
PIPCUB CLASSICS
DOT AND TOT
of Merryland
L. FRANK BAUM

PIPCUB CLASSICS

Dot and Tot of Merryland

L. Frank Baum





L. Frank Baum

1856 - 1919

AI-created interpretation after George Steckel, circa 1911.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

L. Frank Baum

L. Frank Baum was an American writer best known for creating the land of Oz. Born Lyman Frank Baum in New York State, he pursued several kinds of work before his children's books brought lasting success.

Theatre was an early interest. Baum worked as a producer and playwright, later ran a store with his wife in Aberdeen, South Dakota, and edited a newspaper there. After moving to Chicago he worked in journalism and developed his writing for children. Those experiences linked storytelling with performance and the practical demands of finding an audience.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz appeared in 1900. Baum went on to write fourteen Oz books, as well as many other novels, stories, poems and scripts. He also explored ways to bring his stories to the stage and to film.

His imagined worlds invite readers to take unusual companions and surprising rules seriously. Familiar needs such as friendship, courage and a sense of home give direction to fantastic journeys. Although later adaptations have shaped popular memory of Oz, the books offer a larger and more varied world than any single version of the story can contain.

Biographical reference: Wikipedia, L. Frank Baum. Historical portrait: George Steckel, circa 1911. Full source details are retained in the edition archive.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

Pipcub Classics

Dot and Tot of Merryland

L. Frank Baum

Text source: Project Gutenberg, eBook 37976.

This edition retains the selected source transcription. Typesetting and editorial author pages prepared for Pipcub. Historical language and viewpoints remain those of the source work.

https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/37976

Decorative chapter-opening letters have also been transcribed into the reading text; original illustrations are retained.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The success achieved last year by "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz"—a book that not only ran through many large editions, but brought the author hundreds of letters from interested little folks—has induced me to follow that tale with another, herein presented.

Should "Dot and Tot of Merryland" win the approval of my young friends, I shall be pleased and contented.

In any event Mr. Denslow's quaint and merry pictures, which, in this book excel all his previous work, will be sure to induce happiness in the heart of every beholder.

L. FRANK BAUM.

Chicago, July 1, 1901.

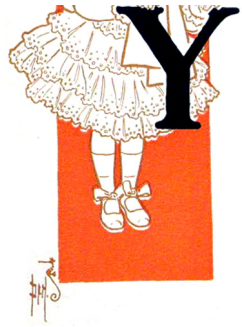


DEDICATION.

To ev'ry laughter-loving Tot—
Whether your name be Dot or not;
And may you find a Merryland
Forever lying close at hand.







YOU should have seen Dot as she nestled among the cushions of the carriage on her way to the railway station with her father and governess, Miss Bombien. Her dainty white gown was covered with tucks and puffings and embroideries, as became the dress of the daughter of the wealthy banker who sat smilingly beside her. Her soft, braided white hat had a wide brim that drooped languidly over the pale little face beneath, and broad, white ribbons drew down the brim until all the yellow curls were hidden away. Indeed, the only bits of color about Dot that showed were her deep blue eyes and rosy lips. Even these last were not so rosy as they should have been, for Dot was not in her usual good health, having been confined to the big city house during a long winter and a chill, uncomfortable spring.

But, now that the flowers were blooming and the birds singing in the new-leaved trees, she was going, in charge of her governess, to pass the summer at Roselawn, a beautiful country home her father had recently purchased.

"You must try not to be lonely, dear," said her father, as he held her little hand in his big, strong one. "I have told Miss Bombien to let you run and romp to your heart's content, so the roses may more quickly return to your pale cheeks."

Dot's eyes brightened. To run and romp as she pleased would indeed be a new experience to her, and she was happy even to think of such delight.

"You will have no one but Miss Bombien for company," continued her father; "but there are plenty of servants, and I am told the grounds are in beautiful condition. In a few days, at most, Sweetheart, I shall run down to see you, and then you can tell me how you like your new home. In the meanwhile, Miss Bombien will simply look after your comfort; there will be no lessons to bother you. All you must do is eat and sleep and play, and to grow strong and rosy-cheeked again."



Dot listened to al this with much pleasure, and decided she was about to have a fine holiday. Her real name, by the way, was Evangeline Josephine Freeland; but mamma and papa had always called her "Dot" from the day she was born, so sometimes she almost forgot she had such a beautiful name as Evangeline Josephine.

Dot's mamma was an invalid, and had been taken by her father—Dot's grandfather, you know—for a trip to Europe, in search of better health, and so she had been forced to leave her little daughter to the watchful care of Miss Bombien. Mr. Freeland, although he loved Dot dearly, was a very busy man and could devote but little time to his child. "So, Sweetheart," he told her, "you will be Queen of Roselawn this summer, and I will come down once in a while to bow before your Majesty's throne."

What he really feared was that Dot might grow up weak and delicate as her mother was; but he did not tell the child this. He resolved, however, that if fresh air and healthy surroundings could give his little girl strength and health, they should be at her command, and therefore he had purchased Roselawn almost entirely on Dot's account.

Before she realized it, Dot found herself at the railway station and aboard a parlor car, where her father gave her a long and loving farewell kiss. Then Mr. Freeland stood upon the platform and waved his hand to his daughter, while the train slowly glided out from the station and began its journey into the sweet, fresh country.

Roselawn won the girl's heart at first sight. The cool but sun-kissed mansion seemed delightful after the stuffy, formal city house. It was built in a quaint yet pretty fashion, with many wings and gables and broad verandas on every side. Before it were acres and acres of velvety green lawn, sprinkled with shrubbery and dotted with beds of bright flowers. In every direction were winding paths, covered with white gravel, which led to all parts of the grounds, looking for all the world like a map, Dot thought.

From the first day of her arrival, Dot was all eagerness and joy. Miss Bombien fully obeyed her instructions to let the child run. Dot entered the house only to eat her meals, which she did with growing appetite, and then away she would romp to chase butterflies, visit the stables or poultry yard, or sit near the river bank and watch the driftwood float by. Sometimes a boat danced over the broad, blue waters, and then Dot would jump up and down and clap her hands in ecstasy at the pretty sight. The river soon became her favorite resort, for the green banks and terraces before the house ran down to the water's edge.

Miss Bombien passed her days in hammock swung under a side porch, where she read a great many books and enjoyed herself in her own way. She did not bother to watch Dot, thinking the child could get into no mischief beyond a torn frock or a soiled face.

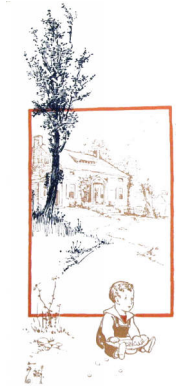


One morning, having finished her breakfast and scampered out upon the lawn, as usual, Dot chanced to notice a tiny path that led through a small opening in a high and thick hedge. She had never been in this direction before, and although she had often seen the hedge, she had not thought there was a way to pass through it. So a spirit of adventure came over her.

"I'll explore," said Dot to herself.

Pat, pat, patter went the little feet on the gravel, and soon the busy hedge was reached and the opening passed.

Then Dot stopped suddenly and looked around. A cozy little vine-covered cottage nearly surrounded by blooming posies, was before her. From the doorway, however, a path led to Dot's feet, and sitting in the middle of this path, slowly piling pebbles into his broad-brimmed straw hat, was a little boy.





CHAPTER II.

TOT

THE boy was a year or two younger than Dot, and seemed a chubby little fellow as he sat with his legs spread apart and his dark eyes raised wonderingly to the face of his unexpected visitor. Waves of brown hair clustered loosely about his broad forehead, and his dress was neat, though of a coarse material.

He paused in his play and stared hard at Dot for a moment; then dropped his eyes bashfully and ran his fingers through the white pebbles in an embarrassed way.

"Who are you?" asked the girl, in the calm, matter-of-fact tone peculiar to children, while she continued to regard the boy with the interest of a discoverer.

"Tot," was the low reply.

"Tot who?" she demanded.

"Tot Tompum," murmured the boy.

"Tompum! That doesn't mean anything," said Dot, decidedly.

This positive statement seemed to annoy the little fellow. He raised his eyes half shyly a moment and said, in a louder voice:

"Papa Tompum cuts the grass, an' makes the flowers grow. I'm Tot Tompum."

"Oh," said Dot; "you must mean Thompson. Thompson's the gardener, I know, and gardeners make the flowers grow and cut the grass."

The boy nodded his head twice as if to say she was right.

"Gard'ner," he repeated. "Papa Tompum. I'm Tot Tompum."

Then he took courage to look up again, and seeing a friendly smile upon Dot's face he asked boldly, "Who is you?"

"Oh, I'm Dot," she answered, sitting down beside him. "My whole name is Dot Freeland."

"Dot F'eelan'," said Tot.

"Freeland," corrected Dot.

"F'eelan'," said Tot.

"Never mind," laughed the girl; "let us play together. What were you doing with the pebbles?"

"Jack-stones," said the boy, and gravely picking out five of the white pebbles, nearly of one size, he tossed them into the air and tried to catch them on the back of his hand. Two tumbled off, and Dot laughed. The boy laughed, too, and tried it again. Before long they had become fast friends, and were laughing and chatting together as happily as if they had known one another for months.



Tot's mother, hearing their voices, came to the door of her cottage; but seeing her boy's new playmate was "the young lady at the mansion," she smiled and returned to her work.

Presently Dot jumped up.

"Come, Tot," she cried, "let us go where your father is working. I saw him weeding one of the flower beds this morning."

Tot scrambled to his feet and poured the white pebbles from his hat, after which he placed it upon the back of his head; so far back, indeed, that Dot wondered why it did not tumble off.

"We'll go see Papa Tompum," he said, trotting along beside his new friend.



Thompson, the gardener, was quite surprised to see his little boy holding fast to the hand of the rich banker's daughter, and chatting away as frankly as if he had known her for years; but Thompson had learned by this time that Dot ruled everyone about the place and did exactly as she pleased, so he made no protest. As he watched the children running about the grounds where Tot was usually forbidden to play, Thompson felt proud that his boy had been selected by "the young lady" for so high and honorable a position as her playmate.

He made no protest when they raced across a flower bed and left the prints of their small feet upon the soft earth, for Dot held Tot firmly by the hand, and he obediently followed wherever she led. The big red roses attracted her fancy, and she ruthlessly plucked a handful and stuck them in rows around the rim of Tot's hat as well as her own, although the poor gardener, who had tended these flowers so patiently that they had become precious in his eyes, actually winced and shivered with dismay at witnessing the careless and, to him, cruel manner in which the young mistress of the house destroyed them. But Dot knew they were her property and enjoyed the roses in her own way; while Tot, although he may have felt guilty, wisely shifted all responsibility to his companion, and admired the royal way in which she accepted everything about the place as her very own.



When the luncheon gong sounded from the big house, and Dot left Tot to obey the summons, she said to him, "Tomorrow I will bring a basket of sandwiches and cake, and we'll have a picnic down by the river bank."



"All right!" answered Tot, and trotted away toward his father's cottage.

It had been an eventful day to him, for he had found a delightful playmate.





Early next morning Dot came out of the house with a basket on her arm so big and heavy she could hardly carry it. Indeed, she stopped several times between the house and the gap in the big hedge to set the basket down while she rested. Once she was sorely tempted to chase a pretty butterfly that fluttered lazily over the lawn near by; but a glance at the basket and a thought of Tot recalled her to the fact that this was "a picnic day," and so she trudged steadily on and passed through the hedge.

Tot was sitting on the door-step waiting for her. He wore a clean sailor waist and blue brownie overalls, and his face and hands had been freshly washed for the important occasion.

When he saw Dot's basket his eyes grew big and round, and he asked, "What you got?"

"Oh, that's our lunch," said the girl, setting down her burden with a sigh of relief.

"What's lunch?" demanded Tot.

"Why—something to eat, you know," she answered.

"Oh," said Tot. Then he looked at the basket with new interest and asked, "Basket all full somefin' t'eat?"

"Yes," replied Dot, with some pride. "I begged cook to give me all the good things she had in the pantry, 'cause you and I are going to have a picnic, and eat our lunch down by the river. So she filled it way up to the top, 'cause cook always does anything I ask. And it's a great big basket, Tot, too."

"Yes," answered Tot, gravely, "big basket!" Then he jumped up and, all eagerness, approached the basket.

"Let's eat it!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, no," cried Dot reprovingly. "It isn't time for lunch yet. And I've just had my breakfast. But we'll go down to the river and start the picnic right away. And, if you're good, Tot, perhaps I'll give you just one piece of jelly-cake before lunch time."

Tot's mother came out and kissed her boy good-bye, and then he and Dot took hold of the handle of the big basket and started for the river.

Of course, it took them a long time to get there, for often they set down the basket to pick flowers or watch a robin redbreast carrying food to its nest full of babies, or to run over the soft, close-cropped grass and chase each other, in very joyful and good spirits.

But they always returned to the basket, and at last carried it down to the water's edge, where they placed it upon a large, flat stone.

"That will be our table, when it's time for lunch," said Dot.

"Time now," remarked Tot, wistfully.

"Not yet," said the girl, "but you shall have the jelly-cake, 'cause there's plenty to last all day."



So she drew aside the white cloth that covered the basket and took out two big slices of cake, one for Tot and one for herself. While

they ate it, they walked along the shore. The river was entirely deserted by boats, for it was a warm day and even the fisher folk did not care to be out. On the opposite shore were great walls of rock rising up from the river, but at the foot of the cliffs were bushy trees that lined the further edge of the water.

"Just like whiskers," said Tot.

"So they are, from here," agreed Dot; "but if we were on the other side of the river we would find them to be big trees. It's because they are so far away that they look like the river's whiskers."

They walked farther along the shore until they were past the grounds of Roselawn, and then, turning a little bend in the river, they came to some low bushes growing down by the water.

"Oh, Tot," cried the girl, "wouldn't it be nice to lunch under those trees, where it is cool and shady? Let us go back and fetch the basket."

Tot followed obediently, for he recognized Dot as the leader not only because she was older, but because she possessed the wonderful basket of good things. They walked back to the big stone where they had left the basket, and after a good deal of labor managed to carry it to the grove of low trees. Pushing the branches aside, they crept through the bushes until they reached the edge of the river, and then Dot uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Here's a boat!" she said. "And a pretty boat, too. I wonder whom it belongs to. But never mind, there's no one here; so we will climb into it and eat our luncheon on the seats."

It really was a pretty boat, painted all white, except for a red stripe running along the outer edge. There was a broad seat at each end and two seats in the middle, and in the bottom of the boat, under the seats, were two oars.

One end of the boat was drawn up on the shore, while the rest of it lay quietly upon the water; but the branches of the trees threw a cool shade over all, and it seemed to Dot and Tot the most pleasant place to eat their luncheon.

They carried the basket to the broad seat farthest out in the water, and Dot spread her white cloth over it, and laid upon that all the good things cook had put into her basket.

"Let's play house," said Tot.

"Not house," corrected Dot; "we'll play this is a ship, and we're on a trip across the ocean. Won't it be jolly?"

Sitting upon the bottom of the boat, close to the seat which formed their table, they laughed and talked and ate their luncheon with the keen appetites all healthy children have.

The time passed so quickly they never knew how long they sat there; but suddenly Tot exclaimed, "It's hot!" and put on his hat to keep the sun from his head.

Dot looked up, surprised to find that the sun was indeed shining full upon them. Then she noticed that the shade of the trees was gone and only the blue of the sky was over the boat.

She stood up and gave a little cry of dismay.

"We're in the river, Tot," she said; "the boat has got away!"





CHAPTER IV.

UNDER THE CLIFFS

Tot scrambled to his feet and sat upon a seat of the boat, holding fast to the sides with both hands. As he looked around and saw the boat was far from land, he smiled and nodded his head, saying, "Now we'll play ship, an' ride on 'e ocean. Won't we, Dot F'eelun'?"

"Oh, Tot!" exclaimed the little girl; "I'm afraid we'll be drowned. How can we ever get home again?"

"Ride in 'e boat," said Tot, composedly.

"But the boat is carrying us farther away every minute. We're floating downstream; and by-and-by we'll come to the ocean, where there are big waves," declared Dot, who was really frightened.

But Tot refused to be afraid. As the swift current carried them along, he clapped his hands together joyfully and gave a little laugh of delight. "Nice ride!" he said again and again. "Hooray!"

Dot was older and wiser. She knew a boat could be rowed by means of oars, and there were two oars lying on the bottom of the boat. She decided to make an attempt to reach the shore, for then someone might be found to help them back to Roselawn, which they had now left far behind.

She drew out one of the oars and with difficulty, for it was heavy for the child to handle, managed to push one end into the water and rest the other against the row-lock of the boat. Then she began to row as hard as she could; but her strength was not great, and all she did was to push the front of the boat half around, so that it headed toward the rocky cliffs on the far side of the river.

Her efforts pleased Tot, who laughed merrily as the oar splashed in the water; but Dot was determined to get to land if possible and struggled desperately at her task.

The boat was still headed toward the rocky cliffs, when suddenly the oar flew out of Dot's hands and she fell backward off the seat.

She was not hurt, but when she got up she saw the oar floating in the water, out of her reach; still she was reassured to notice that the boat was now gliding swiftly along, and presently, to her joy, she saw it was headed directly toward the fringe of trees, and getting nearer to the bank every moment.

"It must be another current, Tot," she cried, "and this one is taking us to the shore. So I did some good by rowing, even if I lost the oar."

Tot nodded, but said nothing. He was still enjoying the novel boat ride. Dot sat down on the seat beside him, and they watched the shore grow nearer and more distinct every moment as the boat glided steadily on.

The trees were bigger than they had thought, and grew close down to the water's edge. Dot became worried when she noticed the speed of the boat increasing as they drew nearer to the shore.

"If we bump those trees," she said, "we may be hurt, and the branches will scratch our faces dreadfully."

Tot stopped smiling when he heard this, and took hold of Dot's hand, which he clasped tightly in his own.

The next moment, still speeding onward, the boat reached the trees. The two children were caught by the branches, swept quickly from the seat, and sent sprawling at the bottom of the boat. But the boat itself never stopped an instant. There was just room for it to float underneath the thick branches, and instead of bumping into the shore, the water carried it through a small opening in the face

of the rocky cliff, and then, in total darkness, it continued swiftly on its way!



Dot and Tot, who were both startled by this unexpected danger, managed to get up and sit together upon the seat of the boat; but they could see nothing before them and only a faint light behind, where they had entered this hidden tunnel in the cliff.

For some moments they sat in silence. Then Dot reached out her hand to see if she could feel anything; but the cool, damp air was all around them. Then she reached upward, and her hand struck against a piece of projecting rock which hurt her.

"Tot," she whispered, "I think we'd better lie down in the bottom of the boat. The roof isn't very high up, and it may bump our heads if we sit here."

Tot slipped off the seat at once and stretched himself out on the boards underneath. Dot quickly followed him, and then for a time they lay very still in the darkness, listening to the water as it rippled softly along the sides of the boat.

Presently the girl asked, "Are you frightened, Tot?"

"Not, much," was the hesitating answer; and then, after a long pause, he added, "but some."

"Oh, I'm some frightened myself," said Dot. "But I don't know what we can do."

"I know," declared Tot, solemnly.

"What?" she inquired, in an anxious voice.

"Nuthin'."

Dot saw no need of replying to this, and another long period of silence followed.

They did not seem to be in any immediate danger, for the boat swept along with a free, easy motion that was very pleasant, and the air was delightfully cool after the heat of the sun outside in the open river.

But two things worried Dot. One was the fact that she was being carried a long ways from home, and the other a fear of where the underground river might lead them. She wasn't at all sure they were not floating down into the middle of the earth, and the chances of ever seeing Roselawn again were growing smaller every minute.

Nothing seemed to worry Tot, however. The darkness and the murmuring of the water made him drowsy, and before long he was fast asleep, with his chubby little arms clasped around Dot's neck.

