

Suddenly Eleanor espied some large tree ferns and knowing that near them would be water, our wayfarers left the path to explore. Soon they were rewarded by the sight of a small clearing in the forest. In front of them was a tree-clad hillock, and at the base of it was a large clear pool of water, the source of which was a spring, welling from out the side of the hillock. The waters of the pool were brown, and reflected upon the surface were the shadows of the huge mahogany trees towering above them. At the further end of the pool was a dense mass of papyrus, reeds, bulrushes, and pokers from which protruded a shining bed of water plants and lilies. Here was life abundant, seen and unseen, pulsating life, around this lovely, silent pool which placidly ministered to all.

Eleanor and Henry rested, choosing a spot from which they could see the changing effects of the Sun's decline. The beauty of the place entranced them. The soft music of the wind in the trees, the scent of the woodland, the drowsy hum of insect myriads, the croak, croak of the frog, made of the whole a beautiful haven of peace and beauty. Soon Eleanor was aroused by the appearance of a shadowy form, an opalescent, cloudlike something, passing in and out of the dark shadows under the trees into the sunlight. Now there appeared many of these light forms, too far away to admit of a concise description. Some of them came nearer and both Henry and Eleanor gazed in amazement.

From among the trees there appeared, tripping

toward the pool, a lovely maiden, a young girl with a radiant, happy face, smiling serenely, perfect in proportion and grace. She had long, flowing, light hair, and it waved backward in curling profusion. Clad in a diaphanous garment of light, gauzy material which changed color as the Sun glinted upon it, this delightful and delicate creature stopped and rested her hand upon the trunk of a tree fern. She was about four feet in height and lissom as a fawn. Soon she was joined by four others, some dark skinned, some crowned with auburn locks. They lightly crossed the pool at various angles, meeting on the other side, and seemed to be in conversation.

Then many, many more appeared; all wore what seemed to be flashing jewels and carried either a flower or a sprig of leaves. They, too, appeared to be upon some errand. They visited every tree and spoke to it, laying dainty hands upon gnarled and lichened trunks, then floated upward into the branches and moved among the leaves. It was a glorious sight, like unto our concept of an angelic host. In every direction they floated, joyous beings etherealized into the lightest form. Certainly they seemed to communicate with each other although no speech was heard.

The Sun descended lower, shedding his beams through that dim and silent forest. Flashing among the trees, the wood nymphs floated onward. Now Eleanor and Henry silently withdrew, not wishing to be abroad in the veldt after sundown. Slowly they made their way back to the Kaffir path and gained the forest edge which ran straight upward to the

hills as though some master hand had sheared it into shape. Cautiously, as do all good hunters and explorers, they crept out toward the open. The pasture plain was now flooded with the rays of the sinking Sun, the hills in the distance were a hazy blue—indefinite, mystic. Henry stepped out, noticing many antelope now feeding quietly. Running rapidly toward the hills, along the edge of the forest was a company of brown, baboonlike forms, yet too erect to be baboons, not unlike humans.

Henry heard a hoarse laugh, and stepping backward toward Eleanor whom he had warned not to advance, he waited. There was certainly something approaching steadily, some antelope or perhaps wild dogs running on the edge of the forest. Yet those seen previously were not antelopes, baboons, nor dogs. Now, before the astonished eyes of Eleanor and Henry appeared a satyr, running fast, followed by another and another. They passed so close that all their features could be observed in detail. They had saturnine faces, dark skinned with oval, deep-set eyes, thick overhanging eyebrows, low foreheads, two small horns jutting upward from the forehead, long ears tapering to the tip, large mouths, goatee beards, hair-covered bodies, strong arms and hands. From the middle downward they presented sturdy, goat-like bodies, legs and hoofs. A little, stumpy tail completed their anatomy.

They were so close that their laughter and chatter could be plainly heard. They ran fast, some twenty of them, followed by another twenty or so. They

were evidently off to some rendezvous. Eleanor and Henry followed them as the last one passed.

Swiftly turning into an opening between the trees the satyrs disappeared. Henry followed and saw the whole assembly in an open space. One of the number was taller than the rest and stood apart, chattering in an outlandish tongue. They were all gesticulating and evidently highly amused. Suddenly the leader raised one arm, and the whole mob vanished among the trees. Eleanor, concealed behind a huge fig tree, also saw all that passed.

