

was, because we had had a very stiff day of it. His horse fell over the last wall and rolled upon him. He lay unconscious for some time, but he recovered, and I hope there will be no ill effects, and I hope also it will be a lesson to many others. We rode through Otahuhu, and a drag was then laid from there to the Royal Oak, Onehunga. Many started, but only a few came in at the finish. Only one lady again was seen to last through this. It was the best and stiffest hunt we have had this season. Many came to grief, and many a stone wall was partly demolished.

A most enjoyable juvenile party was given by Mrs H. Laidlaw Thompson at her residence, The Firs, Ellerslie. About sixty invitations were issued, and the whole affair was a brilliant success. The decorations were most effective, consisting of quantities of flowers, ferns, and pot plants, brilliantly lit up with fairy lamps and Chinese lanterns. The verandah was enclosed, and lined with South Sea Island Tappa. The hall, drawing room, and other rooms thrown open were also decorated, the effect upon the juvenile guests as they arrived being most bright and pleasant. The music, consisting of two violins and harp, performed beneath a bower of evergreens, was excellent. Some of the dresses were exceedingly pretty. Miss Thompson wore a lovely dress of white crepe; Miss K. Thomson looked pretty in pink silk; Miss McMillan had on a handsome green plush with pink cash; Miss White (Ellerslie) was most effectively dressed in scarlet; Miss Kate Hay looked very handsome in pink, with bouquet of white trams. Miss Alice Morrin looked very well indeed in an uncommon brown velvet costume; Miss Winifred Russell looked exceedingly well in blue; Miss (Grace) Russell had on a very elegant old gold with Watteau back; Miss Sybil Davis looked charming in a flowered delaine, which was most elegant; Miss Mayne wore a pretty blue dress; Miss Marshall looked very well in white net over pink; Miss Law wore black and gold; Miss Elliott, very pretty white costume; Miss D. Thomson had on a charming white dress with pink trimmings. A most pleasing feature of the evening was the *minuet de la court*, most gracefully danced by Misses Thompson, M. Law, K. Thompson, and D. Thomson.

WELLINGTON.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 11.
One of the most successful festivals ever held by the Girls' Friendly Society has just taken place at the Lodge, when Lady Onslow presented the prizes for needlework, Bible questions, etc. Mrs J. E. Fitzgerald, the President, took the chair, and Archdeacon Stock gave a most interesting address. The Countess spoke a few kind and encouraging words, and also presented thirty volumes of Miss Young's works to the Society for the library. Several musical items were given by Mrs England, Mrs Kemp, Miss Kemp, Miss Grant, and Miss Williams, and a pleasant evening was spent.

Of course we have been to see and hear Williamson's Juvenile Opera Troupe. Everyone else has been too, I think, and they have gained in popularity each evening. Thus far they have only had one opera, 'La Mascotte,' and this they are evidently very proud of, for they have given us no less than six, if not seven, performances of it, so the change to Mikado will be very welcome. Miss Everett seems to be the best actress in the company, but little Miss Stevens is my favourite. She is so tiny, and goes through her part of the Princess with such a piquante air, and to see the childish face above her bridal robes appeals to all. She first comes out and sings 'In Old Madrid,' and wears the daintiest little black velvet riding habit, just showing a pale blue satin skirt embroidered with gold, and wears a large velvet hat covered with feathers, and carries a whip; but she looked prettiest of all in the last act, in a short red petticoat, full white chemise, and black velvet zouave jacket and little red cap, and carries a tambourine, which she poses gracefully while she dances. Miss Everett's first dress is a sort of Patience style, with big hat with flowers and short striped petticoat, and then she wears a pink silk evening dress with train, and afterwards she appears in a bridal toilette. Master Stevens acts the King very cleverly, and dresses the part well. Master Queenly is not so good, but his 'make up,' I think, is better. The clever marching of the children was very much admired, especially when they threw red, yellow, and blue lights on them, causing their sabres and shields to glitter again and again with very pretty effect. The scene in the second act is very picturesque. They certainly deserve patronage, and seem to have got it liberally throughout New Zealand. Amongst the audiences during the week have been Lady and Miss Hector, Mr and Mrs C. Beetham, Mr and Miss Buller, Miss Reynolds (Dunedin), the Misses Harding, Mr and Miss Dransfield, Mr Walrod, Mr J. and the Misses Mills (Dunedin), Mrs and the Misses Gore, Mr and Mrs Edward Richardson, Miss Richardson, Mr and Mrs Burns, Miss S. Graham, the Misses Halse, Mr and Mrs Reynolds (Dunedin), Mrs and Miss Coleridge, Mr and Mrs Travers, Mr and Mrs De Castro, Mr and Mrs Mantell, etc.