The girl was also gradually recovering from her fright, since nothing terrible seemed to happen. They were having a long journey under the cliffs; but she knew there must come an end to it some time, and probably they would float out of the dark tunnel into the daylight sooner or later.

On and on sped the little boat, until at last, as Dot lay staring into the darkness, she noticed a dim light about her, and began to see the rocky roof of the cavern through which they were passing.

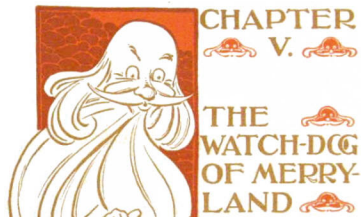
Then she sat up, and, far away in the distance, she saw a round, bright spot that reminded her of a full moon. It seemed to be getting nearer and bigger, and finally she gave a cry of joy and awakened her companion.



"Tot! Oh, Tot!" she called. "We've got to the end at last and are coming out of the tunnel!"

Tot sat up and rubbed his eyes. He gave one careless glance at the opening, and then turned his eyes upon the lunch basket, saying, sleepily, "I'm hungry!"







Of course, Dot paid no attention, during this exciting moment, to the boy's demand for food.

There would be plenty of time to eat after they were out of the tunnel and in safety.

The boat glided on as gracefully as a swan, and in a few minutes it passed through the jagged rocks that formed the mouth of the tunnel and floated into a broad, open river.

Dot and Tot quickly scrambled upon the seat and looked around them.

They were in a deep valley, shaped very much like a chopping bowl, only around the outer edge were high, peaked mountains. Not a tree nor a green thing was to be seen anywhere, but the valley was thickly covered with stones—big stones and little stones and stones of all sizes—scattered about in every direction.

Through the center of the valley ran the broad, blue river, at one end of which was now the boat, while at the other end the children saw a low archway, through which the water seemed to pass into some country beyond.

Very slowly the boat was floating toward this archway, and Dot decided there would be ample time to eat something from the basket before they had passed through the valley of stones.

"We may as well go on, Tot," she said, as she arranged the luncheon; "for this isn't a pleasant place to stop in, and we should never be able to climb over those high mountains."

"Never could," agreed Tot, as he bit into a sandwich.

"What a queer place this is," she continued, looking around them. "I don't believe anyone has ever been here before. Let us give it a name. That's what all explorers do. We'll call it Stony Vale."

"All right," said Tot, contentedly. Then he stretched out his arm and pointed to something that was moving among the stones.

"See!" he said. "Funny man."



"Why, I really believe it is, Tot!" exclaimed the girl, looking toward the place. "No, it isn't a man; it's a bear."

"Bear!" repeated Tot, with wide open eyes. "Funny bear!"

Halfway up the valley they saw a shaggy-looking creature sitting upon a rock. It seemed to have the form of a man, as Tot had first declared; but it was covered with long, thick hair, which made Dot decide it must be a bear.

Whatever it was, the creature was surely alive, and it had also seen the boat, for the next moment it rose from the rock and came bounding down to the shore of the river, leaping from stone to stone, and moving so swiftly that its long hair streamed out behind it in the wind.

The boat was now being carried by the current directly toward the shore, and soon its front end touched softly upon the gravelly

beach. At the same time the strange creature drew closer to them and sat down upon a big stone only a few feet away.

Dot and Tot had been watching it, and now saw that what they had taken for a bear was an old man, with whiskers and hair so long that they reached down to the soles of his feet, and probably would have grown still longer had not the rough stones worn away the ends of the hair. Not a bit of his body could be seen; the flowing white hair covered him everywhere like a gown, except upon the top of his head, which was smooth and bald. So thick, indeed, was the covering that when he stretched out his arms, the old man could only push his hands and wrists through the masses of hair.

The curious appearance of this strange person surprised the children, and they remained for some time staring at him without trying to say a word.

The hairy man looked at them, in return with equal interest, and was the first to speak, saying in a mild, sad voice:

"Strangers, who are you?"

"I'm Dot, sir," answered the girl. "Dot Freeland."

"She's Dot F'eelun'," repeated Tot.

"And this is my friend, Tot Thompson," she continued.

"I'm Tot Tompum," said Tot gravely.

"Oh," replied the man. "I'm pleased to make your acquaintance. I'm the Watch-Dog of Merryland."

"What a queer name!" exclaimed Dot. "Why do they call you that?"

"Because I'm placed here to keep everyone from passing through the archway that spans the river into the fair and happy valleys of Merryland."

"How can you keep them from passing through?" asked the girl.

"Why, tell them they mustn't, of course."



"But suppose they won't mind you, what will you do then?"

The old man looked puzzled, and shook his head slowly.

"I'm sure I don't know what I could do in that case," he answered. "You see, no one has ever before come here since I was commanded to guard the entrance to Merryland."

"How long have you been here?" inquired Dot.

"About three hundred years, I think; but I've lost track of the exact time."

"Don't you ever die?" asked Tot wondering at this great age.

"I haven't died yet," answered the old man, thoughtfully.

"But you will, won't you?" persisted the boy.

"Why, I suppose so, if the Queen lets me," was the reply.

"Who is the Queen?" questioned Dot.

"She who rules Merryland," answered the man.

Then, for a few moments, there was silence, while Dot and Tot stared at the hairy old man and he stared at them.

Presently Dot broke the silence the stillness by asking, "What do you do in this lonesome place, where you have no one to talk to?"

"Why, most of the time I watch, as it is my duty to do. And when I get lonely, I count my whiskers."

"Oh!" said Dot. Then she inquired, curiously, "How many whiskers have you?"

"Well," answered the Watch-Dog of Merryland, confidentially, "there are either eighty-seven thousand four hundred and twenty-six, or else eighty-seven thousand four hundred and twenty-eight. Sometimes I make it one figure and sometimes the

other, so I can't really tell which is right. I was engaged in counting my whiskers when I looked up and saw your boat. I had then counted sixty-nine thousand three hundred and fifty-four; but I was so surprised to see you that I missed the count, and now I shall have to begin all over again."



"I'm sorry," said Dot, sympathetically; "I'd like to know just which is the right number."

"If you will wait I'll count them," he replied, eagerly. "Perhaps then you can tell if I make a mistake."

"How long will it take?" she asked.

"I can do it in about four months."

"Oh, we couldn't possibly wait that long," declared the girl. "I really think we should be going now."

"Where will you go?" he asked.

"There is only one way for us to go—through that archway into Merryland, as you call it. We are not strong enough to pull the boat upstream, so we must let it float where it will."

"It will be a terrible disgrace to me," said the Watch-Dog of Merryland, in a solemn voice, "if you escape me. What will the Queen say when she knows I have watched here three hundred years without seeing anyone, and then allowed the first strangers who came along to pass through the archway?"

"I do not see that she can blame you," returned Dot. "You say yourself you would be unable to stop us if we decided not to mind you. So the Queen can only blame us for not minding you."

"That is true," said the old man, more cheerfully.

"Want somethin' t'eat?" inquired Tot, holding out a slice of jellycake.

"Dear me!" said the Watch-Dog, taking the cake in his hand and looking at it with much curiosity. "What is it?"

"Eat it," said Tot; "it's good."

"But I can't eat," replied the old man. "I don't know how. I've never eaten anything in my life."

"Not even when you were a little boy?" Tot asked, in wonder.

"Well, I've forgotten what happened when I was a little boy, it's so long ago," returned the man. "But I certainly have no desire to eat now, and if I had there is nothing in the Valley to devour except stones. I suppose eating is a habit you have acquired. Why don't you break yourself of it?"

"I get hungry," answered Tot.

"Hunger must be a habit, too," remarked the old man, "for I never have had it since I have been in this valley. However, if you will allow me to keep the cake, I will amuse myself by looking at it when I'm tired of counting my whiskers."

"You are quite welcome to the cake," said Dot. "But now I must ask you to excuse us, for it is time we started upon our journey."

"Oh, don't let me detain you," replied the Watch-dog of Merryland, politely; "that is, if you are determined to disobey my orders."

"I fear we must," said the girl. "Is Merryland the other side of that archway?"

"Part of it is," answered the old man. "There are Seven Valleys in Merryland, connected by archways, for the river flows through them all."

"And what is beyond the Seventh Valley?" asked Dot.

"No one knows except those who pass through, and those who pass through never return to tell," he replied.

"Well, good-bye," said Dot.

"Bye!" repeated Tot, briefly.

"Good-bye," answered the Watch-Dog.



The girl took the remaining oar and pushed the boat away from the shore with it. The little craft glided out into the river very slowly, and drifted along with the current in the direction of the archway.

Dot and Tot sat on the seat and watched the friendly old man until a shadow fell upon them, and called their attention to the fact that they were passing through the arch into the First Valley of Merryland.





CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST VALLEY



The rocky arch was not very thick, yet before Dot and Tot had floated to the other side of it, shouts of merry laughter and the chattering of many voices came to their ears. Some of the voices sounded loud and shrill, others low and deep, but all rang with a happy tone that aroused the children's interest at once, and made them wonder what occasion could cause so much amusement.

Then, so suddenly that it quite startled the childish voyagers, the boat glided from the archway into the most beautiful country one could imagine.

It was a Valley, as the Watch-Dog had said; but it was level and sunny and dotted with broad-leaved trees; while soft, tender grasses, mingled with brilliant flowers, covered the ground in every direction. There seemed to be no houses at all, yet streets were laid out in regular order, having at their sides raised platforms in place of houses. Each of the platforms was four feet high and fifteen feet square on the top, and they were separated from one another by stretches of the flower-strewn lawn. The top and sides of every platform were padded like the mattresses of a bed, and were covered with silks and velvets of the most gorgeous patterns, no two being of the same combinations of colors.

On many of these raised and padded platforms, Dot and Tot saw groups of funny-looking Clowns, all dressed in wide, baggy trousers, puffy jackets and soft, pointed caps. Yet in their costumes

was an endless variety of colorings and combinations of colors, making the groups look remarkably bright and pleasing.

The faces of the Clowns were painted in a fanciful way, with rings of red and blue and yellow on their cheeks, and spots and streaks of the same gorgeous colors over their eyes and around their chins.

When the children first came into the Valley of the Clowns, they saw many of them leaping and tumbling and turning somersaults upon the platforms, while others were juggling with balls, or balancing long feathers and sticks upon their noses and chins. These feats were greeted with shouts of laughter by other Clowns who were resting and looking on, and these spectators also cried out their approval or poked fun at the performers when they failed to accomplish the acts they were attempting.

While Dot and Tot sat in their boat, looking with amazement at the strange sights all about them, one of the Clowns chanced to look their way, and upon seeing the children, he set up a shout and rushed down to the shore, followed by more than a hundred of his fellows.



As they ran, the Clowns leaped over one another, turned somersaults into the air, and walked upon their hands nearly as fast as they could upon their feet; and so swift were all their movements that, in less time than one could think possible, they were all crowded along the river bank, and shouting loud greetings to the new arrivals.

Dot had to put her fingers in her ears at first, for the noise bewildered her, and while she wondered what she should say to these lively creatures, she noticed a richly dressed Clown standing before the others, and making low bows to her and to Tot. As his

lips seemed to move, she took away her fingers from her ears that she might hear what he was saying.

Everyone was talking at the same time, and at first Dot could hear nothing plainly; but the Clown who was standing in front of his comrades clapped his hands loudly together three times, at which the others instantly became silent and motionless.

Then, with another bow, the leader addressed her, speaking in a sweet and most pleasing tone of voice, "Welcome, O King and Queen of Children, to the Valley of Clowns! We live but for your amusement; we love your happy and smiling faces more than anything else in the world, and this day on which you have come to visit your slaves is the most joyful we have ever known."



Here he made another bow and threw his pointed cap high into the air, where it whirled over and over and finally fell straight upon his head again. There was a shout of applause at this feat, and Tot laughed loudly and clapped his hands.

Then the leader of the Clowns again spoke, "If you will graciously consent to land in our country, where everything we have is at your service, we shall be delighted to amuse you to the best of our ability."

"You are very kind," answered Dot, "and as we are tired by sitting in the boat so long, we shall be glad to accept your invitation."

Then she pushed the boat to the shore, where a dozen Clowns seized it and drew it far up on the grassy bank. Then Dot and Tot

stepped out upon land, and as they did so every Clown present turned a backward somersault and shouted, "Here we are again!"

The one who had first spoken to them now came forward and shook hands with both Dot and Tot in a very polite manner.

"My name is Flippityflop," he said, "and I am the Prince of Clowns, ruling here under the gracious favor of her Majesty the Queen of Merryland. I beg you will allow me to escort you to my dwelling; but first I should like to know your names, and how you came here."

"I'm Tot Tompum," said the boy, looking up into the Clown's painted face, "and here's Dot F'eelun. We've come in a boat, long, long ways off. An' we don't know how to get home again."

"We are delighted to have you with us, however you came here," replied the Clown; "and as for your getting home again, why, that is worry, and no one ever worries in the Valley of Clowns. You are welcome to remain our guests as long as you please, and while you are with us you must consider us your slaves, for Clowns have always been the slaves of children." Then he turned to the others.

"Brothers!" he shouted. "Allow me to introduce you to our friends Dot and Tot, of the Big Round World. We are all their slaves. Salute them!"

Instantly every Clown stood upon his head and knocked his heels together in the air. As they wore silver bells around their ankles, this made a most delightful, tinkling sound, and the sight of so many topsy-turvy Clowns was so pretty that Dot and Tot both laughed and clapped their hands.

Then Flippityflop caught the children in his arms and seated one of them upon each of his shoulders, after which he marched up the street, followed by the rest of the Clowns, who sang and danced as they came.

The Prince carried them to one of the prettiest platforms and set them gently upon its cushioned top. Then he leaped into the air, whirled around like a windmill and landed gracefully beside them.

"Welcome to my dwelling," he said.

"But this isn't a dwelling," exclaimed Dot. "A dwelling is a house."

"And this is a sofa!" declared Tot.

"Oh, no; it's a real house," said Flippityflop, "although it may be different from the dwellings you are accustomed to. Let us enter."

He seized a silken strap and opened a trap-door in the top of the platform.

"Come on!" he cried, and jumping down the hole, disappeared from view.

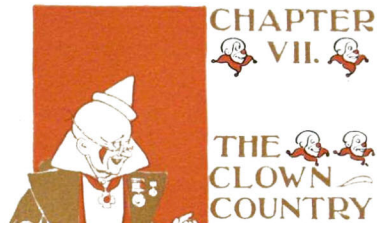


Dot crept up to the trapdoor and looked down. Just beneath her was Flippityflop, holding out his arms.

"Come on!" he said again; "I'll catch you."

Dot did not hesitate, but dropped through the opening, and the Prince caught her safely in his arms. Tot followed a moment later, and then the children gazed about them curiously.







Flippityflop's house proved to be one big room, built under the platform, and lighted by a soft glow from hidden electric lamps. The walls were covered with bright-yellow silk hangings and on the floor was a crimson carpet. All around the sides were wide benches with soft cushions of purple velvet, and near the middle of the room was a small table of blue and silver. On the walls Dot noticed several gaudily colored pictures of Clowns, and when Flippityflop saw the children looking at these pictures he said:

"Those are portraits of my father and grandfather and great-grandfather. They were all Princes of this Valley of Merryland, as well as good men and clever Clowns. Therefore I am proud of them."

"They look very jolly," said Dot.

"They were jolly, and proved a comfort to thousands of children. But you must be hungry, and I trust you will allow me to offer you some dinner. What will you have?"

"What you got?" inquired Tot.

"Well, I have in my cupboard some fried goldfish, boiled buttercups and pickled shoelaces," he answered.

"Don't want any," said Tot.

"These seem rather foolish things to eat," remarked Dot.

"Of course, they are foolish things," agreed Flippityflop, cheerfully. "Everything we do here is foolish. You certainly can't expect wisdom in a country of Clowns."

"Course not," said Tot.

"If you'll send to the boat for our basket, I think we will prefer to eat the things we brought with us," declared Dot.

"Certainly!" answered the Prince, and immediately sticking his head through the trapdoor, he asked a Clown who stood outside to fetch the basket.

It came in a remarkably short time, and then Flippityflop assisted Dot to lay the cloth on the blue and silver table, while the children proceeded to eat of the sandwiches, cake and apple-tarts that remained in the basket.

"Wouldn't you like something to drink?" asked the Prince.

"I am rather thirsty," admitted Dot; "have you any milk?"

"No, we do not use milk in this Valley," he answered. "But we have some excellent green paint, or, if you prefer it, I can give a bottle of red mucilage."

"No, thank you," said Dot; "we couldn't drink those. Perhaps you will bring us some fresh water from the river."



"But the water is quite wet," exclaimed the Clown, "and is liable to make you damp. Surely you won't think of drinking it!"

"Oh, yes; we're accustomed to drinking water," said the girl.

So the water was sent for, and Dot and Tot took long and refreshing drinks, although their action alarmed Flippityflop, who

urged them to eat a few handfuls of sawdust afterward to absorb the dampness.

"Do all the Clowns live in this Valley?" asked the girl, when the table was cleared.

"Yes, all except those we send into the world to amuse the children," answered Flippityflop. "You see, we train them all very carefully, and every year one is selected to go into the world."

"How do they get there?" asked the child.

"At the upper edge of our Valley there is one place not so steep as the rest. The Clown who is leaving us climbs to this place and finds himself on the top of a mountain. So he makes himself into a ball, as he has been taught to do, and rolls down the mountain into the outside world, where he travels around until he finds a circus to join."



"Oh!" exclaimed Dot. "I've seen 'em—in circuses."

"To be sure; that's the proper place for Clowns. Do they make the children laugh?"

"Sometimes," said the girl.

"When they do not," said Flippityflop, gravely, "they are imitation Clowns, and were never trained in this Valley of Merryland. The real Clowns are sure to make you laugh. But come, it is time our people were gathering on the platforms for their evening practice. Would you like to watch them?"

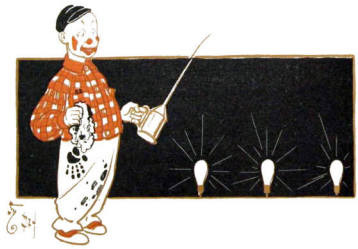
"Yes, indeed!" cried Dot, joyfully; and Tot clapped his hands and echoed: "'Deed, yes!"

So Flippityflop lifted them through the hole to the top of the padded platform, where they saw a strange and merry sight.

All the platforms on both sides of the street were now occupied by Clowns, who were performing in a most marvelous manner. The trees were full of electric lights, which shed brilliant rays over the scene and enabled the children to see everything distinctly.

"Come with me," said their friend, "and I will lead you through the street, that you may see what my brothers are doing."

They left the Prince's platform and came to the next, where three gaily dressed Clowns were bounding into the air and whirling around before they came down again. Every time they jumped they cried: "All right, Mr. Johnson!" in their shrill voices, and often one of them would fall on his head or back instead of landing on his feet. When this happened they were not hurt, for the platform was soft and yielding; so they sprang up at once and tried it over again, laughing at their own mishaps.



At the next platform were some juggling Clowns. One of these placed a light ladder on his shoulders, and another ran up it and stood upon his head on the top rung.

In another place the Clowns threw small silver balls into the air, one after the other, and then caught them cleverly as they came down.

Near the end of the street a Clown, dressed in a costume of scarlet with green spots upon it, and wearing a white, pointed cap upon his head, was singing a comic song. They stopped to listen while he sang as follows:



A goat to a barber went one day;
"Just trim my beard," the goat did say,
"And cut my hair in a stylish way"—
Sing shivvy, shovvy, shavey!
The barber then began to snip,
But soon he let the scissors slip,
And cut the goat upon his lip—
Sing shivvy, shovvy, shavey!

Then Mr. Goat, with angry bleat,
Gave one big jump from out his seat,
And knocked the barber off his feet—
Sing shivvy, shovvy, shavey!
"Enough!" he cried, "I'll have you know,
If barbers treat their patrons so,
I'll just allow my beard to grow!"
Sing shivvy, shovvy, shavey!

