

DOTTY DIMPLE STORIES

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ILLUSTRATED



DOTTY OUT WEST.

LEE & SHEPARD BOSTON

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DOTTY DIMPLE OUT WEST.

CHAPTER I.

STARTING.

One beautiful morning in October the sun came up rejoicing. Dotty Dimple watched it from the window with feelings of peculiar pleasure.

"I should think that old sun would wear out and grow rough round the edges. Why not? Last week it was ever so dull; now it is bright. I shouldn't wonder if the angels up there have to scour it once in a while."

You perceive that Dotty's ideas of astronomy were anything but correct. She supposed the solar orb was composed of a very peculiar kind of gold, which could be rubbed as easily as Norah's tin pans, though so intensely hot that one's fingers would, most likely, be scorched in the operation.

On this particular morning she felt an unusual interest in the state of the weather. It had been decided that she should go West with her father, and this was the day set for departure. "I am happy up to my throat!" so she said to Prudy. And now all this happiness was to be buttoned up in a cunning little casaque, with new gaiters at the feet, and a hat and rosette at the top. Forty pounds or so of perfect delight going down to the depot in a carriage.

"Don't you wish you could go, Zip Parlin? I'd like to hear you bark in the cars; and I'd like to hear *you* talk, Prudy, too!"

As Dotty spoke, the faintest possible shadow flickered across her radiant face; but it was only for a moment. She could not have quite everything she wanted, because she could not have Prudy; but then they were to take a basket of cold boiled eggs, sandwiches, and pies; and over these viands, with a napkin between, were two picture-books and a small spy-glass. There was a trunk with a sunshade in it, and some pretty dresses; among them the favorite white delaine, no longer stained with marmalade. There were presents in the trunk for Grace, Horace, and Katie, which were to take them by surprise.

And more and better than all, Miss Dotty had in her own pocket a little porte-monnaie, containing fifty cents in scrip, with full permission to spend it all on the way. She also had a letter from Susy to be read at Boston, and one from Prudy to be read at Albany.

Yes, there was everything to be thankful for, and nothing to regret. She was quite well by this time. The rich, warm color had come back to her cheeks. She did not need the journey for the sake of her health; her papa was to take her because he chose to give her the same pleasure he had once given Prudy. It was Susy's private opinion that it was rightfully her turn this time, instead of Dotty's; but she was quite patient, and willing to wait.

It was a long journey for such a little child; and Mrs. Parlin almost regretted that the promise had been made; but the young traveller would only be gone three or four weeks, and in her aunt's family was not likely to be homesick.

It was a very slow morning to Dotty. "Seems to me," said she, vibrating between the parlor and the kitchen like a discontented little pendulum,—"seems to me it was a great deal later than this yesterday!"

She had eaten as many mouthfuls of breakfast as she possibly could in her excited condition, had kissed everybody good by twice over, and now thought it was time to be starting.

Just as her patience was wearing to a thread the hack arrived, looking as black and glossy as if some one had been all this time polishing it for the occasion. Dotty disdained the help of the driver, and stepped into the carriage as eagerly as Jack climbed the beanstalk. She flirted her clean dress against the wheel, but did not observe it. She was as happy as Jack when he reached the giant's house; happier too, for she had mounted to a castle in the air; and everybody knows a castle in the air is gayer than all the gold houses that ever grew on the top of a stalk. To the eye of the world she seemed to be sitting on a drab cushion, behind a gray horse; but no, she was really several thousand feet in the air, floating on a cloud.

Her father smiled as he stepped leisurely into the hack; and he could not forbear kissing the little face which sparkled with such anticipation.

"It is a real satisfaction," thought he, "to be able to make a child so happy."

The group at the door looked after them wistfully.

"Be a good child," said Mrs. Parlin, waving her handkerchief, "and do just as papa tells you, my dear."

"Remember the three hugs to Gracie, and six to Flyaway," cried Prudy; "and don't let anybody see my letter."

Dotty threw kisses with such vigor that, if they had been anything else but air, somebody would have been hit.

The hack ride did not last long. It was like the preface to a story-book; and Dotty did not think much about it after she had come to the story, — that is to say, to the cars.

Her father found a pleasant seat on the shady side, hung the basket in a rack, opened a window; and very soon the iron horse, which fed on fire, rushed, snorting and shrieking, away from the depot. Dotty felt as if she had a pair of wings on her shoulders, or a pair of seven-league boots on her feet; at any rate, she was whirling through space without any will of her own. The trees nodded in a kindly way, and the grass in the fields seemed to say, as it waved, "Good by, Dotty, dear! good by! You'll have a splendid time out West! out West! out West!"

