in sleepy yawns.

A crisp, green sparkle filled the air; happy people hurried along the streets.

From the west a bright blue Scalawagon turned from Banana Boulevard into Pumpkin Place and came

to a full stop before a quaint building bearing the sign
OZ CREAM beside the door.

An eager boy about twelve or thirteen years old
stepped from the car.

"You needn't wait for me," he said. "I'll walk to the
palace."

The intelligent, expressive eyes of the Scalawagon
looked from its turret; one of them gave the boy an
understanding wink. With a disappointed expression
the Scalawagon moved slowly away. Nothing would
have pleased it better than to carry this boy all day
on his rounds.

As the lad turned briskly toward the house, it drew
itself up to full height with a welcoming gesture and
opened its front door as he approached. His blue suit
and blue shoes indicated that he came from the land
of the Munchkins.

The pleasant face of a young girl smiled from inside
the entrance.

"Oh, Number Nine, I'm so glad you came," she ex-
claimed. "I wanted to tell you about Evangeline and
our two Oz cream containers. The two ten gallon cans
with the new bottomless supply may not be enough
to serve all our customers and Evangeline. I was
hoping you might find some way to get me two more
cans. I wouldn't have you think we had ever run

short, but, since Evangeline, with her two mouths, drops in, we might not be able to fill orders. We are expecting her any moment now. She always comes early because she prefers my Oz cream parlor above all the others in the City."

"No one can blame her for that," replied Number Nine. "I like it, too. Don't worry your pretty head, for I met Evangeline yesterday. She spoke so highly of your place I told the Wizard about your possible difficulty before we quit work last night. Just to hear Evangeline tell how good your cream is has made me hungry for some ever since.

"That's what everyone tells me," beamed the pretty shopkeeper. "Wait one moment till I get you some," and the girl bounded back into the shop. Once behind the counter she uttered a pleased little shriek: "Glory be! Glory be! Now, isn't that just like the Wizard!" Where the two cans had been, there were now four. Although it was impossible ever to empty a single can or even nearly to reach the bottom of it, the Wizard had doubled the supply.

In Oz everything is so abundant that no one ever runs short, and never any charge for a single thing. Number Nine had been chosen to assist the Wizard of Oz in the endless details of City management as

well as his work in the laboratory. His double duties kept him busy all day. No sooner had Number Nine begun to eat his cream than the soft voice of Evangeline was heard outside and her two monstrous heads looked through the window.

"We just happened to be passing," began the gentle voice of the first head, "and we thought we'd drop in for a little snack to cool our throats," finished the second head. "Thanks to the soothing benefit of your cream our coughs have entirely disappeared. If you only knew how mortifying it has been to annoy our friends by coughing smoke and flame in their faces! It's not polite."

"That's splendid," laughed Number Nine, "but you are always polite. In all of Oz, there is no Dragonette half as polite as you, so the Wizard has sent you two extra tubs of Oz Cream for your own special use. One is for Evan and one for Geline. I have never been able to tell you apart, so you will have to make your own selection of flavor."

"Horrors!" ejaculated one of the heads. "This may lead to a mixup--we don't know which is which either." Number Nine made a record of this difficulty in a small note-book. But the other head cried out:

"Bless my claws and scales! Think no more of it dismiss the matter-and tell us how we can show our

gratitude."

"That is easy. Eat more Oz cream!" smiled Number Nine as he rose from the chair before his empty plate. At the door he waited until Evangeline had crackled and scratched her huge dragon body to one side. She was a great pet, humored by everyone in the Emerald City for her refined manners and her attention to etiquette.

Before she had time to untangle herself and thank the boy again, he was half-way down the street. For Number Nine this was a busy day-with animal gardens to visit, public orchards to look over and bowers and snuggeries where free food was provided, to be inspected.

All this he did, then took care that all the emeralds were properly polished and the hedges trimmed into the likenesses and shapes of the important people of the Kingdom.

When he had finished his work, he found his way to the popular style shop. Jennie Jump, the chief stylist of the land, met him at the door. She and Number Nine were great pals for they had experienced many adventures together.

"I hear you are having lunch with the Queen today," said Jenny, her voice filled with excitement. "Let me

see if you are presentable." He turned around and around while she made a careful inspection. "No-- there are wrinkles in your sleeve. Better let me fix them."

In a jiffy she put the boy through her magic turn-style and turned him out in a snappy Oz green suit with silver buttons.

"Dressed to the Queen's taste," she laughed and, with a pat on the shoulder, she sent him on his way to the palace.

Near the castle gate Number Nine met a crowd of amused Ozians who apparently were watching something, for at intervals they burst into encouraging laughter and gay shouting.

Scalagawons were dashing up and down the street. Groups of noisy youngsters ran in all directions with the green-whiskered soldier in hot pursuit. The children hid behind houses until the soldier had passed, or climbed into Scalawagons which took them to safety. But, with the soldier out of sight, they hurried back to the palace wall. Each child held a piece of chalk with which he drew pictures of the soldier on the smooth surface of the wall.

This single soldier made up the whole army of Oz; he had all the dignity of a commanding general. He thought the pictures lacked this dignity. He issued

his own commands which he himself was compelled to obey.

"Down with treason!" he squealed, rushing hither and yon after his tormentors. "Keep the royal peace! Suppress this mutiny and rebellion!!" he ordered himself.

The children skeedaddled, shrieking with excitement.

"Halt!" roared the army. Nobody halted, so he halted himself. "Brats!" he stormed as they all escaped.

Number Nine watched the disturbance with a chuckle. He got his name from being the ninth child in a large family, so he knew what fun these youngsters were having.

Smiling broadly, he mounted the grand stairway to meet the Wizard and together they passed down the long jeweled corridor that led to the Great South Hall.

With one arm over the boy's shoulder, the Wizard escorted him into the presence of the Queen.

She was seated on the railing of the balcony outside the Hall and beckoned the Wizard to join her there.

She was greatly amused and burst into peals of cheerful laughter.

"Look," she called and pointed down.

Directly below, the army was again charging after the scurrying children who managed to slip away by the skin of their teeth to safety among the laughing spectators, whose hilarious mood added to the fun.

"I notice our children are annoying my army again," the Queen remarked gently with a roguish little twinkle in her eye. "Those little harum-scarums have been teasing that poor soldier all morning. Such skylarking has gone far enough."

With a gracious gesture, she slid from the rail and welcomed her guests to the royal lunch table.

The meal over, the Queen, the Wizard and Number Nine got down to business without any frills. Many matters of public importance came up for attention. Large green envelopes containing reports floated through the air into the Wizard's hand. When each case was disposed of, the envelope floated back to the filing cabinet in the Hall of Records. The last envelope was marked important.

Opening it, the Wizard puckered his brow and adjusted his spectacles on his nose as he read:

Last official report, Army of Oz
1st. Wore out twenty-two pair of shoes.
2nd. Smashed only musket in the Kingdom.
3rd. Army's amiable temper ruined.

4th. Not a prisoner taken.

5th. Army disgusted. And resigns.

"Harummp!" sputtered the little man and his glasses fell off. Looking into the distance with eyes filled with mild anxiety, he crammed the report back into the envelope and it floated away. "Well-well-" he drawled, "I don't think we need consider the resignation part of it."

Ozma's eyes twinkled as she ate another candied cherry.

"We understand how our soldier with his green whiskers has done a lot of running around, but a few army maneuvers can't possibly hurt him. He is only doing his duty in preventing those artistic little cubs from defacing the walls. It was amusing to watch them scamper, and I always dislike spoiling the children's fun." She was thoughtful for a while-then turned eagerly to the Wizard: "Why not get all our children together and direct their artistic energies to something useful. I will have them decorate the entire castle wall with their best pictures. Real scenes from the glorious history of Oz." The Queen smiled broadly at her two companions. "It would keep them out of mischief and add to the beauty of the City, to say

nothing of saving the amiable temper of our army."

The Wizard was delighted. "Your Gracious Majesty always amazes me," he exclaimed, jumping up in surprise. "You took the words right out of my mouth. To decorate the walls!"

"And you double surprise me," said Number Nine, a little shyly. "I was just about to make the same suggestion."

"That being the case, the law is passed unanimously!" said the Wizard, pouring himself another glass of grape juice. "And the meeting is adjourned."

CHAPTER 9

The CWO Painters' Project

NO sooner had the council come to an end than the patter of footsteps was heard in the hall. The door to the Council Chamber flew open with a bang and Princess Dorothy, Trot, Betsy and Jellia Jam ran excitedly into the presence of the youthful Queen.

"Have you seen the soldier chasing the children?" they giggled, all out of breath. "It's almost as good as a circus. And he hasn't caught a single one yet"

"You should see his funny long legs," panted Trot
"They were simply velocious."

Number Nine looked at the Wizard and the Wizard looked at Ozma. Velocical? They all wondered where Trot had picked up such a beautiful word.

Raising her hand to quiet her impulsive friends, Ozma said:

"Unfortunately you are two minutes late. The whole problem has just been settled."

Princess Dorothy looked surprised: "Well-" she began.

"Well, what?" asked the Wizard a little impatiently. Before any explanation could be made, the corridor echoed with the rattle of more children's feet. Into the Great Hall they rushed crowding the gallery and filling a large part of the Hall. Behind them resounded the grim footsteps of the soldier with the green whiskers.

He stalked into the Hall, stopped before the Queen with a determined air and saluted her:

"Will Your Majesty allow me to deliver all the monkey-shiners of Oz?" he paused. "For being monkey-shiners, they should be properly punished." He saluted again.

"You have done well to bring the children here. We were wanting them," said the Wizard. He drew one little boy toward him and pushed back the tousled

hair that fell in his eyes. "What's your name?" he asked the child. The youngster was so impressed by this kindness from the great Wizard that he could not speak.

"Whipper-snapper is a good name for him, if you ask me," bellowed the angry soldier.

"But I didn't ask you," quietly replied the Wizard as he led the little fellow to a table and handed him a glass of fresh grape juice.

"If that doesn't beat all!!" sputtered the army. Giving aid, comfort and grape juice to prisoners!!"

He stormed around, stuffing his pockets with fruit and cookies from the table, then he stalked out of the Hall with his nose in the air.

"He'll get over his huff in four minutes," said Number Nine, glancing at the clock. It was his work to investigate and suppress huffs. "It's only a four-minute huff

The Queen was speaking: "Now that we are all together and just in time to hear of our new project, I think our wonderful Wizard has more to tell you." Ozma rested her arms on the table and smiled toward the great sorcerer.

"We are thinking of having you paint the history of Oz on the castle walls," the Wizard explained.

"What do you think of the idea?"

Dorothy's eyes danced: "It's magnificent!" she cried.

"It's the grandest idea I ever heard," chimed in Jellia.

"Splendid!" said the Wizard. "We'll call it the CWO Painters' Project. CWO stands for Castle Walls of Oz. You children shall do the painting, making a lasting record of the important events in the history of our great city. Dorothy, you can lay out the picture of your adventures. Betsy, Ojo, The Intelligent Scarecrow and the Kindhearted Tin Woodman can each do theirs. There will be plenty of help for you. Then, Kabumpo and Scraps and Tik-Tok, Jack Pumpkinhead-my goodness gracious!-and Jennie Jump -really, there is hardly any end to the interesting stories, and you've plenty of space to work on."

The plan was received with enthusiasm by all there, as well as by those who came hurrying into the Hall to learn what was going on. The Hungry Tiger, the Cowardly Lion, Sir Hokus, Captain Salt, General Jinger-and a long line still crowded the corridor.

"I'm here to explain this" and the cheerful little Wizard laid out the details of the project to Princess Dorothy, and how it was all to be done. "I know you take pride in your City and want to make it more

beautiful," he said at the close. A thunder of applause followed.

"When do we start?" asked Kabumpo, the huge elephant who had been leaning against the throne.

"We have already started," said the Wizard as he wiggled his hand in the air and several large boxes floated toward him. "You now observe," he continued, opening one of the boxes, "that the first step has been taken." He held up a number of paint brushes.

"Quaint looking things !" exclaimed Trot.

"Yes, yes, my dear," the Wizard answered. "It's a novelty. Something new in paint brushes. They are designed to supply every color. You only need to turn the handles to get the shade of color you need. They cannot drip and you never need to dip them into a paint pot. I am sure you will find them perfect," he added, passing them around for inspection. "And now that everything is settled, I am leaving the magic brushes in your hands. Let us see what you can do. You begin the big job tomorrow."

He sat down with a mild feeling of satisfaction as the children gathered together in little groups to work out their plans.

Number Nine slipped away and hurried to the Wizard's secret Laboratory in the high tower. He set to

work sweeping the workshop and dusting the delicate machines. Then he tried a few experiments with long distance observations through the Ozmic Ray.

"Jumping Jupiter!" he exclaimed after the first peep through the complicated lens. "Whoo - oo - what's all this?"

The tube crackled; darting sparks snapped out. The distant vision of a small volcano floating in a pink ocean was projected on the screen. Definitely the picture showed trouble of some kind. Little figures in white coats moved rapidly over the volcano's sides swinging long weapons.

Out of the ocean appeared the polished sides of an odd-looking fish. Number Nine thought it looked like a whale made of wood but before he could be sure it had dived beneath the pink water

A small boy was hurled from the volcano into the sea.

"Rough stuff, I'm thinking!" Number Nine muttered, watching attentively.

The great head re-appeared-yes, it was a whale. It was following the boy, who climbed onto the mouth after a vain struggle in the water. The volcano was belching vegetables from its crater.

"Weird goings-on out there somewhere," said Num-

ber Nine to himself, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "This ought to be looked into."

Late into the night a light in the Wizard's tower could be noticed from the streets. Number Nine was still watching every move on the wild Nonentic Ocean.

Early next morning the boy was back at the screen and all the time he could spare from his other duties he gave to observing the progress of this unusual looking monster carrying another boy about on his extended jaw.

Suddenly he stiffened. "Hey there! You can't do that!" he yelled into the tattlescope, and without any dilly-dally he banged through the astonished Ambassador at the end of the hall. "Take me to the Gnome King's Dominion!" he commanded, and disappeared.

A few minutes later he suddenly reappeared. For a time he anxiously studied the tattlescope. Then, suddenly remembering the Wizard's instructions, he turned from the thrilling scenes on the screen to attend to his duties outside. Turning to the hall clock, he said, "Keep an eye on this tattlescope until I get back," and locked the door carefully as he went out.

It was a glad day for the people of the Emerald City, and it would have been so for Number Nine if he had not been so anxious about the unknown whale.

His faithful Scalawagon was waiting at the castle

steps. And, with a "Cheerio," he hopped into the car, pressed a button inside for lunch and began his inspection while he ate.

Around the entire wall, scaffolds and stepladders were erected, over which swarms of children were helping to put the last final touches to the paintings that were to be finished that afternoon. The entire city was doing its utmost to make the presentation a success.

Each artist had been given a whole city block to decorate and every person and animal, both high and low, were working for dear life to have his picture finished on time.

Kabumpo the Elegant Elephant was desperately covering vast surfaces, with Ojo sitting on his head adding a final touch where it was needed.

Close by, Tik-Tok, with a brush in each hand and a ruler in his teeth, was finishing an elaborate mechanical drawing of wheels, cogs, pulleys, springs and keys. His helper was an elderly man in scraggy clothes who measured and corrected the work from beginning to end so that all the wheels moved together. It was Tik-Tok's own idea.

The patchwork girl had covered her space with patches that looked very much like herself. And on

each patch she had written a rhyme. To a rubber
ghost who had been covered with smelly fiabbergas,
she wrote,

"Persnickety Bellsnickle,
Once you smelled not worth a nickel.
Now you're a rubber-out,
You're even useful here about."
Across another patch appeared,

"In verse I tell you what I thunk,
Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's punk."
She stood before her patches in deep thought, then
dashed off the following,

"I'm running out of bright idears
With which to hail our royal peers."

Farther on were adventure pictures and others that
were funny. The eyes of the Scalawagon danced with
amusement at all the comical decorations. And Num-
ber Nine thought they were extraordinary.

Captain Salt had made a beautiful blue ocean with
pirate ships that sailed back and fofth, with sea gulls
darting through the sky.

General Jinger had cows and horses marching with

wooden guns over their shoulders. She was seated on the Sawhorse about to attack a long row of red, white and blue crows sitting on a high fence.

The Hungry Tiger had filled his space with a close-up portrait of himself, and the Cowardly Lion had entirely forgotten to put himself anywhere in his picture. By special invitation Rinkitink had come a long way from his kingdom, with a surly old goat, to do their bit. Trot and Jellia Jam had made an excellent drawing of the castle.

Sir Hokus Pokus, assisted by Evangeline, the two-headed Dragonette, had completed an army of knights in armor, on beautiful white horses, charging through a field of red roses. All the students from the Wogglebugs' College had come to work on a field of various sporting events. Many other noteworthy decorations were there, but we haven't the time to speak of them all. Number Nine, however, kept notes on every one.

Two spaces were empty. One for the Tin Woodman, the other for the Scarecrow.

Nearing the spot from which he had started Number Nine found Jack Pumpkinhead with a crowd of admirers gathered around him. Jack was a slow, painstaking creature but his picture was one of the best, most life-like and spirited. Standing on the back

of the Sawhorse he was filling in, and touching up.