After each verse another Clown cracked a long whip at the singer, which made him leap into the air and screw his face up in such a comical way that Dot and Tot were greatly amused, and applauded him rapturously.

Just across the street was another singing Clown; but this one was dressed in a curious costume that was all white on one side of his body and all red on the other side. This fellow balanced the point of his cap upon the end of his nose, and then, making a bow, sang the following song:



Little Tommy Harris
Made a trip to Paris.
There he went within a tent,
Saw a convex firmament;
Then he peered within a booth,
Saw a shark without a tooth,
Heard a dumb man sing and chant,
Saw a crimson elephant.
Next he walked into a street,
Saw a lamp-post drink and eat,
Heard a turtle loudly roar,
Saw a rainbow through a door.
Then a man without a leg
Danced upon a horse's egg.
Then a steeple on a dome
Cried, "My boy, you'd best go home."
But as Tommy homeward sped,
He awoke—and was in bed!
Little Tommy Harris
Never went to Paris!

This singer had so droll an expression on his face that Tot yelled with rapture, and Dot found herself laughing heartily. Indeed, the whole performance was a delight to the children, and they were sorry when a bell rang and put a stop to the antics of the Clowns.

At once the they all dived into the trapdoors of their platforms, and Flippityflop said they had gone to bed and would not appear until the next morning.

The children were somewhat tired by the adventures of the day, so when Flippityflop helped them to gain the room under his platform, they crept to the soft-cushioned benches that lined the walls and lay down. In less than a minute Dot and Tot were fast asleep, curled up side by side, with their arms entwined.

Next morning they were awakened by the strains of sweet music. Dot at once sat up and asked, "What is that?"

"That is my alarm clock," answered Flippityflop, who had been reclining upon a bench at the other side of the room. "It tells me when it is time to get up."

"It's a queer alarm clock," said the girl.

"But a very good one," returned the Clown. "It is really a big music-box under the bench, which starts playing every morning at seven o'clock. So, instead of being awakened by a rattling and clanging of bells, such as most alarm clocks make, I open my eyes with a sensation of pleasure, and get up feeling jolly and content.

"I think it's a lovely clock," said Tot.

"Won't you join me at breakfast?" asked the prince. "I'm going to have a dish of scrambled egg-shells and a few fried buttons. The eggshells make our complexion white and chalky, and we are very fond of them."

"I prefer to eat something from our basket," replied the girl. "But Tot may eat the egg-shells and buttons, if he wants them."

"Don't want 'em!" cried Tot. "Want bread and butter."

"Well, I declare!" said the Clown. "What peculiar tastes you children have!"

But he allowed them to breakfast from their own stock of food, and when the meal was finished Dot said, "We must be going now; but first I wish to thank you for the pleasant time we have had in your Valley. We enjoyed the Clowns very much indeed."

"Nice Clowns," declared Tot, with emphasis.

"I'm sorry to have you go," said Flippityflop, "but I suppose you cannot stay here always, especially as you are going to visit our Queen."

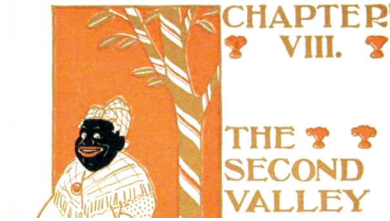
Then he carried the big basket down to the boat for them, and all the Clowns came to the river bank in a long procession, to bid them good-bye.

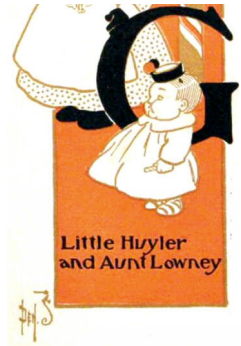
After they were seated in the boat and had begun to float out into the river again, the Clowns started singing a comic song, in one big chorus, as a farewell entertainment.

Dot and Tot laughed and waved their handkerchiefs at the jolly fellows until the archway leading into the next Valley was reached, and as the shadow of the rocks fell upon them and shut out their view of the First Valley of Merryland, they sighed and turned wonderingly to face whatever adventures might lie before them.









Gliding out of the archway into the Second Valley of Merryland, our little voyagers saw before them a big enclosure shaped like a diamond. Along two sides of this diamond the river ran very slowly, and upon the bank at their left rose a huge, straight wall of solid rock, that seemed, as they looked up, to reach to the clouds.



Upon the bank at their right hand, however, was a broad, flat country, which seemed at first sight to resemble any other beautiful valley, having trees and meadow, roads and fences, and a few pretty houses clustered near the river bank.

But on looking closer, Dot and Tot saw that all the trees had smooth trunks, with bright colors twisted around them like sticks of candy. The branches, though smaller than the trunks, had the same stick-candy appearance; while the leaves, which were of various colors, looked soft and thick, as if they were made of candy, too.

The houses were many-colored, being pink and brown and white and lavender, and the walls of all of them were as smooth as taffy. One big house, that was built exactly at the bend in the river, seemed to Dot to be made entirely of molasses candy, for it had the same color and appearance.

The trees and houses and fences were all smaller than one usually sees, but the brilliant colors made them look very pretty indeed.

The boat floated slowly toward the bend in the stream, and finally came close to the bank in front of the big molasses-candy house, where it stopped. Dot stepped out upon the bank and fastened the boat, and then Tot jumped out beside her. There was a little path, brown in color and rather rough, that led past the house and down to the river where they stood, and as Tot jumped upon this path he stubbed his toe and fell down. Then Dot saw him pick up a piece of the brown path that had become loosened, and after looking at it a moment put it into his mouth.

"Don't do that, Tot!" called the girl, in horror. "You mustn't eat mud."

"T'ain't mud," said Tot, with his mouth full. "It's fudge."

"Fudge!" echoed Dot. "You must be crazy, Tot." But she tasted a small piece herself and found that Tot was right. It was very nice fudge, too.

Just then as Dot was looking curiously toward the house, she saw the door open and a little man come out, followed the next moment by a little woman. They were not only very little, but short and very fat. The man wore a tall hat, a swallow-tail coat and tight breeches; but all his garments seemed fastened to him in some way, as if they were not made to come off, and their bright colors looked to have been painted on. The woman's dress had the same appearance, and the big Shaker bonnet she wore seemed really a part of her head.



When these people saw Dot and Tot, they stopped short and looked at each other in surprise; but the man seemed soon to recover himself and walked quickly toward the children, swinging a candy cane in his hand as he came.

"Good morning, my dears," he said, pleasantly.

"Good morning," answered Dot.

"Mornin'," said Tot.

"Will you kindly tell us how you came here?" continued the fat little man. "You must excuse my curiosity, but I cannot remember ever having seen any real children before."

"Our boat brought us," said Dot. "We're drifting down the river and have to go wherever it takes us."

"Oh, I see," said the man. "Well, since you are here, permit me to welcome you to the Valley of Bonbons," and he reached out his hand, with a graceful bow, to the little girl.

Dot shook hands with him, of course; but it made her shiver a little, the hand felt so soft and flabby; and when she withdrew her own hand she noticed upon it a fine white powder like flour. This she brushed off, but the little man laughed and said. "It's only powdered sugar, my dear. I'm obliged to keep myself covered with it, you know, so I won't stick to things."

"But—but I don't understand," stammered the girl. "Aren't you made like other people?"

"Certainly; I am made like everyone I have ever seen until I met you and this little boy. It strikes me you are the ones who are queerly made. You don't seem to be candy at all."

"Oh no!" said Dot, in a matter-of-fact way. "We're just flesh and blood and bones."

"And clothes," added Tot, who was looking with greedy eyes at the strange little man.

"Well, well!" said the man, thoughtfully tapping the ground with his cane; "what strange creatures you must be. In this Valley everyone is made of candy."

"And everything else is candy," exclaimed the little woman, who was peering over the man's shoulder and had not spoken before.

"Oh yes; everything we know of is candy except the river," continued the man.

"Are you candy?" asked Tot, with wide open eyes.

"To be sure. My bones are all made of stick candy and my flesh is marshmallow. That is why I must keep myself covered with powdered sugar; otherwise I would melt or stick to everything I touched. My wife is made in the same way, and we are very proud to know we are very pure and wholesome."

"What do you eat?" asked Tot, curiously.

"We eat candy, of course; that is what makes us so fat. Candy is very fattening, you know," said the little man cheerfully.

"But you haven't any teeth," remarked Dot, who had noticed this fact.

"Teeth! Certainly not. No one can eat much candy and still have teeth. Haven't you heard that candy always destroys a person's teeth?"

"I've been told so," replied Dot.

"But we get along very nicely without them. Indeed, our lives are decidedly sweet and peaceful."

Just then they heard a shrill scream, and at once the woman rushed toward the house, running in a very comical manner because she was so short and fat.

"That's the voice of our youngest child, the baby," explained the man. "I fear some accident has happened to it. One of our greatest troubles is that we cannot depend upon our colored servants, who are chocolate. Chocolates can seldom be depended on, you know."



"I hope nothing serious has happened to your baby," said Dot, with ready sympathy.

"Probably not," answered the candy man. "But I hope you will now permit me to escort you to my house. You must be hungry; and I will have luncheon served at once."

"Thank you," said Dot.

So, led by their fat little host, who waddled as he walked in a way that made Tot laugh, they went to the house and were ushered into the front parlor.

The room was beautifully furnished; but the chairs, tables, pictures and ornaments were all composed of candy of some sort, and there was a fragrant odor of wintergreen, peppermint and rose about the room that made Tot's mouth water in delightful anticipation. The boy seated himself in a pretty pink and white chair, and Dot sat down upon a small sofa; but happening to remember the sofa was candy, she quickly arose and remained standing, although she was also a little afraid of the sticky floor, which seemed to be well powdered.

Soon the woman entered the room and, having welcomed them, she said, "Our colored nurse, Aunt Lowney, had left the baby, little Huyler, out in the sun, and before she noticed he was getting warm, his left hand had all melted away. That was what made him cry."

"Oh, that is terrible!" cried Dot, clasping her hands in horror at the sad accident. "What can you do for the poor child?"

"I have sent Aunt Lowney into the marshmallow field to get him some more fingers. We shall be able to patch him up all right, I think, so do not let it distress you. Accidents are always happening

in our Valley. But I will order luncheon served at once, for you must be hungry after your journey."

She then left the room, but soon returned, followed by two serving maids, with complexions so dark brown in color that Dot was almost afraid of them.

"They are only chocolate, you know," whispered the man, "and quite harmless when taken in moderation."

Dot hardly understood what he meant, but felt more at ease after the explanation.

The maids brought many candy dishes to the table all filled with delicious bonbons and sugar-plums of every description. There were apples, pears, oranges and grapes, berries and peaches, rose-leaves and violets; but all were composed of candy and proved delightful eating. For drink they had pink lemonade, served in dainty candy cups.

"This pink lemonade," said the woman, "is one of the features of our Valley, through which it flows in a pretty stream. Sometimes we also drink the river water, but not often, for it is hardly sticky enough for our taste. Our luncheon is now ready, so please draw your chairs to the table."

Tot tried to rise then, but found he was stuck fast to his chair, owing to the heat of his body having warmed the candy. Finding he could not get up he began to cry, but Dot helped him, and by carefully pulling his clothes away, an inch at a time, she managed to get him loose. His clothes left a soft fuzz upon the seat and back of the chair, and to avoid further trouble, the candy man scattered powdered sugar over the chairs in which Dot and Tot sat at the table.

"I suppose it will powder your clothes somewhat," said he, "but they can be brushed clean before you leave the Valley."

The children enjoyed their novel luncheon. "It's the first time," whispered Dot to Tot, "I ever had all the candy I wanted to eat."



"Won't we get sick?" asked the boy, who was busily eating a delicious peach—rose candy outside and a soft, delicate cream within.

"I suppose so," answered Dot, truthfully, "but there's nothing else to eat, you see."

"Don't want nuthin' else," said Tot.

"Allegretti," called the woman to one of the brown maids, "bring a dish of those new cocoanut-kisses for our guests. Won't you have a few more maple caramels?" she asked, politely, turning to Dot.

"No, thank you," replied the child; "I've eaten so much already that I fear I shall be ill."

"Oh, nonsense!" returned the little man; "you cannot become ill eating this sort of candy, for it's the purest in all the world. But if you lived here always you would doubtless become as fat as we are, and probably you would lose all your teeth."

"We're not going to stay," answered Dot, in alarm. "We shall have to start in just a few minutes."

"But not until you have taken a short walk around our Valley," remonstrated the little man. "You may never come here again, you know, and it is a very sweet sight."

They agreed to join their kind host in a walk, and after the candy man had carefully dusted himself afresh with powdered sugar, they started out.

As they walked up the street, they noticed that many people came to the doors of the candy houses and looked at the strangers with great curiosity. These people seemed made of many different kinds of candy, but all were quite fat, and had their clothes painted

upon them in bright colors, like the candy images that are sold in shops at Christmas time.

"Aren't the people here very brittle?" asked Dot, as they walked along.

"Yes, I may admit they are somewhat brittle," answered the man. "That is one of the drawbacks we suffer from being made of candy. Only two days ago, Mr. Gunther, a particular friend of mine, fell down a hill and was broken into seventeen different pieces."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Dot. "What did you do with him?"

"Oh, as he was ruined beyond repair, we divided him up among the neighbors who loved him best, and ate him the next morning for breakfast."

"Ate him!" cried the girl, who was greatly shocked.

"Certainly; Mr. Gunther was a very sweet man."

"But this is horrible," said Dot, with a shudder. "You are all cannibals!"

"Cannibals! What are those?" inquired the candy man.

"Why, people who eat each other," said Dot.

"Oh, then we are cannibals, sure enough," declared the little man, calmly.

"But cannibals are wicked creatures," said the child, aghast at such savagery.

"Is it wicked to eat candy in the country where you live?" demanded the man.

"No; but then people are not made of candy there."

"Well, here there is nothing else than candy; so if we eat at all we must eat candy. Is it wicked to eat in the country you came from?"

"No," replied Dot, who was beginning to be puzzled at all this.

"Then," said the little man, "you cannot consider us wicked for eating each other. Of course, we never eat anyone who is not broken; but when a man breaks himself into seventeen parts, it is considered quite a compliment to him for the neighbors who feast upon his pieces."

This did not seem quite right to Dot, but she did not know how to reply; and to add to her confusion, the candy man suddenly held up his left hand, which he had placed behind him as he talked, and showed her that his thumb and two of the fingers were missing.

"Why, what can have happened to them?" she asked, in real distress.

The candy man looked at his hand carefully, and then quickly turned and looked at Tot.

"There are marks of teeth on my hand," said he, "and no one in this Valley has teeth except you two children."



"Tot!" cried Dot; "did you bite off this gentleman's fingers?"

Tot hung his head.

"Answer me!" said the girl. "Have you been eating our friend?"

"Well," said Tot, slowly, "he said the folks here were good to eat; an'—an'—he held his hand behind his back—right in front of my mouth; an'—so I took one of little bite off his fingers, an'—"

"Tot," said Dot, "I'm ashamed of you! The idea of eating one who has been so kind to us, and so soon after luncheon, too!"

"Pray, do not scold him," said the candy man. "He says I am good to eat, and that makes me so proud that I shall not mind the loss of my fingers. When I have time I can get some new ones patched on; so it does not matter much in the least."

Still, Dot was hurt and angry at the occurrence, and Tot walked behind them with hanging head.

Very soon they saw, sitting by the roadside, a child who was so exceedingly black in color that Dot exclaimed:

"Surely, that baby isn't made of chocolate!"

"No," said her friend, "that's a licorice child. We have a few of them in the Valley and they are much admired. But here is our stream of pink lemonade, and we will cross it by this little bridge."



The bridge was remarkably pretty, being made of pea-green and orange-colored candy, twisted together and ornamented with dainty frosted work such as bakers put upon wedding cakes.

Upon reaching the other side of the stream they found themselves near the mountains, which shut in the far side of the Valley. Dot looked up at these mountains and asked, curiously, "Who are all those people sitting on the rocks?"

At the question, Tot looked up also and saw long rows of candy men and women sitting close together at the foot of the mountains.

"Those people are the gum chewers," replied their guide.

"What are they doing there?" inquired the girl.

"They are being punished," returned the candy man, gravely. "If you look over yonder, to the left, you will see a number of low bushes. On these grow all kinds of chewing gums, and sometimes those who are naughty go out there and pick the sticks of gum."

"But I thought they had no teeth," said Dot.

"Nor have they; but their gums are hardened by long use, so they are able to chew as well as you do. This gum-chewing is a very disagreeable habit, as doubtless you know; so when anyone is discovered indulging in this habit, we make them come out here to the mountains and sit on the rocks for seven days and seven

nights. It is a terrible disgrace, of course; but all naughtiness must be punished in some way."

Dot watched the gum-chewers thoughtfully for a time, being ashamed to remember that she herself had often been guilty of indulging in this condemned habit; but she said nothing about it, and soon they turned and retraced their steps past the bridge and the village and the home of their kind host, coming at last to the river's edge where they had landed.





Here Dot and Tot were surprised to find one end of their boat filled with delicious looking candies, which the colored maids had placed there during their walk, being directed in the work by the little candy woman with the Shaker bonnet.

Dot thanked the kind lady earnestly, for the food she had brought in the basket was nearly gone. Then the candy lady gave each of the children a sweet kiss, and the candy man shook hands with them, being careful not to let Tot bite off any more of his fingers.

Our little adventurers now seated themselves in the boat, and the chocolate maids pushed it off the bank for them. Soon they were drifting down the river again, and before long reached the archway that led to the Third Valley of Merryland.







Soft strains of sweet and soothing music fell upon the ears of the children as the boat glided silently through the arch that led into the Third Valley. Then the jagged rocks surrounding them melted away in the rear, and they passed into a country that lay peaceful and smiling under the pleasant rays of the sun.

At first, Dot thought the entire Valley was carpeted with soft, white plush, but afterward she found it was a silken moss which grew thickly everywhere. There were a few trees, with wide-spreading branches, and upon these grew beautiful flowers that filled the air with delicate perfume, but in most places the Valley, which was shaped like a great cup with gently sloping sides, was open to the warm rays of summer sunshine which flooded it.

The entire scene was pretty to look upon; but what made the children's eyes open wide with wonder was the sight of hundreds of little, naked babies lying about upon the soft moss. They were waving their dimpled arms about, kicking out their chubby feet, or holding their tiny, fat thumbs in their mouths, while they cooed and crowed in a very happy and contented way. The breeze that blew gently through the trees made the music Dot and Tot heard; but the strains were soft and low, and seemed like a lullaby to hush the babies to sleep.

Some of these little ones were sleeping as the boat drew near, and they looked cozy and comfortable as they lay curled up on the moss; but others were wide awake and full of playfulness, while none of them cried or fretted or seemed a bit cross.



The babies were not the only inhabitants of this strange Valley, however. Walking among them were several long-legged, solemn-looking Storks, pure white in color, with splashes of black upon their wings. They appeared to act as nurses or guardians of the babies, and every now and then would fill a bottle with sweet milk from the fountain, and placed it beside a baby that acted as if it might be hungry. This fountain stood in about the center of the Valley and sent many sprays of new milk into the air, from whence it fell in graceful curves into a big basin of pure white marble. The nursing bottles were kept on a wide shelf at the edge of the fountain, where they were handy for the Storks to use.

While Dot and Tot were looking at the strange sights of this Valley, which was so different from the others they had seen, their boat drifted close to the shore, and one or two of the Storks came down to the river bank and looked at them curiously with their bright eyes.

Then one of the big, long-legged birds spoke to them in a voice that was soft and pleasing. "Why did you come to our Valley?" it asked. "You are too old to become babies again."

"Oh, we're not babies," said Dot, earnestly. "We're quite grown up. And we came here because we could not help it. In a few minutes we will go away again into the next Valley."