The Sun was now just dipping below the horizon. Our friends hurried across the open pasture land toward the road that ran through the groves. Eleanor said she was not at all surprised to see the satyrs as she had so often sensed brown figures running through the bush at sundown.

Elated by what they had seen, Eleanor and Henry reached the homestead safely as the mystic twilight deepened into night.

EPISODE 5

There was one spot that Eleanor and Henry were eager to visit, namely, the river, always a source of delight. Many pleasant hours had they spent in the vicinity of the deep-cut channel running through the estate. Like so many South African rivers, at times this one was a roaring, turbulent, swollen stream. In the rainy season, the storms which poured their torrents on the mountain heights descended by way

of this stream to meet the larger river which flowed serenely to the far-away ocean all the year round. On this occasion our friends found it mild and affable; sometimes it flowed for a space underground, to appear again and pursue its long downward course.

Eleanor and Henry made their way to a suspension bridge, hung like a spider's web over a huge fissure cut through the veldt during past centuries by the waters of the stream. Just below the bridge were some lovely, deep pools, fed by a strong cataract which sparkled in the Sun.

On the opposite side of these pools grew thick bushes of vivid green, and swaying in the breeze above the waters were pendulous, basket-like nests of weaver birds.

Eleanor and Henry strolled along the bank of the river, exploring the winding channel. High up on the bushes the remains of debris brought down by the flood waters showed where the swirling storm waters had reached in days gone by. Under the trees and bushes the ground was carpeted with soft grass and ferns.

Returning to the largest pool, Eleanor and Henry reclined on the warm earth under the shadow of friendly trees. In a few minutes they were surrounded by a countless army of exquisite fairies. At the same time a different manifestation of life appeared on the margin of the pool, in the reeds, and upon the water lily leaves. Here were hundreds of shining forms, much like the fairies, but without wings. Silver colored creatures of exquisite beauty

floated over the waters and soared through the air, for all the world like wreathing snowflakes with the difference that these lovely forms, human in appearance, danced upward in a perpetual, streaming multitude. They emerged from the water and immediately melted into it when they returned to its surface.

These vivacious little creatures played among the reeds and rushes surrounding the pool. Some of them floated through the air to nearby bushes, but none went far away from their native element. They were all silver colored, with dark, curly hair, sweet visaged, and charmingly graceful. Despite their ethereal appearance and apparently delicate forms, these silvery beings were very real and formed a cloud which hovered over their domain in the silent, dark waters of the pool. Sprites and fish mingled in the depths and near the surface, sporting and playing together, flashing in and out of the labyrinthine tangle of plant and reed stems, water grasses, tree roots, and other vegetation. The dark forms of the fish and the silvery flash of the sprites as they gambled in the watery fastness presented an unforgettable scene.

After standing spellbound for some time, watching the antics of the fairies and the wreathing forms of the silvery water dwellers, Eleanor and Henry moved away to a smaller pool over which a huge tree had fallen, making a rough bridge. The tree was still alive although it must have fallen some years before. Kneeling among the greenery and branches

of this fallen giant, our friends watched the myriads of water sprites found there also. They were of silvery hue, exactly like the others in form and bearing.

Sometimes, with every appearance of great glee, a bevy of these sprites would take hands, float up and down in the water and form a circle, a letter S, a loop, or a triangle; again one would appear to lead the others in and out of the stalks of the reeds. From their bowery stand Eleanor and Henry long watched the joyous antics of the sprites.

After a while the ring doves began to coo their soft evening serenade, and the wood pigeons swiftly flew toward the hills. A great white crane flopped its ungainly way to new pastures, the Sun festooned the tree tops with golden light and shed a glory over all that faced him.

Once again our Nature lovers saw the fairies disappear, and the water sprites sink calmly into the bosom of the pool. Slowly the two made their way toward the citrus groves, through the wind brake of wattle trees, on to the vegetable gardens. The Chinaman who tended this extensive plot of ground had gone to his cabin and left row upon row of shallow trenches ready to receive seeds or seedling plants in the morning. Suddenly shadowy forms arose and moved among the foliage of the great beds of vegetables just at hand, and again our friends saw an army of little brown gnomes ministering unto the Earth products with every sign of loving them.