A very good entertainment has just been given at St. Mark's schoolroom in aid of the choir fund. It consisted of vocal and instrumental music, and statutory and *tableaux*. Two *tableaux* consisted of scenes from 'Pignatelli and Galatea,' two very amusing ones being 'The Three Old Maids of Lee,' and then 'The Three Young Maids of Lee.' Five scenes from Burns' 'Auld Robin Gray' were excellent, Mrs Lucas (Miss Florence Nightingale) singing the solo parts, and others given were 'Victory,' 'Faith, Hope, and Charity,' and 'The Angel Reapers.' Mrs Lucas was encored for her song, 'The Children's Home,' and gave 'Comin' Thro' the Rye.' Mrs Peter Webb sang, and also Mr Gooder, Mr J. E. Page, and an instrumental trio was played by Miss Keblell, Miss Picher, and Mr A. Hamerton, and a quartette for voices was sung by Matames Meek and Webb, and Messrs Hueston and Pimner. The accompaniments were played by Misses Page and Hardwick, who also supplied pianoforte solo. There was a large audience, and the whole affair was very well managed.

We have lost another of our old colonists in the person of Mrs Daniel Riddiford, who died very suddenly. It appears she was perfectly well the day before, and spent a convivial evening with several of her young relatives, but was seized with a sudden attack of bronchitis early the following morning, and died before her medical man (Dr. Kemp), had arrived. Miss Willis, her grand daughter, and Mr Arthur

Cooper, her grandson, were both staying in the house at the time. The funeral took place from Mr Ed. Riddiford's place, Woburn, at the Hutt, and was very largely attended, the Rev. Mr Still and the Rev. Mr Fancourt officiating. Mrs Riddiford will be greatly missed in every way, and especially in all charitable works, of which she was a strong upholder and generous donor. She leaves six daughters and three sons, all of whom are married, and most of them living near to where their mother lived. She was an excellent correspondent, and all her near relatives received a letter from her regularly every week, and up to the very last took an active interest in all those around her.

We are to lose the Earl and Countess of Onslow for a short time. They are going to Otaki to visit the Maori tribe, and are to be accompanied by the Ladies Dorothy and Gwendoline Onslow, and little Lord Huia, and Sir Walter and Lady Buller, Miss Buller, and Mr Walrod. Captain Guthrie has gone to Australia to be present at some race meeting (I am dreadfully ignorant as regards the sporting world, or I would know which meeting), and is accompanying Mr Gollan, of Hawke's Bay, who has taken his horses with him. Lord and Lady Onslow went to McCollins stables one morning before they left to see Mr Gollan's horses, which have excited much admiration here.

There has been nothing exciting this week, but I will be able to tell you about Mrs J. E. Maxwell's fiasco next week, and later on about Miss Norman's musical recital.

The two latest engagements are those of Mr J. H. Cook, formerly of Nelson, and Miss Spensley, so well known in musical circles in Christchurch; and Mr T. Wilford, son of Dr. Wilford, of the Hutt, and Miss Georgie McLean, daughter of the Hon. George McLean.

RUBY.

NAPIER.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 9.
It has been so very warm lately I have seriously been thinking of donning a summer gown. However, it is just as well not to begin to change one's clothes too soon, for it has come on quite wintry again, and to-day we are all glad of our furs.

The last of the Cinderella dances will be coming off shortly. I hear this one is to eclipse all the rest, so I hope to tell you all about it in a future letter.