"Oh," said the Stork, "very well."

"Isn't that milk I see in the fountain?" asked the child, after a little pause.

"Certainly it is," answered the Stork; "we feed the babies with it."

"Could—could I have a drink of it?" asked Dot, who was thirsty from eating so much candy.

"Why, bless the child! Of course you can. We have plenty and to spare. Come on shore at once, but be careful not to step on the babies."

"I want a drink, too!" cried Tot, who had been so much astonished to hear a bird speak that he had remained silent until now.

"You may both drink as much as you wish," replied the Stork, in a kindly voice.

So the children stepped out upon the bank and fastened their boat, that it might not float away without them. Then, taking each other's hands, they followed the Stork over the silken moss to the fountain. There were no cups, so Dot and Tot drank from bottles; but they thought it the most delicious milk they had ever tasted.

While Dot was drinking she happened to look up into the sky, and something she saw there made her utter a cry of surprise. A fleecy, flower-like bud was floating, lightly as thistle-down, high in the air, and seemed to be slowly dropping into the Valley.

"What is that?" asked the girl, wonderingly.



"That?" answered the Stork, turning its head sideways so that its round, black eye could look at the sky; "why, that's a baby-blossom to be sure."

"And what is a baby-blossom?" inquired Dot.

"Wait a moment and you will see," replied the Stork.

Slowly and gently the white object floated downward, and even as Dot and Tot watched it, the fleecy blossom sank upon the moss a few feet from where they stood. Then one white leaf unfolded, and another, and still another, until they saw lying in the center of the flower a beautiful baby, fast asleep. While the children looked upon this sight, hushed and silent at the wonder of it, the leaves of the blossom faded away and disappeared, while the new baby rolled over and opened wide its big, blue eyes.

"It will be hungry after the long journey," said the old Stork, and, filling a bottle at the fountain, the bird carried it in its long bill to the baby and began to feed it, crooning at the same time the following verse:

Hushaby, lullaby,
Sweet flower from the sky;
Glad be thy dreams, for thy
Life lies before thee.
Soon shalt thou be at rest,
Soon fondled and caressed,
Pressed to the mother's breast
Who will adore thee.

The baby looked up at the Stork, smiled sweetly and then closed its eyes in sleep; while Tot, who had watched this scene with much

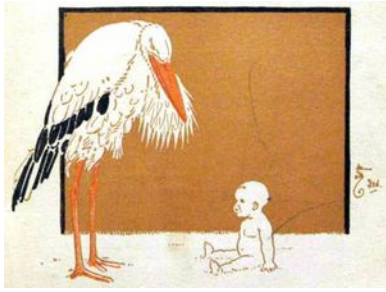
interest, asked in a low voice, "Do all the babies come from the sky?"

The old Stork did not seem to hear him; but another bird, which was busily filling nursing bottles at the fountain, replied:

"Certainly, they do."

"I should think it would get crowded," said practical Dot, "for here comes another blossom."

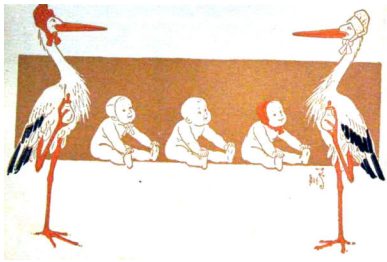
"Two of 'em!" added Tot, looking upwards.



Indeed, two more of the baby-blossoms were seen floating down from the clear, blue sky, and the children watched them until they settled upon the white moss and opened their leaves, setting free two more rosy, new-born babies.

The Stork at the fountain was now singing an odd little song in a soft, cooing voice, and as Dot listened she caught the following words:

Coo-oo-oo, Coo-oo-oo!
Babies are born ev'ry minute, 'tis true
Babies are best when they're chubby and new;
'Most anybody will want one or two;
Some people willingly take quite a few.
Here comes another! For babies are due
To fall when they're fresh and tender and new.
Coo-oo-oo, Coo-oo-oo!
Babies are blossoms that fall like the dew.



Just then the older Stork, which seemed to be the chief of the nurses, came toward the fountain and said to another of the birds, "It is time to take one of the babies into the world. They are coming quite fast to-day, and we must make room for the new ones."

"Very well," answered the other. They walked among the babies until they came to one quite big and strong, who was lying fast asleep. This baby the Stork picked up very tenderly and placed upon the other bird's back, twining its little arms around the long, soft neck, to which it clung tightly.

Then, spreading its great wings, the Stork flew into the air, bearing the baby gently, and sailed over the edge of the Valley into the world beyond, where it disappeared from view.

"That is the way we keep our Valley from getting crowded," said the old Stork.

"Do you suppose," asked Dot, "that I lived here once, when I was a baby?"

"Probably," answered the bird. "But, of course, I cannot remember all the babies, especially after they grow big."

"Oh, of course not," exclaimed the girl.

"Course not," said Tot; "too many of 'em."

"Now, if you will excuse me, I'll feed the two babies who have just arrived," said the motherly old Stork; and so the children watched it and the other Storks for some time, and admired the gentle way in which they tended the babies, and heard again and again the crooning song:

Hushaby, lullaby,
Sweet flower from the sky,

which always seemed to have the effect of sending the babies to sleep.

Having taken one more drink at the fountain and said goodbye to the kind Storks, Dot and Tot returned to their boat.

As they pushed it out into the stream, Dot asked a Stork that stood watching them:



"What is in the next Valley?"

"Oh, the Queen of all Merryland lives there," answered the bird, "for that is the Fourth Valley, and lies in the center of the Seven."

Then, with a feeling of awe at their approach to the Queen who ruled this wonderful land, the children turned their eyes anxiously toward the fourth archway. But as the boat drifted through its entrance, Tot looked back into the Valley they were leaving and noticed another baby-blossom floating down from the sky, while the voice of a Stork sang softly:

"Coo-oo-oo, Coo-oo-oo!
Babies are born every minute, 'tis true."







When the boat carried Dot and Tot beyond the rocky arch that led to the Fourth and most important Valley of Merry-land, the children held their breaths in suspense; for here lived the Queen of all this wonderful country, and they had no idea what she was like.

"Perhaps she will be angry with us for disobeying the Watch-Dog's orders," Dot whispered; "and then she may punish us in some terrible manner."

"No, she won't," replied Tot, confidently.

"Perhaps she will make us slaves and compel us to work for her," continued Dot, with a little shudder.

"No, she won't," protested Tot, stoutly.

"Why won't she, Tot?" asked the girl.

"'Cause it's Merryland," returned the boy.

"Ah! That's true," said Dot, thoughtfully; "the Queen of this lovely and happy country couldn't be very cross with us."

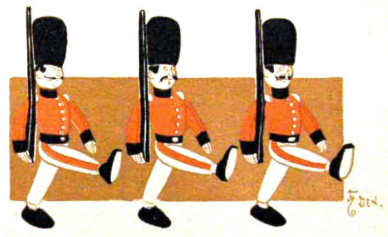
"Course not," agreed Tot.

"Then we won't be afraid," she added, her courage restored by Tot's simple faith; "but will wait and see what happens to us."

The boat now swept around a bend in the river, and they saw they were in a Valley somewhat larger than any they had yet

visited; but their view was shut off by a high wall that ran along the river bank on one side, and by the rocky edge of the Valley on the other side.

The wall was higher than their heads when they stood up in the boat, and upon its top Dot noticed several little wooden soldiers, with guns on their shoulders, walking stiffly back and forth, as if they were keeping guard. Each of these soldiers was seemingly made out of one piece of wood, and wore a high black hat and a red coat with black buttons, while his trousers were painted white. The guns did not look very dangerous, and Dot remembered that once she had owned a box of just such looking soldiers as these.



But the soldiers on the wall were moving around, and Dot's soldiers had never moved at all—at least, while she was looking at them. What they might have done when she was not looking she, of course, could not tell.

The wooden soldiers paid no attention to the boat, which glided slowly down the stream, while the children looked for a place to land.

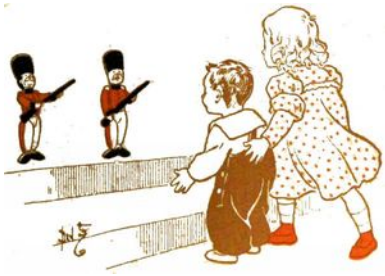
"Perhaps we'll float right through the Valley," whispered Dot, "and then the Queen will never know we've been in her country at all."

In a few moments, however, they saw a gate in the wall, made of wood and nearly covered with gold and silver plates that shone brightly in the sun. In front of this gate was a little landing place and some steps leading down to the river. They floated up to the steps and stopped, so Dot and Tot got out and tied the boat to a silver ring in the wall. Then they walked to the gate, where Dot was just putting out her hand to open it, when she heard a voice cry:

"Halt!"

She looked up and saw that on each side of the gate was standing one of the wooden soldiers. Their guns were pointed straight at Dot and Tot, and although the soldiers were not much taller than Tot's knee, the children were startled at their warlike attitude and stood still in surprise.

"Can't we open the gate?" asked the girl, after a moment.



"No!" answered one of the soldiers, in a voice he tried to make gruff, but which sounded rather squeaky, as if it needed oiling.

"Why not?" inquired Tot.

"It's against orders," replied the soldier. "The Queen has commanded me to shoot any stranger who tries to open the gate."

"But your gun is only wood," said Dot, who was annoyed at the soldier's interference.

"Wooden guns can't shoot!" shouted Tot, gleefully.

The soldier seemed somewhat embarrassed at this and Dot thought he blushed a little.

"It does not matter whether my gun will shoot or not," he answered, stiffly. "I am ordered not to let anyone open the gate."

"But you have no right to give me orders," said the girl. "I don't belong to Merryland, so your Queen has no authority over either Tot or me."

"Then why are you here, if you don't belong here?" asked the soldier.

Dot hesitated to reply, for she felt the rebuke this question implied.

"We couldn't help coming," she explained, at last; "the boat brought us."

"Well, since you are here," said the soldier, "you must obey the laws of this country and the Queen who rules it."

"That's rubbish!" cried Dot, now thoroughly provoked. "You can't obey the orders of your Queen yourself."

"Why not?" inquired the soldier, in surprise.

"You were ordered to shoot, were you not?"

"Certainly."

"Well, you can't shoot, for your gun is made of wood. So you cannot obey orders."

"But if you had not come here," protested the soldier, "I should have had no occasion to shoot. So it is all your fault."

"Perhaps so," replied Dot; "but I mean to open the gate in spite of your orders."

She raised the latch and the gate began to swing slowly back upon its hinges; but when it had partly opened, she saw standing before her another wooden soldier, dressed like a Captain, who held in his hand a wooden sword.

"Stand back!" cried the Captain. "If you advance another step I will stick my sword into you."

Dot looked at the sword and saw that the point of it was really sharp. So she stopped short and said, "Does the Queen of Merryland live here?"

"She does," replied the Captain.

"Then please let her know that I have come to call upon her," continued Dot. She was a wise little girl, and knew that while she might safely argue with the helpless soldiers, it was far better to be polite to the Captain with the sharp sword.

At her request the officer bowed courteously and blew upon a pewter whistle that hung around his neck. In answer to the summons another soldier appeared, who saluted his Captain respectfully.

"Go to her Majesty the Queen," commanded the officer, "and tell her there are two strangers at the gate who wish to see her."

At once the soldier started upon his mission, and the little wooden Captain turned to Dot and Tot, saying, "You may come

within the gate and sit down while you await the commands of our Queen; but if she will not receive you, of course you must go out again."



So the children passed through the gateway, which the Captain closed behind them, and sat down upon a small wooden bench built against the wall. Then they began to look around, for now before their eyes was the Fourth Valley of Merryland, the home of the Queen.

"Why, it's just like a toy village!" cried Dot, after the first look.

It really was something like a toy village. There were several pretty streets, with rows of little houses facing them, and each house was much ornamented and brightly painted. Before the houses were rows of trees which seemed to have been whittled out of wood, for the leaves looked like shavings. These trees were colored a bright emerald green, and each one stood upon a little round platform of its own. The grass also looked like wood shavings, and was dyed the same bright green color as the trees.

Dot gazed dreamily at the houses and thought they resembled the big doll's playhouse her papa had once given her for Christmas, and which now was standing in the attic of her city home.

At the far end of the main street, which ran down to the gate where they sat, was a house much bigger than the others, having for a roof a round dome which shone in the sun as if made of gold. This house was built in a remarkably beautiful and artistic manner, and before it, upon a bright green lawn, stood many trees and flowering shrubs.

"Who lives there?" Dot asked the wooden Captain.

"That is the palace of her Majesty the Queen," was the reply.

"Oh!" said Dot; "is she very big?"

"Quite big," answered the Captain, proudly.

"But," he added, "of course she is not so extremely large as you are."



"Oh!" exclaimed Dot again, and before he had time to say anything more she saw a carriage drive around to the front of the palace. Then the door quickly opened, and what looked to be a lady came out and entered the carriage.

It was so far away she could not see the lady clearly at first; but soon the carriage came rolling swiftly toward them, and both Dot and Tot stood up that they might see plainly who was coming.

In a remarkably short time the carriage reached the gate and stopped short, and now the children's eyes were big with wonder as they looked upon it and its occupants.

The carriage itself was of the kind that are sold in toy shops, and it was drawn by two horses standing upon wooden platforms with rollers underneath, so that instead of the horses themselves running, the wheels of the platforms whirled around, taking the carriage wherever the driver might direct. This driver looked for all the world like a rag doll dressed in a coachman's uniform. His neck was rather weak, and that caused his head to lean slightly to one side, giving him a somewhat broken-down appearance; but he held the reins firmly in his stuffed hands and looked straight ahead, like a well-trained servant.

Seated in the carriage was the loveliest Wax Doll the children had ever looked upon. She was nearly as big as Tot, and was exquisitely dressed in a gown of soft, fluffy white material, with many pink ribbons upon her shoulders and sleeves, and a broad sash around her waist. Her silken hair was long and of a golden color, while her eyes were blue, and had in their depths a sweet and gentle expression. As for her complexion, it was a dainty pink-and-white, delicately blended. Upon her head she wore a golden crown with seven points upon it, and each point was tipped with a gleaming jewel.

Almost at first sight Dot longed to hold the Wax Doll in her arms and love and fondle her, and Tot suddenly became so bashful that he took off his hat and bowed his head to the "sweet lady" (as he called her), with his eyes bent upon the ground.

Yet scarcely had the children taken a good look at this delightful creature, when the Wax Doll leaped lightly from the carriage and stood before them, showing, as she did so, that her feet were clad in white satin slippers, embroidered with silver.

"Who are you?" she asked, in a pleasant voice, but with some anxiety, Dot thought; "and how did you ever get to Merryland?"

"We came in a boat," replied the girl; "and this is my friend, Tot Thompson, and I am Dot Freeland."

"Dot F'eelun," murmured Tot, shyly lifting his eyes and nodding his head.

"But you shouldn't have come here," said the little lady. "This is private property, and I have placed guards to prevent anyone entering my Valleys."

"Are you the Queen?" asked the girl.

"Yes, I am Queen of all Merryland; and I cannot understand why my guards have disobeyed my orders."

"Oh, the guards were all right," said Dot. "It was we who disobeyed. But we really couldn't help it, for we had to go wherever the boat carried us."

Then she told the Queen all the story of their adventures, and of how they had been carried by accident into the Valleys of Merryland.

After she had heard the story, the little lady looked puzzled for a moment and then said, "No one who enters my kingdom should ever be allowed to leave it again, for if they did the world should soon know all about me and my people. If that happened, all our comfort and fun would be spoiled, for strangers would be coming here every day."

"Have strangers been here before?" asked Dot, timidly.

"Never," answered the Queen.

"Then what are you going to do with us?" inquired the girl.

"Really, I do not know. You see, I am so perplexed that I have stopped smiling, and that will never do in the world; for should the weather change and cool my wax, I would remain solemn until it warmed up again, and my people would then think me unworthy to be the Queen of Merryland."

"I'm sorry to have caused you so much trouble," said Dot, softly. "I'd much rather be at home again, if I could, although your Valleys are so queer and delightful."

Then the Queen again smiled upon them.

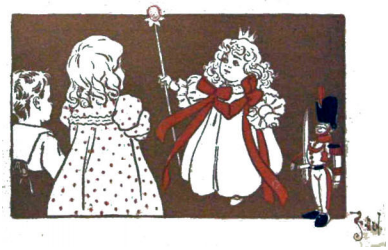
"Don't worry, my dear," she exclaimed, brightly, "I'll find some way out of our difficulty when I have used my thinking machine. Until then you must come to my palace and be treated as my guests."

"Thank you," said Dot and Tot together.

The Queen turned to the wooden Captain and commanded:

"Escort these strangers to my royal palace, and see that you treat them most politely; for although they are in reality my prisoners, they have been guilty of no intentional wrong and seem to be nice children."

The wooden Captain removed his wooden hat and bowed very low, so low indeed that Tot could see the peg on the top of his head that held the hat on when it was in place.



"Your Majesty's commands shall be obeyed," he said.

Then the Queen stepped into her carriage, the rag coachman cracked his whip, and the wheels of the horses' platform began spinning around. Then the Queen rode swiftly up the street to her royal palace.

Dot and Tot followed more slowly, for the Captain who escorted them was exceedingly small and walked stiffly, having no joints in his knees. As they trudged along Tot asked the Captain:

"Why do the horses go on wheels?"

"Because they're made that way, I suppose," was the reply.

"Why don't they make 'em to walk on their legs?" continued the boy.

"It would tire them too much," answered the Captain. "Being on platforms, the horses never get tired, you see, for the wheels do all the work."

"Oh!" said Tot, "I see." Then, after a pause, he asked:

"What do you feed 'em?"

"Cotton," answered the Captain. "We keep them quite full of it all the time. That's what makes them look so plump and healthy. What do they feed horses on in your country?"

"Hay," said Tot.

"We tried stuffing ours with hay once," remarked the Captain; "but it made their skins look lumpy, it was so coarse; so now we use cotton altogether."

"I see," said Tot again, in a rather bewildered voice.

The street they were walking upon was smooth and level, and the houses they passed were neat and pretty; but both the children noticed there were no people to be seen anywhere about the

village. This seemed strange, and Dot was about ask who lived in the houses, when they arrived at the gate of the palace, upon which the Captain knocked three times with the handle of his wooden sword.

Thereupon the gate opened slowly, and they passed into a beautiful flower garden, and walked along the green-bordered paths until they came to the high-arched doorway of the palace.



Dot had only time to notice that there were seven golden stars above the doorway, when the Queen herself appeared and led them through a hall into her drawing room, having dismissed the wooden Captain with a nod of her royal head.

Although the house was by far the biggest one in the Valley, the tops of the doors were only a little way above Dot's head, and when the children sat down in the drawing room they chose the biggest chairs, and found them just about the right size.

"Now, my dears," said the pretty Queen, "it is almost dinner time, and I know you must be nearly starved; so I will have you shown at once to your rooms, and when you have bathed your faces and brushed your clothes you shall have something nice to eat."

She touched a bell that stood upon a table near by, and at once there came into the room a little boy doll, dressed in a brown suit with brass buttons. He was larger in size than any doll Tot had seen outside of Merryland, yet he was not so big as the Queen herself. When the children looked at him closely, they could see that his face and hands and feet were knitted from colored worsteds, while his eyes were two big black beads.

This curious doll walked straight up to the Queen and bowed before her, while she said, "Scollops, show this young man to the laughing chamber, and wait upon him while he arranges his toilet."



Scollops, as the knitted boy seemed named, bowed again and murmured, "Your Majesty shall be obeyed." Then, turning to Tot, he took his hand and led him from the room. The hand felt soft and woolly to Tot, but he did not object to it, for Scollops had a merry expression to his face that won the little boy's heart at once.

"Where are we going?" he asked, as they began to mount the stairs.