It was not at all like going to Willowbrook. It seemed as if these Boston cars had a motion peculiar to themselves. It was a very small event just to take an afternoon's ride to Grandpa Parlin's; but when it came to whizzing out to Indiana, why, that was another affair! It wasn't every little girl who could be trusted so far without her mother.

"If I was *some* children," thought Dotty, "I shouldn't know how to part my hair in the middle. Then my papa wouldn't dare to take me; for *he* can't part my hair any mor'n a cat!"

Dotty smiled loftily as she looked at her father reading a newspaper. He was only a man; and though intelligent enough to manage the trunks, and proceed in a straight line to Indiana, still he was incapable of understanding when a young lady's hat was put on straight, and had once made the rosette come behind!

In view of these short-comings of her parent and her own adroitness at the toilet, Dotty came to the conclusion that she was not, strictly speaking, under any one's charge, but was taking care of herself.

"I wonder," thought she, "how many people there are in this car that know I'm going out West!"

She sat up very primly, and looked around. The faces were nearly all new to her.

"That woman in the next seat, how homely her little girl is, with freckles all over her face! Perhaps her mother wishes she was as white as I am. Why, who is that pretty little girl close to my father?"

Dotty was looking straight forward, and had accidentally caught a peep at her own face in the mirror.

"Why, it's me! How nice I look!" smiling and nodding at the pleasant picture.

"Sit up like a lady, Dotty, and you'll look very polite, and very *style* too."

Florence Eastman said so much about "style" that Miss Dimple had adopted the word, though she was never know to use it correctly. I am sorry to say there was a deal of foolish vanity in the child's heart. Thoughtless people had so often spoken to her of her beauty, that she was inclined to dwell upon the theme secretly, and to admire her bright eyes in the glass.

"Yes, I do look very *style*," she decided, after another self-satisfied nod. "Now I'd just like to know who that boy is, older'n I am, not half so pretty. I don't believe but somebody's been sitting down on his hat. What has he got in his lap? Is it a kitten? White as snow. I wish it wasn't so far off. He's giving it something to eat. How its ears shake! Papa, papa, what's that boy got in his lap?"

"What boy?"

"The one next to that big man. See his ears shake! He's putting something in his mouth."

"In whose mouth?"

Mr. Parlin looked across the aisle.

"That 'big man' is my old friend Captain Lally," said he quite pleased; and in a moment he was shaking hands with him. Presently the captain and his son Adolphus changed places with the woman and the freckled girl, and made themselves neighbors to the Parlins. The two seats were turned *vis-a-vis*, the gentlemen occupying one, the children the other.

Now Dotty discovered what it was that Adolphus had in his lap; it was a Spanish rabbit; and if you never saw one, little reader, you have no idea how beautiful an animal can be. If there is any gem so soft and sparkling as his liquid Indian-red eyes, with the sunshine quivering in them as in dewdrops, then I should like to see that gem, and have it set in the finest gold, and send it to the most beautiful woman in the world to wear for a ring. This rabbit was white as a snowball, with ears as pink as blush roses, and a mouth that was always in motion, whether Adolphus put lumps of sugar in it or not.

Dotty went into raptures. She forgot her "style" hat, and her new dignity, and had no greater ambition than to hold the lovely white ball in her arms. Adolphus allowed her to do so. He was very kind to answer all her questions, and always in the most sensible manner. If Dotty had been a little older, she would have seen that the captain's son was a remarkably intelligent boy, in spite of his smashed hat.

After everything had been said that could possibly be thought of, in regard to rabbits and their ways, Dotty looked again, and very critically, at Adolphus. His collar was wrinkled, his necktie one-sided, he wore no gloves, and, on the whole, was not dressed as well as Dotty, who had started from home that very morning, clean and fresh. He was every day as old as Susy; but Miss Dimple, as a traveller bound on a long journey, felt herself older and wiser still, and began to talk accordingly. Smoothing down the skirt of her dress with her neatly-gloved hands, she remarked:—

CHAPTER II.

THE CAPTAIN'S SON.

"Is your name Dollyphus?"

"Yes, Adolphus Lally."