The estate was quiet, for all the workers had left

for their various homes. It was dark when Eleanor and Henry reached the house.

EPISODE 6

Saturday was the last of these holidays, for on the morrow Eleanor must go back to school and Henry would return to his duties. In the afternoon Eleanor and Henry decided to go to a favorite sun-lit promontory in the hills.

The Sun was now among the tree tops and soon would light up the glade with golden rays as it sank to rest. Here was a veritable paradise, a natural haven of peace and quiet. Eleanor and Henry sat upon the north side of the glade under a huge, lichened rock which stood sentinel over another flat, altarlike mass raised about two feet from the ground. It was a comfortable throne. They decided to stay in that lovely spot and enjoy the view from the edge of the glade as the Sun dropped behind the mystic horizon. Soon an unusual noise disturbed their reverie. They had never heard the voice of a frog in that glade, but now there seemed to be several voices raucously chanting in rhythmic sequence. In the upper air there was a great calm; everything seemed hushed and uncannily still. Again the frogs croaked in unison, then a bell bird joined them: "Clang, clang, clang, clang!"

Eleanor said to Henry, "Even the trees are still, and there is no murmur of insects at all, but I think I hear a faint sound in the distance."

Opposite to where they were sitting came a flash of brilliant color, and flying steadily, floating in toward them, were hundreds of fairies of every conceivable color. From all sides came these bands of living forms, some carrying bells of different color, some a small leaf, some a tiny, silken petal only. They flew toward the east and settled in companies, as it were, low down among the bushes, evidently awaiting some event. Then from the west came a troop of lovely, golden-sheened fairies, thousands of them, followed by many, many more of silvery hue. These formed up in front of the others and perched upon the grass and ferns. They all formed a hollow semi-circle, banked upward, a colorful sight indeed. All were joyous, happy-faced little creatures. Many more arrived, gaily clad in rainbow hue. Then came a flight of bright-red dragon flies, and an army of cicadas settled in the trees, the Sun glinting upon their wings in a glory of opalescent splendor.

And now from the thick bush, from every side, company upon company of little brownies marched gravely and sedately. They formed another semi-circle facing the fairies, leaving a central stage space. A flat-topped rock lay close to the end of the arc formed by the fairies, and opposite it was a fallen tree-trunk. The frogs stopped croaking, but the bell bird now joined by three others clanked more vigorously than before. All the fairies rang their petal blossom bells and waved the emblems they carried. The brownies clapped their hands.

In front of a bevy of primrose colored fairies

appeared a dainty fairy carrying a golden scepter. Upon her head was a jeweled cap and she flashed radiance all around her. She was the queen. She alighted on the rock, surrounded by her attendants. Another dainty, jewelled figure now appeared upon the scene riding upon a large brown beetle. This glorious creature alighted upon a branch of the fallen tree, and for a few moments all was still. Some late comers straggled into their places. The clapping continued, also the bell-ringing and the waving.

This is just what Eleanor and Henry saw as they looked upon the scene: a grassy, circular space around which was grouped in a sloping, banklike formation, extending from the ground to the top of the bushes, myriads of multicolored figures. The fairies were grouped in a crescent-shaped arrangement, at one end of which stood the queen surrounded by her bodyguard. Her regent was poised at the opposite side of the crescent on the fallen tree. On the other side of the circle were the brownies, grave little fellows, some sitting, some standing, some raised on the branches of bushes and on rocks and stone. Their formation was also crescent shaped, and they joined the fairies in making a circle, around the open space. Above in the trees glistened the dragon flies, the cicadas chirped incessantly, the bell birds clanked on.

Now the fairy queen floated upward in the air and held aloft her shining scepter. All was quiet, and it appeared that the queen spoke because now and then there burst out a waving of hands and a ringing of bells. The queen floated down to her lichen-covered

throne. Into the stage circle there floated two groups consisting of about a hundred fairies alternately silver and gold. They grouped themselves quickly into the form of a five-pointed star, then simultaneously arose and performed some exquisitely graceful evolutions in the air. Then four companies of brownies marched into the arena. They formed pleasing figures quickly and with quiet grace. They ran and played leapfrog and made a display of their ability to perform quick evolutions.