"To the laughing chamber," replied Scollops; and having reached the top of the stairs, they walked down a long hallway and entered a room so odd and pretty that Tot stopped short and gazed at it in astonishment.

In many ways it was like an ordinary room, for it contained a dresser, a bed, chairs and a table. But upon the wall were painted hundreds of heads of children—boys and girls of all countries, with light and dark hair, straight and curly hair, blue and black and brown and gray eyes, and all with laughing faces. The posts of the bed were also carved into laughing baby faces; the chairs and the dresser showed a face upon every spot where there was a place for one, and every face throughout the whole room had a smile upon it. To match the rest of the furniture, the carpet had woven upon it in bright colors all kinds of laughing children's faces, and the effect

of the queer room was to make Tot himself laugh until the tears roll down his cheeks.

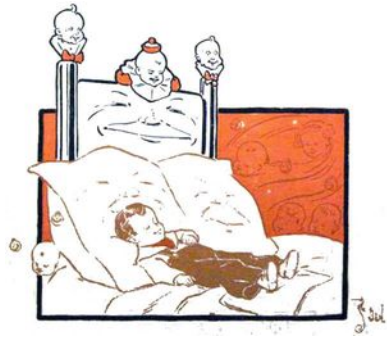
When the boy had looked the room over and seen all the faces, Scollops helped him to wash his hands and face, to comb his hair and to brush his clothes, and when this task was finished, the woolly doll said:

"I will now show you why this room is called the laughing chamber. Lie down upon the bed a moment—but don't get your shoes against the clean covers."



Tot lay down upon the bed, and at once heard a sweet, tinkling chorus of laughter coming from every part of the room. It was so delightful and soothing that he listened to it rapture. Softly his eyes closed, and in another moment he would have been sound asleep had not Scollops raised him to his feet and said:

"It is not time for sleep yet, for you haven't had your dinner. But the laughing faces will make you slumber peacefully when the time comes, and give you pleasant dreams, too."







No sooner had Scollops taken Tot from the drawing room than the Queen touched her bell a second time, and in answer to the summons a neatly dressed doll maid entered the room and made her bow before her pretty mistress. This maid was a pleasant looking little person; but Dot noticed her eyebrows were painted upon her face, and her hair seemed painted on, too, only the little white cap nearly covered it, so it didn't show much.

"Twinkle," said the Queen, "show this young lady to the musical chamber and wait upon her as she dresses for dinner." Then, turning to Dot, she added, "I shall retire to my own room and use my thinking machine while you are gone, so that I may know what to do with you. Your coming has completely upset my life, for I never thought to see strangers in Merryland. But you must not worry. Doubtless, my thinking machine will show me exactly what to do with you, and in any event I could not harm two such gentle children as you and Tot."

She nodded smilingly and left the room, while the maid Twinkle led Dot up the stairs and along the hallway to her room.

The girl thought she had never seen a prettier chamber, although she had always been daintily cared for by her wealthy parents. The bedstead was of pure ivory, and the pillows were

covered with creamy-white silk, embroidered with white flowers. The bedspread was of pure white, too, and over it were thickly sewn many brilliant diamonds, while the fringe along the edges was made of diamond beads. The chairs and sofas were covered with white brocaded silks, and the velvet carpet was scattered with lilies-of-the-valley on a delicate green groundwork.

In one corner stood a beautiful little dressing table with a big mirror above it, and through a draped doorway Dot saw a luxurious little bathroom with a tub of white marble.

"It's a lovely room," said Dot to the maid; "but why did the Queen call it the musical chamber?"

"Sit down, please," was Twinkle's reply. So Dot seated herself in an easy chair, and no sooner had she touched the cushions than the sweetest strains of music fell upon her ears. She listened to it delightedly until the piece was finished, when Twinkle raised her to her feet.

"The music will play as long as you sit there," she said. "Try the sofa."

Then Dot sat upon one of the sofas, and heard the strains of a military band, seemingly far away, but sounding sweetly and distinctly, nevertheless.

Twinkle now led her to the bath-room that she might bathe her face and hands, and when the water fell into the basin it played an inspiring waltz tune. The brushes which the maid passed through Dot's hair were musical, too, and everything she touched seemed to play to her the most ravishing strains of melody.

"Now," said Twinkle, "lie down upon the bed a moment."

Dot obeyed, and heard a chorus of sweet, childish voices singing such dreamy, soothing lullabies that her eyes closed in spite of herself, and she was almost asleep when Twinkle aroused her and bade her attend the Queen's banquet.

"The voices will sing you to sleep when bedtime comes," said the maid; "but now you must have dinner and learn what fate the Queen of Merryland has in store for you."

She walked to a door that was half hidden behind a rich drapery, and, pushing it open, showed Dot that it led to the laughing

chamber. It was with real pleasure that the girl saw her friend Tot, who had at that moment just risen from his bed.

The boy eagerly showed her all the gay, mirthful faces in his room, and they made Dot laugh out of pure sympathy. Then she brought Tot into her own dainty chamber, where he sat upon a chair and heard an orchestra play a merry schottische. But Twinkle and Scollops were now impatient to hurry them away, so soon they descended the stairway again and were ushered into the royal banquet room.

The Queen had arrived there before them, and her was face was smiling as sweetly as ever. She set Dot upon one side of her at the big table and Tot upon the other side.

This table was spread with delicate glassware and rare vases of fragrant flowers, and the dishes they ate from they perceived were of solid gold.

"How did you like your chamber?" the Queen asked Dot.

"It is delightful," she answered. "I did not think there could be such a beautiful room in all the world."

"And were you also pleased?" inquired the Wax Doll, turning toward the boy.

"My room's fine," replied Tot; "it made me laugh!"

The dinner was now served, and certainly no more delicious meal was ever eaten by children, unless they chanced to dine with the Queen of Merryland. There were many courses of rich and rare edibles, and each dish Dot and Tot thought could not be surpassed until they tasted the next one.

"Really," said Dot with an admiring glance at her Majesty, "you must be a fairy."



"To be sure I am!" laughed the pretty Queen.

"Still, you are not like any fairy I have read about," continued the child, gravely.

"No, I suppose not," returned the Wax Doll. "You must know that fairies are as different from one another as other people are, and the reason you have not read about me is because the folk who write fairy tales have never been to Merryland."

"That is true," agreed Dot. "Tot and I were the first to discover you."

"Yes, and you were very wrong to do so," added the Queen, reprovingly. "But I have used my thinking machine, as I promised, and it has shown me an easy way out of my difficulties."

"What will you do with us?" asked Dot, looking at the Queen so anxiously that she forgot to drink her nectar.

"I'm going to adopt you," was the calm reply.

"Adopt us!" exclaimed the girl, wonderingly.

"Yes, that is the only thing to do. You are going to be my adopted daughter, the Princess Dot of Merryland; and your companion must become my adopted son, Prince Tot of Merryland."

"But must we always live here?" enquired Dot.

"Can't we go home again?" demanded Tot.

"Those are questions I cannot answer now," said the Queen. "For the time, at least, you must live with me, and I think you will be delighted with this Valley and all the pretty things I have to show you. Should you ever grow tired of Merryland we will talk

about your leaving it. At present you will be wise to think of nothing but your happiness in becoming members of the royal family of this kingdom."

The boy and girl listened to this silently and thoughtfully, for although the Queen smiled, she spoke with a dignity and authority that made them realize she was very much in earnest. But seeing that her guests looked serious and troubled, the little lady soon rose from the table, saying more cheerfully as she did so, "It is nearly time for my army to drill, so, if it please you, we will sit upon the balcony and eat our ice cream while we watch the soldiers."



Dot and Tot sprang up at once and followed the Queen to a balcony that ran across the front of the palace. Here they seated themselves and were served with delicate ice-cream hollyhocks upon golden saucers by Twinkle and Scollops.

"Why do you call the maid Twinkle?" Dot asked the Queen.

"Because she steps so quickly and so softly, like the twinkling of a star, and because her eyes are so bright and sparkling," answered the Wax Doll.

"Why do you call him Scollops?" enquired Tot, pointing his finger at the boy doll.

"Because his hair is all knitted in scollops, and he has scollops around his wrists and at the bottom of his trousers."

Tot looked, and sure enough the scollops were there.

"You see we always have a reason for the names we bear in this kingdom. It is only in the big outside world that people have names that mean nothing," said the Queen.

"What is your name?" asked the girl.



"Haven't you heard it?" enquired the Queen, with a surprised look.

"No; I have only heard you called the Queen," said Dot; "but, of course, you must have a name of your own."

"Oh, I certainly have," answered the little lady. "My name is——." Then she stopped suddenly and leaned over the balcony, while she held up one of her pink hands and whispered: "Listen!"

The children now heard the sound of martial music approaching, and in a few minutes there marched around the corner of the palace a band of pewter musicians. They were dressed in brightly painted uniforms and marched proudly and in excellent time, while they played as loudly as possible upon their instruments.

Following the band came a squadron of pewter soldiers on horseback, and the horses reared and pranced, while the officers waved their pewter swords above their heads in an impressive manner. Next came the foot soldiers, company after company, wearing red painted uniforms and blue painted uniforms, as well as uniforms of green and yellow paint.

Not a man in the entire army was more than six inches high, and all were made of pewter—just like the boxes of soldiers you buy at the toy shops; but they marched like real live soldiers, and there were so many of them that it was actually an impressive sight.

As each company passed beneath the balcony where the Queen sat, the men saluted her respectfully and the officers raised their hats, while the doll Queen bowed graciously in return.

"Isn't that a fine army?" she asked, proudly.

"They're rather small for soldiers," replied Dot.

"I could kick 'em all over with my foot!" said Tot.

"Oh, but that would be wrong," exclaimed the Queen. "Surely they haven't done you any harm."

"No," said Tot; "but I could fight 'em all."

"It's wrong to fight," remarked the Queen, reprovingly.



"Then what do you have soldiers for?" questioned Dot.

"Why, to march and drill and look pretty, of course," answered the Queen. "I thought everyone loved to see soldiers march."

"I suppose they do," said the girl.

"No one should wish to hurt such brightly dressed creatures," continued her Majesty, "nor should a soldier wish to harm anyone else."

"Yet the wooden Captain at the gate threatened to stick his sword into us," declared the child.

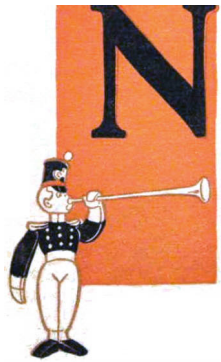


"That's different," replied the Queen. "The wooden soldiers are guardians of the Valley, and it is their duty to threaten and scare folks. But had the Captain really hurt you with his sword, I should have had the quarrelsome fellow chopped into kindling wood. He's quite dry and would burn nicely."

They sat for some time watching the pewter soldiers drill, and finally the entire army marched away again. When they had gone, the little village seemed as silent and deserted as it had been before.



CHAPTER XII. PRINCE TOT AND PRINCESS DOT



Now," said the Queen, "you must come to my throne room and be adopted."

So she led the way and they followed her to a beautiful apartment, large and grand, with high ceilings set with precious stones. In the middle of the room stood the Queen's magnificent throne.

Seating herself among the cushions of the throne, her Majesty touched a bell which brought Scollops running in.

"Send to me all the people of my household, as quickly as possible," commanded the Queen of Merryland. "I am about to perform an important ceremony, and they must all witness my act."

Scollops bowed and retired, and the Wax Doll turned to Dot and Tot and remarked, "I've never adopted anyone before so I don't know exactly the form of ceremony I ought to employ; but I shall do the best I can, and that ought to be satisfactory to you."

"Oh, yes," said Dot. "I suppose so."

"Does it hurt?" asked Tot.

"Does what hurt?"

"To be 'dopted."

"I hope not," said the little Queen; "I shall try to be as gentle as possible."

The members of the household now entered the room and the children found there were a good many of them. All were dolls of some sort; but Dot noticed the Queen was the only wax doll in the Valley, so far as she had seen. Among the household servants the cooks were black dolls, the chambermaids were china dolls, and the others seemed mostly made of wood, although there was one elderly doll that was clearly papier-maché. These knelt down in a circle before the Queen and remained in this humble position during the Ceremony of Adoption.

Her Majesty began by making a speech, in which she told how the strangers had been carried by accident into Merryland.



"It was not their fault," she said, "but when I consulted my thinking machine I found I must do one of two things—either turn them into dolls by means of my fairy wand, or else adopt them as my children. They seem so much bigger and prettier than dolls that

I have decided to adopt them, so I have called all my people in to witness my act."

The servants of the household loudly applauded this speech, and one of the chambermaids clapped her hands so earnestly that she broke off one of her little fingers.

"Dot Freeland," now said the Queen, in a solemn voice, "kneel down upon my footstool."

Dot was a little frightened, for never before had she heard the Queen speak in any voice but a laughing one; but she knelt down obediently, and the Queen placed upon her head a small golden crown with four points, each point being tipped with a flashing gem. Then the Queen said:

Thou art made a Princess now
By this crown upon thy brow;
All must bow to thy command,
Who reside in Merryland;
And my daughter thou shalt be,
Living long and happily.
Rise, my Princess, fair and sweet,
At my right hand take thy seat.

Dot rose at once and sat on the Queen's right hand, while all the household applauded again; but this time the china chambermaids were more careful of their fingers. The girl longed to take off her pretty crown and look at it, but she felt it might not be dignified to do so; therefore she sat quietly, as a princess should, while Tot in turn knelt upon the Queen's footstool.



The fairy doll placed upon Tot's head a crown almost exactly like the one Dot wore, saying to him in her gentle voice:

By this crown I give to thee,
I, the Queen, hereby decree,
Thou shalt be a princeling grand
In our happy Merryland.
Purest joy shall be thy lot,
All thy troubles be forgot;
Rise, Prince Tot, for thou shalt be
Loving son henceforth to me!

Tot shoved the crown to the back of his head, where he usually wore his hat, and seated himself at the Queen's left hand.

The assembled household now cheered loudly and long, and in the midst of the uproar the wooden Captain entered at the head of the pewter band, and the musicians blew upon their instruments so powerfully that the big throne room was filled with music.

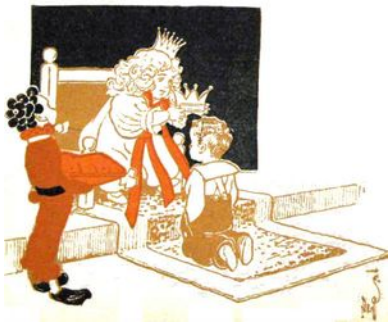
All this was decidedly pleasing to Princess Dot and Prince Tot, who felt very proud of themselves and most grateful to the generous Queen.

Scollops and Twinkle now served lavender-colored ices to those present at the Ceremony of Adoption, and the pewter band finished playing and marched away again. Then the Queen took Dot and Tot to the drawing room of the palace, where the children had leisure to thank her and to admire their pretty crowns. The Wax Doll smiled sweetly upon them, and seemed quite as pleased as her adopted children at the success of the ceremony.

Presently Dot asked, "Does no one live in those pretty houses in the village?"

"Yes, Princess," answered her Majesty; "they are full of people."

"But we have seen no one except the dolls who live in this palace," remarked the child.



"That is true," returned the Queen, "for I have been so busy since your arrival that I have not had a chance to awaken them."

"Are they all asleep?" asked Tot.

"Well, not exactly asleep," answered the Queen; "but they are dolls, like all the rest of us in this Valley, and they only move around and talk when I bring them to life by means of my fairy wand. At one time I kept them alive continually, but it was such a bother to manage them all that I changed my plans, and now I let them lie in their houses until I wish to amuse myself with their pranks. I have only to wave my fairy wand three times and blow my magic whistle to arouse the whole village to activity. But then I always have my hands full trying to make them behave properly."

"That seems a nice way to rule," said Dot, thoughtfully. "If every king and queen were able to do the same thing with their people, there could not be so much quarreling nor so many wars."

"True enough," laughed the Queen; "but real, live people would not like to be treated that way. Would you like to see my village wake up?"

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Dot.

"Then I will order our carriages so we may drive down to the village."

The Queen called Scollops and sent him for three carriages "For," she said to Dot and Tot, "there is just enough room in the royal carriage for me, and as there are no bigger ones in the Valley, we must each ride in a separate carriage."

It was not long before the three carriages, each drawn by horses standing upon wheeled platforms, and driven by rag doll

coachmen dressed in the royal livery of pink and blue drew up before the gate of the palace. Dot had hard work to squeeze into the seat of her vehicle, and when she succeeded she had some fears that it would tip over, or the wheels would come off the horses. But Tot, being smaller, fit his carriage nicely, and being younger and a boy, he had no fears of any accidents.

So now the drivers cracked their whips and away they rolled, the Queen first, Dot next and Tot last of all. When they reached the main street of the village, the three carriages drew up near the sidewalk, all in a row, and the Queen said:

"Now I will awaken the people."

She waved the fairy wand three times around her head and blew a shrill blast upon the magic whistle.



Instantly a commotion arose all about them. Doors and windows began to open, and from the houses flocked many dolls of all sorts and sizes. There were china, bisque, wooden, papier-maché, rag and rubber dolls, with yellow hair, red and brown and white hair, and complexions ranging from the daintiest pink to the deepest black. Some were finely dressed, some well dressed and some shabbily dressed; but all seemed and light-hearted, and they ran about singing and dancing chatting to each other as happily as if they had not been asleep for so long a time by their Queen.

"I don't understand how you can make dolls act like real people," said Dot, as she watched them with wonder.

"No, I suppose not," replied her Majesty. "But if you were a fairy, as I am, you would know all about it."



The Queen now left her seat in the carriage and entered a pretty little cottage that stood near by. Dot followed to doorway and, peeping in, saw that this entire cottage was occupied by an enormous music box.

"I'll make it play," said the Queen, "for my dolls love to dance to the music."

Thereupon she touched a spring, and at once strains of delightful melody came from the big music box.

Dot hastened outside again and found the street filled with dolls, who were dancing joyously to the bewitching music. After watching them for a time in silence the Queen said:

"Now they have had enough fun for one day, so I will send them to sleep again."

She waved her wand once and the music stopped playing. The dolls stopped dancing and began to say good-night to one another. A second time the Queen waved her wand above her head, and then every doll hurried to its own home, and the doors and windows began to close again. But Dot and Tot could hear the dolls laughing and talking in the houses until the Queen waved her wand for the third and last time, when silence fell on the village, and her Majesty turned to the children and said:



"Now they are fast asleep again, and will remain so until I choose to awaken them."

"They are lovely dolls," said Dot, sighing to think the entertainment was ended, "and I should love to play with them all day long."

"Sometimes I have kept them awake all day myself," replied the Queen; "but that is when I am lonely and need amusement. No one can be dull while those laughing, romping, mischievous dolls are awake. But I must have a talk with my new Prince and Princess this evening, so I could devote but little time to my people, and only awakened them to satisfy your curiosity."

"Can't I have a doll to keep?" asked Tot, as they drove back to the palace.

"Yes, my dear Prince," answered the Queen. "I'll give you Scollops. You will find him very useful and a jolly playmate."

Tot nodded his thanks, and soon they reached the palace and accompanied the Queen to her room. When all were seated the Wax Doll said, "Tomorrow I must leave you here alone, for I am going upon a journey."

"Where to?" enquired Dot, greatly surprised at this announcement.



"I shall go up the river to the end of Merryland, where you entered the First Valley. Since you have found a way to enter my kingdom from the big outside world, I have been greatly worried for fear others would also come here. To prevent this I must visit the Watch-Dog of Merryland, and tell him how to keep anyone from passing the archway."

"Oh, the Watch-Dog cannot keep people out," said Dot. "He's too polite and good-natured. When we said we would not mind him he was sorry, but he didn't try to stop us."