"Well, my name is Alice. Nobody calls me by it but my papa and my grandmas. Dotty Dimple is my short name. There are a pair of dimples dotted into my cheek; don't you see? That's what it's for. I was born so. My *other* sisters haven't any at all."

Adolphus smiled quietly; he had seen dimples before.

"You didn't ever know till just now there was any such girl as *me*, I s'pose."

"No, I never did."

"I live in the city of Portland," pursued Dotty, with a grand air, "and my papa and mamma, and two sisters, and a Quaker grandma (only you must say 'Friend') with a white handkerchief on. Have you any grandma like that?"

"No, my grandmother is dead."

"Why, there's two of mine alive, and one grandpa. Just as nice! They don't scold. They let you do everything. I wouldn't *not* have grandmothers and fathers for anything! But *you* can't help it. Did you ever have your house burnt up?"

"No, indeed."

"Well, ours did; the chambers, and the cellar, and the windows and doors. We hadn't any place to stay. My sister Susy! You ought to heard her cry! I lost the beautifulest tea-set; but I didn't say much about it."

"Where do you live now?"

"O, there was a man let us have another house. It isn't so handsome as our house was; for the man can't make things so nice as my father can. We live in it now. Can you play the piano?"

"No, not at all."

"Don't you, honestly; Why, I do. Susy's given me five lessons. You have to sit up as straight as a pin, and count your fingers, one, two, three, four. X is your thumb."

Dotty believed she was imparting valuable information. She felt great pleasure in having found a travelling companion to whom she could make herself useful.

"I'm going to tell you something. Did you ever go to Indiana?"

"No."

"Didn't you? They call it Out West. I'm going there. Yes, I started to-day. The people are called Hoojers. They don't spect me, but I'm going. Did you ever hear of a girl that travelled out West?"

"O, yes; ever so many."

"I mean a girl as little as me, 'thout anybody but my papa; and he don't know how to part my hair in the middle. I have to take all the care of myself."

Dotty had been trying all the while to call forth some exclamation of awe, or at least surprise. She was sure Adolphus would be impressed now.

"All the whole care of myself," repeated she. "My papa has one of the *highest* 'pinions of me; and he says I'm as good as a lady when I try. Were you ever in the cars before, Dollyphus?"

"O, yes," was the demure reply, "a great many times. I've been round the world."

Dotty started suddenly, dropping her porte-monnaie on the floor.

"Round the world! The whole round world?" gasped she, feeling as insignificant as a "Catharine wheel," which, having "gone up like a rocket," has come down "like a stick."

"You didn't say round the *whole* world?" repeated she, looking very flat indeed.

"O, yes, in my father's ship."

His "father's ship." Dotty's look of superiority was quenched entirely. Even her jaunty hat seemed to humble itself, and her haughty head sink with it.

Adolphus stooped and restored the porte-monnaie, which, in her surprise, she had quite forgotten.

"Does your father keep a ship?" asked she, reverently.

"Yes; and mother often makes voyages with him. Once they took me; and that was the time I went round the world. We were gone two years."

"Weren't you afraid?"

"No, I'm never afraid where my father is."

"Just a little afraid, I mean, when you found the ship was going tip-side up?"

"Tip-side up?" said Adolphus. "I don't understand you."

"Why, when you got to the other side of the world, then of course the ship turned right over, you know. Didn't you want to catch hold of something, for fear you'd fall into the sky?"

Adolphus laughed; he could not very well help it; but, observing the mortification expressed in his companion's face, he sobered himself instantly, and replied, —

"No, Dotty; the world is round, but you wouldn't know it by the looks of it. Wherever I've been, the land seems flat, except the hills, and so does the water, all but the waves."

As the captain's son said this, he looked pityingly at his little companion, wondering how she happened to be so silly as to suppose a ship ever went "tip-side up." But he was mistaken if he considered Dotty a simpleton. The child had never gone to school. Her parents believed there would be time enough yet for her to learn a great many things; and her ignorance had never distressed them half so much as her faults of temper.

"Did you ever go as far as Boston before?" pursued Adolphus, rather grandly, in his turn.

"No, I never," replied Dotty, meekly; "but Prudy has."

"So I presume you haven't been in Spain? It was there I bought my beautiful rabbit. Were you ever in the Straits of Malacca?" continued he, roguishly.

"No—o. I didn't know I was."

"Indeed? Nor in the Bay of Palermo? The Italians call it the Golden Shell."