Now there came another bevy of fairies of different colors and formed themselves into a living rainbow, stretching from one side of the arena to the other. Under the center of this beautiful living arch other fairies formed an animated bell which hung downward and swung in harmony to the tiny, softly-ringing bells. Next a bird flew into the center of the ring, followed by four others. They were lauries, black birds, with bright scarlet wings. Tiny fairies were perched upon their heads and backs, and the birds performed a flying exhibition which was beautiful indeed. The rays of the setting Sun now lit the entire glade, adding to the entrancing beauty of the scene. These pageants were carried out with speed and alacrity. Those who took part were apparently under some sort of control, although there was no major-domo nor master of ceremonies.

Next a series of exercises were carried out by the brownies who rode on the backs of meerkats (little, squirrel-like animals) and performed all kinds of amusing tricks. Others marched in symmetrical for-

mation. As the Sun slowly descended the whole of the fairy troop, together with the brownies, formed a set piece. The brownies grouped themselves into three stars, the largest of which was in the center. Above each star the fairies formed a design like a shamrock leaf in shape. After holding these designs for a few minutes, they drifted back to their original positions. Again the queen raised herself with queenly gesture and drifted from the glade, followed closely by her regent and attendants.

As the fairies and brownies departed, Eleanor and Henry looked around and saw shadowy wood nymphs under the trees. Behind them stood the dark forms of the satyrs who had evidently been interested on-lookers.

The Sun was sinking now below the edge of the glade, and gradually the brownies filed away beneath the bushes, the fairies floated upward and disappeared among the forest trees. The frogs were quiet, dragon flies, cicadas, and birds flew away, the insects set up their evening song, a breeze whispered in the trees, and long shadows spread, darkening the glade to dimness.

Once more Eleanor and Henry, glad beyond measure at this glorious pageant, slowly made their way down to the homestead. Pat and Wasp gamboled through the veldt before them, rummaging in all directions.

Now the holiday week was ended. Eleanor and Henry decided to tell none of their associates of these amazing experiences. The veldt, the mountains, hills,

dales, and silvery streams had a new meaning for them. Besides the diverse phenomena of Nature, so well known to them, they had discovered these lovely dwellers in the wild. They tried to find the reason for this present manifestation which affected them both profoundly. Often before, roaming the prairie together, they had felt an uncanny sensation of unseen life around them, of the presence of beauty and gladness—expressed, yet invisible. They had even spoken to each other of this intuitive feeling. Now they wondered why they had not seen these phenomena before. These lovers of the woodlands had gone into the veldt at all times embued with love and gladness, in sympathy and in harmony with every phase of Nature, to see and enjoy the ever-changing panorama of life.

This remarkable series of manifestations was probably due to the fact that Eleanor was at the age when some children have the ability to contact the Nature Spirit world. This realm is indefinable in many of its aspects, but is, nevertheless, a reality, and the possessor of this "gift" is projected into a world of being usually unseen. The companion of Eleanor, entering into the magical peace and silence of the woodlands, en rapport with her, could share these beautiful manifestations as was the case in this series of true incidents.

As Eleanor and Henry strolled home they tried to remember tales of fairies, sprites, gnomes, elves, wood nymphs, and satyrs, and they realized that what they had just seen correlated with what they

had read and delighted in. They knew that they had been privileged to see but the fringe or borderland of a world usually unseen, a world of spirit forms as real and tangible to etheric vision as the lovely flowers and blossoms which gladden the Earth are to physical sight, a world of graceful life and exquisite beauty.

TO A HAZEL NUT TREE

GRACE SPAULDING GAUDY

Little hazel blossoms
all in a row
up-side down,
how funny you grow.

You look to me
like the candles they make
to tell your age,
on a birthday cake.

And then one day
when the apples are red,
the geese fly south,
and the leaves lie dead,

We'll all gather round,
and then you'll be
just stacks—of little nuts
on a hazel tree.