His work was mostly boiling caldrons with sorcerers,
witches and black cats, and poisoned fumes that
turned into owls and pink bats.

Few dreamed that Jack possessed so much talent-
he didn't know it himself. At the moment Number
Nine arrived, he was finishing a life-sized portrait of
an old witch who at one time had caused a lot of trou-
ble in the Land of Oz. She wore a high pointed hat
with a wide brim. Around her neck was a crinkley
white ruff and she had large silver buckles on her
square-toed shoes.

Bending down, Jack asked the Sawhorse, "Can you
remember the color of the lining in old Mombi's cape?"

The old Sawhorse stamped his feet, "Sure, I can
remember. It was red. I'll never forget that terrible
hag. She was an old wretch if ever there was one."

Jack painted the lining red in the long black cape
that reached her shoe-tops. The face he painted with
a long hooked nose and beady black eyes shining with
a wicked leer. A sharp chin stuck out with a deter-
mined expression that was true to life.

Jack had plenty of reason to remember what this
famous old witch looked like. For hadn't she held him
prisoner for seven years? Yes, for seven long years
she had made him wash dishes and peel potatoes with-

out one minute's rest. All the time, for Jack never needed to sleep or eat

"You are right, the old jade did have a cantankerous streak," mildly answered Jack, as he finished the last brush stroke.

Many words of praise for Jack's work came from the crowd. "It's excellent-amazing-a speaking likeness" was heard on every side.

The expression on the portrait was so real it seemed to move slightly. Then the head actually turned and old Mombi glared at Jack.

In a thin cackling voice she ordered him out of the way, at the same time freeing herself from the wall and expanding into her natural shape.

Jack looked surprised in his own gentle manner, but saw no reason for her spoiling his picture, and asked her politely to get back where she belonged.

At this Mombi pushed him to one side. "Wait until you are spoken to," she piped. "My speaking likeness will do all the talking from now on." Then she calmly stepped out and looked around.

Another cackle and she whacked her broom over Jack's head. "Old jade, am I? Take that, Lunkhead!"

Then across the Sawhorse she laid another wallop. "Terrible old hag, hey? And old wretch?" she added,

swinging her riding broom.

The crowd was horrified and fled in every direction.

Old Mombi's eyes flashed suspiciously. "Am I alone? Am I safe?" she asked herself. "I guess I'd better hide until I settle a few old debts I have against that Queen Ozma. If only I could get my hands on her."

Her eyes snapped as she sniffed. "I smell strong magic," she jabbered, and raised her nose to sniff again. Another poke was aimed at Jack Pumpkin-head, and she sprang over the castle wall, landing on a balcony where she hid among the Queen's favorite flowers.

Then with leaps and bounds she mounted higher and higher until she reached the wizard's tower. With clawlike fingers she forced open the small window and disappeared inside.

Immediately a warning sounded from the bell tower and the bellmen spread an alarm that grew into a bedlam that threw the city into an uproar.

Ozma and the Wizard, who had gone to the Quadling Country to bring Glinda for the opening of the wall pictures, were expected to come back at any time. Number Nine stood glued to the spot. Disaster stared him in the face. "Whatever can I say to the kind Wizard? If only there were some way to prevent further trouble," he shuddered. Everything had hap-

pened so suddenly he was taken entirely by surprise.

He felt disgraced. "I know I am not fit to be an assistant," he accused himself when he saw Mombi climbing out of the window, carrying the Wizard's black bag which held many of his best magical tools.

"Now everything is sunk," he groaned. "Everything. I'm sunk for sure, and maybe the whole city."

The Wizard had mixed just enough magic in Mombi's paint to keep her flying. But in possession of the magic black bag she was now in a position to do untold mischief.

She knew this as she cruised slowly through the air with her head almost buried inside the bag examining every powerful instrument. Without warning two strong young arms caught Mombi in a desperate grip. From somewhere in the street below a figure had unexpectedly shot up and seized her.

With his heart in his mouth, Number Nine recognized his closest friend, Jenny Jump.

Using all her fairy gifts of eye, fingers, foot and her own ability, the girl battled gallantly to gain possession of the black bag. Old Mombi was fully determined to keep it herself, clawing and shrieking with all her old time fury.

Swaying in mid-air, with the girl's strong magic

fingers locked in her hair, Mombi slowly yielded, and Jenny wrenched the bag from her grasp and let her get away. She flew due east and was soon lost in a Yellow blur.

Meanwhile the royal Scalawagon was speeding up from the south, bringing Ozma and her friends for the official opening.

Jenny settled back to earth with her hair askew and panting from her exertion, and took the black bag into her shop. The Cowardly Lion and Hungry Tiger were stationed outside the door. These two watchful guardians stood rigid and alert until the royal party dashed back to the city. Then everyone breathed easier with old Mombi out of sight.

Meanwhile, though only a painted image of her former self, the desperate old mischief-maker made a beeline for the wastelands of the Winkie Wilderness. Here in the lonely mountain passes, so wild and hidden, bandit sorcerers and weird witches work their magic under cover. They have lived there for years waiting to ambush any wanderer.

This wilderness was the first place old Mombi remembered where she could find a hiding place. Yet the refuge was no refuge at all. Only by several desperate encounters did she manage to escape being forced into slavery by wizards and witches just as cruel as

old Mombi and even more powerful. Move on she must.

Out and away she flew, across the yellow sands until she came to the Deadly Desert. Here she let out a screech, closed her eyes, and leaped the whole distance across the dangerous waste. Knowing she would be pursued, she was still driven to find a hiding place. Flying low over the bleak, empty land of the Kingdom of the Gnomes, she saw the sparkle of the water on Tickle Bender's head as it rose up seething over a helpless wooden whale. Without hesitating, she swooped down close to the whale.

"Do I see a door in that silly old fish?" she mumbled to herself. "Yes, I think I do!" She dashed toward it with the speed of the wind, slipped inside the cabin, and slammed the door. Safe inside, she stealthily peered around, poking into every corner. Finding the place empty she crawled under a low bunk and lay flat on the floor.

With one wicked eye she could see every part of the cabin without being discovered. Then-her heart stood still----everything began to sink-down-down-down-

CHAPTER 10

Kaliko in a Rage

TICKLEY BENDER saw old Mombi fly into the whale just as he dropped the Jones cousins into the underground cavern that led to nowhere, and he laughed and laughed.

The huge whale drew his lower deck in close and set his jaw. Bucky held fast to the rail as they went, licketty-split, into complete darkness.

The course of the river turned and twisted. Often Davy scraped his sides on the tunnel walls but soon learned to avoid the tight places at the sharp turns. Occasional flashes from Davy's eyes lit the tunnel, but only for a moment. Beating their way the best they could they managed to steer clear of disaster. The rush of the subterranean river gradually subsided and Bucky's confidence returned. Finally the water found its level and the roar died down. A faint glow from far ahead slowly grew bright enough to show high arches of beautiful carved stone between long stretches of carefully built masonry.

"Looks as if somebody lived down here," whispered Bucky as the light grew bright enough to show them where they were going.

"What's all this?" Davy sputtered, as they ap-

proached a broad lake where a warning sign was
carved in the rock. It read:

NO PLACE FOR FISH, CHICKENS,

Children or Ex-Kings.

Kaliko King of the Gnomes.

"It's too late now to pay any attention to that," said
Bucky, as they barged swiftly past the warning into
the quiet lake.

All around the lake were built galleries of colored
stone. Immense cut rubies and diamonds with other
precious stones were set in such a manner that they
reflected beams of light from the farthest corner to
the high, vaulted roof.

The clang of a hundred hammers could be heard
where twisted little workmen were to be seen, beating
metals into various beautiful forms.

At sight of the newcomers the little gray men
stopped their work and stared in amazement. Only
for a moment did they pause, then darted through
the galleries, spreading the alarm. Throughout the
whole underground kingdom excitement spread. The
Gnomes hurried back to their smoking forges and the
ring of little hammers against anvils began again;
with lightning speed they were forging long chains.
From the edge of the lake, the Gnomes threw these

chains around the whale until they had him so entangled he could not break away.

"Of all the star-spangled nerve!" yelled Bucky.

"What in blazes do you fellows think you are doing?"

"Fishing!" answered a hairy little Gnome. The other Gnomes were convulsed with mocking laughter.

From an upper gallery one powerful Gnome succeeded in looping a line around the whale's tail and pulled it tighter with a double hitch. With a shout of glee a company of bow-legged Gnomes soon had the whale hauled out of the water. They dragged him by the tail into a brightly lighted cavern.

"We'll take him to King Kaliko," they shouted.

"Blithers and blisters! What next?" thought Bucky as he vainly tried to free himself from the strong golden chains that bound him to the whale.

Meanwhile, more wiry gray Gnomes had come up from underground mines carrying pickaxes and shovels.

"Take him to the King!" they yelled, joining the procession.

The King sat on his ruby throne munching a sandstone sandwich.

"Now what?" he groaned in a tired voice. "Get out!"

A hairy old Gnome stepped forward and bowed low.

"We have caught a fish for Your Majesty," he said.

"Will you have it fried for supper? Or baked?"

"Don't bother me," complained the little King. "I don't care what you do with the bung-eyed monster. Eat him yourselves," he grumbled, lolling flat on his back and swinging a skinny leg over the ruby throne.

"I prefer this cup of hot quicksilver," he whimpered as he gulped the sizzling hot liquid and smacked his lips with satisfaction. "Now I feel better," he sighed, sitting up straight and casting a suspicious glare at the captives.

Sliding timidly down from his high throne he stepped gingerly around the chained prisoners. On hands and knees, he crept close to the whale, looking slyly beneath the huge body, and he began to tremble.

"Are you alone?" he stuttered, his round eyes staring in alarm.

"I won't tell you-you should have questioned us before you chained us up," Bucky answered quickly.

"You haven't, by any chance, met a mean old fellow named Ruggedo hanging around outside?" the King asked.

"No!" replied the boy.

"Are you sure?"

"Positive!"

"Then why in bluster and blazes do you come both-

ering me?" snapped Kaliko, peevishly.

"You don't think, for one moment, we wanted to come to this awful place. Do you?"

At this remark of Bucky's, Kaliko flew into a rage.

"So that's what you think of my priceless possessions," he screamed, staggered by the boy's frankness.

"That's not half of what I think !"

"Of all the cool insults to the richest kingdom in the world," raved Kaliko, thinking of the untold treasures he had stored in his caves.

"It's a fine kingdom to get chained up and dragged around in. I don't think you are half-civilized!" Bucky retorted.

Kaliko turned to his head digger: 'Quiggeroc, take this big toad-fish out of my sight, and put that boy to work in your deepest mine," said the King taking a step toward Bucky and swinging his jeweled sceptre threateningly.

At the same moment a clear voice filled the cavern:

"Be very careful, Kaliko!"

At the distinct command the King stopped and listened. The voice continued: "To the boy and the whale, Welcome to Oz. The Gnomes cannot hurt you. This is Number Nine speaking!"

CHAPTER 11

King Bucky

KAL.IKO stood still, his face filled with an expression of doubt and indecision. Recovering quickly from his surprise, he came closer to his prisoners. "Don't try any Hoodle Doodle tricks with me," he said sharply. "If you think you can trick a Gnome you are just making yourselves ridiculous." He aimed a Rockety-socket blow straight at Bucky's head, with his sceptre.

The sceptre was snatched from his grasp by an unseen hand and Kaliko was thrown flat on his back. He lay quiet for a moment, then raised his head just enough to order the whale dragged out of his sight. Led by Quiggeroc, the front line of Gnomes advanced in a body, only to be stopped by an invisible wall that rose several feet away from the prisoners. The rush of Gnomes from the rear stumbled over those ahead, piling up in a wriggling mass of the little men before the barrier, while from inside the wall the clink of breaking chains falling from the whale added to the racket.

Then out of the confusion appeared a boy about the same age as Bucky. He turned to the stubborn Gnome

Ring, pointing his finger at him. "I am here to warn you. I don't want any harm to come to these strangers. See that you do as you are told." He smiled at Davy and Bucky and was gone as quickly as he had come.

Almost as astonished as Kaliko were Bucky and Davy but they managed to keep their wits about them. And with this sudden turn of events the boy became alert, springing toward the King of the Gnomes with his fists clenched.

No longer a beaten prisoner, Bucky grabbed the little King by the shoulders and spun him around. In the scuffle the King's ruby crown fell to the ground. Bucky picked it up and set it on his own head.

"Help!" shrieked Kaliko.

Quiggeroc made a feeble attempt, at the beginning of the scrimmage, to assist his monarch but was unable to get within ten feet of the struggling pair. Bucky, feeling more powerful now that the situation had changed, decided to take the bull by the horns. The crown on his head filled him with courage. He was ready for anything.

"See here, you Kaliko King!" he snapped, with little respect for the uncrowned King. "I'm King here now and I intend to teach you better manners!"

Kaliko bit and scratched at the boy without harming him, and Bucky held him tightly. For a boy of twelve

he was exceptionally strong and he handled the ferocious little Gnome exactly as he should have been handled.

Pulling the ruby crown down tighter on his head, he turned to Quiggeroc who was bouncing nervously on the ends of his toes with the horde of Gnomes bouncing behind him.

"Back to the mines!" yelled the boy.

Many of the Gnomes turned and marched back toward the underground caverns. Quiggeroc, still on his toes, stared with a crafty stare.

From the tail of his eye, Bucky saw Kaliko crawl out of reach, leap to his feet and run toward the great ruby throne. Trembling with terror, he rummaged through his pockets until he found a small ruby key.

In a twinkling he slipped it into a key-hole on the side of the throne. The throne swung open in two halves. Kaliko darted into a hollow space inside and it closed together with a snap.

Tempestuous as the last few minutes had been, Bucky felt even surer of himself than before. The voice of Number Nine had filled him with courage; the crown on his head made him feel like a King when the miners had obeyed his first command. With the unruly little King safely locked up, Bucky felt safe

from his attacks. But of Quiggeroc he was not so sure
--he would bear watching.

He turned to the whale who was impatiently swinging his tail from side to side.

"So far, so good," he said in an off-hand manner, patting the crown down tighter on his head.

The gentle whale turned his round eyes sadly to the boy. "I must say-of all the extraordinary behavior - and surprising conduct - the folks around here beat the pirates-"

"Please now, hold onto yourself," pleaded Bucky. "You warned me not to be surprised at anything in the Land of Oz, so I'm not the least surprised at this. There was a time when I thought the worst had come to the worst. Now, it appears that the best has come to the best and I am King of the Gnomes."

"Yip, Yip for King Bucky Jones!" trumpeted the whale, starting to thrash himself across the jeweled floor toward the lake.

King Bucky jumped aboard and stood erect by the rail as they passed through groups of sulky Gnomes who offered no resistance.

"It's plain to be seen," remarked Bucky, "that whoever wears this ruby crown is King. I may be King but I feel like a fish out of water in this awful hole."

"So do I," complained the whale, "for I am a fish

out of water - and I don't intend to stay out any longer."

He strained his big frame, and creakily dragged himself along corridors lined by walls of beaten gold. On every side Gnomes surrounded them in sullen silence, obeying the boy's commands only because he wore the crown.

With a sigh of relief the whale eased himself into the waters of the lake. They explored every side, looking for a way of escape, but the only possible way was through a large flood-gate and that was closed.

"Open the flood-gate," ordered Bucky.

Not a Gnome budged.

"Stop pussyfooting! Open the gate!" This time Bucky roared. Still, no Gnome obeyed.

Bucky searched his mind for a solution of this difficulty. Like a flash, he remembered the first day he had spent with the whale and his search of the cabin. He had found the pirates' chest and in that chest were the four explosive door-knobs. Quickly he ran to the cabin and returned with them hidden under his coat.

"For the last time, Quiggeroc-Open it up before I blow it up!"

One stubborn Gnome handed Quigg a large dia-

mond, urging him to throw it.

Without waiting longer, Bucky fired a door-knob at the gate. To his astonishment, there was no explosion. But what was more effective, a great blast of wind ripped loose the hinges of the barrier.

At the same moment, the horde of Gnomes let fly a shower of emeralds, diamonds and sapphires that fell clattering on the deck of the whale. Some weighed two pounds and were as large as baseballs. One after another, the boy threw the door-knobs and the flood-gates were blown wide apart by the released wind; they fell open with a crash sending the spray high.

The wind of a tornado now whistled across the lake. Quiggeroc was blown clear back to the cavern entrance, a large emerald still in his hand.

Before he had a chance to throw this stone, Lucky Bucky slipped the ruby crown from his head and let it fly at the old Gnome. The powerful wind penetrated the caverns, filling them with a dismal howling and those Gnomes who had not sought shelter in the galleries were sent spinning into the water. Not until the last Gnome was swept away did the violent wind die down. Bucky could see three queer creatures flying clumsily overhead.

Their heads were shaped like bellows with strong, nozzle-shaped beaks. Long legs dangled from their

bird-like bodies as they darted aimlessly around.

"Come back here," Bucky called, noticing their indecisive movements.

Much to his relief, the birds fluttered down, one at a time, and came to rest on the rail beside him. The first one puffed:

"I'm Tom." The second, "I'm Dick," and gave a nod. The third announced: "I'm Harry, at your service," and took his place beside the others.

Then, they all looked around and asked: "Where is the Flummux?"