"Well," replied the Queen, "that is why I must make the journey. I shall command the Watch-Dog to sit hereafter upon a rocky shelf above the arch, and then if people will not obey him, and try to get through the arch in spite of my orders, the old man must jump into the river in front of the opening. As soon as he touches the water he will be turned into a great rock, which will block up the archway and prevent anyone from entering my kingdom."

"Oh, I see," said Dot. "Then the Watch-Dog may be of some use, after all."

"I hope so," declared the Queen.

"But what shall we do while you are away?" asked the girl, anxiously.

"You may amuse yourselves by running about the palace, and all my household will wait upon you and obey your orders; for you are now Prince Tot and Princess Dot of Merryland, and your power is second only to my own."

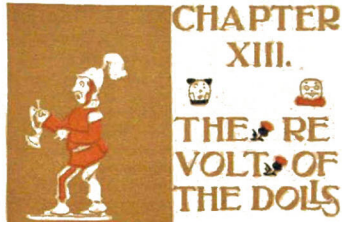
"That's nice," said Tot.

Twinkle now led Dot to her room and helped her prepare for bed. The diamond coverlet was rather heavy to sleep under, so Twinkle laid it aside and covered the girl with a soft, fleecy robe.

Tot also went to his laughing chamber, accompanied by Scollops, who helped him undress and threw over his head a pretty pink silk nightgown. Tot wanted the door between his room and Dot's left open while they slept, so Scollops opened it and the children called good-night to each other.

When Dot lay down upon her bed, the fairy chorus began to sing softly and sweetly; and when Tot lay down the invisible laughter of childish voices rang out like chimes, keeping time to the tinkling chorus from Dot's bed. This was all so soothing and delightful that in less than a minute the children's eyes had closed, and soon they were fast asleep and dreaming sweet dreams of the wonders of Merryland.







Dot and Tot awoke early, but the sun was already flooding the palace with its silver rays, and they made haste to dress and join the Queen at breakfast.

This meal was as dainty and satisfying as the one they had partaken of the night before, and the wax Queen laughed and talked so pleasantly that no one would have suspected she was about to undertake a long journey.

"I shall try to return by sundown," she said to them, "so you will only be alone during the day. I advise you to pass the time by exploring the Valley, and if you wish to ride, the royal coachmen will take you wherever you wish to go."

"May I ask a favor?" said Dot, timidly.

"Certainly, Princess; ask whatever you will," returned the Queen, as she threw a scarlet cloak over her shoulders and prepared to start.

"I would like you to waken the dolls of the village before you go, so that Tot and I may play with them," said the girl.

The Queen reflected a moment before she replied, "The dolls are often mischievous when they have a whole day to themselves, and

you might find them troublesome. However, as you will be sure to enjoy their merry pranks, I'll do as you wish, and leave you the dolls for playmates."

"Oh, thank you ever so much!" cried Dot, gratefully.

The Queen now called the carriages and they all rolled down to the main street of the village. Here her Majesty waved the magic wand three times, and the dolls immediately awoke and began such a chattering and such romping play that the Queen herself became bewildered and ordered the coachman to hasten to the river bank.

Dot and Tot went with her to see her start upon her journey, and when they had passed out of the big gate, which the wooden soldiers opened for them with respectful salutes, the Queen said:

"I am going to borrow your boat, for it will be the easiest way for me to reach the Valley of the Watch-Dog."

"But you can never row it up stream," said Dot; "and there is but one oar."



"Oh, I shall not need the oars at all," responded the Wax Doll, and seated herself in the boat.

"Do you know," said the girl, "that you have not yet told us your name?"

"Didn't I tell you yesterday?" returned the Queen, as if surprised.

"No, indeed," said the girl.

"Well, that was very careless of me. I am so busy that sometimes I forget to do things. But I must be going, so goodbye my dears; I hope the dolls won't bother you too much."

"We shall enjoy them," replied Dot.

The Queen now waved her fairy wand and at once the boat glided from the shore.

"Good-bye, your Majesty!" cried Dot and Tot together.

Swiftly the boat floated up the stream—so swiftly, indeed, that the water rippled like music against the bow. The children waved their handkerchiefs at the fairy doll until she had reached the arch leading to the Valley of Babies, when they passed through the gateway and, dismissing their coachmen, walked up the village street to visit the dolls.

These were really becoming rather boisterous and ran about in circles, playing "I spy," and blind-man's buff, and London Bridge with much laughter and noise. When they saw Dot and Tot they ran up to them and cried:

"Start the music box! We want to dance."

"I do not know how. The Queen has the key with her," answered Dot, shouting loudly that she might be heard above the tumult.

The dolls seemed greatly disappointed at this, and one saucy-looking wooden-jointed doll said crossly:

"The Queen has no right to go away and take the key. How are we to amuse ourselves all day unless we can dance?"

"Tot and I will play with you," answered Dot.

"Very well," said a big China doll which wore a rather soiled and ragged dress. "What new games do you know?"

Dot mentioned several; but the dolls laughed at her, crying out: "That's old! We're tired of that! Give us something new!"

"The old games are very nice games," said the girl, "and I do not see why you should object to playing them."



"We'll object if we want to!" declared a worn-looking kid doll, whose joints were so ripped that they scattered sawdust whenever it moved. "You're not our Queen."

"But I'm your Princess," said Dot, with dignity, "and while the Queen is away I have the right to rule in this Valley."

"So have I," said Tot.

"Then rule!" shouted the saucy wooden doll. "Rule as the Queen does, and give us music to dance by."

"Yes! yes!" they all cried. "We want to dance!" And they flung their arms over their heads, and leaped and pranced so energetically that the ground was quite strewn with sawdust that leaked out of them.

Dot was much troubled at the noisy demands of the dolls. She had expected a quiet and happy day playing with these pretty creatures, and now, even in the first hour of their awakening, they were proving very troublesome. Tot seemed to enjoy the excitement, however, and stood behind Dot, with his hands in his pockets, smiling gleefully.

While she was thinking what was best to be done, the rag doll Scollops came up to Dot and said:

"Since the music box is locked up, why do you not order out the pewter band to play for them?"

"That is a good idea," she exclaimed, her face brightening. "Go at once, Scollops and tell the musicians to come and play."

While Scollops was on this errand the dolls became more noisy than ever, and one of them tried to knock Tot's crown off. But the boy gave the naughty doll such a strong push that he pushed over a dozen or more that stood behind it.



"Don't hurt them, Tot," said the girl; "remember they are not strong and will break easily."

"I'll smash 'em if they touch me!" cried the boy, indignantly; "I'm Prince Tot."

Fortunately, the pewter band now made its appearance, and at Dot's command they stood in a circle at one edge of the road and began to play a waltz.

The effect of the music upon the dolls was laughable. They immediately began waltzing around as merrily as could be, and paid no further attention to Dot and Tot. While they danced the dolls kept up a continual chattering and laughter, and they looked so sweet and happy that the children could hardly realize they had been so cross and unreasonable a short time before.

"If they are kept busy they won't get into mischief," said Scollops, who had come back with the band; "but even her Majesty the Queen cannot manage them when they have nothing to amuse themselves with. I'm a doll myself and I know."

"What does she do when they are naughty?" asked Dot.

"She puts them to sleep," was the answer.

Dot had almost regretted asking the Queen to leave the village dolls awake all day; but she loved to watch them dance, and they seemed quite contented now.

"Don't they ever remain quiet, and visit with each other, and rest?" asked the girl.

"Never," replied Scollops. "They always are unhappy unless they are rushing around or playing or dancing."

"They wouldn't make very comfortable playmates, would they, Tot?" she said.

"No," he answered, gravely; "don't like live dolls."

But it amused them to watch the little creatures capering about, so the children sat down upon a door-step and enjoyed the dancing until Twinkle came to tell them their luncheon was ready. Then they quietly stole away, unnoticed by the dolls, and walked to the palace, where they had a delightful luncheon and were waited upon by Scollops and Twinkle.

While they were yet at the table they suddenly heard a great noise and clamor at the palace gate, so they at once ran out to see what was the matter. Crowding before the gates was an excited throng of dolls, screaming and stamping and waving their hands in the air as if they had really become crazy.

At first Dot could make nothing of their cries, for all were talking at the same time; but she asked Twinkle what the trouble was about and the maid answered:

"The musicians must have stopped playing."

"I wonder why they did that," said the girl.

Here Scollops, who had been down to the gate and spoken to the dolls, came up to Dot, bringing with him the leader of the pewter band.



"What caused this trouble?" she asked.

"They are so unreasonable," replied the musician, in a complaining voice, "that no one can manage them except the Queen. We had played dance music for several hours and were all tired out, for our lungs are only pewter, and no true musician likes to play such common music continually. So we thought we would rest ourselves by playing something slow and really classical—for all classical music is slow, you know. But no sooner had we started the introduction than those soulless dolls became violent. They rushed at my poor musicians, threw them down, and trampled upon them! Every member of my band is either bent or broken. Even I have a bent back and a twisted leg, and my horn is badly damaged."

Dot looked at him and saw that he spoke truly.

"I'm very sorry," she said, nervously. "I'm sure I don't know what to do with them, for the Queen will not return before sundown."

The dolls had remained outside the palace gates until now; but as Dot looked anxiously toward them, the gate flew open and one of the rebellious creatures ran up the path to where the children stood. She was dressed in a rather fussy way, and had big black eyes that stared straight at one. Her hair was tangled and matted, and she had lost one shoe and worn a great hole in her stocking, through which her toes peeped out.

"What do you want?" asked Dot, as this doll came near.

"We want our dinner, of course," answered the doll, saucily.

"But I didn't know dolls could eat," said the girl.

"Well we do, and now we want to be fed. Do you think it is right and proper to keep us awake all day and then refuse to give us any dinner?"

"What do you eat?" enquired Dot.

"What could a doll eat but sawdust? Nearly all of us have danced more or less sawdust out of our bodies, and now we want them filled up again," continued the doll.

"But I have no sawdust, nor do I know where to get it," answered the child.

"The Queen has a house full of it in the village. Give us the key and we will help ourselves," said the doll.

"The Queen must have taken the key with her," returned Dot, helplessly; "I know nothing about it."

"Then we shall break down the door," declared the doll, and stamping her feet with anger she rushed back to her companions.

When they learned that the Queen had carried away the key to the sawdust house the dolls became much excited and ran off with loud shouts to tear down the door of the house.



Dot was both vexed and worried, for Twinkle declared the Queen would be much provoked if her pretty house was battered and broken.

"Let's call out the army," exclaimed Tot, suddenly.

"That's a good idea, Tot," said the girl, and at once sent Scollops to order the pewter soldiers to march into the village and preserve order. But the rag boy soon returned with the news that the soldiers refused to obey.

"They are not used to fighting," explained Scollops, "and they fear the dolls will treat them as they did the pewter band. Besides,

they declare the Queen detests fighting, and would blame them for interfering with the people of the village."

"The soldiers are toys and the people are dolls," added Twinkle; "so they sympathize with each other."

"They didn't seem to sympathize with the band," said Dot.

"No, but the band had no right to play classical music in public."

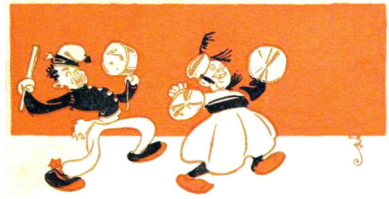
"Perhaps you are right," said Dot, thoughtfully.

She saw now that she must let the naughty dolls have their own way; but she went down the street with Tot and Scollops and watched the crowd break down the door of the house. They took away quantities of the Queen's sawdust and carried it to their homes, where they made it into pies and cakes and feasted merrily upon this queer food.

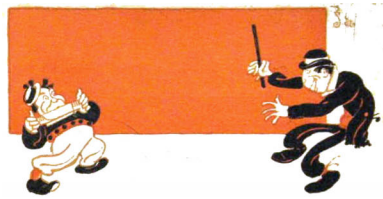
This gave them something to do and made them happy for a while, and Dot was profoundly grateful for a period of rest and quiet; but she feared the dolls would break forth into more mischief before the day passed, and so it proved.



For toward evening they again became restless, and as there was no music to be had they decided to make some of their own. So they gathered up a lot of tin pans for drums and pot covers for cymbals, and several of the dolls got combs and put paper over them. When they blew upon these combs and hummed a tune it sounded almost like music; so they formed a procession, with the doll musicians at the head of it, and marched all over the village, singing loudly:



Tum, tum—tum!
Tum, tum—tum!
Here comes the band with a tin-pan drum;
Here come the cymbals, clangety-clang!
Here come the combs with their twang, twang, twang!
Here come the marchers, happy and gay,
Strangers must keep out of our way!
Tum, tum—tum!
Tum, tum—tum!
Clatter the cymbals and bang the drum!



They marched up to the palace gate and back again, and when they came to the house in which was the big music box, one of the cried:

"Let us break the door down and start the music!"

"Good, we will!" screamed some of the most mischievous dolls.

"What do we care for the Queen?" yelled others.

They made a rush for the house, and Dot, now angry and determined that the Queen's music box should not be spoiled, ran to the door and placed her back against it, while she cried out, "If any of you dare to come nearer I will whip you soundly!"

The dolls hung back at this, but they threw a shower of tin pans and combs and pot covers at her, which rattled against the house, but did not hurt her a bit. Suddenly, amidst all this riot and turmoil, the girl was amazed to see every doll become silent and motionless. They ran in all directions to their homes, and as the street became clear Dot saw, standing there alone, the Queen of

Merryland, who was waving for the third and last time the fairy wand which would put every doll in the village fast asleep.

"Oh, your Majesty!" cried the girl, running to her, "I'm so glad you've come home again!"





You see, Princess," said the Queen, when they were safely within the palace, "it is rather dangerous to leave the dolls awake while I am away. I feared, after I had started, you might have trouble with them, and so hurried back as soon as I could. Did they frighten you?"

"A little," said Dot, "for they would not be quiet an instant."

"No; that is the way with dolls. If one wishes to take any comfort with them they must be kept asleep. Then we can love them and play with them as much as we desire, but while they are awake they are sure to cause no end of trouble."

"I'll keep my dolls asleep," said Tot, with decision.

"Yes," agreed the girl, "they are nicer that way. But did you see the Watch-Dog of Merryland?" she asked the Queen.

"Yes, indeed; and I told him just how to block up the archway if any more strangers appeared," was the answer.

"Was he countin' his whiskers?" asked Tot.

"Not when I arrived. I think he was playing with a piece of jelly cake."

"Oh, yes," said the girl. "Tot gave it to him."

The Queen was silent for a time, and appeared to be thinking without her machine, which made the girl anxious. But finally her

Majesty said, "Now that I have looked after the safety of my first three Valleys, I feel I should visit the last three, for it has been years since I have entered them."

"Can't we go with you?" asked Dot, eagerly.

"I cannot answer that question now, for I have not consulted my thinking machine, without which I never make an important move, but I will let you know in the morning."

Dot and Tot were all excitement after that to know what the thinking machine would advise, for they were curious to see the remaining Valleys of this wonderful country. But the Queen said no more about the journey that evening, and devoted herself to entertaining them in such a pretty and modest way that they grew to love the big Wax Doll very dearly.

Before breakfast the next morning, however, they asked what her thinking machine had said, and she at once replied:

"You may, if you wish, go with me to visit the other Valleys. Since you are my adopted children and a Prince and Princess of Merryland, it is right you should know all about your own country; therefore we will make the journey together."

"That's lovely!" cried Dot, with delight. "When shall we start?"

"Whenever you please," answered the Queen. "As you seem so anxious, we may as well start after breakfast."

"Good!" exclaimed Tot, who was already busily eating; "I'm ready."

So, breakfast being finished, they all walked down to the river, wearing their golden crowns and feeling happy at the prospect of new adventures.

They found the boat lying beside the steps outside the wall, and the wooden soldiers who were on guard saluted them respectfully as they seated themselves and made ready to start. The Queen sat in the middle of the boat, with Dot at one end and Tot at the other. But now they were not obliged to wait for the slow current to carry them along.

For when the pretty Queen waved her fairy wand around her golden head, the boat shot out from the shore and glided swiftly

toward the rocky arch that led to the Fifth Valley of Merryland. This they reached in a few minutes and passed quickly through, while Dot and Tot looked eagerly ahead to see what the Fifth Valley was like.



It seemed very quiet as it lay under the rays of the morning sun, and at first the children thought the Valley resembled one of the quiet country scenes at home. For nothing remarkable met their eyes, and they felt rather relieved at the contrast between this and the wonderful Toy Valley they had just left.

Yet Dot soon decided the place was inhabited, for they came to a queer looking group of buildings standing near the shore. These could not be seen clearly at first, but the boat drew nearer every moment, and finally the Queen waved her fairy wand and some magic power carried them quickly to the shore at a spot near to the buildings.



The children sprang out upon the grass, and then they could see better what these strange houses looked like.

All the buildings were exactly alike, and stood about as high as a tall man. In shape they were square, with a flat roof, but around each roof was a stout railing. There were no windows at all, and each house had but one door, which was placed in the center, halfway between the floor and the roof. Even this was more a

doorway than a door, being nothing but a square hole, with a broad shelf projecting outside and inside the bottom of the opening.

The entire group of buildings was painted a pure white, but underneath each hole, or doorway, was a big, black number. The house nearest the river on the left side was number 1, and the one on the right side was number 47; yet the houses were not laid out into streets, but stood here and there upon the smooth lawn, without any attempt at order or regularity.

"Well, how do you like this Valley?" asked the Queen, with a laugh as she saw Dot and Tot looking at the queer place with sober faces.

"The houses seem very odd—if they are houses," replied Dot. Then she enquired: "Who lives in them?"

"King Felis lives in number 1," said the Queen. "At least, he did several years ago when I last visited him. I will now call him, that I may introduce you to his Majesty."

Thereupon she gave a shrill whistle, and a moment later a great Maltese pussycat sprang upon the shelf of the doorway at number 1 and sat there for an instant crouched, with its ears pointing into the air and its big yellow eyes gazing steadily at the visitors. Then the pussy leaped lightly to the ground, and standing upon its rear legs before the Queen, he bobbed his head solemnly up and down and said, "Welcome, Queen of Merryland, to the Valley of Pussycats!"

"I thank you, King Felis," responded the Wax Doll sweetly. "But permit me to introduce to you my adopted children, Princess Dot and Prince Tot of Merryland."

The big pussy looked at the children with surprise, but nodded his head politely.

"The Prince and Princess seem like people from the big, outside world," he said, with a wise look; and then he turned to Dot and asked:

"Do you pull the tails of pussycats?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed the girl, who was just then admiring the beauty of the cat King as well as his ability to speak.

"Or pinch their ears?" he continued.

"Never!" declared Dot.

"I did—once," remarked Tot, composedly. "An' it yelled."



The big kitty looked at the boy gravely and said:

"Should you do such a thing in this Valley I would ask the Queen to send you away at once. It is really a wicked amusement, for it hurts a pussy as much as if someone should pinch your own ears."

"All right," remarked Tot. "I'll be good."

"You will find my adopted children both kind and gentle," said the Queen; "so pray do not fear them, King Felis."

"Your Majesty rules all Merryland," he replied; "and your children shall be as welcome in our Valley as yourself. But I must call my people, that they may pay their respects to your Majesty."

"Where are they?" asked Tot, who had been looking around and could see no other living thing than the big Maltese.

"At this time of day they are asleep, as all good pussycats should be," was the King's answer. "The sun is warm and pleasant just now, and my people are enjoying their mid-day naps."



He then lifted his voice and uttered a loud, wailing cry.

Scarcely had it died away when the pussys began to appear. They leaped from the roofs of the houses, from the doorways, and even from among the shady clumps of long grass. Every house added six or seven to the number, and soon hundreds of pussycats were standing before the Queen, bowing gracefully and crying, "Welcome, your Majesty!" in all sorts of voices.

