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FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS

The Strange Story of the Children and the Water Lily Fairy



IT was away down in the Southland, near to a great swamp; near enough to have it said that there was a great swamp in their vicinity and that in that swamp-land roamed strange phantoms—maybe ghosts, maybe spirits. It was old Aunt Nanny who told them this story of the ghosts or spirits. Their mother and father had never said anything so ridiculous. But—you all know how superstitious the good old darkies of the South are.

Well, the "they" we are telling about were Paul and Janey Downs, aged respectively nine and seven. And they had lived their short lives in that one place, their home of hundreds of broad acres.

swamp? Maybe a—" Aunt Nanny looked about cautiously—"maybe a—a—spirit. Be careful, honey chile. Keep close to Daddy."

Then Paul was off on the run. And he was late getting home that afternoon. He saw Janey playing in the kitchen garden and ran to her. "Oh, sister," he cried, "I saw some water-lilies. Don't you recollect that Aunt Nanny said there were always fairies where the water-lilies grow? I would have stayed close to one and called three times, 'Fairy, fairy, fairy, come forth to me!' But I wasn't alone a second—so couldn't do it."

Janey was all attention. "Are the water-lilies far from here?" she asked. "Maybe we might go to them alone! See, it is early yet—the sun is quite high. Could we go and see the water-lilies, and return before supper time?"

Paul's face flushed with anticipation. "Say, sister, that's a good idea," he said.



FIND WHO THE OFFICER IS THINKING ABOUT.

One day in early spring Paul had a strenuous day for so young a fellow. He had first had his lessons in the nursery, and governess had said he was "doing finely" with his arithmetic and that she would excuse him from spelling that forenoon so that he might go with uncle and daddy to the swamp. Mr. Downs and his brother Frank (the latter made his home with his married brother) had decided to go over to the edge of the swamp to see about some drain ditches which were being dug.

As Paul ran down stairs he passed Aunt Nanny in the hall. "Oh, Aunt Nanny," he said in a whisper, "I'm going to the swamp with Daddy. Do you s'pose I'll see—ANYTHING?" His eyes were very wide and he looked expectant.

"Lor's bless us, honey! Who can tell what a pussen will see ober by dat

"I know exactly how to go. Let's ask Aunt Nanny about how to get the fairies. But—not a word to her about our going, mind."

"Oh, not a word, brother." And Janey shook her head. Then they went to the summer kitchen where Aunt Nanny was at work. "Say, Aunt Nanny, tell us how one might get the fairies to come out of the water-lilies in the swamp," begged Paul. And he and Janey sat upon the doorstep.

"Haw! haw! haw! honey chilluns," laughed Aunt Nanny, "you alls jest have to go close to the pretty water-lilies an' squat on de bank an' say, whisperin' like, 'Come out, you darlin' fairy! Come out, you darlin' fairy! Come out you darlin'!' An' pretty soon you alls'll see the water-lily move. Den—up pops de fairy, sho' an' certain! Dat's all der is to it, chilluns."