"Do you mean this one?" asked Bucky, for he was still holding the fourth door-knob in his hand. "You were all door-knobs before I set you free."

"I'm not surprised at that," Tom why don't you set her free, too?"

"I'll be glad to," Bucky told them and dropped the knob on the deck.

A report like a bursting automobile tire sounded and Bucky was almost thrown from the deck when a fourth, smaller creature appeared with quite a flutter.

"Hello, everybody!" she called when she saw Tom, Dick and Harry sitting on the rail. Turning to Bucky she announced: "These brothers of mine call me Flummux because I am a kid sister. You know how broth-

ers are. My nature is like the breath of spring-a very gentle Zephyr. You may think I am weather vain until you know me better. Who are you?" she asked, suddenly staring at the whale, who was drawing a deep breath.

"Oh, I am Bucky Jones, and this is my favorite cousin, Davy Jones," replied the boy turning to his friend.

The whale gave her a smile.

The girl continued: "We Gabooches always stand together. I really mean, we always blow together. And when we get our wind up, we make the dust fly."

"So I noticed! It was ripping of you to open the flood-gate for-"

"Glad to do it," she interrupted, "but where are we? And why are we here? I don't like this place but I do like you and your big cousin."

"Thanks," replied Bucky. "If you all would like to join our crew, we could help each other to escape from this tough little kingdom."

"Since you have thrown away your crown and King Kaliko is safely locked inside his throne, I think we had better be moving along," suggested Davy.

"Squee to gnomes. I'm not afraid of them as long as I have my breath and strength enough to blow it," said Dick the Gabooch.

"You leave them to me," said the little Gabooch girl breezily as she swooped down on some Gnomes that were creeping up with more diamonds in their hands.

Swish, swash, swooch, she blew them around and returned to her perch beside her brothers.

Flapping her wings, she looked up at the whale with a self-important twitter: "Satisfactory?" she asked.

"Exceedingly so-quite superior-indeed, you deserve all the supreme words of praise that I cannot think of at this moment, to save my soul!" responded the good-natured whale.

"Hardly anything remarkable-just so so," said the little Gabooch in a soft tone that showed a growing affection for Davy.

"Your brothers certainly got us out of a fix," explained Bucky, "and, as we don't like this place any better than you do, I think we had better be moving out while we have the chance."

CHAPTER 12

Over the Rainbow

HOLD tight, all of you," warned Davy impatiently, and spun himself around toward the broken

flood-gate. Over it he plunged blindly into a gloom,
the end of which none of them could even guess.

The Gabooches crowded closer to Bucky who hugged
the hand-rail with determination.

Their way turned and twisted as before. Now and
then Davy scraped along the sides of rock. He mum-
bled unhappily at having his beautiful coat of enamel
scarred.

But having begun the journey, they must keep go-
ing so they crashed along with the current. Pres-
ently they were swirling 'round and 'round like a
bubble in a whirlpool, evidently staying in one place;
and for hours this traveling in long, monotonous cir-
cles continued.

When they were nearly desperate, from somewhere
in the darkness a clear voice spoke out: "Turn to the
left! This is Number Nine speaking. Always turn
left. Turn now!"

Promptly following the advice, Davy struck out
blindly and after a momentary shudder while falling
through dark space, they regained their composure
and knew that the guiding voice had led them in the
right direction.

The waters became calm and a faint sparkle of light
appeared. Not long after this, they swung out into
fresh air.

As far as the eye could see, stretched a land of dreary rocks and sand. Neither dwellings nor animals were to be seen or heard; not even the chirp of the early bird, for it was early morning.

"We must have spent the night in that underground kingdom of gold and diamonds, where they eat sandstone sandwiches and drink molten metal," said Bucky as he scooped a drink from the river. "Suffering Sea Serpents!" he cried and spat the water out. A look of disgust broke over his face. "I'm a burnt biscuit if old Tickle Bender isn't in that water yet. I can taste him. The water tickled my tongue."

The whale's honest eyes took on a cautious expression at the mention of old Tickle.

"I know everything turns out all right in Oz but I would rather not be in the same river with him," whispered Davy as he started in a hurry down the narrow waterway.

As they continued, the river grew narrower and shallower, with the rocks scraping beneath them, but Davy kept on until he found that the entire river had fizzled away into thin air and they were stranded in a desert waste.

The Gabooches looked with sympathy at the boy who had set them free. "Looks as if someone had

stolen the river," said Tom.

"And it looks like the end of us, too," answered Bucky, trying to be cheerful. "I do wish we had picked an orange grove or a strawberry patch."

"Of course, of course," said Tom, "no one would pick such a place as this to end in."

"Be quiet! all of you. And let me hear no more talk about ending, here or anywhere else," said the whale rather sharply. "I want you all to understand that we are going to the Emerald City if we have to move but an inch at a time," and he yanked himself around the rocks with determined jerks.

For hours they jogged through the blistering sun, urged forward by the resolute purpose that Davy always kept fixed in his wooden head.

"We may stumble and even flop a little, but we will get to the Emerald City," he repeated over and over. Sometimes Bucky walked ahead, removing stones to clear the path. Over many miles they staggered, and at the end of the day found that they had covered a considerable distance. Still the way ahead seemed endless.

Luckily neither Davy nor the Gabooches required food. Bucky ate a couple of juicy peach pies and felt better. They rested that night under the stars. Early next morning the restless whale was awake

and on his way again. He expected to go farther than he had the day before because fewer rocks bothered him and the way sloped slightly down hill.

Coming to level ground they noticed, for the first time, that all about them were strewn many bones.

With a yell, one of the bones jumped up: "Klickity Yi-Yi-Klick-Klick-" he shouted and all the bones awoke.

They rattled and shook themselves, staring at the whale out of cold bone eyes. Shrill gusts of crackling mirth filled the air as they danced about with absurd motions to show their fantastic amusement. Every awkward jump brought them closer to the travelers.

"One side! One side!" called Bucky stepping out with the intention of pushing them away if they blocked his path.

Quickly he changed his mind when one of the creatures stood up to shake his hand and with his bent elbow, the bone jabbed Bucky in the ribs. The boy doubled up and rolled on the ground. Before he could get to his feet another elbow nudged him, giving him another sharp shock, like a shooting cramp.

"Stop it!" Bucky howled as he tumbled about in the sand.

Other bones hopped up to give him more jabs with

the butt ends of their joints, and with every touch he got a slight electric thrill that gave him a most unpleasant feeling.

"Are you bones trying to be funny?" gasped the squirming boy.

"Of course we are. We're the funniest bones in all the world. You don't need to tell us that!"

"I think you're crazy!" sputtered Bucky.

"Sure, we're often called Crazy bones too," they rattled as they danced around. "Crazy bones! Funny bones!" they cheered.

Then turning their attention to Davy, they jabbed and poked him from every side. Even through his thick bulk the whale felt little cricks and stitches that made him wiggle. These visible shivers only made matters worse, for the clownish bones left Bucky to give all their annoyances to Davy. While hundreds of little electric darts stung the whale, Bucky regained his place of safety on deck.

Davy moved briskly over the sandy stretch trying to outstrip them, but the nimble bones followed at an amazing pace, prodding and twittering at him as they followed.

Each little electric touch they administered increased the flight of the whale until he was moving at a very rapid speed due to this borrowed electric power.

In this manner they continued the chase until the crazy bones, having used up all their shocks, fell flat on the sand, completely exhausted.

The plucky whale staggered on alone until he came to the edge of the dangerous desert. Hot waves of burning sand dashed up on the shore, as breakers do in the sea.

Here the whale stopped short--and his heart sank. Instead of the cool waters of an ocean, he was faced with rolling waves of scorching sand. The heat was so great that the whale was forced to turn back. Behind a little sand dune the Gabooches were flying lazily, acting as guides. They fluttered to earth, slapping their wings noisily against their small bodies to attract Davy's attention. The whale immediately turned in that direction, and when he and Bucky reached the spot they found the Gabooches guarding an exquisite little girl sitting on a rock.

Tom, Dick and Harry had their dangerous nozzles pointed at the child, who was laughing. The sound was like the tinkle of bells.

The Flummux was angrily scolding her brothers. "Don't you dare touch that beautiful creature! Sometimes you are so stupid."

"Let them raise all the wind they want to; it won't

bother me," said the beautiful creature with peals of silvery laughter.

At that moment Davy arrived and the little fairy danced through the air and landed on the rail beside Bucky.

"Whatever brought you here? Are you lost?" she asked.

"I'm beginning to think so," he answered ruefully.

"Don't worry, little sailor boy. I'm lost, too----I often get lost, but my father always finds me and takes me home. Who are you? I don't remember seeing you before."

"My friend and I," said Bucky, including the whale with a gesture, "are on our way to the Emerald City. I'm not sure we are on the right road."

Interrupted by the sound of tinkling glass, he stopped speaking to listen. The air was filled with seven mysterious pillars of solid light that settled deep into the sand beside them, and in the pillars were each color of the rainbow. The little fairy flew among them, arranging them in place. The air was cooler and cleaner now, as the fairy danced around the whale. Floating gracefully back, she sat down on Davy's head.

"Don't you know me?" she asked in surprise. "My name is Polychrome! My sisters and I are the rain-

bow."

With delicate care and a dainty motion, she caught up the gauzy folds of her dress and flew off again to oversee the forming of the great arch. The curving rays from the rainbow fixed themselves more firmly in the sand as many sisters of Polychrome began to dance down the arc of the bow in the gayest spirits. These beautiful rainbow fairies dipped lightly to the sand bringing hope and confidence to the bewildered travelers.

Polychrome and Bucky were pleading with the whale who kept shaking his head as though in doubt.

"No, no!" he was saying, "You go ahead. Leave me here. I'll find a way to follow later."

"We'll do nothing of the sort. I would never think of leaving you here. If you stay, I'll stay!" replied the boy. "And, another thing-I'm the pilot and you are the first vessel I ever heard of that refused to go where the pilot directed-"

"I'm sure you can do it," insisted Polychrome.

"Please -

"Well, it wouldn't hurt to try," the whale conceded.

"If you won't try, remember I stay right here with you," said Bucky.

"See here, now-if that's the way you feel, of course

I'll try," replied the whale.

"Splendid!" cheered Polychrome.

"Now, I am going to pilot you up that rainbow if it's the last thing I do," said Bucky, as he helped to lift Davy's head against the pillar of light. "Now-up with you-everybody lend a hand!"

The great whale began to rise until he was standing straight up on his tail.

All the daughters of the rainbow helped.

Tom, Dick, Harry and even little Flummux blew a gale strong enough to turn the trick.

Davy began to move-slowly at first-then, with everyone straining for all he was worth, the whale started to rise.

Higher and higher he slid; then faster-until they had him well on the upward way. They could see the desert, far below, dimming as they rose. The other end of the bow was lost in the distance.

All hands continued to push so no time should be lost. Using every ounce of strength, they pushed their dangerous undertaking forward until Davy was moving at a surprising clip, up the long rays of color.

The sun had begun to sink into the evening before they reached the top of the curve. And the girls, who were not accustomed to such hard work, began to show signs of weariness.

"Let's all take a little rest to get back our breath," suggested Bucky when he noticed how worn out the girls were. They stopped pushing.

Davy began to slip backward. But they caught him in time and with renewed vigor they resumed the drive-striving to reach the top. If they had let him slip, there is no telling what might have become of him.

But they were more careful now. They were all joyous when they reached the level stretch of the top of the arc. From that point the going was easier for the bow curved down hill.

"Before we go any farther," said Davy. "I want to try to thank you for all you have done for me!"

"We would never have left such a kind whale and such a nice sailor boy in that awful place," replied Polychrome, and all her sisters agreed.

Then, on the edge of the rainbow, they sat down in a beam of brilliant color. Without warning, the bow began to bend. The weight of the whale made it sag in the middle. Ever so little at first, then more and more, it dipped until it reached the breaking point. Already the four Gabooches were underneath Davy; blowing their most powerful gales, they just managed to hold him from dropping any farther but not an inch

could they lift him no matter how long-winded they
blew. They could barely hold him-Something must
be done quickly-

Luckily a bunch of cloud-pushers who kept the
clouds moving in the sky were returning from work
at the end of the day. They obligingly lent a hand and
soon had the whale back on the level beams of light.

The track ahead ran downward, the curve growing
steeper the farther it bent. The descent seemed down-
right dangerous but so eager was Davy to cross the
desert that he started off immediately down the slight
decline. Gaining speed at an alarming rate, he soon
found it wise to consider slowing down.

"Take it Ozzy, Mr. Jones, take it Ozzy," warned the
Flummux, who had all she could do to keep up with
him.

The daylight was fading and the big wooden whale
knew that the rainbow would grow weaker and van-
ish completely with the setting of the sun.

At the present speed he was bound to smash. He
figured out that there was little choice left to him,
and he dug his tail hard into the rainbow. This acted
as a dragging anchor to break his speed. It was the
best he could do. He let everything take its course.

The pressure of his tail did help a little but not
enough to do more than keep his head pointing

forward.

Then, dropping straight downward, he landed with a crashing swoosh on the surface of a small lake that fortunately was spread out at the foot of the rainbow.

The mighty splash over, Davy settled himself comfortably in the cool water with dancing, golden ripples all around him. With a look of joyous satisfaction, he turned to Lucky Bucky and smiled.

"We are at last in Oz--the real Oz--I can hardly believe it!" he breathed.

Bucky, who had been very much shaken up in the crash, turned anxiously to his cousin:

"You had an awful fall, Davy. How are your timbers? I do hope they are not shivered!"

"I don't care now if every timber in my framework is shivered to bits," replied the whale, with a look of rapture on his broad, friendly face. "At last I am in Oz-Real Oz-nothing else matters."

And the sun went down on the happiest whale in all creation.

Around them the air was so quiet it passed through the trees without disturbing the leaves. It was a land of enchantment. The rainbow itself had dissolved in the twilight but from high overhead, the sweet voices of the rainbow's daughters called:

"Good-night, big whale-good-night, little sailor
boy. We hope you reach the Emerald City safely.
Good-night! Good-night!"

CHAPTER 13

Winning Their Way

BUCKY lay flat on the grass for a long-needed sleep.
The Gabooches, who never closed an eye, perched
on the rail like sentinels keeping guard.

Sun-up, next morning, found them all eager to be
on their way. A hurried glance at the lining of the
pirate's coat showed them exactly where they were
in the yellow land of the Winkies.

The water in the little lake into which they had
splashed the night before was like liquid gold. It
flowed into a prim little river.

This stream ran through a stiff as starch country
with here and there a house set on the top of a hill.

It was not a wide river-just wide enough for Davy
to swim through without touching either side. The
banks were well kept and straight as a ruler, without
the slightest hint of a curve. When the river turned,
it turned in an exact right angle.

Placed close to the edge was a severe looking sign

painted with yellow letters:

NO CONNECTION WITH ANY OTHER RIVER

Fishing Drinking

Bathing and Boating

FORBIDDEN BY LAW

No bridges or tides allowed

Drowning on Thesdays only

DO NOT CROSS ME.

Proceeding at an even speed, the whale was so filled with good-feeling that he paid no attention to the sign.

"What a whale of a place!" he kept repeating as they passed long lines of formal trees leading up to stiff, orderly houses.

Never before had Bucky seen such odd landscapes. Looking at the scenery, he forgot to keep an eye on Davy's course. So, it happened that he suddenly found himself surrounded by a patch of high, waving cat-tails. They were tough and lashed angrily across the deck at Bucky, who caught one, and yanked it by the roots from the water and dropped it on the river bank.

"Meow-" complained the root and stretched itself into a lazy old cat that licked itself dry before it spoke to Bucky. "Go on, finish the job. They usually do,"

it purred, "and please be quick about it."

Bucky pulled up two more cats and dropped them beside the first one. He continued to pull cat-tails until his arms ached, placing them side by side along the grassy bank.

In this way he cleared a passage and hardly had Davy slipped through before all the cats jumped back into the river, leaving only their waving tails showing.

The very last cat glared at them. She seemed annoyed.

"Some people ought to learn to leave other people alone," she remarked as she dived into the water and disappeared.

Bucky was perplexed by this but the Flummux returned the cat's stare and was about to answer her, but hesitated so long that the cat was gone.

"Do you want to know what I think?" she whispered to Bucky. "I think those cat-tails are people under enchantment-put there by some wicked witch-That's what I think!"

The river flowed along, straight and self-satisfied. Bucky was thinking hard.

"Do you believe this witch stuff?" he asked the Flummux.

"Why shouldn't I believe it? Why shouldn't you believe it? Weren't we shut up in door-knobs?"

Bucky scratched his head: "There is something in what you say. And I'm not so sure you are a Flummux either," he said.

"I hope you are right," replied the little Gabooch as she vigorously polished her brass nozzle with a cosmetic made from brass polish that she had found in the cabin.

With elaborate care, she also polished her brothers' nozzles until they sparkled.

"Perk up, boys," she said. "I want you to look your best in case we meet some important people. It isn't every girl who has such handsome brothers as you are!" The Flummux twittered cheerfully as she hopped back into the cabin to replace the brass-cosmetic.

The whale quivered along blissfully. "What good fortune I have with so much to see-such a Lucky pilot-such a loyal crew. Was ever a big, homely whale so favored with finer friends-"

"Now, my great big cousin,-" began Bucky giving a friendly pat to Davy's blunt nose, "just suppose we were caught in this river and transformed into cat-tails. What then? I'm not used to magic or enchantments."