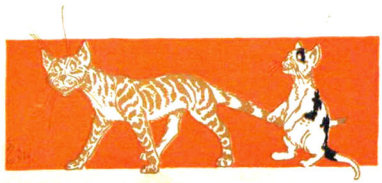
They were plump and comfortable looking, and Dot had no idea there were so many kinds and colors of pussys in the world. Some had long, silky hair, and some short, velvety hair; some had long, bushy tails, some short tails and some no tails at all. They were white and black, blue and gray, yellow and red, speckled and tortoise-shell in color. Some had pretty ribbons around their necks and some of the older ones wore spectacles; but all were as neat as wax, and seemed well cared for.



The big King was the largest of them all; yet there were many various sizes, down to the tiniest kittens with their eyes just open.

When all this array of pussys had saluted the Queen they sat down upon the grass and began to purr, while some indulged in a yawn behind their paws and others commenced to wash their faces; for they had just been aroused from a long nap.

"Your people seem happy and contented, King Felis," remarked the Queen, when she had looked them over carefully.



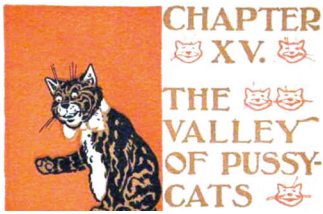
"Oh, yes; they are thriving finely," replied the Maltese King. "But why should they not? They have no troubles nor cares, and pass their lives in eating and sleeping. With comfortable homes and plenty of food they cannot help being the happiest pussycats in the big round world."

"I should think not, indeed," said the Queen.

"But now you must permit me to offer you the hospitality of my house," said the King. "It is nearly dinner time, and you will wish to rest and eat. Our houses are not very large, so I must divide your party and place you in separate families. The boy will be cared for by my cousin Tabby, who lives at number 16. The girl I will place with Uncle Palladius, who lives at number 9. And your Majesty will, I trust, partake of the hospitality of my humble home." And he bowed again, very politely.

"We accept your kindness with much pleasure and many thanks," answered the Queen; and then she whispered to Dot and Tot not to be afraid, for the pussys would treat them with great courtesy.







Tot wasn't a bit frightened when a gentle looking pussy of uncertain age came up to him and said:

"I am Cousin Tabby, and as you are to be my guest please follow me to number 16."

The boy laughed at the idea of entering a cat's house, but he walked after the softly-moving pussy, who, when she reached number 16, sprang upon the shelf and said:

"Climb in, please."



This was hard work, for the shelf was nearly as high as his chin. But Tot had already learned to climb the trees at home, so he managed in some way to pull himself up, with the result that he lost his balance and fell head foremost inside the house.

To his surprise he alighted on a soft cushion, and then he scrambled quickly to his feet and looked around him.

The room was dimly lighted by the square doorway, but after his eyes got accustomed to the twilight he saw that upon the floor was a soft carpet, while big cushions lay around in every direction. At the side of the room was a long, low table, not higher than Tot's knee, and standing in a row upon this table were four white bowls. There was a cupboard in one corner, a big fireplace at the end of the room, and in a second corner two little gray kittens lay asleep upon a cushion.

While the boy looked at these things there sprang through the doorway another gray kitten, older and larger than the others, and Mrs. Tabby said, politely:

"This is my niece, Miss Flitter, who lives with me; and these two little ones, who were too young to go and welcome the Queen, belong to Mrs. Mewling. She has such a large family that I have adopted these children, for my house is much too large for myself and Flitter."

"Oh," returned Tot, who was rather bewildered. Then, as Cousin Tabby seemed to expect some further reply, he added: "all right."

"Now, if you will please make yourself comfortable," continued the pussy, in a soft, purring voice, "I will get our dinner ready."

She took a white apron from the peg near the fireplace and tied it around her waist. Then she placed another bowl on the table for Tot, and busied herself about the work while the boy lay on the soft carpet and stroked the silk-like fur of the two gray kittens.

While Tot was being thus entertained, Dot was led by Uncle Palladius to number 9, where he lived. Uncle Palladius was a great black pussy, and was one of those who wore spectacles, giving him a comical appearance.



Dot had harder work than Tot to climb through the square doorway of the house, but she succeeded after a struggle and was pleased with the cozy appearance of the room.

Uncle Palladius was the head of a large family, and as strangers were rare in their Valley they all gathered around the girl and looked at her curiously, while one pure white kitten came softly up and rubbed its back against Dot's leg. She stooped down, and picking up the pretty kitten snuggled it close in her arms and gently caressed it. Then she sat down upon a cushion, while the other kittens gathered around her or stretched themselves lazily upon the carpet near by.

All this delighted the girl, for she was especially fond of pussycats, although her invalid mother did not like them and had always declared she "would not have a cat in the house."

So the child had often longed in vain for a pet of this kind, and was now very happy to be able to play with so many.

She leaned down and pressed her cheek against the white kitten, while she whispered: "You sweet little darling!"

"I've got a new ribbon," said the kitten, proudly.

"So I see," replied Dot, who had noticed this. Then she asked:

"How old are you, dear?"

"It's pink," said the white kitty.

"What is pink?" enquired the child.

"My ribbon."

"Oh, yes. But tell me," she added "is Uncle Palladius your father, or your grandfather?"

"It's got a bow-knot on it," purred the kitten softly, with half closed eyes.

"What has a bow-knot on it?" asked Dot.

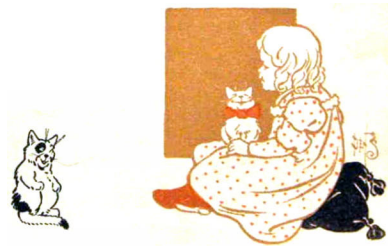
"My ribbon."

"Yes, dear; but we'll talk of something else," said the girl. "Are all these other kitties your sisters and brothers?"

"Mamma gave it to me," sang the white kitten, contentedly.

"Gave you what, dear?"

"My ribbon."



"Don't mind her," said another of the pussys, in a rather contemptuous voice; "it's her first ribbon, and she's so vain she can think of nothing else. Put her down and take one of us; we can talk to you in a sensible way."

"Well, let us talk, then," said the child, but she still held the vain kitten cuddled in her arms—it was so soft and pretty, she thought. "Tell me about Uncle Palladius."

"He is our grandfather," said one that had white fur with big black spots scattered over it, and which, moreover, presented a curious appearance, because one eye was surrounded by a black spot and the other by pure white fur.

"Uncle Palladius is very old and wise, and is uncle to half the pussys in our Valley. Our mother, who is named Snowball, lives with him, as he has at present no family of his own."

"Here is mother, now!" cried another kitten, and Dot looked up and saw a pussy entering the room that was by far the most beautiful she had ever seen. Snowball was large and very graceful, and her fur was the purest white, without a black mark anywhere. She sat down near Dot and asked: "Have my children been bothering you?"

"Oh, no!" declared Dot; "they are the loveliest pussys in the world."

Snowball smiled in a gratified way.

"I think, myself," she said, "that no house has a prettier or lazier lot of kittens than number 9. We can outsleep any other family I know of, and when it comes to our midnight concerts Uncle Palladius' voice is so strong it can be heard above all the rest."

"What are these midnight concerts like?" asked the girl.

"Oh, they are wonderfully entertaining," answered Snowball, "and I wish you could hear one of them. Perhaps you have noticed the railings around the roofs of our houses. Well, in the middle of the night we all sit upon these railings and have a grand concert. There are no people to throw stones or bootjacks at us, so we enjoy ourselves immensely. The house that can produce the loudest chorus, with the most varied sound, is considered the most aristocratic in the Valley, and I am proud to say that Uncle Palladius and I have the reputation of fully holding our own."



"Yes, yes!" spoke up Uncle Palladius, in a deep, bass voice; "I flatter myself I can be heard throughout the whole Valley."

"But the kittens cannot jump to the roofs of the houses, can they?" asked Dot.

"No, indeed," replied Snowball; "only those who are old enough and strong enough to jump to the roofs are considered worthy to take part in the concerts. But the little ones have the pleasure of lying inside before the fire and listening to us."

"Do you have fires?" enquired the child.

"Yes; we consider nothing more cozy and comfortable than lying before a glowing grate fire. When the evenings are chilly there is a fire in every house, and we pussys lie before it upon our cushions and enjoy its warmth. Usually we sleep all day long, and most of the night, except during the concert, which lasts from midnight until dawn."

"You must enjoy yourselves very much," said Dot, earnestly.

"Oh, we do, indeed!" replied the white pussycat; "but I see that dinner is now ready, so please come to the table."

The girl walked toward the low table with some curiosity to know how these pussys ate, and what they had for food. She found a row of white bowls sitting upon a white cloth, and each bowl was filled with fresh milk. At the ends of the table were plates of light bread with deep brown crusts.

The kittens all brought cushions to the sides of the table and sat upon them, their heads being then just high enough to reach the bowls. Dot was placed at one end of the table, with Snowball at her right hand, and Uncle Palladius sat at the other end.

"Where do you get such nice milk?" asked the girl.

"We have several springs in the Valley," answered Snowball, "where it bubbles up constantly."

"And where do you get the bread?" Dot next enquired.

"That grows upon the tall trees you see scattered about. We climb the bread-trees every day and gather fresh loaves."

"Don't you catch mice?" asked Dot.

"Mercy, no!" replied Snowball, in a horrified voice. "Do you suppose mice would be foolish enough to come into a Valley of Pussycats?"



"No, I suppose not," replied the girl; "but I always thought pussys liked mice."

"I have never seen the horrid animals," returned the white cat; "but there is a tradition in the Valley that some of our forefathers found mice here at one time and quickly destroyed them. They may have eaten them, for all I know; no one can be certain what his forefathers did. But none of us now living here has ever eaten anything but bread and milk, of that I am positive."

"It's such nice bread and milk," said Dot, "that I should think you would prefer it to anything else."

"We do, for there's nothing else to prefer," was the answer.

After dinner the kittens washed their faces carefully and then all of them, accompanied by Dot, left the room and walked to King Felis' house where they found Tot and the Queen surrounded by a crowd of pussys.

"Oh, Dot!" cried Tot, when he saw the girl. "I held the gray kittens after dinner, an' never dropped 'em once!"

"Was he good?" Dot asked Cousin Tabby. "Yes, he behaved very nicely," answered Cousin Tabby. "We must now bid our friends farewell," said the Queen, "for it is time to proceed upon our journey."

So they returned to the boat, and all the pussys, headed by King Felis and Uncle Palladius, went with them and politely bade them good-bye.

When they were floating in the river again the Queen asked Dot, "How did you like the pussycats?"

"They're lovely!" exclaimed the girl. "I should have liked to stay all night with them."

"Well, I wouldn't," rejoined the Queen. "The last time I passed the night in this Valley the pussys screamed so loudly at their midnight concert that the noise cracked my wax. They are much nicer to visit in the daytime."

"Why is the King named Felis?" enquired Dot, after a moment's thought.

"Because that is the name of his race. All our names have some meaning in Merryland," answered the Queen.



"I suppose your own name has a meaning, if only we knew what it was," said Dot, slyly.

"Good gracious!" cried the Queen; "haven't I told you my name yet?"

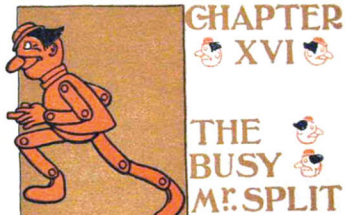
"No," said Dot.

"Then I must have forgotten that you asked it. It was very stupid of me, and I assure you I didn't mean to be rude." Then her Majesty turned to Tot and asked:

"How did you like the Valley of Pussys?"

"Fine!" said the boy. "The kitties were soft an' fuzzy, an' the bread and milk was good. But the doors," he added, solemnly, "are built too high up to be 'zactly comf'table."







When the boat entered the Sixth Valley of Merryland our voyagers saw before them a forest of green trees growing close down to the river bank. These were so thick that they formed almost a solid wall, and they had passed halfway through the Valley before they came to a small opening, or path, running from the water's edge through the forest. To this spot the Queen directed the boat, and soon it grounded gently against a pebbly beach, and they all stepped out and stood upon the narrow path.

"Isn't there anything but trees here?" asked Tot.

"Yes, indeed, there is a very pleasant country behind the trees," answered the Wax Doll. "Follow me and I will guide your steps."

So they followed the Queen slowly along the shady path, while over their heads the branches met and sheltered them from the rays of the afternoon sun. This was gratefully appreciated by Dot and Tot, for they had left their hats in the boat and wore only their golden crowns.

After walking a short distance the Queen stopped suddenly—so suddenly that Dot nearly ran against her and Tot bumped his nose upon Dot's shoulder. Looking ahead to see what was the matter, the children found lying across the path a bright green Alligator

nearly three feet long. Its back was scaly and made in short lengths, which were jointed together in a peculiar way.

While Dot and Tot were trying to make up their minds whether to be afraid or not, the Alligator turned his head toward the Queen and said, gently:

"Step on my middle, please!"

"With pleasure," returned the Queen; and she placed one of her kid slippers upon the middle of the Alligator's back and stepped to the other side of him. As she did so the pressure of her foot made a faint squeak, and the Alligator sighed with delight. Then he turned his head to Dot and repeated

"Step on my middle, please!"

"Why?" asked the girl, hesitating.

"So I can hear my squeak, of course," answered the Alligator. "If no one steps on me I might as well have no squeak at all. It is now some years since I have listened to the music of my squeak, but each day I have crawled into this path as soon as I was wound up, for I knew that sooner or later someone was sure to walk down the path and tread on me. You look heavier than the Queen, so perhaps I'll squeak louder."



"Let Tot try it first," said Dot; "I'm afraid I'll break you."

"Oh, don't worry, I've been used so little that I ought to be in good condition," said the Alligator. But Tot went first, and gave his foot a great push as he stepped on the creature's body.

The squeak was so loud and shrill that the Alligator laughed from pure joy, and cried, "Wasn't that splendid? I believe I have

the finest squeak in the world! The person who made me knew his business all right."

"Who made you?" asked Dot, with quick interest.

But instead of replying, the Alligator winked his left eye at her three times and murmured softly, "Step on my middle, please!"

So Dot stepped upon his back, and being heavier than Tot, the Alligator squeaked louder than before.

"Thank you! Thank you very much!" he called, in a happy voice. "I have never enjoyed myself so much since I was made."

They walked on and left him smiling contentedly as he lay across the path, and before many minutes they reached a circular space of flat country where no trees grew at all, although the forest surrounded it on every side.

Around the edge of the clearing were wooden barns and stables with their fronts wide open, showing stalls and mangers and stabling for all kinds of toy animals. One had a sign over the door reading "Fire Engine," and another "Police Patrol." The stables were all about as high as Dot's waist, and in some of them were toy animals and stablemen, while others were entirely empty.

In the center of the space was a big merry-go-round, having thirty-four animals in rows upon its edge, all of which wore pretty saddles and bridles of bright red and blue leather. There were lions, elephants, tigers, deer, camels, horses, donkeys and several other animals, all whirling around in pairs, while a barrel-organ played sweet music. But no one was riding on any of the animals.

Between the merry-go-round and the stables was a narrow, iron railway track, built in a circle, around which was rushing a big tin engine, drawing a gaily painted train of tin cars, filled with tin passengers that never moved a bit.

The rest of the opening in the forest was filled with groups of animals of all sorts, some standing perfectly still, some walking stiffly about, and others pretending to eat grass, or slowly wagging their tails from side to side and nodding their heads up and down. Some were covered with real fur, while others were made of tin or wood and painted in natural colors.

Near the spot where Dot and Tot were standing they noticed a group of wooden rocking horses talking with their heads together, while they rocked gently to and fro upon their rockers. Back of them was one that had broken its rocker and was lying upon its side in quite a helpless condition.

Almost in front of their path stood a black, woolly dancing bear upon one of its rear legs. It remained perfectly motionless, and the Queen walked up to it and asked:

"Where is Mr. Split?"

"He is in the forest winding up the panthers and in the police patrol house oiling up the wagon, your Majesty," answered the dancing bear in a weak voice. "I've been run down now for over three hours, and expected at least half of Mr. Split to come long ago and start me going again; but he seems especially busy this morning."

"Yes, there is a great deal of work for him in the Valley," said the Queen, thoughtfully; "there really should be four of him."

"But he has only two arms when he is hooked together," returned the bear; "so there could not be more than two parts of Mr. Split that could hold a key."

"That is true," said the Queen. Then she looked up and exclaimed. "Here comes Mr. Left Split now."

Hopping toward them with wonderful speed was the queerest man the children had seen in all this queer kingdom. He was not, in fact, a complete man, but just half of a man, as if he had been cut in two from the middle of his head straight downward. This left him one ear, one eye, half of a nose and of a mouth, one arm and one leg. He was dressed in a bright red suit and carried in his hand a brass key.

"Even—, Your Maj—," he cried out, as he drew near. "Hap—see!"

He meant to say: "Good evening, your Majesty, I'm happy to see you," but there being only half of him he spoke but half of each word.

"Good evening, Mr. Left Split," replied the Queen. "I see you are as busy as ever."

"Ind—am. Anim—al—get—out ord—" By this he meant to say: "Indeed I am. The animals are always getting out of order."

"Please wind me up at once," said the dancing bear, in a complaining tone; "I've been run down for three hours."

"Ver—sor—, but can't help," remarked Mr. Left Split, cheerfully, meaning that he was very sorry. He placed the key in a small hole at the back of the bear's neck and wound it up tightly.

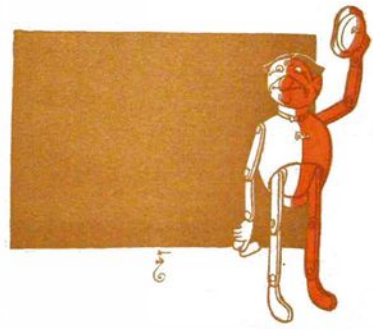
As soon as he withdrew the key the bear began to move its head by slow jerks from side to side, and to rest first upon one leg and then upon the other, as if it were dancing.

"That's better," it said, in a more pleasant voice; "I ought to run now until sundown."

Just then the Queen exclaimed: "Here comes Mr. Right Split," and the children looked up and saw the other half of the split man coming out of the forest a short distance away. He also had a key in his hand, but when he saw the Queen and her companions he came hopping toward them, saying in his jerky voice "—Ning,—jesty!—Come our—ley." By which he meant to say: "Good evening, your Majesty! Welcome to our Valley." But being the right half of the man he spoke on the right half of each word.

As soon as he came up, however, there was an end of this mode of speech, for the right half of Mr. Split placed his flat side close to the left half's flat side and then with both hands he hooked the two halves together with little brass hooks. Then Mr. Split looked more like a complete man, although the left side was dressed in a bright red suit while the right side wore white, so it was easy to see where he was joined together.

When he had fastened himself securely, which he did with great rapidity, the man spoke, saying, "Your Majesty has found us as busy as ever. The fact is, these animals and cars and merry-go-rounds run down very quickly, and they require so much attention that this is the first time we have been hooked together since early this morning. It is the same every day, but I try to do my duty, and you will find this Valley in good condition and everything properly cared for."



"I am sure of that, Mr. Split," answered the Queen.

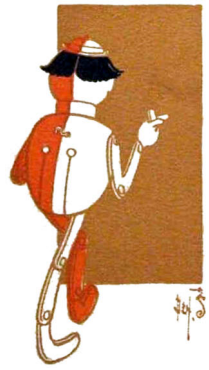
Dot and Tot had been so astonished at all this that they had stood perfectly still, and noticing this Mr. Split came toward them with his key raised and said, briskly:

"Where are your key holes my dears? You must have run down."

"Oh, no!" cried Dot, shrinking back; "We're—we're alive!"

"Oh, that is different," returned the man, with a laugh. "I'm glad you are not to be wound up, for I am so busy now that there ought to be three or four of me instead of two."

"You're funny," remarked Tot, who had been staring at Mr. Split.



"Thank you, sir," replied the man, bowing politely.

"What are you made of?" asked the boy, curiously.