Mrs Cornford gave a large children's dance. There must have been fully seventy little ones there, and they did seem to enjoy themselves, but who could help doing so with such a splendid hostess as Mrs Cornford? The rooms looked lovely, the supper-room especially, and the children did full justice to all the good things provided for them. Amongst the older children were the Misses Balfour (2), Baker, Roy, and Heath. Miss Balfour looked so pretty in yellow; Miss Annie Cornford also looked charming. The dance broke up at a reasonable hour, and the children all agreed that there never had been such a jolly ball. Do you know, Bee, the way the children dance is wonderful. Some of the elder ones might well take a lesson from them; their steps are so even, and they are so polite to one another.

We are so glad to learn that Mrs Rhodes is better. She was so unwell at one time, it was thought advisable to send for Miss Rhodes, who was on a visit to Mrs J. Wood, at Nelson, but, fortunately, when she arrived home, Mrs Rhodes was much better, and has continued to improve until quite lately, when she has not seemed quite so well again. She is such a dear old lady, and is so much liked. We shall be so glad when she is herself again.

We had a splendid concert at the Athenaeum Hall. Miss Large sang so sweetly, and, of course, was encored. It is such a treat to listen to her. Mrs Sheath was also in splendid voice, and sang some very pretty songs. Miss Hitchings played nearly all the accompaniments in her usual excellent style. She looked very nice in black. I must not forget to tell you that a gentleman named Mr Ferguson sang. I think he is a new-comer. His song took immensely, and you would have laughed if you had seen him pretending to be shy. I don't believe he was really shy, and his singing was much admired. One of his songs was 'The Bogie Man,' the audience being convulsed with laughter. You know, Bee, I don't think we girls should get all the praise. I think the men should sometimes be admired, especially when they deserve it. Amongst the audience we noticed Messdames Balfour, Logan, Kettle, Weber, Parker, Frazier, and the Misses Filton, Balfour, Hitchings (2), Rhodes (2), Gleason, Roy, and several others.

I expect I shall have a wedding to tell you about shortly. Miss Roy is to be married to Mr S. R. Kennedy, and I am afraid we are not as delighted as we ought to be about this wedding, for what we Napier people are going to do without Miss Roy I really do not know. She is a most accomplished pianist, and sings well, and is always ready to assist at any concert got up for a good object. Most of our little ones, and indeed, some of our big ones, too, owe their good dancing to her excellent tuition. Her sister, Mrs Heath, will miss her terribly. I hear Miss Laacelles is to be one of the bridesmaids.

There is to be a large Athenaeum ball—a calico ball. It is to be held in the Garrison Hall, and I believe crowds are going to it.

I noticed Miss Hitchings looking very charming in fawn skirt, red blouse, fawn jacket, stylish black hat lined with red; also Miss Chapman in grey gown, stylish hat; and Miss Hamlin, fawn gown, large hat with feathers.

GLADYS.

HASTINGS.

DEAR BEE, SEPTEMBER 8.
The Gymnasium closed last evening with a very pleasing entertainment. I was not there, unfortunately, but was told that everything passed off most satisfactorily. The competition for the medal took place, and some very good exercises were gone through, especially on the parallel bar. Mr Charlton, from Te Aute, was the judge, and his decision gave universal satisfaction. Eleven young men competed (although one of them was put out of it by having his toe hurt), and as two of them, Mr Warner and Mr Olsen, got the same number of marks, it was decided to still further test them on the bar. However, it was found impossible to decide which was the better of the two, and in order to get over the difficulty, Mr Fraser generously

offered to give two medals instead of one. His offer was received with great applause. Mrs Hobbs gave away the medal to Mr Warner, and I suppose Mr Olsen will receive his when it is made. Everyone sang, 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow,' and the proceedings terminated with some wonderful performances on the bar by Messrs Charlton and Hodge, the former wearing a most elaborate costume of pink fleshings with red velvet trunk and collar, and high boots covered with gold spangles. Mr Murdoch proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Fraser, which was unanimously carried, and during the uproar Mr Fraser fell. We are all sorry there are to be no more of these popular entertainments, and shall look forward with pleasure to the opening of next season.