The whale was quick to respond: "As I told you be-

fore, don't worry about such things. Queen Ozma and the Wizard attend to all such problems when it becomes necessary."

"That may be all very true but I will feel safer when we are out of this river."

The whale whipped up speed, then put on all the brakes suddenly, and he was none too soon. For this river, like the other, had stopped abruptly.

Looking ahead they saw a patch of lawn with a high stone wall beyond. Hanging there was another sign marked:

GLAD TO SEE YOU GO

"I'm glad, too," said Bucky, "if we haven't come to another standstill."

Impatiently springing ashore to examine the wall, he found a wide iron gate and opened it. Stepping through, he looked about cautiously when he heard the sound of excited voices. He was relieved to see another river not far away.

Beckoning Davy to follow, he turned toward a restless gathering of people standing beside another large sign. The lettering on this one was quite different.

Only Real River in a 100 miles

Everybody Welcome
Prize Winners
Champions
Lucky Shots
King Pins
Especially Welcome
Ability Skill and Chance
Sports Games and Amusements
WELCOME TO ALL

"Can you beat that?" exclaimed Davy in surprise,
sticking his head through the gate.

An eager little man with a most hospitable manner
came up to meet them and explain the situation. He
drew a mark across the sand at the river shore.

"You'll have to beat every game if you expect to
pass," he told them. "Start from scratch," he directed,
indicating the mark.

"You certainly are a gay community," remarked
the agreeable whale as he lumbered up to scratch.
From there he could see that many games were in
progress.

"And-might I add-quite a sociable one."
As Davy and his crew went down toward the river,
a team of over-sized grasshoppers met them. They

were dressed in gaudy Scotch kilts with long ribbons
fluttering from their caps.

Some of them were taller than Bucky and he hesitated when they crowded around him. But their gracious manners put him at ease.

"Would you care to play a game of hop-scotch? The fun is just beginning!"

Bucky soon found that he was no match for the hop-scotchers, but Tom, Dick and Harry entered the competition eagerly. They won. The party then passed on down the river where, on both banks and in the stream itself, every known game was being played.

Right and left, they were challenged by enormous frogs to a game of leap-frog. The Flummux was bashful at first but her brothers coaxed her to try and she did. And, what's more, she won.

With each winning, they were allowed to proceed. In this manner, they won their way, little by little, down the river.

A cricket team of tall green crickets challenged them to come up the creek and play, but this they were forced to decline because they did not have enough players to make up an opposing team.

A stray deck of playing cards climbed aboard Davy's deck, pleading with him to try a game of solitaire.

"Really I'm not a game-fish," explained the whale,

"But I'll try my luck

He almost won, but-didn't----

"Sorry, old blubber," said the cards, gathering themselves together, "You're game anyhow!"

At the second try, he did win and they all moved up a peg. Before they left, the cards gave an exhibition of fancy shuffling that was astonishing.

There were plenty of side-shows. It was just like a county fair. Courts for tennis and pools for water sports dotted the course. Grandstands stood in the background and boardwalks wandered from place to place wherever large crowds needed them, or when a champion was playing.

So much was going on that Bucky concluded they never would get to the Emerald City if they had to play every game. The Gabooches were having the time of their lives, winning one contest after another. In quick games of chance, Bucky always came out ahead, being so Lucky. Davy, by far the best swimmer, beat all the champions in the water sports.

They noticed that the games were more difficult and the players more expert, as they advanced, and they tried to avoid these experts wherever possible.

A team of Crows who were champion crow-kay players insisted the strangers should kindly stop and

be beaten.

As there was no way to avoid this challenge without being rude, Bucky spent a whole half-hour playing crow-kay with white crows. He won by the small margin of one stroke.

Davy's fine feats at swimming were greeted with cheers from all sides. At every turn, bids, dares and challenges were called: "Win or. lose! Try your luck! Winner takes all!" until Davy's head ached from the friendly racket. Patiently he sloshed along, trying to avoid the delays of so much merrymaking. To every bid to play, he turned a deaf ear. At last they had passed through the River of the lively gameland.

CHAPTER 14

Tea and Thunderbugs

THE way ahead looked clear. But just as they reached a turn in the river, out of nowhere came the word: "Check!" spoken like a sharp challenge.

"Go on! Go on! Don't pay any attention to him!" said Bucky. Davy increased speed in an effort to get out of sight around the bend. It wasn't long before the order was repeated, this time more emphatically:

"Check! Check! DoubleCheck!"

They were forced to stop. A large checker-board spread itself entirely across the river and strutting Over the board came a fat, pompous teapot. He began to set the black and red checkers in the proper squares, and not until he had them placed did he turn to the angry whale.

Then turning around he laughed through his spout:

"Back up and slow down," he ordered. "Or do you wish to back down and give up? If so, you are prisoners of King Jack Pott."

"Never!!" cried Bucky and Davy in a combined breath.

"Never!!" repeated the Gabooches, one after the other.

With one spring Bucky leaped onto the checker-board.

"We are ready!" he announced. "Now, make your first move. Here is mine!" and he shoved one huge black checker from the square where it rested to the next one.

The game was started.

King Pott strutted across the board to make his move, but he stopped to ask:

"How do you like my looks? Did you ever see a better looking Jack Pott than I am? Such beautiful

lines; such delicate china! And what would you like me to be filled with? Coffee, tea or chocolate?"

"I'll take tea," said the boy, patiently waiting for the Jack Pott to make his move. "We are in a hurry to be on our way."

"Now, my friend, having tea is a leisurely performance. Do you take lemon or cream?" asked King Jack and he began to boil up inside with more interest in serving tea than in playing a game of checkers.

"If it's all the same to you, I prefer iced tea."

"Oh, very well," replied the King to Bucky with an impatient toss of his spout, noticeably cooling off while he made his next move in the game. "I suppose you came from somewhere, didn't you?"

"Yes, indeed," answered the boy, jumping two of the King's checkers, which he handed over to the Flummux. "Yes, siree! we came from somewhere and we are on our way to somewhere else!"

"Why bother your head with going anywhere else? Why not remain here with me?"

"Because we are in a hurry to go somewhere else."

"Rather strange goings-on, I should say," replied King Jack, winning three of Bucky's men. "Have you ever stopped to think that I may have entirely different plans for you?"

"Indeed," responded Bucky, taking two more of the

King's checkers. The Flummux picked these up and carried them quickly into the cabin, where she hid them carefully, inside the whale.

"When I win this game, my plan is to have you remain just where you are," the King answered with determination. "All day long you will play game after game of checkers with me. Then, all night your friends must play. Won't that be the jolliest, grandest life from now on?" added Jack as he moved a red checker into Bucky's king line. "King! King! Double King!!" he shrilled through his spout.

"Okay, crown him," said the boy quietly to the Flummux who darted into the cabin and came back bearing a red cherry pie. With this, she crowned Jack Pott's king. All the on-lookers were so intent upon watching the game that no one noticed this little trick.

"Please, Mr. Bucky," she said in a pleading whisper, "please do be careful and win." She brought out another pie to crown the other king for Jack. "It would be an awful life with nothing to do but play checkers from morning till night."

The game became intense, nip and tuck, with everyone so interested that no one noticed a band of creeping Thunderbugs coming close to the checker board.

These bugs were about a foot high and against their

folded brown wings, their breasts glowed with a soft light. Their short black legs, upon which they could stand upright, ended in red-hot toes.

Still unnoticed they crept closer and closer until they came within reach of the pies that crowned Jack Pott's kings.

In a wink, they snatched all the pies and made off with them.

Then Bucky's kings jumped all of Jack's checkers and won the game in two minutes.

King Jack Pott was furious. The water in his teapot boiled over and splattered hotly across the board. Never before had he been beaten at his own game of checkers. His sputtering hid the stealthy second approach of the Thunderbugs as they returned for more pies.

From every direction they came in great numbers, all pleading for more pies. Their appealing voices held a sincere craving that Bucky was quick to understand, but the Gabooches began to blow away the new arrivals.

This action enraged the Thunderbugs. In an instant their soft glow had changed into a crackling fury of heat and fire as they rushed forward in a blast of thunder.

King Jack Pott became so hysterical that he sneezed

out most of his tea into the air and took to his heels,
running swiftly over the hill, with his spout rolling
from side to side and his lid jumping up and down
under pressure of his steam.

The checker board fell apart into separate blocks
and, taking to their spindling legs, they followed their
King.

The steady blowing of the Gabooches so excited the
Thunderbugs that their already fury-filled bodies be-
came roaring furnaces. Noting this, the four wind-
makers blew up into a gale which tumbled the bugs
about through the grass in a deafening tempest.

During all this excitement, the whale remained his
usual calm self. His sleepy eyes were half closed. But
when the flaming bugs rolled too close for safety, he
used his only weapon of defense and spouted a huge
stream of water over the fiery bugs, thoroughly
drenching them all.

Every spark of fury that the strong wind had stirred
up was extinguished. Only a little puff of black smoke
curled up here and there and all the thunder died
away. A couple of faint sputters; then every Thunder-
bug settled down quietly in the grass, so completely
squelched that hardly one of them opened his eyes.

"What in thunder is the matter with you hot-headed

creatures?" demanded Davy.

One timid voice answered: "Pie!"

"Pie?" repeated the puzzled whale.

"Yes, pie," the little voice squeaked. "Any kind of pie. . . Few people realize how we hunger for pie. how we spend most of our lives hunting for good raspberry pie. We can smell a pie for miles. We can smell pies now. We have hoped and hoped to some day have as much pie as we can eat. . . with a piece of cheese, if we can get it; but it's perfectly all right without it, if we just have pie!" The leading Thunderbug came out of his hiding place in the grass and perched on the deck-rail, his great eyes filled with a sorrowful longing.

"For pity's sake!" cried Bucky. "I feel sorry for you fellows." He looked about and on every side saw hungry eyes and heard pleading voices plaintively begging for pies. So Bucky hurried to the cupboard inside the cabin and returned with his arms filled with all kinds of pies.

With an old cutlass, he cut them into quarters and passed the pieces around. Each Thunderbug thanked Bucky when he received his share and beamed gratefully over a second helping.

Lowering his voice from the sharp squeal to a throaty pitch one very polite bug explained: "I must

apologize for the rude way we acted," he said, "Frank-ly, we are not the frightful fellows old Jack Teapott might lead you to think." As he spoke, his soft glow returned. "We are only plain fire-flies . . . simple lightning bugs if you like, but we do object to being shoved and pushed around. And what makes us red-hot is to be blown around. That's worse!"

"Could anyone blame you?" asked Bucky. "I'm sure I don't. . . and as for pies. . . you can have all you want..." The happy expression on their hungry faces Was answer enough. "We have plenty and more than plenty to satisfy you all," the boy promised as he returned to the cabin for the third supply.

Tom, Dick and Harry let off a warning squawk and flew upward from their perch on the rail.

Wham-smack, back came the Teapott from over the hill, bringing with him a tall policeman. Jack was still boiling over, with tears and a runny spout, but his lid had settled down.

"Hold these vagrants!" he ordered the policeman. "They are a menace... Officer, do your duty!"

The policeman was a thin safety pin with a large copper badge pinned to his front. His legs were made of hairpins, and he managed to move about on them with extraordinary agility.

"Consider yourselves pinched," remarked the pin in a sleepy voice but looking directly at Bucky.

"That's only one pin's opinion," answered the boy, leaning over the rail and smiling. "Don't you think you are Ozuming a little?"

"Not at not at all... it's my duty to guard the safety of the community. The High Royal Jack Pott tells me you are vagrants and must be permanently pinned down. Consequently, you are pinched."

"I'm warning you not to attempt anything like that. If you do, we may rip ourselves loose and you'll have a lot of rips to look after!" Bucky spoke with a slow determination.

"Perhaps you are right. I'm only pointing out what the King commands you to do!" said the copper, rattling his copper badge and releasing his own safety catch. The sharp point of it snapped out straight, like the blade of a sword. The policeman stepped forward.

"I see the point of your jabber now," smiled Bucky, "But don't try to badger us with a copper's badge!"

"Obey me before I fill you full of pin holes, like this. . ." the policeman swished the safety pin as he rushed forward and sank the pin-point into the wooden nose of the whale.

"Just cool off a little before pushing your point too far," advised the boy.

"Your silly talk makes me so tired," said the pin,
trying to pull his point out of the board. "I'm tired of
listening to you and tired of looking at you."

Bucky spoke with vigor: "That's exactly what I've
been trying to tell you. . . you are very tired. .. oh,
so tired that you need a long rest. Don't bother to
arrest us... you take a rest yourself. Lie quietly down
and go to sleep. Give yourself a long rest."

The pin fastened his safety catch: "Promise to be
very quiet and wait while I am a-resting myself," he
said rather hesitantly.

King Teapott burst into a rage: "You pinhead
snoozer !" he cried. "Why let them put such notions
into your bent pinhead!"

"Don't ask me such crack-pot questions," snapped
the policeman, wearily, folding himself up and sinking
into a comfortable spot where immediately he fell
asleep.

Without another word, the whale began to swim,
and they left the King fuming and sputtering on the
bank.

"Ahoy, old chum," whispered Bucky. "I'm glad that
copper didn't get his hairpins in my hair. Our sugges-
tion knocked him off his pins. Okay, Okay!"

"If your suggestion hadn't, our wind would have,"

valiantly announced the Flummux. She stopped when she recalled that the Thunderbugs might be offended at this thought and she burst into the only tune she knew, making up the words as she went along:

"The zip of the breeze
That blew from the North
Only made the whale sneeze
And so forth, and so forth..."

"Excuse me, young lady, that's quite enough of that," dryly remarked Davy as he plowed steadily ahead.

Evening fell. A low whirring of wings surrounded them, bringing a thousand little lights to guide Davy on his course. They were the grateful Thunderbugs returning, filled with the hope of another treat of more pie.

CHAPTER 15

Slippery Going

THEIR appeal sounded too much like hungry boys I begging for bread, so Bucky brought out many pies to satisfy them for a while at least.

The course of the river now led them into a dense forest, but as they drifted along, the growth of trees was interrupted at intervals by gaps and gorges where the bare stone walls of towering mountains crowded them on either side.

The whale was completely covered by the giant lightning bugs. Inside the cupboard, Bucky examined the supply of pies. Never had he seen so many pies stacked up, one on another, doing nothing. All so perfectly baked, so crisp and fragrant----no wonder the hungry Thunderbugs came back for more.

With both arms loaded, Bucky returned to the deck. At sight of the generous meal in store for them, the fire-flies turned on their brightest lights. Because of this brilliance Davy was able to churn ahead through the darkness without the slightest hesitation. At first he had no suspicion of danger, but at one turn he noticed a group of outlaw sorcerers and their helpers gathered in some kind of confab. This made him nervous, and his shivering threw many of the Thunderbugs into the water. They scrambled back again, and Davy made no explanation of his terror, not wanting to spoil their feasting on his deck where Bucky and the Gabooches were handing out pie after pie.

All through the night, while the bugs ate joyously,

the big-hearted whale often quivered with alarm,
scared almost out of his seven senses by the hobgoblin
fingers that darted from the deep shadows made by
the overhanging trees. Of all imaginable places for
travelers to come to harm, this river was the most
dangerous, for here mountain sorcerers and maraud-
ing witches hid behind the rocks waiting for their
victims. Time after time that night a powerful and
wicked witch was about to seize them, then hesitated
-and drew back. Before she could muster up enough
courage to try again, the huge fire-fish had passed
her hide-out

The appearance of the wooden whale was indeed
terrifying as he sped down the dark, sinister river at
breakneck speed, his whole form a mass of brilliant,
blinding light. Except for this, the bands of meddle-
some outlaws who lived on either side of the stream
would have been quick to stop the adventurers and
force them into slavery but, even when the ravines
were so narrow that it took all of Davy's ability to
pass over the foul rifts and tumbling falls, the hostile
bands drew back in fear.

Davy alone realized the creepy hidden danger; he
alone saw the inquisitive glaring eyes of the huge
prowling spy-ders waiting in their cobwebs of mys-
tery. He saw long, protruding noses capped by metal

hooks get ready to strike and then draw back quickly
when the flaming light almost blinded the creature.

Many of them were so filled with terror that all they
could do was to slink away to their caldrons and ovens.

Through all this dangerous and terrifying night,
never once was Davy molested and never did he reveal,
either by word or look, the anxieties he went through
during the dark hours.

The breaking of day found the Gabooches still feed-
ing the Thunderbugs although most of the cupboards
were empty now. Even the crumpets were gone; not
even the hole in a doughnut remained.

Of course this gave them more closet space and also
reduced the weight of the cargo, so Bucky encouraged
the bright bugs to eat all the pies that they could hold.

"Make a clean job of it; clear up every one. It gives
us twice the cabin space and Davy sits much lighter on
the water," he said.

The sky was filled with a glow of gold. In the distance,
vast fields of yellow corn could be seen. A quick ex-
amination of the map in the lining of the pirate's coat
showed them that they were deep in the land of the
Winkies.

"Thank goodness we are out of those merciless
woods," chirped the Flummux.

"Couldn't you and your brothers blow down a witch?" asked Davy, teasingly.

"Never had a good chance," she answered, blithely, "but I would gladly try, any day."