"Wood, of course," answered the man. "Wood is the strongest and best material for that purpose. My feet are beech, my arms and legs are limbs of ash, my body is pine and my heart is oak. As for

my head, it is mostly chestnut, although my hair is curly maple, my eyes mahogany and my teeth hickory."

"Oh!" said Tot.

"You may notice my voice is very strong," continued the man; "it is made of birch bark."

"Oh!" said Tot.

"And my hands are made of the rubber tree so I can wiggle my fingers easily and turn the keys to wind the machinery."

"Oh!" said Tot.

"If you had not told us this," remarked Dot, shyly, "we should have thought you were made entirely of witch hazel."



The Queen laughed at this, and said: "Now, Mr. Split, if you will kindly gather some fruit and nuts from the forest for our supper we will ride on the merry-go-round until you return."

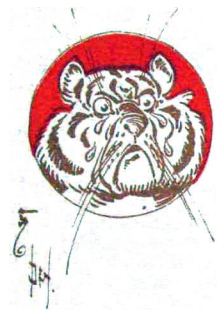
The man bowed and at once ran into the forest on his errand, while Dot and Tot followed the Queen toward the merry-go-round.





When they came to the railway track they were careful not to get run into by the rushing tin train. They waited until the cars had passed the spot where they stood and then quickly ran across the track before the engine came around again.

The merry-go-round was turning smoothly, and the saddled animals galloped along in an inviting way, while the barrel-organ played some very loud and frisky circus tunes.



"It's almost like a side show!" cried Dot enthusiastically, as she seated herself upon a camel. Tot bestrode a dapple-gray horse, and the Queen sat upon a lion and took hold of its mane to steady herself.

They whirled around in a very pleasant and exhilarating manner for some time, and Dot was laughing and enjoying herself

immensely when she happened to notice a number of big teardrops rolling down the cheeks of the tiger that was galloping just in front of her.

"I—I think it's—it's—real mean of you," whimpered the tiger with sobs in his voice, "for you to ride on that humpbacked animal all the time, and—and neglect a roy—royal Bengal tiger!"

"Oh, I shall be glad to make a change," she cried, and leaping off the camel's back she sprang upon the tiger, who thereupon dried his tears and smiled in a most delightful manner.

"We seldom have visitors in this Valley," he said, after he had wiped his eyes with a handkerchief that was sticking in his bridle, "so most of the time there is no one to ride us. I don't see the good of a merry-go-round if it isn't used."

The Queen now noticed some of the other animals looking discontented, so she and Tot changed seats also, and by the time Mr. Split came to call them to supper they had ridden all the animals in turn, and the keeper noticed that his merry-go-round was bathed in one whirling smile of gladness and content.

"It is good for my animals to have visitors," he said, happily, "it cheers them up."



Mr. Split had spread a white cloth upon the grass close to one edge of the forest, and Dot and Tot and the Queen sat around this and ate of the delicious fruit the queer man had gathered. There were melons, grapes, bananas, oranges, plums, strawberries, and pears and all were ripe and exquisitely flavored.

By the time they finished their meal it had become twilight, and the Queen declared it would soon be dark.

"I wonder where we can sleep," said Tot. But Dot looked around and saw that Mr. Split was fastening three big hammocks between

the trees at the edge of the forest. These hammocks were lined with soft, silken cushions and looked very pleasant and cozy to the sleepy children.

The Queen and Dot and Tot each climbed into one of the hammocks and were covered over with silk-quilted comfortables, after which Mr. Split turned a key at the end of each hammock and set them moving gently to and fro like the rocking of a cradle.

Before she went to sleep Dot looked over the edge of her hammock and saw that the merry-go-round and the tin train were now motionless, while all the animals seemed to have run down and were standing quite still waiting for morning, when Mr. Split would come and wind them up again.

* * *

The little girl was awakened next morning by a sharp clicking sound near by, and opening her eyes she saw a tin monkey running up and down a string fastened to a branch of the tree.

"Dear me!" she said, looking at him intently; "are you wound up so early in the morning?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the monkey, still busily climbing his string; "Mr. Split was here some time ago. I suppose nearly everyone in the Valley must be going by this time."

"I didn't know it was so late," said Dot, slipping from her hammock to the ground and feeling rather ashamed of her laziness.



Tot was already up and sitting near the railway track watching the tin train go round. The Queen now joined Dot and they called Tot to breakfast, for Mr. Split had loaded the cloth with a variety of cool, fresh fruit and berries.

"He gathered those before he unhooked himself," said the Queen, "for then he had two arms to carry them. But when it came to winding up the animals he had to separate in order that he might use each hand in a different place, and so get around quicker."

"Mr. Split's name suits him very well," said Dot, who was enjoying the fruit.

"Yes, it would be hard to call him anything else," replied the Queen.

"I suppose your own name fits you in the same way," ventured the girl.

"Certainly it does," answered the Queen.

Dot's heart now began to beat rapidly, for she thought she would at last discover what the Queen's name was. Tot also looked interested, and forgot his slice of melon as he listened.

"You haven't told us yet what it is," said the girl.

The little Queen laughed merrily. "Isn't it funny," she exclaimed, "that I always forget to tell you? There is no reason in the world why you should not know my name."

"Then," said Tot, sharply, "tell it!"

"Well," she said, "it's—"

Just then they heard a great crash, a whirling of wheels and the scream of a whistle. Springing to their feet they saw the tin train lying upside down near the track, with its wheels whirling around like the wind, and near by was a wooden goat and cart, completely wrecked and splintered into many pieces.

They all ran down to the place, and the brave little Queen picked up the tin train and set it upon its track. It started to run again in its usual rushing way, but Dot noticed that the cow-catcher was badly bent and that some of the paint had been knocked off.

"There has been a collision," said her Majesty, calmly. "I was afraid that goat-cart would get into trouble if it ran so near to the engine. But it is wrecked now, beyond repair, so there is nothing more to worry about."



As she spoke the Police Patrol and the Fire Engine both dashed up to the spot, and one of the officers asked: "What's the trouble?"

"You are too late," said the Queen; "the trouble is all over."



"Then we may as well go back," said the officer, grumpily. "The trouble usually is over when we get anywhere; that's why we take our time about coming."

"Well," said the Queen, when the Patrol and the Fire Engine had gone back to their stables, "it is time for us to go."

They looked around for Mr. Split, but not seeing him they walked across the opening to the path that led through the forest to the river. They each squeaked the Alligator when they came to him, and left him feeling joyful and contented.

The boat was lying where they had left it, and they at once stepped in and seated themselves.

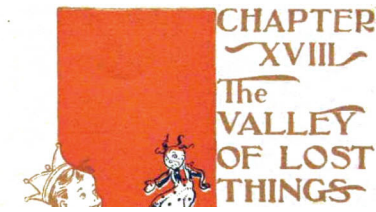
"I'm sorry not to say good-bye to Mr. Split," said Dot, as the boat glided out into the river.

"He is so busy he won't mind it," answered the Queen. "I suppose he was in the forest winding up the animals there when we came away. I do not think there is another man in the whole

world that does so much work as Mr. Split, and he seems to enjoy it, too."



The boat was rushing swiftly through the water, now, and soon the forest of trees was passed and our voyagers entered a deep archway that led to the Seventh and last Valley of Merryland.





It was morning, and the sun shone as brightly as it had every day since they came to Merryland; yet the stillness of the Seventh Valley was so intense that the children became sober the moment they entered it, and even the smile upon the little Queen's wax face looked strained and out of place.

"The people here are either asleep, like the dolls, or run down, like the animals," said Dot, sinking her voice to a whisper.

"There are no people," replied the Queen.

"Then what is the Valley for?" asked the girl.

"Wait a moment and you will see," was the answer.

The boat now drew near the shore, but the banks of the river were so high and steep that they could see nothing above them, and Dot thought at first they would be unable to land.

Presently, however, they reached a small place where the bank sloped gently down to the water, and here the Queen stopped the boat and asked the children to step out.

"Now follow me," said Her Majesty, when they had all landed. So they walked up the sloping bank and found themselves upon a big, circular plain as flat as a platter, which was thickly covered with thousands and thousands of pins. There were no trees at all,

but lying scattered upon the ground were heaps and stacks of the most curious things.

Nearest to Dot was a great pyramid of thimbles, of all sizes and made of many different materials. Further on were piles of buttons, of all shapes and colors imaginable, and there were also vast collections of hairpins, rings, and many sorts of jewelry.

Tot noticed at his side a mammoth heap of lead pencils, some short and stubby and worn, and others long and almost new.

"What does it all mean?" asked Dot, wonderingly, after she had gazed about her.

"It is the Valley of Lost Things," answered the Queen.

"Oh!" said Dot.

"Oh!" echoed Tot.

And again they began looking with wide-open eyes.

"It is rather dangerous to walk on the pins," said the Queen; "so we must choose some overshoes from this pile and put them on our feet. There are so many pins lost that they cover the entire Valley, and sometimes the points turn up and are liable to stick into your feet."

The pile of overshoes was quite near them, so they hunted through it until they found the right sizes. Of course they could not get mates, but that did not matter so much, if the soles were but thick enough to keep the pins from sticking through.

When at last their feet were clad in lost overshoes they started to walk through the Valley, and Tot was surprised to see so many heaps of caps and coats that had been worn by boys.

"Where do they all come from?" he asked.

"Well," replied the Queen, "it seems boys in the big outside world seldom hang up their caps and coats; so they are easily lost. Perhaps if they knew they would get to this Valley, and could never be found again, boys would be more careful."

"Would they?" asked Tot.

"I suppose so. Here is a big pile of pennies. I expect most of those were lost by children, too."

"Let's take some!" cried Tot.

"No, indeed," said Dot, "if we took them they wouldn't be lost any more."

"Won't they ever be found?" asked the boy.

"I think not," replied the Queen. "No one has ever been here but you, and probably no stranger will ever come to this Valley again."

"It's all right for us to come," declared Tot.

"Why?" enquired the girl.

"'Cause we're lost, too!"

"So we are, Tot," said Dot, rather sadly; "but lost people are usually found again, for I don't see any others here."

They walked a little farther on and saw a mass of broken toys lying scattered about. There were dollies, too, for suddenly Tot made a pounce and grabbed up a sorry looking doll with one arm broken, one eye out and a scratched and battered face.

"I've found her!" he cried, joyfully; "I've found Jane! An' I'm going to keep her, too."

"Is it really your doll?" asked the Queen, with some curiosity.

"Course it is," replied Tot; "I lost her."

"Then I do not see why you should not keep her with you; for, being found, she doesn't belong here any more."

"Course not," said the boy, hugging the broken doll in his arms.

"There are a good many gloves and handkerchiefs lost," remarked Dot, looking at the heaps lying around.

"Yes," replied the Queen; "and over at the further side of the Valley are many piles of pocket-books, each pile as big as a haystack. People are so careless with pocketbooks."

"Have they money in them?" asked the girl.



"Some have a great deal of money inside them, and some only a few pennies. Others are stuffed with cards and samples and papers," said the Queen. "I would take you to look at them, but we should have to climb over a hill of lost needles, and I fear our overshoes would not protect us from their sharp points."

"It's always hard to get at money," said Tot, with a sigh.

Among other things lying near her Dot now noticed a hurdy-gurdy, such as she had seen musicians carrying around the streets. There was no monkey with it, and it looked quite old and battered.

"I wonder how long it has been here, she remarked, thoughtfully.

"Play it, and see," suggested the Queen.

So Dot set the hurdy-gurdy up straight and turned the crank, when it began playing in a jerky and wheezy manner a tune called "Silver Threads Among the Gold."

"My! But that's an old tune," said Dot.

"It's rather pretty," declared the Queen, who had never heard the air before. "Play another."

This time the tune was "Little Annie Rooney," and then followed "Captain Jinks" and "Two Little Girls in Blue."

"I guess this hurdy-gurdy was lost before I was born," sighed Dot. "It's certainly very old."





Well, shall we return to the boat?" asked the Queen, when they had looked at the lost things a while longer.

"Yes," they answered willingly, for the Valley was a rather sad sight.

So they walked back to the bank, where they took off their overshoes and threw them upon the pile. Then they went down the sloping bank to the river and sat down upon the sand to rest.

"I'm hungry," said Tot.

"I forgot to bring anything to eat," answered the Queen. "But that will not matter. Fetch me your basket from the boat."

Dot brought it to the little lady, who simply waved her fairy wand over it and said:

"Now we shall have a good dinner."

The girl removed the cover and found that the big basket was filled to the brim with dainties of all kinds.

"That's nice," said Tot. "Were all those things in the end of your stick?"

"No one has ever yet discovered," answered the Queen, "how fairies are able to do such wonderful things. In fact, fairies could not explain them clearly if they wished to. So it is best not to ask

questions, but to eat freely of these good things and be thankful my magic wand was able to fill the basket."

"All right," said Tot.

Although they enjoyed their dinner, the little party seemed to be unusually silent and thoughtful, and finally Dot asked:

"What shall we do next? We have seen all of the Seven Valleys now."

"When we have finished our dinner we will return to my palace in the Fourth Valley," replied the Queen, gaily.

A long pause followed this remark, and it was broken by Tot saying in a loud and decided voice:

"I want to go home!"

The Queen looked up quickly, with an anxious expression upon her face, and asked, "Do you really?"

"Yes. I want to see my mamma!" declared the boy.

"And leave this beautiful country, where you are a Prince?"

"Yes," said Tot decidedly.

"You surprise me, indeed," said the Queen, "and I am rather disappointed that you are not content to remain in my kingdom." Then she turned to Dot, and enquired: "Do you also wish to return to your home?"

"Well," replied the girl, "I love these beautiful Valleys dearly, and never expect to be as happy again as I have been here. But if Tot goes home of course I must go with him, for his mother left him in my care, you know."

"I am very sorry," said the Queen, after another long pause; "I had hoped to keep you with me always. But in my Kingdom of Merryland no one must be unhappy—it is the law. And if you really wish to return home it would make you unhappy to stay. So," she added, quietly, "you may go whenever you wish."

"How?" asked Tot, excited at the prospect.

"In your boat, of course. You have only to float down the river and through another tunnel to reach the big outside world again. But when you have passed through I shall close up the tunnel forever, so you will never be able to return."

"That's all right," returned Tot, gleefully.

"I shall be sorry never to see you again," said Dot, gently, as she clasped one of the fairy doll's pretty hands in her own. "You have been so kind to us, and I'm sure Tot is as grateful as I am. But he's a boy, you know."

"I know," said the Queen, with a smile.

"Let's go now," urged Tot, as if he couldn't wait a minute, now the matter was decided.

"How can you get to the Fourth Valley if we take the boat?" Dot asked the Queen.

"That will be easy," she answered, pleasantly; "my fairy wand will carry me home."

"Come on, then!" cried Tot, leaping into the boat.

Dot turned to kiss the pretty Queen, who exclaimed: "Be careful of my wax!"

But she stood on her tiptoes and gave the little girl a dainty, airy kiss that just brushed her lips.

"Good-bye my Princess," she said, and turning to the boy, added:

"Good-bye, Prince Tot of Merryland."

"Good-bye," called Tot from the boat. "You're nice, an' I love you. But I love my mamma, too."

"To be sure," answered the Queen, sweetly.

Dot now stepped in beside Tot, and the fairy doll placed the basket in the boat and pushed it away from the shore.

As they floated slowly down the stream the Queen followed along the top of the high bank, as if to keep them in sight as long as possible; and Dot was looking at her almost regretfully when suddenly a thought flashed into her mind. She stood up in the boat and called out:

"You've never told us your name!"

"Haven't I, really?" asked the Queen, as if greatly surprised.



"No," said Dot. "I want to know what it is."

"So do I," yelled Tot, standing up beside the girl and steadying himself by her arm.

"Certainly. I'll tell you now," cried the Queen, still running along the bank. But scarcely had she spoken when she threw up both her hands and screamed:

"Look out for the arch!"

Dot and Tot both turned around to look, but they were too late. A low, gloomy archway was just before them, and as the boat glided into it, the jagged rocks of the roof caught the children and threw them flat upon the bottom of the boat.

In falling, both the pretty gold crowns were knocked from their heads and fell splashing into the dark waters of the river, where they were lost forever.

Dot and Tot lay quite still for a time, while the light in the tunnel turned to twilight, and the twilight turned to utter darkness.

Suddenly they heard a great crash, with the sound of falling rocks and the splashing of water. The boat rocked with a little shiver, but neither of the children spoke, for they knew the Queen had kept her promise and closed up the archway behind them.

Finally Tot whispered, "I've got her yet."

"Who?" asked Dot.

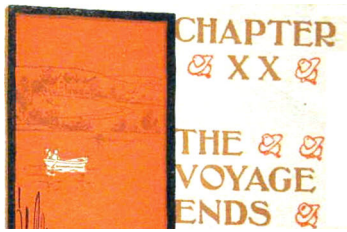
"Jane."

The girl did not reply. She was rubbing her head where the roof had struck it and thinking earnestly of the wonderful country she

had just left. Tot might, in time, forget his visit to Merryland, but Dot never would.



"It's goin' to be as long as the first tun'l, Dot," said the boy; and then he curled himself up and fell asleep, while the boat glided swiftly through the dark tunnel, and no sound broke the stillness save the soft rippling of the unseen waters.





Suddenly Dot, who had also fallen asleep, awoke with a start.

The sun was just sinking in the west, and the boat had left the tunnel while they slept and was slowly floating down the middle of a big river.

The girl at once awakened Tot and they looked carefully along both sides of the river to see if they could find the place where they had come out of the tunnel. But nothing could be seen except a line of low trees growing close down to the water.

"It doesn't make any difference, anyway," said the girl; "for the Queen has closed up the end of the tunnel."

"Where are we?" asked Tot.

"I don't exactly know. But this looks very much like the river that flows past Roselawn."

"Yes!" cried the boy, nodding his head, "I 'member those trees."

"Then," rejoined Dot, slowly, "I think I know how it happened. The Valleys of Merryland are not in a straight line, but lie in the form of a half circle; so in passing through them we have come upon the same river again, only higher up the stream. We'll soon be opposite Roselawn, Tot."

The boy was staring at the bank and did not answer at once. But as the boat swept around a bend in the river he cried:

"Look!" and pointed with his finger to the shore.

Before them were the green banks of Roselawn, and someone had already seen the children, for a boat pushed out from the shore and came rapidly toward them.

A few minutes afterward Dot was closely clasped in her father's arms, while Tot was rapturously kissing the bearded face of Thompson the gardener.

"How do you happen to be at Roselawn, Papa?" Dot asked.

"Miss Bombien telegraphed me you were lost, so I came by the first train and have been searching everywhere for you. Thompson and I had both nearly despaired, for we feared our little ones had been drowned."

"Oh, no," said Dot, "we've only been on a trip to Merryland. But I'll tell you the whole story when we get home."

Mr. Freeland noticed his daughter's round, plump cheeks, slightly sunburned, but with a fresh, rosy tint showing through the skin, and saw how her eyes sparkled and danced with health. Very gratefully he pressed her again to his heart and whispered:

"Wherever you may have been, my darling, the change has restored your health, and that repays me for all my anxiety."

* * *

As they walked up the white-graveled paths of Roselawn, Dot skipped happily along by her father's side, while Tot held fast to the gardener's big finger with one hand and carried Jane in the other.

Soon they came to the place where the path branched off to the gap in the hedge beyond which Tot lived, and he called out, "Good-bye, Dot."

"Good-bye," answered the girl; "I'll see you tomorrow."

But before she had gone far Tot came running up, calling for her to stop.

"Oh, Dot!" he said, "I know what the Queen's name is!"

"Do you?" she asked eagerly. "Tell me, quick!"

"Why it's Dolly, of course," said Tot.

"Of course!" answered Dot, with a smile. "Funny we never thought of that, isn't it?"



THE END

Dot and Tot of Merryland

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Discover your next classic.

Explore the Pipcub collection.

pipcub.com