

Chapter VI - The Royal Chariot

JUST then the king came back to the room and said:

"The chariot is at the door; and, as there are three seats, I'll take Lord Cloy and Princess Sakareen with us."

So the children followed the king to the door of the palace, where stood a beautiful white and yellow sugar chariot, drawn by six handsome sugar horses with spun sugar tails and manes, and driven by a brown sugar coachman in a blue sugar livery.

The king got in first, and the others followed. Then the children discovered that Lord Cloy was the frosted man and Princess Sakareen was the sugar lady who had told Twinkle that she was hollow.

There was quite a crowd of sugar people at the gates to watch the departure of the royal party, and a few soldiers and policemen were also present to keep order. Twinkle sat beside the king, and Chubbins sat on the same seat with the Princess Sakareen, while Lord Cloy was obliged to sit with the coachman. When all were ready the driver cracked a sugar whip (but didn't break it), and away the chariot dashed over a road paved with blocks of cut loaf-sugar.

The air was cool and pleasant, but there was a sweet smell to the breeze that was peculiar to this strange country. Sugar birds flew here and there, singing sweet songs, and a few sugar dogs ran out to bark at the king's chariot as it whirled along.

"Haven't you any automobiles in your country?" asked the girl.

"No," answered the king. "Anything that requires heat to make it go is avoided here, because heat would melt us and ruin our bodies in a few minutes. Automobiles would be dangerous in Sugar-Loaf City."

"They're dangerous enough anywhere," she said. "What do you feed to your horses?"

"They eat a fine quality of barley-sugar that grows in our fields," answered the king. "You'll see it presently, for we will drive out to my country villa, which is near the edge of the dome, opposite to where you came in."

First, however, they rode all about the city, and the king pointed out the public buildings, and the theaters, and the churches, and a number of small

but pretty public parks. And there was a high tower near the center that rose half-way to the dome, it was so tall.

"Aren't you afraid the roof will cave in some time, and ruin your city?" Twinkle asked the king.

"Oh, no," he answered. "We never think of such a thing. Isn't there a dome over the place where you live?"

"Yes," said Twinkle; "but it's the sky."

"Do you ever fear it will cave in?" inquired the king.

"No, indeed!" she replied, with a laugh at the idea.

"Well, it's the same way with us," returned his Majesty. "Domes are the strongest things in all the world."