Davy didn't say a word, but he skimmed lightly over the river, putting every ounce of his strength toward hastening the day when they would reach the safety and happiness awaiting them in the Emerald City.

Every impatient snap of his tail sent them humming along. Presently he had reached his utmost speed and everyone aboard was thrilled to travel so fast, then-slap-bang-more trouble.

Same old trick---no water in the river. Though the water was gone, Davy continued to slide along the river bed at the same terrific speed. Strangely enough, he kept on sliding.

With the first shock, all the Thunderbugs flew away, some carrying pies under their arms.

Davy was becoming accustomed to these sudden changes and always tried to make the best of them. But this time, he was naturally puzzled for instead of slowing up as he had always done before, now he was going faster and faster. He slipped from side to side, often nearly turning over and it takes a lot of speed to turn a whale over. Determination was written plainly on his broad face as he rocked and rolled over

a surface as smooth as glass and as oily as the ocean before a storm. Darting down slippery rolling gulleys, Davy tottered and teetered over long stretches of space. The slightest turn unbalanced him, so rapid was the pace, but each time he managed to settle back on a level keel.

Bucky, speechless with surprise when the first stretch hurled them along, had all he could do to keep from being thrown off the deck. Recovering his breath at last, he gasped out the one word: "Soap!"

At the moment of his discovery, they were bounding through a slazy ravine, shut in on either side by steep cliffs of soap stone. The odor was strong and irritating, especially that of dog soap and laundry soap. The toilet soap was not quite so disagreeable. Splashing through pools of soft soap, they became coated from head to foot with the slimy white substance.

"Oh, for a nice river to wash away this stuff . . . wailed Bucky, trying to wipe the soap from his eyes. "I wonder where we can find one? We need it badly."

"Don't ask me?" replied Davy, using every way within his power to check his mad rush. "All I know is that we're in Slippery Dick's land. It's plainly marked on the map!!"

Sure enough. They knew the map was correct when

they bumped into a sign which read:

GREASED RACE TRACK

Keep Off

Beside the post stood Dick himself holding a stop-watch in his hand and giving it all of his attention.

"You did it, by heliotrope!! You broke the record."

A broad grin spread across his roughly modelled soap face. He was elated and seemed about to break into a lather of suds.

"Get into the stable and dry off," Dick called out to the whale as he himself marched stiffly up a path that ran between rows of soap flowers to a castle made of various colors of Castile soap.

Davy was making vain efforts to climb over a hill so that they might continue their journey. But he found it so slippery that he failed hopelessly every time he made an attempt.

"Oh, for a river!" cried Bucky again.

"Please, Mr. Jones, let us find one for you," volunteered the Flummux and, with her brothers, she flew off toward the west where distant yellow hills were visible beyond the pathless waste.

Bucky looked uneasily around the hollow valley of waste where they were trapped.

"It's plain to be seen that we must not linger here very long," he said. "You may not know it, Davy, but I have heard that soap is sometimes made of whale oil."

"Oh, Bosh, Tosh and Blather," exclaimed Davy. "And I hear that some people use the stuff for everyday purposes. Just imagine me using it. It is ridiculous. Let's talk about something else."

"Perhaps we had better talk about the weather," said the boy looking up at the sky where snow clouds were gathering.

Soon a fluffy fall of white began to settle lightly about them. Within ten minutes it had developed into a young blizzard and a feathery powdered downfall had blotted out the sky.

It piled over them in drifts. Strangely enough, it was not cold. Scraping up a handful, Bucky smelled it:

"Well, I'll be scrunched if it isn't Talcum powder!" he exclaimed.

Davy sniffed... The warm blizzard piled still higher and seemed to fall heaviest on the very spot where they stood. It came in such masses and so suddenly that they scarcely knew where to turn before they were blanketed so deeply as to be helpless. By slow degrees they were being buried under a fragrant and

unlimited mass of Talcum.

"What next?" sputtered Bucky, taking a hurried look into the sky. Not a sign of the returning Ga-booches. "What's the use," he thought, but changed his tune the minute he remembered how close they were to the Emerald City where real trouble never comes.

Also, he knew that he had his good luck to fall back on. It usually pulled him out of serious places. And this storm was getting to be serious.

"Do you think we will be smothered?" asked Bucky, struggling toward the cabin door.

"Smothered my Grandmother!" snorted the whale in a muffled voice as an extra heavy fall of fluff poured itself over his head. Bucky fought his way into the cabin.

Once inside, he could breathe freely. He lighted the lamp and opened a cupboard door, for he was beginning to feel hungry. Not one single pie had been left!

"I hope those Wind Birds find a river before we are goners," he said to himself as he jumped into a bunk without noticing the bright, wicked eye of old Mombi glaring up at him from her hiding place.

CHAPTER 16

In Search of a River

WHILE Bucky slept the Gabooches were flying
high and low, scouring the country for miles
around in search of a river.

Wherever they looked stood endless fields of corn.
Mile after mile they explored, but at every turn they
met only disappointment.

After hours of fruitless search, they espied a tall
tower standing away off against the horizon.

Without a moment's delay they made all haste in
the direction of the tower. If there were no river near,
at least they could find out where the nearest river
was. Upon approaching the tower, they found that it
was built in the shape of an enormous ear of corn.
It certainly was inhabited for there were windows and
a front door with a rickety little doorstep.

"Surely somebody is home, for smoke is coming out
of the chimney," said the Flummux as she dropped
down quietly in the garden and ran around to the
front door.

As she passed an open window she heard voices
inside the room. She knocked softly on the door and
waited.

She didn't have long to wait before the door swung

open so suddenly that it fell off its hinges and lay on the floor inside.

"Come right in," invited the cheerful voice of a person whose unusual appearance rather startled the Flummux. She hesitated a fraction of a second, then stepped inside without taking her eyes off the man whose smile soon put her at ease.

His head was made of a sack of meal with features painted on it, giving a fascinating expression to his face. His voice and manner were full of kindly welcome. A soft crackling sound like the ends of bits of straw rubbing together came with each move that he And. . "Bless my soul!" thought the little Gabooch when she saw that he really was stuffed with straw.

Another man was sitting on a bag of corn, a man made entirely of tin. He, too, had a cordial smile on his face as he turned toward the girl and put aside an oil can which he was using to oil his joints.

The straw man bowed with great dignity.

"Could anything be nicer than a visit from a bright young person on such a bright morning?" he asked as he pushed the straw back into place on his left side where it had been bulging out between the buttons of his faded blue coat.

He looked for all the world like a scarecrow, loosely

jointed in a baggy suit of clothes held together with bits of rope and string. Indeed he was a scarecrow but with the manners of an emperor.

In fact, he was both an Emperor and a Scarecrow. Though somewhat a little out of the ordinary, his friend the Tinman had every mark of a highly polished gentleman.

With a winning smile, the Scarecrow tilted his head to one side: "Now then . . ." he began and waited for the Flummux to speak.

"Thanks... oh, thanks a lot. I dropped in to find out if you can direct me to the nearest river," wheezed the girl, working her bellows in nervous jerks.

The Tinman dropped his oil can in amazement and stared. The Scarecrow shuddered as he spoke:

"As near as I can gather from what you say, I suppose. . . at least, I suspect, you want to take a bath! Now, don't misunderstand me, you really do not look as if you needed a bath. So let's forget about a river. They are such awful nuisances, don't you think so, Nick?" he added, turning to his friend.

For answer, the friend shuddered again with a great rattle.

The Scarecrow continued: "We have had so much trouble with rivers in the past, we asked the Great Wiz-

ard of Oz to remove them from our Kingdoms." He placed his hand affectionately on the Tinman's shoulder. "Remember what trouble we had when the Land of the Winkies was filled with so many rivers? Day after day we were troubled with rivers and the witches and Jinkijinks that used to pull us into the water.

"One day you were lying helpless with your precious joints rusting in the bed of some river and I searched until I found you. The next day it would be I who was lying soggy and helpless in a dismal depth from which you saved me and kindly carried me home on your back. It took three days to dry me out and make an Emperor of me again. Long days of dampness and sorrow."

At this point, the tender-hearted Flummux began to sniffle and to slap her wings. "What shall we do? What shall we do?" she kept repeating, "after big Mr. Jones and little Mr. Jones have been so kind to us... oh, stop and consider them... I cannot let them perish ... Something must be done... Something..."

"My dear young friend," softly interrupted the Tinman. "Say no more; your words grieve me more than my tender heart can stand. Perhaps a way can be found to save these friends who are in danger. My friend and I are rulers of this land. I have only a heart of gold. He has the superior brain. Together

we surely will find a way out."

The Scarecrow pressed his brains into shape with his clumsy hands. His eyes took on an intent look.

"Just a moment!" he began, "I seem to remember now. . . there used to be a river that flowed close to the back of the house...

"You're right. I remember that river," added the Tinman eagerly. "It was a beautiful river in a way, but it caused us no end of trouble. So, we had the authorities remove them all except a few that were left far outside. But they have limited permits and are allowed to flow only short distances."

The Flummux said cautiously, lest she interrupt the line of thought: "That accounts for the sudden ending of these rivers!"

"It most certainly does . . ." replied the Tinman.

"Now that I come to think of it," the Scarecrow continued, dreamily. "The Wizard rolled it up and put our river under the back cellar door, didn't he?"

"What a brain you have! What a memory!!" exclaimed the Tinman clasping the Scarecrow's hand.

They all hurried to the rear of the corn castle, and when they lifted the cellar door, sure enough, there lay a beautiful river, all rolled up and ready for use.

"Just as good as the day it was put there," said the

kindhearted Tinman. "My friend has not only the most obliging nature but a helping hand as well."

"Lovely! Lovely! Lovely!" whistled the Flummux through her brass nozzle. "Now everything will be perfectly lovely!"

"I am quite sure we can lend you our river just long enough to relieve your friends in distress." The Scarecrow made this offer with a gracious wave of his cotton hand. "Bring it back when you are through with it and put it under the door."

"Thanks for all your kindness. Now the big whale and Mr. Bucky will get safely to the Emerald City," said the Flummux and, being very polite, she attempted to curtsy.

"The what!" screamed the Scarecrow and the Tinman together, in great alarm. "We can't permit a big whale in the Emerald City. There's no place for such an enormous fish. Will he want the rivers back again? Where will he stay if he doesn't have a river? What will Ozma think of such a calamity?"

"That really doesn't matter," replied the excited girl as she and her three brothers streaked back to Bucky and Davy in Soap Hollow, with the borrowed river following close at their heels.

Both Nick Chopper and the Scarecrow sank down on bags of corn. They looked worried but said nothing.

There was nothing to be said.

CHAPTER 17

Scarecrow Entertains

AS far as the Gabooches could see, a dreary blanket of snow covered the valley where they had left their friends. But almost immediately they discovered a decided hump on the spot from which they had taken off. It had the definite shape of a whale.

Blowing their heaviest blasts of wind they cleared away the drifts of white fluff, disclosing the large intelligent eye of Davy. It gave them an encouraging wink as they continued to dig with their heaviest gale and in a short time they had freed the buried whale, who came out fit as a fiddle and ready to start.

Next a path to the river was cleared by the blasts of the four delighted Gabooches and the adventurers were on their way, with a clear run ahead to the corn-castle the Tin Emperor had built for the Scarecrow.

The lookout located the tall residence of the famous friends and not long after that, it loomed majestically before them. It was evident to Davy that he was approaching friendly territory and his hopes revived

when the guiding Gabooches stopped him under the shadow of the imposing building.

With a loud clatter the front door was pushed open. Out rushed the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman to welcome them and see what sort of visitors were at their door.

There was no need to introduce these two good fellows to the whale. He knew them. The fame of these celebrated characters had spread to the far corners of the land. To really see them with his own eyes and hear them speak filled Davy with awe. The wonder of it all so impressed the great kind fish that he could not find words with which to answer when the Scarecrow stumbled in the doorway and would have fallen if the Tinman had not caught him in time.

Still smiling the Strawman regained his feet and spoke cordially:

"It is always an honor to welcome new friends. As spokesman for the Tin Woodman here, my friend and the Emperor of this fair land of Winkies I offer warm hospitality. So, feel that you are among friends." He turned to include his tin companion: "You will agree that strangers are always welcome here, even the strangest."

Davy tried again to answer, but his feelings choked his words and he could only gulp: "C-C-Come aboard."

"Certainly, certainly," replied the two popular heroes in concert. Assisted by Tom, Dick and Harry they came aboard to examine the strange craft.

The Ilummux spoke up: "I have been telling Mr. Davy how perfectly lovely you were to lend us your river. Just fancy poor Mr. Davy having to squirm his way across that long distance."

Davy also thanked them for their welcome and the loan of the river: "Come inside and see our comfortable cabin," he added as the Flummux opened the door.

The two celebrities wandered into the interior of the whale, eager and pleased with this new experience and interested in all the handy appliances that were provided in Davy's interior.

The sound of voices and the daylight shining through the open door roused the sleeping Bucky. With a start, he sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes. Two astonishing faces were smiling at him. They held friendly expressions so he said: "Good-morning," as he slid to the floor.

"All Oz mornings are good mornings," heartily replied Nickchopper as he examined the wooden beams that supported the framework of the whale. "Quite a snug place you have here," he remarked.

"It certainly is," added the Scarecrow. "We must

ask Ozma and all the good folks in the Emerald City
to call on you to see your attractive home."

"Do you really think they would come here to visit
us?" Bucky asked in an awed whisper.

"Leave it to me," responded the Strawman with a
grand gesture. "I will attend to all the details. With
a good lunch and a cool breeze thrown in, I know they
would enjoy it."

Having examined every nook and cranny of the
cabin, but not looking carefully under the bunk, where
old Mombi crouched without making a sound, far out
of sight, the visitors returned to the deck and Bucky
passed his hand affectionately over Davy's wooden
nose which was scratched and discolored by the soap.
The whale turned his eyes downward on his guests,
then, overcoming his bashfulness, he inquired:

"How far is the Emerald City from here?"

"Nick and I have walked it in two days. I suppose
the young lady could fly there in sixteen minutes,"
answered the Scarecrow, turning to the Flummux.
"But just how long it would take toswim.....
that's another question I cannot answer... as I have
never learned to swim. It all depends on how fast a
swimmer you are."

"Davy is the fastest swimmer I ever saw," said
Bucky with pride as he reached up and wiped the soap

from the whale's eyes. "He's a champion swimmer and what he has been through in the last few days shows he can stand the racket." And Bucky told briefly of their adventures.

The Tin Woodman and the Strawman were first thrilled and then alarmed by the tale. But, with the final escape of the adventurers to the corncastle and safety, they all breathed more freely.

"I wish I had time to tell you of some of our adventures," said the Scarecrow. "I know that you are anxious to run along but before you go, I would like you to come inside and see the castle Nick built for me to use while visiting him if you've a few minutes to spare. From the top of the tower there is a magnificent view. You can see the Emerald City very plainly."

The invitation was readily accepted and Bucky climbed twenty flights of stairs to the lookout. Indeed, the view was magnificent.

To the west the bright green domes of Ozma's palace glistened in the afternoon sun.

"Ahoy, Davy!" he called to the whale below. "We ought to get there tomorrow !"

Standing between the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman, Bucky had pointed out to him the purple lands

of the Gillikins to the north and the Quadlings' red lands to the south. Far in the distance, beyond the Emerald City, lay the blue lands of the Munchkins, where the Scarecrow was Emperor. Every detail of this information was shouted down to the whale.

Bucky was now convinced that the splendors of the great Land of Oz were true and not fantastic tales. Every good thing about the land was related patriotically by the Emperor of the Winkies and his companion. The great corncastle in which they lived was proof enough that the whole life of the city of Ozma and her possessions was managed with generosity and understanding.

"This castle of Nick's is a place any emperor should be proud of. Don't you think so?" asked the Scarecrow.

"Proud indeed!" agreed Bucky.

"Some day I must show you through the tin towers of my metal palace," the Tin Woodman suggested.

Resting on the bosom of the river, Davy's contentment was changing into a restlessness to be off. The wind birds were darting about impatiently, encircling the tower where they could cast sidelong glances at Bucky and then retreating toward the whale. They were too polite to be outspoken to Bucky but he got the hint they were trying to give him. He turned with

his hosts and left the platform of the tower to descend the stairs.

Suddenly the Tinman leaped into the air: "Be careful, old chum!" he warned, but he spoke too late.

Catching his foot in a coil of wire, the Scarecrow slipped on the top step and plunged headlong down twelve flights of stairs.

Bucky hurried down after him, expecting to find the hapless Emperor mashed into nothing or torn into shreds. Instead he came upon him smiling and patting his head again into shape.

"I hope you didn't hurt yourself with that awful fall," cried Bucky solicitously.

"What do you mean? Awful fall? I always come down stairs that way. It saves time and it's lots of fun. Try it some day."

Whatever Bucky thought he kept to himself as he helped the Emperor to his feet and waited until Nick-chopper descended the stairs. They went out together to the wooden whale.

"I do hope you will excuse my battered and splattered appearance," said Davy. "I forgot to mention it before."

"Don't give it a thought," replied the Scarecrow cheerfully, for he himself was covered with dust. "The

Wizard will fix you up in jig time. He'll give you a whole new polish, may even change your color. In fact, he could make you even smaller-say about four or five inches long. You could live comfortably in a glass bowl on the Queen's dining-table."