I am very glad to say that the cricket season is coming on. The cricketers had a meeting a week or so ago, and arranged all sorts of nice things for the coming season. I believe there is to be a sort of large tent put up for the ladies, which will be most acceptable. Mr C. Loughnan, the secretary, gave out that the piece 'Engaged' would very likely be reproduced before long. This is good news, and I have no hesitation in saying that if it is played again either in Napier or Hastings, there will be a crowded house.

Our tea-meeting takes place just now, and won't there be a gathering, especially of small fry. After the tea, I believe we are to have a great treat in the musical line, as most of our leading amateurs have promised to sing. There ought to be a 'bumper' house, as the charge for admission to the concert is only sixpence. I will tell you about the tea and conversations in my next letter.

Miss St. Hill has returned from Wellington. She looks very handsome in a dark green costume, large dark green hat with cock's feathers; Mrs Sunderland (Gibborne) looks very nice in a stylish navy gown, large black hat with feathers; Mrs Joe Williams, dark grey gown, sealette jacket, stylish bonnet; Miss Humphreys, very stylish navy blue gown, tight-fitting jacket, small close-fitting hat; Mrs Harry Nelson, navy blue costume, small boat-shaped hat; Mrs Donnelly, black gown, white vest, black jacket, white chic hat, black band; Mrs Howard, handsome dark green cloth gown, richly trimmed with very handsome dark red and green plaid, French bonnet of dark green plush, covered with marigolds; Miss Greenwood, grey gown, sealette jacket, small black hat with black pom-poms; Mrs Vicker-man, dark skirt, heliotrope blouse, black jacket, black chic hat; Mrs Longman, brown gown, fawn jacket, brown chic hat with brown band.

DOLLY.

AN ELECTRIC HOUSE.

THE most interesting portion of the World's Fair at Chicago, as far as ladies are concerned, will be the electric house, which sounds as if it might almost be a practical illustration of how to manage an establishment without servants.

It is to be a miniature house, worked entirely by electricity, which is to be the motive power for the bells, the lights, the doors, and the burglar alarms, to at once illuminate the house in case of attempted ingress. The rooms are warmed by electric radiators, and cooled by electric fans.

But the most marvellous part is that relating to the cooking. It is to be conducted on an electric range in a kitchen at the top of the house, and the dishes are to be lowered to the dining-room by an electric dumb waiter, and washed afterwards by an electric dish washer, in which a child can wash 10,000 dishes a day. The washing, ironing, and scrubbing of the floors and woodwork, and even the cleaning of the windows will be performed by electricity. Everything which in an ordinary house is relegated to the dusthole is also immediately destroyed by electricity.

My only fear would be that, living in a house so laden with electricity—for even the library contains little photographs for sending verbal messages to friends—I should, one day, find myself so highly charged that I might be unconsciously executed, and, perhaps, spirited away by electricity before any of my friends could know anything about it.

THE LONGEST DAY.

It is quite important when speaking of the longest day in the year to say what part of the world we are talking about, as will be seen by reading the following list, which tells the length of the longest days in several places. How unfortunate are the children in Tornea, Finland, where Christmas day is less than three hours in length.

- At Stockholm, Sweden, it is eighteen and one-half hours in length.
- At Spitzbergen the longest day is three and one-half months.
- At London, England, and Bremen, Prussia, the longest day has sixteen and one-half hours.
- At Hamburg, in Germany, and Dantzic, in Prussia, the longest day has seventeen hours.
- At Wardbury, Norway, the longest day lasts from May 21st to July 22nd without interruption.
- At St. Petersburg, Russia, and Tobolek, Siberia, the longest day is nineteen hours, and the shortest five hours.
- At Tornea, Finland, June 21st brings a day nearly twenty-two hours long, and Christmas one less than three hours in length.
- At New York the longest day is about fifteen hours, and at Montreal, Canada, it is sixteen hours.

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