

THE WATER NYMPH

KEYWORD: Action.

High, high up in the White Mountains, just where you never, never would expect it, nestled a beautiful lake, its calm, clear waters spread out like a big mirror. Quiet and peaceful, it made a picture of the pretty fluffy clouds and the blue, blue sky. The trees with their pretty swaying branches seemed to be nodding and bowing to their own pictures in this great mirror, and in it also the fluffy clouds watched their pretty shapes as they floated by.

Hidden quite out of sight under a tree was a little boy, dreaming, wondering what the clouds did at night and whether they were still white and fluffy, why the wind blew; how the water got away up there on the mountain top. This little boy's name was Dick. He spent all of his spare time by the lake or in his boat or swimming. Some people thought he was a very lazy boy indeed and called him lazy Dick, but he knew that they were wrong. They didn't know that he got up very early in the morning to get all his little tasks done so that he could have more time at the lake.

Quite near his hidden resting place was a bed of water-lilies, spreading their pretty green leaves and flowers on the water of the lake. These were his friends, and he was greatly interested in them.

Dick had a secret. He was the only one around there who knew that a beautiful nymph lived right in the middle of that very lily bed. How did he know? Why, because he had seen and talked with her. I'll tell you about it.

Well, one day when he was very, very tired, he fell asleep right where he now was hidden, and when he woke up, there in the middle of that lily bed, looking straight at

him with large, beautiful eyes full of wonder, was a lovely nymph. He had never in his life seen anyone quite so beautiful. He smiled at her and moved forward just a little so that he could speak to her, at which she came right up out of the pink lilies. Her hair was like spun gold, making a halo around her pretty head. Her body was soft pink and blue, but Dick could not see her feet, for only the upper part of her body came out of the lilies. He was ever so still, for he did not want to scare her. But at last he spoke quietly and asked her if she lived there all the time. She said that she did, and that she was the spirit of the waterlilies. Then he asked her if she knew the undines, and she laughed and said that they were her sisters.

She was just beginning to tell him about the sylphs who lived up in the fluffy clouds, when there was a scream and a cry for help. Dick looked to see where it came from, and then like a flash made a quick dive into the lake. With firm strokes he swam out to an overturned canoe, and rescued a little girl who had fallen into the lake. She had never been out alone in a canoe before and did not know how easily it could turn over. Spying some waterlilies she had leaned over to pick them, when splash! she had landed in the water. Dick held her firmly with one arm and with the other he swam safely to shore, where by that time several people had gathered, for they too had heard the cry for help.

Virginia's father (yes, that was the little girl's name) shook Dick's hand and thanked him for saving his daughter. He praised Dick's courage and then said, "But that was not only courage, my lad, but *action*." You see, Dick had not stopped one minute to think about danger to himself, for he knew he must act quickly when someone else's life was in danger. So he had jumped right into the water, thinking only of saving the little girl, with no thought of himself.

After that no one ever called him lazy Dick again, for

they knew better; they knew that he would act quickly and with courage whenever there was need for action.

When the excitement had passed, Dick lay down in the bright sunshine, just as though nothing unusual had happened, and watched eagerly for the water nymph. But when she came to smile at him, he was fast asleep.