"To live in a glass bowl is not exactly what I had expected," said Davy with a stiff nod of his ponderous head. "Even the thought of such a fate shivers all my timbers. I could never think of it--never!"

The Tinman saw instantly that a mistake had been made. He spoke quickly. "Don't worry about such a thing happening," he said. "I know that the Wizard would never meddle with anyone's appearance without first getting his consent. Put yourself entirely at ease and remember that you are among good friends in Oz."

"Everything grows more wonderful as we come closer," Davy answered. "Some of the things are still unbelievable. Many of the people outside are not such good fellows as you two are."

The Scarecrow, anxious to make up for his error, joined in the conversation: "That's too bad," he remarked. "As near as I can gather you've had a hard time making the trip, but the end is worth all the trials. We, too, had difficulties with the outlaws. Now we know where they are so we avoid their wild haunts."

"Thanks to our lucky stars and a good crew we have come through with only a few scratches and smears, and these can be repaired," the whale said cheerfully.

"With a little magic, the authorities in the city will polish you up in no time," the Tin Woodman replied.

"I wouldn't be surprised if they could fix you up better than you were before. They will make a new whale of you. Now, don't worry, for you have better things to look forward to."

"All my life I have been looking forward to this visit to Oz," Davy said eagerly. "We have come a long way by land and river. Many of your rivers were not so friendly. Perhaps I had expected too much from them. But all that's passed and I am indeed happy to have come as far as we are."

"Since we are speaking of rivers-" interrupted the Scarecrow. "I will repeat what I have already told your flying friends... This kingdom was once overrun with mischievous rivers, so we had them removed. You may wonder why, when they are such convenient things. They didn't know how to behave themselves. They brought troublesome witches from the mountains, and these nuisances became so frisky that we couldn't walk through our own kingdom without being pushed or dragged into the water. Can you imag-

ine such a state of affairs?"

The Flummux was indignant: "If I had been here I would have fixed them for you," she cried.

"That's very loyal of you," replied the Scarecrow, "But I appealed to the Wizard. I recall his very words as he rolled back the rivers. 'Humgumption!' was what he said. Since then we have had no trouble. Now, wasn't that a splendid thing for him to do? No one is so wise nor powerful as the Wizard. He is simply wonderful and can always find the way out of a bad situation. 'Old pal,' he said to me, 'some day you may need a little river, and what do you say to my leaving one rolled up with a rubber band to hold it together, and you keep it under the cellar door.' I ask you, Mr. Jones, was ever a friend so thoughtful? There it lay until we needed it for you!"

"I'll say it was thoughtful," said Bucky.

"I do hope my river behaves itself properly," added the Emperor of the Munchkins.

"I've never had any confidence in rivers," the Tin-man remarked. "You might allow me to suggest that you put the river back and get the Wizard to make you a set of strong tin wheels."

He had spoken direct to the whale and Davy's reply was just a look of disapproval. Noticing this disappointment, Nickchopper added: "Now that I come to

think of it, that isn't a practicable idea for many of the streets in the city are so narrow, and I doubt if you could even get through the castle gate."

"Had you thought of Lake Quad, Nicky?" asked the Scarecrow. "That's only two miles south of the city.

It's large and just the place to run the river into."

"Excellent! Your fine brain is working well today

I don't see how you do it; it's remarkable," said

the Tin Woodman.

"Oh, so-so. . ." carelessly remarked the Scarecrow

pushing his brains into place before he put his hat on

his head.

As he lifted his hat to put it on, it zinged out of his hands with a humming sound.

Again came the hum and one of the Gabooches was jerked overboard.

"Robbers! Witches!" warned Nick, springing to his feet and swinging his sharp axe. There came a sharper zing and the Tinman cut through a long extended rubber band that recoiled with a snap and lay on the ground beside the cellar door.

"Now tell me what did you go and do that for?" wailed the sad voice of the rubber band. "You have taken all the snap out of me-with all my bounce and stretch gone-what shall I do when you bring the river

back? With my gumption gone, I will not be able to hold the river together!"

"It's entirely your own fault, trying to act like a robber band. Thought it would be snappy, didn't you!" cried the Tinman. "You ought to be ashamed! You'll never do it again!"

Bucky listened in bewilderment to this amazing conversation. "Will the wonders never cease?" he asked himself.

The Tinman took the Scarecrow to one side.

"It's just as we expected," announced the Strawman returning to the group. "The river is not to be trusted. We would never forgive ourselves if anything happened to you fine fellows while sailing on our river."

"We have sailed worse rivers than this one and Davy lived through the racket," said Bucky with a great show of confidence.

"I'm afraid he couldn't weather this one," the Scarecrow replied, "unless we go along to protect you."

This suggestion met with instant approval. Two comfortable beach chairs were hauled from the cabin and placed on the flat part of the head of the wooden whale for the comfort of the distinguished passengers.

Cushions and footstools were provided. Nicky and the Strawman settled themselves to tell tales of their own adventures. Their listeners grouped themselves

about, fascinated by the narrative.

Davy swished his tail and speeded up a little and the next lap of the journey was begun.

Quite unexpectedly, they found themselves entering a well-cared-for stretch of lawn. On it was set a neat sign bearing the notice

WISE ACRES

COUNTRY CLUB

CHAPTER 18

The Uncles

THERE was nothing out of the ordinary about the place except its neatness. A long, low clubhouse faced the river. As the whale came abreast of the building a hundred or more comfortably fat club men hurried down to the river-edge in great excitement.

"What in the name of all green grass do you mean by running a sloppy river through our grounds?" demanded one very stout fellow.

"It's the shortest and most convenient way home," condescended the Scarecrow, without the slightest hesitation.

"So?" snapped the clubman.

"So what?" asked the Emperor, not in the least disturbed.

"So you think you can run a cock-eyed river through our Kingdom of Uncles without permission, do you?"

"Yes . . . once in a while," calmly responded the Scarecrow.

"Then you will find yourself answerable to Uncle Bill--that's me--Chairman of the Club."

"Have a chair then," and the Scarecrow threw his deck chair to Uncle Bill who sat down pointing one fat finger at the Emperor demanding:

"Are you an Uncle?"

Without waiting for a reply he pointed another fat finger at the Tinman and repeated the question.

"That is the first rule of the Club," chirped up another fat man. "I'm Uncle George."

"Pleased to meet you, Uncle George."

"Ask any member here. . . Uncle Jim, Uncle Joe, Uncle Charlie or Uncle Bob. Ask any of them...

At this moment a very dignified uncle walked across the lawn. He was tall, not fat like the others, and had a tuft of whiskers on the end of his chin.

"Here's the president of the club. Ask him. He'll tell you where you get off. How about it, Uncle Sam?"

"Calm down," said Sam in a quiet tone of voice as he looked at the many angry members. "Don't be

uneasy."

While the others argued, the Tin Woodman arose.

Giving a slight tilt to his head, he bowed: "Since you have asked me, I will answer Yes, I am an uncle. I had six nieces, years ago. They all married Tin-smiths. I am your Uncle Nick, if that will ease the situation." The uncles applauded to a man.

"What about the others?" insisted Uncle Fred. "That boy, for instance. He's no uncle... throw him out."

Bucky stepped forward: "I know I am no uncle," he said. "I'm only a nephew-but-That's my Own Uncle right there!!" raising his voice, he insisted: "I'd know him anywhere!" and he ran toward Uncle Sam with his hands outstretched.

"He is quite right," soothed Uncle Sam, putting an arm around the shoulders of the boy.

Bucky held tightly to the hand of the distinguished man and looked up into his face.

"I knew you were my Uncle Sam as soon as I saw you. And am I glad to see you! Oh, boy, Oh, boy...!"

The other uncles insisted that the Scarecrow be thrown out. Uncle Pete started to take hold of him.

"Stand back," commanded the Scarecrow springing up.

Loosening the buttons of his coat he thrust his hand

inside the stuffing of crisp straw that gave shape to his body and drew out a hidden golden crown.

This he placed on his head. His painted eyes flashed as he began to speak:

"As a rule, uncles are an intelligent lot. I hope you use your intelligence, and, as Emperor of the Land of the Munchkins, I command all uncles to use the sense that goes with that intelligence." Having spoken his brief message, he sat down.

"For the land's sake, why didn't you tell us that sooner," exclaimed Uncle Ed and Uncle Dick hurrying forward to shake the Emperor's hand. "We have heard such great things of you and we've always wanted to meet you. Come up to our clubhouse as our honored guests. You and all your party..."

"That's very kind of you, my dear Sir, I am sure, but at the moment, it can't be done. We are on our way to the Emerald City with our friends, who are strangers here."

"On your way to the Emerald City," they all yelled together. "Come on now, Emperor, be a good sport. We need a vacation." They coaxed, crowding aboard the deck. "Take us along with you, please. We have never been to the Great Metropolis !"

"You will have to ask the whale, as he must carry you and have all that extra work to do!" replied the

Scarecrow.

"Make yourselves at home has always been my motto," promptly responded the hospitable whale. "Get aboard; we have no time to waste." Extending his lower jaw to its fullest length, Davy made more room on the deck for his guests.

"To be sure-no time to waste," they agreed and in two minutes all the uncles were comfortably packed on board the good whale, Davy, who was skimming along expectantly toward the great green Capital.

The jolly uncles covered every foot of space and proved themselves delightful guests. Their jokes, riddles and funny stories amused the whale and the Gaboosches. The Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman, who were both enjoying the trip immensely, were treated with the greatest respect.

Most of Bucky's interest was directed toward his Uncle Sam. After he had found a deck chair for his hero, he sat down beside the old gentleman with the goatee and listened to him talk while the whale forged ahead along the smooth river through endless fields of corn.

Poor Davy strained every nerve under the excess burden. Resolutely he labored to keep up the pace throughout the long afternoon. There was still a long

pull, with many miles to go, but he did not waver.

Wearing a look of determination on his wooden face, he bravely carried the additional weight. But, in spite of his courage, these hours of double duty began to tell on the whale's enormous vitality. Considering the past days of rough voyaging, the strain of crashing through dark, rocky caverns, and the long stretches of burning sand over which Davy had dragged his weary planks, it was little wonder that he was nearly worn out. Beside the journey, the crash from the arc of the rainbow had been a terrific jolt that left wide cracks and dangerous openings between his timbers. So, when at last, late in the afternoon, he slid into Lake Quad and into deep water, he could do little more than let himself drift.

Little by little the water first seeped, then gushed, through the openings and lay inside. He tried to spout it out, but that exertion was more than he could put forth.

He made a frantic effort to turn back to the shallow river, or to reach the shore but the attempt came too late. Bellowing a warning cry to his passengers, he gave one great exhausted sob and began to sink in the midst of a swirling foam.

Overboard went more than a hundred uncles, making a tremendous splash. Davy Jones disappeared.

Being all good swimmers, the Uncles managed to reach land. Uncle Sam swam close to Bucky. Between them they held the Scarecrow high above the water and succeeded in landing him on shore with only one boot damp, which really was remarkable considering the nervous state the Emperor was in. Uncle Harry and Uncle Joe, who were both strong swimmers, floated the Tin Woodman to safety between them. As every uncle reached the beach, he stretched out to dry.

Wearily the wooden whale let himself sink to the bottom of the lake, breathing out tired bubbles. "With just a few minutes rest, I'll be myself again," he murmured and closed his eyes.

But he opened them immediately when, from beneath him, he heard a fretful female voice scolding.

"Of all the unearthly flippity-flops! Why can't you be careful and look where you are going? Isn't the lake big enough for you? You don't need to plump yourself on top of my head. And don't make excuses!"

The injured creature was an enormous cat-fish. She looked exactly like a cat, had eight legs and called herself an octopuss.

"Can't a respectable Octopuss take a cat-nap any more without having her nine lives endangered?" she continued to complain.

Eyes blazing, she attacked the whale with her eight paws, pummeling him for all she was worth.

"I'll show you-" she spat.

Good-natured Davy let her pummel. He swayed first to one side and then to the other under her blows, each of which pushed him shoreward. Over his face spread a broad grin as he recalled how the funny bones had helped him over the waste land.

Coming face to face with the angry cat, he remarked:

"You're quite a pushy cat, aren't you?"

This made her still angrier and she continued to beat him harder, fortunately always pushing him toward the shore.

"That will be sufficient," he gurgled as he felt his planks scrape on the shallow bottom. "Many thanks," he politely added as he quickly left her and stuck his head up out of the water.

Shouts of welcome greeted him when he emerged to join the delighted uncles and modestly take his place beside them on the warm, dry sand.

"I see you got rid of the soap," said Uncle Sam with a laugh. He and the Tin Woodman were examining the open seams in Davy's sides.

"Turn over and drain the water out," suggested Nickchopper as he measured the damage with his tin

fingers. "I'll close every leak and make you watertight in jig time," he promised.

At once he began to split a board into long slivers with his axe. While examining, with patient thoroughness, every plank outside and in, the Tin Man was startled almost out of his wits to see the half-drowned, soggy figure of an old witch crawl across the cabin floor, with her eyes full of fight and fury.

Her bony hands clutched at him as he stumbled out of the door, and old Mombi was out almost as quick as he was. One after another, the astonished uncles were bowled over and knocked flat by the sudden assault of the old troublemaker.

The Flummux was the first to take in the situation. "A witch! A witch!!" she screamed. "Just what I've been looking for," and flew straight for Mombi's head, blowing her fiercest blast. She was soon joined by her three brothers. All the uncles cheered when they saw the disagreeable old hag tumbled around in the air before she streaked off with the Gabooches after her.

Fear lent wings to the old fury as she darted beyond the reach of the slow-flying Wind Birds. And she did not stop until she reached the farthest limits of the Land of Oz. Here, over the broad Nonentic Ocean she wandered until her eye caught sight of a small volcano,

and she zoomed down toward it.

CHAPTER 19

Witch Hunt

MEANWHILE, in the Emerald City, Jenny Jump's style shop on Strawberry Street immediately became the center of interest after her victory in the sky. And by the time Ozma's royal Scalawagon arrived at Jennie's door, the neighboring streets were filled with anxious friends.

In a few brief words the story of Jennie's amazing triumph over old Mombi, and the recovery of the precious Black Bag, was told to the rulers.

Ozma drew her pale green silk gown tight over her magic belt as she thrilled with interest in the tale.

Glinda, in a red velvet dress with black trimming, drew herself up to her full height and added her words of praise to those of the Queen. The Wizard was delighted with the result of Jennie's dog-fight and expressed his thanks for the rescue of his bag. Handing the bag to Number Nine, he said:

"My boy, take this back to the Laboratory, please, and hide it behind the Ambassadoor. It was through my own carelessness that it ever got away."

The boy rose from the sidewalk into the air and disappeared, arriving almost instantly at the dormer window in the tower, inside of which stood the dignified Ambassador.

All apparent danger was now averted and the Royal Party turned and walked briskly to the castle wall, followed by a happy band of attendants, sightseers and visitors from every part of the Queen's vast Kingdom.

Although the scaffolds had been removed, many children were still working at their portrayal of the history of the Land of Oz. The air seemed to be filled with an undercurrent of excitement, as though something were amiss.

Dorothy, who was managing the exhibition, met the Royal Party half-way down Strawberry Street. An anxious frown darkened her fair, young face, usually so smiling.

"Please stop!" she cried. "Don't go any farther. Old Trickolas Om has escaped from my picture and he won't go back. Also; three other witches have escaped beside Old Mombi. We don't know how to get them back. It makes me feel creepy to have Old Mombi flying around." The rulers listened in silence as Dorothy continued: "Old Trickolas has been trying to get

Kabumpo's painted elephant off the wall so that he can start a revolution. But the painting won't budge because it has all the loyalty of good old Kabumpo himself."

The Wizard wiped great beads of perspiration from his brow.

"It is quite evident I have mixed too much magic with the paint; the matter looks serious." He spoke reflectively, then made a sudden motion through the air with his hand.

Instantly the crowded streets were deserted. Not a person was to be seen anywhere. Glinda, Ozma and the Wizard alone remained. They came close together and moved quickly forward, talking in low tones.

Next to Old Mombi, Trickolas Om had once been their greatest menace, disturbing the peace and quiet of the nation by transforming innocent people into lost keys and door-knobs, for he knew a few low tricks and was a practical joker as well.

The Wizard knew all of these tricks and was not disturbed by them when he saw Old Trickolas sauntering along the empty street, for had not the Wizard himself whisked the people to safety? The three great magicians awaited the approach of the tricky joker.

"Watch your P's and Q's," warned the Wizard as Old Om came face to face with him.

"Will you lend me your handkerchief?" was the trickster's first laughing remark.

The Wizard handed him a large one made of green silk.

"Now watch this trick closely," said Old Om. "I take it and shake it and you see the wave in it."

Sure enough, a great, green wave surged out of the handkerchief.

Old Trickolas dived into the wave, expecting to escape by swimming away, but he landed on his head.

"Harrumph!" snorted the Wizard in disgust. "What's so funny about that? I'm afraid you were not watching your P's and Q's, Professor-your wave had no water in it. I'll wager you forgot your Pints and Quarts."

And before the joker could regain his wicked wits, Ozma had sent him back to his place on the wall with the aid of her magic belt. She gave directions to Jack Pumpkinhead to paint strong chains around his ankles.