"I don't *s'pose* I ever," replied Dotty, with a faint effort to keep up appearances; "but I went to *Quoddy* Bay once!"

"So you haven't seen the *loory*? It is a beautiful bird, and talks better than a parrot. I have one at home."

"O, have you?" said Dotty, in a tone of the deepest respect.

"Yes; then there is the *mina*, a brown bird, larger than a crow; converses quite fluently. You have heard of a *mina*, I dare say."

Dotty shook her head in despair. She was so overwhelmed by this time, that, if Adolphus had told of going with Captain Lally to the moon in a balloon, she would not have been greatly surprised.

A humorous smile played around the boy's mouth. Observing his little companion's extreme simplicity, he was tempted to invent some marvellous stories for the sake of seeing her eyes shine.

"I can explain it to her afterwards," said he to his conscience.

"Did you ever hear of the Great Dipper, Dotty?"

"I don't know's I did. No."

"You don't say so! Never heard of the Great Dipper! Your sister Prudy has, I'm sure. It is tied to the north pole, and you can dip water with it."

"Is it big?"

"No, not very. About the size of a tub."

"A dipper as big as a tub?" repeated Dotty, slowly.

"Yes, with the longest kind of handle."

"I couldn't lift it?"

"No, I should judge not."

"Who tied it to the north pole?"

"I don't know. Columbus, perhaps. You remember he discovered the world?"

Dotty brightened.

"O, yes, I've heard about that! Susy read it in a book."

"Well, I'll tell you how it was. There had been a world, you see; but people had lost the run of it, and didn't know where it was, after the flood. And then Columbus went in a ship and discovered it."

"He did?"

Dotty looked keenly at the captain's son. He was certainly in earnest; but there was something about it she did not exactly understand.

"Why, if there wasn't any world all the time, where did *C'lumbus* come from?" faltered she, at last.

"It is not generally known," replied Adolphus, taking off his hat, and hiding his face in it.

Dolly sat for some time lost in thought.

"O, I forgot to say," resumed Adolphus, "the north pole isn't driven in so hard as it ought to be. It is so cold up there that the frost 'heaves' it. You know what 'heaves' means? The ground freezes and then thaws, and that loosens the pole. Somebody has to pound it down, and that makes the noise we call thunder."

Dotty said nothing to this; but her youthful face expressed surprise, largely mingled with doubt.

"You have heard of the *axes* of the earth? That is what they pound the pole with. Queer— isn't it? But not so queer to me as the Red Sea."

Adolphus paused, expecting to be questioned; but Dotty maintained a discreet silence.

"The water is a very bright red, I know; but I never *could* believe that story about the giant's having the nose-bleed, and coloring the whole sea with blood. Did you ever hear of that?"

"No, I never," replied Dotty, gravely. "You needn't tell it, Dollyphus. I'm too tired to talk."

Adolphus felt rather piqued as the little girl turned away her head and steadily gazed out of the window at the trees and houses

flying by. It appeared very much as if she suspected he had been making sport of her.

"She isn't a perfect ignoramus, after all," he thought; "that last lie was a little too big."

After this he sat for some time watching his little companion, anxious for an opportunity to assure her that these absurd stories had been spun out of his own brain. But Dotty never once turned her face towards him. She was thinking, —

"P'rhaps he's a good boy; p'rhaps he's a naughty boy: but I shan't believe him till I ask my father."

At Portsmouth, Captain Lally and son left the cars, much to Dotty's relief, though they did carry away the beautiful Spanish rabbit; and it seemed to the child as if a piece of her heart went with it.

"Is my little girl tired?" said Mr. Parlin, putting an arm around Dotty.

"No, papa, only I'm thinking. The north pole is top of the world — isn't it? As much as five hundred miles off?"

"A great deal farther than that, my dear."

"There, I thought so! And we couldn't hear 'em pound it down with an axe — could we? That isn't what makes thunder? O, what a boy!"

Mr. Parlin laughed heartily.

"Did Adolphus tell you such a story as that?"

"Yes, sir, he did," cried Dotty, indignantly, "and said there was a dipper to it, with a handle on, as large as a tub. And a man tied it that came from I-don't-know-where, and found this world. I know *that* wasn't true, for he didn't say anything about Adam and Eve. What an awful boy!"

"What did you say to Adolphus?" said Mr. Parlin, still laughing. "Hadn't you been putting on airs? And wasn't that the reason he made sport of you?"

"I don't know what 'airs' are, papa."