"That leaves us with four witches running wild," said Glinda, the red sorceress from whom no witch had ever escaped.

The vacant spaces in the pictures showed just who these missing witches were. Aunt Geranium, Little

Blue Schoola and Plush were gone. And, of course,
old Mombi, too.

Glinda continued to speak after a careful examination of the wall.

"Schoola is a blue munchkin, causing plenty of trouble by breaking shoestrings. A silly thing to do, but there are several witches who do silly things. Aunt Geranium is invisible as long as a bird is singing. Around my castle I have so many birds that at least one and sometimes two sing all day long, so none of us ever sees her if she is about.

"While she is invisible, however, she pops a geranium bud on a Quadling's nose. Quite harmless, you might think, but a nuisance. I used to remove as many as fifty in a week. It was a bother, sometimes.

"Number three witch is Plush - not so harmless nor so easy to catch if she has a broom. Today she hasn't got one. I've already set up protection barriers around the city. The houses have all been notified to keep their kitchen doors locked and all brooms hidden. Chimneys are on the alert to strike all witches down."

As she finished speaking the great sorceress smiled at her Queen. "What next?" she asked.

"Next, we have to catch them, don't we?" suggested Ozma.

Glinda laughed and pointed up Lemon Lane: "See

for yourself, my dear. Old Schoola and Aunt Geranium are coming back. I knew they would."

"It's no use," cackled Old Schoola, with a glance at the shoelaces of the rulers. "Aunt Geranium gives up too. We are both here even if you can't see her at this minute while that dratted bird keeps squawking. More than half the time when I'm with her, I'm talking to nothing at all."

"Come on, Girls," said Glinda gently to the two witches. "Go back quietly to your proper places." Meekly enough they climbed back.

"Hi-ho-hum .. ." mused the Wizard much amused at Glinda's simple method of catching witches.

"It's all in knowing how that makes it seem so simple, my dear Wizard," smiled Glinda.

Ozma danced a few fancy steps, exclaiming: "I just caught Plush! I placed a broom in a chimney and just before she grabbed it, I whizzed her back to her picture."

"You two make quick work of these witches," chuckled the Wizard.

With another flourish of his hand he brought back the surging crowd of people that, a few minutes before, he had caused to vanish for their own protection. City dwellers, Visitors, Animals, everyone was there.

"I'm convinced, I did mix too much magic in that paint," faltered the little Wizard as he scrutinized Kabumpo's picture. For the painted elephant had eaten the painted hay from the picture for as far around him as he could reach with his trunk, leaving a great blank space on the wall. To remedy this, the Wizard readjusted the paint brushes and Ojo and Kabumpo repaired the scene. In many of the pictures the characters were talking quietly to one another. Others were quarreling. An exceptionally good portrait of Ozma waved its hand to the real Ozma as she passed by.

Another unexpected situation upset the Wizard. Few events in his eventful life equalled his surprise when twenty-two important looking Painted Wizards of Oz came briskly around the corner. Each one carried a black bag of magic and each imagined that he was the very important person.

Respectfully the crowd moved aside to let them pass. With their heads held high, they marched up to the real Wizard and stood before him, striking imposing attitudes.

"The top of the morning to you, me and us!" the twenty-two voices announced in chorus.

The Wizard stared, a little confused by being confronted by so many duplicates of himself. Ozma and

Glinda smiled at the odd turn of affairs and stepped aside to let their friend manage himself.

Fortunately not one of the painted wizards resented any other painted wizard. They had no memory of anything that had happened before they were painted. They looked so exactly alike and their voices and actions were so similar that it was impossible to tell which was the real one with any certainty.

"Sour molasses!" mumbled the Wizard to himself, trying to figure out a plan to reduce twenty-three of him to a single one and how to get them back to their right places without borrowing Ozma's belt. "Come along, all of us," he called when he had made up his mind. "We will take a look at the new pictures." And off they went.

From then on it was not difficult to get each straying wizard to point out the picture from which he had wandered. And, simpler still, with a few kind words, to persuade him to return to his proper place, then paste him back tightly without an argument. A few persuasive words from the wise old Wizard were all that was needed to achieve harmony between them. But he was very careful to see that the painted wizards were securely fastened to the wall.

"You managed yourself splendidly, you darling old

Wizard," said the little Queen as they finished the inspection with no more interruption.

Every child, from the youngest who had helped only a little to the principal character artists, received three medals apiece, one from Ozma, another from Glinda and still another from the Wizard. Following the granting of these, everyone in the Emerald City received a present from a large assortment that Kumbumpo carried on his back.

With the inspection over, the crowd broke up. People in small groups wandered back to their homes, and Ozma, with a party of her most intimate girl friends, retired to the Queen's private apartments.

The Wizard wandered into the royal kitchen to get a slice of pepper cheese from the royal refrigerator. He had been so busy that he had entirely forgotten to eat his lunch.

The kitchen was empty since all the cooks and palace servants had gone out to see the pictures. With a thick slice of cheese on special green bread, he sat down at a carved crystal table to enjoy his repast in quiet and peace.

From a far closet came a faint rattle, then through the open door, an array of brooms stepped forward, old brooms and very old broom--whisk and brush brooms--forming themselves into a row. One sturdy

broom advanced and addressed their great sorcerer.

"Listen, Kind Sir," she began, giving a stiff-backed curtsy. "Could you spare the time to listen to a committee of honest working brooms?"

"We represent hard labor and we ask your help to keep witches from riding us' to destruction. I have been hag-ridden until I am but a wreck of my former self. Look at me! I'm a pitiful sight, I know, and my usefulness as a broom has been practically destroyed."

"There must be something that can be done," said the Wizard with kindness.

The broom took a deep breath and began again:

"We are never ones for asking favors from anyone but, after I was stolen from a comfortable home by old Curly Ah-Ha-Do just to be taken into a mountain wilderness and abandoned, I made up my mind I would bring the case before the authorities.

"It took me two years to find my way home. Don't you think, Kind Sir, that something ought to be done about it? I'm not the only one, indeed I'm not. Now, see for yourself. . ." she paused, then called: "Come up here, Po! Don't be afraid. Show the gentleman your cracked back." An old, broken broom hobbled out from the line. "See her! From being hag-ridden so much by the Thimble Witch. This witch not only

rode her but broke her back on a Munchkin farmer's head and then left her beside the road to perish.

"We were all good brooms once, new, and willing to work hard. Now, when we are old and broken, we are stuck away in corners or behind dark stable doors. It's all wrong!"

The Wizard took a bite of cheese before he answered. Then, with a smile, he placed his hat on the floor and asked the broom if she could jump over it.

Over she went, landing safely. Spiff! And she was a new broom. Poor old Po was the next to hop over and she, too, became a new broom. One at a time the old brooms followed, leaping the hat, and a long line of new brooms ran scampering out of the back door, happy and young again, all eager to be gone from the castle before the servants returned. Once on the street, they scattered in many directions, each hurrying to her old home, to slip into the closet, ready for duty.

Finding himself alone, the Wizard finished his bread and cheese, then darting through the kitchen window, he sailed through the air to his high tower.

On entering the laboratory he found the hall clock stretched out flat on the floor. Number Nine was bending over it, trying his best to restore its life. Every spark of life seemed to have left it-not a wheel

moved-nor could the boy get any response when he tried to restore the tick. He was so depressed by his failure to revive the clock that he did not raise his head when he heard the Wizard approaching.

"Our good old clock is done for-completely knocked out," was all he could say.

"Quite impossible," said the Wizard briefly, but his face carried an anxious frown.

"I've done everything to bring him back to life; I'm afraid it's too late. Old Mombi got him. Why should she murder an innocent old clock?" remonstrated the boy, his voice full of sobs.

"Hoity-toity, tut-tut-tut-" urgently soothed the little man, rummaging through his pocket until he found a peppermint shaker. "It's nothing serious. She may have shattered his hopes for a little while; that's all it is. Peppermint ought to revive the clock. If you would only smile, my boy, that would help a lot." As he spoke the Wizard was dusting the face of the clock with green peppermint star-dust.

In a few seconds a slight whirring began inside the clock; the hands trembled and very faintly came the sound of the clapper touching the bell softly in an attempt to tell them the hour.

Flustered with excitement, Number Nine lifted the

clock to its feet and let it lean heavily against him.

"What happened?" the boy asked eagerly.

The clock did not answer at once; when it did, it said:

"Wait until I'm wound, set and regulated. Remember that I have very sensitive works." As the Wizard turned the crank that started the pendulum, the hands wavered for an instant at the figures nine and three; then, still a little wobbly, they jerked themselves to ten and two. The Wizard nodded his head.

"As long as you can smile like that, old friend, you'll never be knocked out," he said, returning the clock's smile. "Now I'd like to see you smile, too," he added, turning toward Number Nine.

"How can I smile, Sir, when I have bungled my job?"

"You've not bungled as long as you can smile," and the happy-go-lucky Wizard burst into a magical laugh, the clock struck loudly, and Number Nine couldn't resist a broad grin.

With the Wizard and his assistant seated on a bench, the clock told how he had been watching the whale on the screen of the tattlescope and saw him sink in the waters of Lake Quad and how the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman were washed overboard with a great number of other passengers.

"I had no time to leave the laboratory and warn you

when I was struck in the back and thrown to the floor with such force that all my delicate wheels were jiggled loose. I did, however, have a moment to notice the figure of a witch who stared into the screen, then laughed wildly . . . but, after that I remember nothing."

"Well done," announced the Wizard. "You'll find yourself keeping good time in a day or two. Be a little slow about it. I'll take care of the other matter." He hurried over to Number Nine. "Anything else of importance?" he asked.

"Yes. Plenty of excitement beyond the Winkie country. For the last four days I have seen this monstrous whale coming into our land. He is bringing with him a young boy who was thrown from a volcano that..."

"A volcano? Where?" cried the Wizard, jumping from the bench in consternation.

"In the pink Nonentic Ocean. And there have been disturbances ever since. You can look for yourself," said Number Nine adjusting the tattlescope for his master.

"See if you can find my book of magic charms, while I look..." said the Wizard seating himself before the tattlescope.

Number Nine rooted through the black bag. No book of magic charms was there; Mombi had probably taken it. The Wizard was not alarmed at the news because, by a secret method known only to himself, he had changed the charms in the stolen book so that they worked exactly the opposite way from the way they were written. For the moment, the Wizard put the loss out of his mind.

Across the screen he saw the distant volcano come into view. There were the little bakers, mixing dough and making their pies and doughnuts. Their work was interrupted by a black figure that sailed out of the sky and settled down on the crater.

"That's Mombi! Ozma and Glinda must be told of this without delay! Good-bye!"

Just as suddenly as the Wizard vanished from the laboratory he appeared before the Queen. Together they turned the pages of the royal book of records. Without a doubt, Number Nine's report was correct in every detail.

In the Queen's magic picture behind the throne, they saw the same volcanic island with the little bakers shooting biscuits at Mombi's head as they drove her farther and farther up the steep slope of the volcano. Then, with a final yell of derision, the old witch disappeared inside the smoking crater.

There was but one thing for Ozma and her council-
lors to do, and they did it without wasting time.

The Wizard with his black bag, Ozma with her magic
belt and Glinda with her wishing cap were presently
seated in a special scalawagon gliding swiftly to the
distant Nonentic Ocean. The day was clear and every
mountain top to be seen clearly as they sailed with the
speed of the wind.

"Seems like old times," laughed Ozma. "It's been
a long time since we hunted witches together. I rather
like it."

Even the scalawagon beamed with the spirit of ad-
venture as Glinda pointed out the secret lands of sev-
eral well-known sorcerers. Over short rivers and
across pathless wastes of land they soared until they
reached the pink ocean.

"Whatever you do, be careful," warned Ozma, as
they approached the volcano in a spiral dive and
dropped safely into the crater's mouth.

Inside the depths, the voice of old Mombi was heard
giving forth muffled shrieks.

Climbing to the top of the crater's rim, the biscuit
shooters leaned over the edge so that they might look
down and see what on earth was happening.

CHAPTER 20

The Emerald City at Last

LONG before the Scarecrow had his boot in shape again, the Uncles were thoroughly dry and "ready to put to sea." Nickchopper, completely oiled in every joint, was urging Davy to take to the water in order to see that no leak was left to sink him again.

So everyone piled aboard and Davy started to cruise lazily around the lake. With the hearty approval of Bucky, the passengers elected the Scarecrow as skipper for he was familiar with the neighborhood. The Tinman crawled around inside the cabin looking for leaks, but there were none.

The Scarecrow stood on the deck, surrounded by a hundred admiring uncles, trying to answer all the enthusiastic questions they fired at him about the places of interest he was pointing out. So wearing was this effort upon his good nature that his brains began to sag. Between questions he took time to try to push them back into place, but the uncles, usually so considerate, failed in their excitement to notice his predicament. Finally the effort proved too exhausting and the Scarecrow was forced to turn the navigating over to Bucky.

Uppermost in the minds of Bucky and the uncles was the thought of reaching the famous Emerald City. And the wooden heart of Davy beat in tune with this desire. A mile or two to the north arose the splendor of the great city with its domes and minarets gleaming under the sunlight. Davy turned his head toward the north shore.

The whale's mind was made up. He knew that he could wiggle himself overland from the lake shore to the city gate. But the uncles would not listen to such a plan: "We will help you all the way," they promised. Already several of them had taken off their coats in preparation for the long push.

Following the natural course of the lake, the whale swam close to the shore, expecting to run aground. Try as he would, he never seemed to reach the beach, yet the castle drew closer and closer. Before anyone realized it, they were near enough to see watchmen running around the top of the upper parapet. They could even make out the details of the brightly colored pictures on the city walls.

They were heading straight for this wall! Davy kept on sailing.

"Turn to the right!" yelled Bucky, stamping his right foot as hard as he could

The Scarecrow raised his aching head to see what the excitement was about and staggered to his feet

"Stop! Stop!!" he screamed in agony. "This is simply awful!" he moaned, wildly tearing straw from his stuffed bosom.

So thrilled was the whale by the excitement of the moment that he did not hear the order, nor feel Bucky's stamping foot, and he continued to push on his way around the castle wall.

Overcome by despair, with loose straw dangling from every opening of his clothes, the Scarecrow fell backward, clutching the empty air with his cotton fingers.

Hearing the commotion on deck, the Tin Woodman dashed out of the cabin just in time to see his comrade totter. With a bound, he hurried to catch him before he hit the deck. But by the time Nick reached the Scarecrow it was too late to save him and both old friends tumbled over the wooden side of Davy and were lost to view.

The whale, covered with happy uncles, continued on his way gaily, encircling the wall. It took them exactly seven minutes by the great clock in the north tower to complete the trip. Not until they had gone all the way around, did the voyagers discover that they had brought the borrowed river with them.

And not until the whale came face to face with the Emperor and the Woodchopper sitting on the river at the exact spot where they had fallen overboard, did his facial expression change from pure dellght to one of chagrin.

With all the fantastic run of luck they had had, it was almost beyond belief that it should end in such a tragedy with the loss of the two good friends who had befriended him so gallantly. Davy hurried to the rescue as the uncles made ready to lift the two unfortunates from the river. The whale, conscience stricken and filled with remorse, tried to make his voice heard above the tumult, but it was impossible for by now the city had joined in the clamor. A general alarm bellowed and roared, far and wide. Since it was the second alarm of the day--a most unheard of state of affair--the people came running to the walls. They were prepared to repel any invasion; the bellmen pealed and the houses leaned backward in terror, prepared to strike, and strike hard.

The whale slowed down, gliding over the surface of the river toward the lost friends. Bucky, wishing ardently to save them, jumped overboard and received the greatest shock that he had yet met with in Qz. Instead of splashing into water, he bounced over a

yielding surface and slid to the place where the two celebrated favorites were sitting on the top of the river, calm and unconcerned. The Tinman, when he noticed the look of amazement on the boy's face, burst into a tinny laugh.

"An unlooked for twist in things!" he cried. "Our luck has proved itself. A most favorable situation for my dear old chum and me. Why, bless my bolts and rivets, this water is dry and harmless. It's so light we could not sink, even if we wanted to. The Wizard always does give us such surprises."

By this time, the river was filled with uncles slipping and sliding over the tough surface. Some ventured to step ashore but they were met by such a violent attack that they quickly retreated to the river. The Guardian of the Gate, swinging a heavy key and the soldier with the green whiskers, poking a broken blundergun at them, drove the uncles back, while the town crier added a dismal note of warning to all the other distressing sounds.

After several vain attempts to get the Scarecrow up on his feet, they formed a double line and pushed him to shore in a sitting position.

The battered whale and the spruce uncles were in a pretty pickle. Had the beautiful city suddenly gone mad? It certainly seemed so, with the Town Crier run-

ning back and forth, bawling at the top of his voice
and wringing his hands.

Bucky helped the Scarecrow push his loose straw
back into his body, button up his coat, and restore his
head to its proper shape. This assistance completely
revived him and he got to his feet with all the grand
manners of an Emperor.

When the Guardian identified this distinguished per-
sonage, he stopped short and summoned his two com-
panions to his side. Together they stood at attention,
saluting the Emperor of the Munchkins with all
deference due his high position.

At the same moment Number Nine arrived at the
Scarecrow's side. He had relegated to the tall clock
the duty of closely following the flight of the Royal
Scalawagon over the Nonentic Ocean and come to find
out what the hullabaloo was all about, for, during an
absence of the Wizard, Number Nine always assumed
certain duties that carried with them a certain amount
of influence. He immediately quieted the alarm, and
this checked the excitement which had been spreading
dangerously.

From inside the castle, Royal Visitors and perma-
nent residents hurried to the edge of the wall, until it
was crowded with Kings, Queens, Princes, Animals,

Pretty Girls and Rulers of small countries from far
and wide.

Princess Dorothy with her group of close friends,
ventured down the broad stairway to the level of the
river and were introduced to all the uncles with whom
they immediately became very popular.

Led by the Scarecrow, the Tinwoodman with Trot,
Betsy, Jellia and Princess Dorothy, followed closely
by the hundred uncles, all mounted the emerald stair-
way to the top of the wall. The uncles met many old
friends and distant relatives among the Kings and
Queens as they strayed through the elaborate corri-
dors and great halls of the castle.

Lucky Bucky had remained quietly with Davy. He
felt a little shabby in his old clothes that were much
the worse for wear. His pirate's coat looked frayed and
dilapidated beside the fine clothes he saw all around
him.

His old pal, the whale, was not changed. The same
quiet twinkle shone in his eye. Bucky laughed up at
him fondly:

"You lucky old whopper, you made the grade," he
said, "here we are at last, right in the center of every-
thing," and he gave the whale a friendly smack on the
nose.

He turned when he heard his name called. The same

boy who had helped them in the Gnome King's cavern stepped onto the deck and waved his hand.

"I certainly am pleased to meet you fellows again," he said as he shook Bucky's hand. "Sorry I didn't have more time to stay before. But you are here now, and I want you to feel welcome."

"And I want to thank you," replied Bucky, "for your help when we were among those stubborn Gnomes."

"I have been watching you for a long time. Both of you fine fellows deserve a lot of credit for what you have accomplished." Turning to the whale, Number Nine laid his two hands on either side of the battered face and looked into the honest eyes, asking: "Can you spare Lucky Bucky for a few minutes? I . .

"Certainly, my boy, certainly..."

Number Nine almost dragged Bucky up Strawberry Street in his haste, talking a blue streak until they reached Jennie's Style Shop. But, before they opened the door, the little Flummux swooped down out of the sky and stood before them, her manner one of defiance.

"Take your hands off Mr. Jones," she snapped in a most unladylike tone of voice and, before Number Nine could recover from his surprise, she let him have a perfectly aimed blast of wind that sent him head over heels across the lawn. The three brothers had

grouped themselves around Bucky with angry nozzles pointed toward Number Nine as he scrambled to his feet. Tom, the biggest Gabooch, spoke up:

"We may be plain ordinary Flap Doodles but we always protect our friends when we see them taken to prison. We have been on guard ever since they arrived here and will protect them to the last snort!"

"It's all for the best," laughed Number Nine. "There is no prison-and certainly no ill feeling toward such loyal friends as you have proven yourselves to be." He brushed himself off. "Come, see for yourselves..." He opened the door and ushered them into the shop. The place was empty. Jenny and her assistants had gone to the castle to see the magic new river that encircled the wall.

Number Nine had no time to waste waiting for her. He quickly adjusted several push-buttons on a highly glazed turnstyle that stood in the center of the room and asked Lucky Bucky to pass through, which he did.

"There you are! How do you like yourself now?" he asked, leading the other boy to a mirror. Bucky was so pleased he could not speak. He was now dressed in the finest suit of clothes he had ever worn.

The Flummux was not so speechless: "Now see what you can do for me." She coaxed her prettiest.

Number Nine readjusted the buttons and allowed

the funny little Gabooch to pass through the style.

Even the assistant wizard was astonished when she reappeared; one of the loveliest little girls he had ever seen.

Tom, Dick and Harry nearly wrecked the turnstyle in their wild rush to be put through.

"Patience, my friends, one at a time," warned Number Nine, as three transformed young men came out and lifted their little sister in the air with many words of heartfelt thanks to their deliverer.

"Mr. Bucky," called the little sister. "Now what do you say? Isn't there plenty of magic in Oz? We were real people all the time instead of being just creatures, and please don't let me hear anyone call me the 'Flum-mux'; I'm Little Sister," she added as they hurried back to the whale.

Davy's face was blank as they came aboard. They were all so changed he didn't know them in their fine clothes. Bucky laid his head against his cousin's scarred cheek.

"Old chum of mine," he said. "I see we need to be introduced all over again. Tom, Dick, Harry and Little Sister. We haven't changed. It's only our new clothes."

"A whale of a place," whispered Davy, his voice subdued with awe. He cast his eyes to the top of the wall

above him from which Princess Dorothy leaned, calling to them to come up.

The sunny, smiling uncles ran down the emerald stairway, carrying a long rope which they attached to Davy's body. Then, with everybody pulling he slid up the steps without any mishap. The uncles, carried away by their whole hearted welcome, never stopped pulling until they had the astonished Davy inside the castle. They took him right into the throne room.

Number Nine, Lucky Bucky, Tom, Dick, Harry and Little Sister were still clinging to Davy's deck when he came to a stop.

Eager to be friendly, Number Nine introduced them all to everybody. And the uncles, who by now had been all around, took Little Sister into their care and found her to be as quick-witted as she was attractive. Dorothy and Trot entertained the three big brothers. Suitable apartments were found for them all at the end of the crystal corridor.

Bucky decided that he would stay in the whale's cabin. "Davy is kind of bashful and timid," he explained to Number Nine.

"Will it make him feel more comfortable if I stay there too?" asked Number Nine. "May I? I've always wanted to sleep in a ship's bunk."

Davy was delighted with the opportunity to welcome

such a delightful fellow inside when that same fellow
had made him feel so welcome outside.

After the livened servants of the castle had served
an elaborate supper, Number Nine introduced Jenny
Jump to Bucky and Davy, then excused himself. He
hurried back to the laboratory to find out what the
clock had seen during the time he had been away.

CHAPTER 21

Lake Quad

EXACTLY what took place inside the crater happened so quickly, it is impossible to tell. Powerful magic, no doubt. Those three rulers made quick work of any danger. This was evident when they arose from the dark interior of the volcano in such a short time.

On reaching the outer air they circled twice around the crater, then settled comfortably on a pink wave, leaving old Mombi inside to screech to her heart's content.

Scarcely had they landed on the ocean than a low grinding sound was heard inside the volcano, and it slowly started to shrink-- From the highest peak to

its base it diminished in size, without splitting or falling apart.

The little bakers were dumbfounded by the sudden disturbance that seemed to drop out of the sky. Never had one of them supposed such ruin could have happened to their solid little volcano. Slowly but surely it was crumbling to destruction under their feet.

As the volcano contracted the bakers huddled closer together until there was not enough room to hold them all. As the mountain dwindled the baker's caps swelled until they were inflated to the size of balloons that lifted them off their feet and carried them into the air.

So surprised were they at their swelling headpieces they clung desperately together for mutual protection, and clasping hands they formed a long chain that swayed in the breeze while their cherished doughmain melted away.

By then, the volcano was reduced to seven feet at the base, with Mombi's scowling head sticking out of the crater. The old witch had not been reduced in size and filled the whole interior of the volcano. It was a tight fit. So tight she could not move about. This made her angrier than ever and increased her scolding.

"Blast your spectacles," she cackled, every time she

managed to turn her head far enough to glare at the Wizard.

Other weak maledictions and incantations she hurled at Ozma and Glinda when she noticed them making passes that lifted the volcano out of the water and started it floating toward the Emerald City.

Rising smoothly and happily up from the ocean the royal party started for home. The volcano followed the swift gliding scalawagon at a lively speed, with all the biscuit shooters tagging along after them in an endless string.

Glinda took a final look at the little bakers, to make sure their balloons were working properly, then removed her wishing cap.

She folded it over and over until it was small enough to slip into a tiny button she wore on her sleeve, and turned to the Wizard with a questioning smile.

Without waiting for her to speak the nimble witted sorcerer answered, "Yes, yes, - I know, you are wondering what I could want with a dusty smoky old volcano?"

"Exactly."

"We need it for an ornament."

"An ornament?" repeated Ozma, very much puzzled. "You do have the strangest notions sometimes,

you adorable old magic maker."

"Kindly have patience until I carry out a few notions I have for this baby volcano," and he chuckled.

"It might be our best contribution to the city's new decoration. Sitting in the middle of Lake Quad it would look decoratooting."

"What earthly use will it be?" insisted Ozma.

"I might as well tell you," replied the practical Wizard. "During the day the Doughboys can use the volcanic ovens to make their delicious pies and doughnuts without being tormented with thieving pirates. At night we will have fireworks and special illuminations that everyone will enjoy."

"As usual, your ideas are splendid, and I am sure such a gift will be something we'll all be proud of."

Slackening their speed, as they swooped toward the Emerald City, they splashed through a dark cloud with the volcano close at their heels. Somehow the bakers became confused in the mist and floated around in straggling disorder until they heard the witch's scolding voice and found their way out.

From the crater's mouth Mombi still croaked, "Blast your suspender buttons, shoe laces, belts and buckles. Yah! Bust everything, Yah yah yah!"

Ozma was becoming annoyed, "If you expect to put that sour old witch back into Jack Pumpkinhead's

picture, my dear Councillor, I hope you will find some way to curb her loose tongue. We sometimes are-"

Here she hesitated a moment, then stopped short and stared.

"What's this, what's this?" exclaimed the Wizard with a low surprised whistle. "Now isn't that the luckiest break? Just what I have been hoping for-a place to drop the volcano into while we take old Mombi out"

Looking down, they were all puzzled at a mysterious new river flowing close to the castle wall.

"Please do something to keep that witch quiet, and do it quickly," pleaded Ozma, as they splashed into the strange river beside the emerald steps.

"If it's quick action you want, you certainly shall have it," said the little Wizard obligingly. At that same instant Jack appeared with his magic paint brush, and Mombi was transferred to the wall where she struggled to break away until Jack had painted all her edges tight

She sputtered with disgust and ground her teeth.

"Tutty tutty," soothed the Wiaard, turning to the Pumpkinhead. "Now see if you can paint out all that ill-humor, and make her a little more pleasant."

"I won't be pleasant, you old humbug," she snarled.

Without saying a word Jack did what he was told
and with a few direct brush strokes painted a bright
sunny smile over her face. It was all done in an in-
stant.

"There will be no need to chain her," Glinda as-
sured them, coming forward. "An angelic expression
such as Jack has painted clearly shows an amiable
disposition," and the Red Sorceress held up a magic
mirror for Mombi to see herself.

"Look at me! I'm simply irresistible," crooned the
transformed old girl. "What a gorgeous creature I
am, she whispered, and begged to have the mirror
left where she could always see herself.

"My dearest Glinda, you certainly know how to
handle witches," said Ozma, as they mounted the steps
and entered the castle, leaving the Wizard with the
volcano and all the bakers who were dropping around
in amazement.

In the sapphire corridor Glinda and the Queen
passed eleven well fed uncles. And as they approached
the emerald throne room they met four more, dressed
in sport clothes and having the time of their lives.

Inside the grand throne room were many more
strangers gathered around an enormous wooden
whale. He was entertaining them with sailors' tales
and sea chanties which he sang in a deep bass voice.

Upon their entrance a respectful silence fell, and the Queen mounted the throne. The Hungry Tiger and the Cowardly Lion took their places on either side of the throne with the Elegant Elephant in the rear.

With a friendly gesture of welcome the popular little Queen turned to Davy. "Please continue your singing, Mr. Whale; you have a really appealing voice.

So Davy sang all his songs over again, with a few extra pirate ditties that brought roars of applause ringing through the vaulted hall.

Kabumpo felt neglected behind the throne and sneezed so loud and so often he finally spoiled Davy's singing. Princess Dorothy, who had just heard of the Queen's return, ran in sparkling with excitement to report to her Majesty all the stirring incidents that had happened during her absence.

"Such an eventful day!" she panted, snuggling close beside the Queen on the throne as she presented Little Sister and her three brothers, Tom, Dick, and Harry, who didn't want it known that they were once door knobs.

Then, uncle after uncle was introduced. Every one had a joke or a cheerful word.

Ozma acknowledged each new subject with a cordial

bow. Then they all strolled away onto the high terraced gardens, leaving Davy and Number Nine alone.

"Now is my chance to slip back into the river where I belong," said the whale, and he slid along the halls and corridors, then down the grand stairway into the magical river where hundreds of Ozians were now skating.

These happy people were used to odd visitors and, after the first inspection of the whale, accepted him and the river without any more curiosity.

Lucky Bucky, who had been walking around the city arm in arm with the Tinman and Scarecrow, met Davy as he started out. They all climbed aboard. The crowd cheered as he got under way to reach Lake Quad before dark.

They were joined in their cheering by the Queen's party leaning from the high balconies in the castle where they had been enjoying the fragrance of the flowers and the delicious fruit that hung in clusters from the rare fruit trees.

The Sky in the south suddenly became illuminated with a brilliant light. Colored flares blazed; darts and rockets burst in the air in a lavish display of fireworks. Ozma caught her breath, "My goodness gracious, that was quick work."

The Wizard had kept his promise. The volcano was

restored to its former size, with all the little biscuit shooters returned to their precious ovens.

On the whole, Number Nine was impatient to make his report to the Wizard; he felt responsible for the river that had forced its way into the city, although he had not invited it. There was no way of getting around the fact it was a little out of the ordinary. Even in Oz, rivers with dry water that you can't sink in are not common. He enjoyed this one himself; but how, in the name of mischief, to get rid of it, he didn't know.

Upon entering the lake, he was greatly relieved to see the Wizard himself sitting on a lonely rock directing the fireworks.

"Ahoy! your excellency!" hailed Number Nine, "I've been looking for you all afternoon. I'd like you to meet some new friends," and Davy sailed close to the rock and the busy Wizard was safely landed on board.

With the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman adding their eloquent approval, Number Nine delivered a short report of the eventful trip of Lucky Bucky and his huge companion, which he had been observing for days. He complimented them on their valor and courage during the many undertakings that finally

brought them to the Emerald City. In the incredible exploit of passing through the "clutch" in the witches' mountains, at night, they had taken chances no Ozian would have risked.

The Scarecrow's eyes rolled around in his funny face and his fidgety cotton fingers opened and closed nervously, as the sparks fell around him. Seeing his tense expression, the Wizard called, "Put your mind at ease about the sparks; I have removed all the fire from them," and he picked up a handful as proof.

He then turned to Davy, with a genial chirp, "You spry old Whopper, you certainly have livened things up around here!"

"I greatly appreciate your good opinion," answered Davy in a humble voice, "but a tub-headed wobble-tailed old Flunkus like me-Oh, what use am I, among all the grand people around here?"

"USE?" exploded the Wizard in amazement. "You are the very person I have been looking all over for-both you and your river. You can solve a most difficult problem for me, if you only will."

"All you have to do is let me know what's bothering you, and if a blockhead can help you, I will"

"You see, it's this way. The new bakers are baking pies and buns, doughnuts and cookies, and all sorts of good things. Early each morning you might deliver

them to the city. This makes you a person of considerable importance, as you can readily understand."

"A little job like that? Why, that's nothing at all.

And-" wistfully Davy asked, "Is it a permanent job?"

"From now on-Forever," the great man assured him.

Davy was dazed with so much good luck and started to stutter his thanks when, just in time to relieve his embarrassment, there came a call from a group of friends on shore. "YOO HOO !" and all hands turned to answer the call.

Assembled on the beach were many ladies of distinction, escorted by all the uncles, and as the space was limited, only ladies were asked aboard-Queens, Duchesses, Countesses and high ranking girls from Ozma's court.

Ozma and Glinda were given the place of honor on Davy's head, and they stayed until the display was ended. Then, with many thanks for the popular entertainment the Wizard had provided, they all returned merrily to the city.

After the ladies had left, the Wizard turned to Davy,- "Have you a spare bunk in your cabin for me to sleep tonight?"

"What a question to ask! I most certainly have.

To have such distinguished guests aboard is so far beyond my fondest hopes that they exceed all my humble expectation," said Davy, getting his words into shape.

"I'm glad that's settled," said the Queen's advisor as they drifted slowly around the volcano where they could hear the biscuit shooters, high up on the slopes rattling their pans, slamming the oven doors and singing-

Oz high

Oz low

Thump and kneed the dough

To keep awake

We'll bake a cake

In our old volcano

Floating dreamily, they sniffed the fragrant odor of a thousand pies and all manner of luscious pastry that was wafted down the mountain by the breeze.

The big whale whispered to Bucky, in a tremulous voice, "Do you notice any difference in my appearance?"

"Now that you mention it, I think I do," and the boy passed his hand lightly over Davy's planks in the dark. "I'll bet Queen Ozma put a magic touch to your

battered old boards and restored the enamel. Oh boy,
what a perfect polish."

"By the way, Cousin Bucky," inquired the wooden
whale, "What did you do with that old red coat when
you got all these fine new clothes?"

"I clean forget!"

"If that coat is lost, our map is gone. How will we
ever find our way out of Oz?"

"Do you think we will need it sometime?"

"I won't. The new job I have will keep me here for-
ever."

"Perhaps I could get a job helping you."

"Then you like the place enough to stay here al-
ways?"

"Yes, I'm sure I do."

The End