



Tom, Harriet, and the Electric Man.

There was a valley near where Harriet and Tom lived which had very steep sides. If you stood at the top and looked down into it you could not see much except that it was shady and green and cool down there. The reason of this was that the valley was narrow and filled with trees.

Tom and Harriet thought that it was not worth while to try to get down into the valley while there was so many other places which they had not seen. But when they had looked at all the other places they began to think of trying the valley. Perhaps there might be something else down there besides trees, after all. At any rate, a brook ran down into it and Tom had an idea that there might be trout in it.

So he went first, advancing cautiously among the rocks covered with grey moss and making sure that he had a firm place for his feet before he took a new step. Harriet came close behind him, holding by the moss and placing her feet carefully where Tom had placed his, just as he had told her to do.

They had not gone far before they found what looked like a path, although it was so overgrown by the moss and so hidden by the ferns which nodded their heads about their knees that they could not be sure that it really was a path. This made their progress easy, and before a great while they found themselves at the bottom of the valley. It was very cool and pleasant there. The trunks of the trees rose straight up and the leafy branches spread out over their heads like a great green umbrella.

Harriet had brought her doll, Nancy, with her. Nancy had charming yellow curls and large blue eyes. She really was a beautiful doll, and Harriet had had her ever since Christmas without breaking her once. She had pink lid slippers on.

As they walked down the valley beside the brook under the trees they were rather surprised to find a house. They had not supposed that anybody lived there. It was an unusual house, too. It was perfectly round, and the lower part of it was going around one way while the upper part of it was going around the other way. The lower part was painted blue, and the upper part and the roof, which was pointed, was painted red.

There were flower beds all around the house, extending out from it like the spokes of a wheel. These beds were filled with flowers which looked like geraniums only each bed kept changing its colour. One of the beds would be red for a few moments, and then yellow, and then white, and so on.

"This is very strange," Tom said, after they had stood a while looking at the turning house and the changing flower beds. "We must investigate this."

"Do you think it's safe to go any nearer?" Harriet asked timidly.

"Why not?" said Tom.

Harriet could not say and so they went on toward the house. As they came nearer they saw that a small man was seated in the garden. He was a pleasant looking little man, with green and black clothes covered with all kinds of buttons, and very sharp black eyes. Instead of lying down on his head, his hair stuck straight out all around it, which made him look rather nervous.

"Come right in!" he said when he caught sight of them standing at the edge of the garden and looking at him.

As he rose from his chair his clothes snapped and crackled like a cat's fur

COUSINS' BADGES.

Cousins requiring badges are requested to send an addressed envelope, when the badge will be forwarded by return mail.

COUSINS' CORRESPONDENCE.

YOUNGER COUSINS' LETTERS.

Dear Cousin Kate,—I expect you will be wondering why I have not written to you for so long. I have not been well, and my eyes have been troubling me lately, and the other week I went up to Palmerston to have them tested. I have to wear glasses now, and they do feel so funny. I go to the Technical School here to learn dressmaking, and I like it very much. There has been a big bazaar here in aid of the Rowing Club's funds, and the hall looked very pretty. I am afraid this will be my last letter, as we do not take the "Graphic" now, and it would be no use me writing, because I would not see your answers to my letters. I am very sorry, because I used to take such an interest in the children's page. Now I must conclude, wishing the Cousins' Society every success, and very best wishes for yourself. With love from Cousin BERYL.

[Dear Cousin Beryl,—I wonder what it is in New Zealand that has such a bad effect on people's eyes. Such a large number of my friends have had to take to wearing glasses lately, and two cousins too, and they are only babies. I am so sorry you have to also. I am always trying to make up my mind to learn dressmaking, but I hate sewing of any sort, so I don't think my dress would ever get beyond the cutting-out stage. We had a most successful bazaar here last week to raise money to build a new creche, and they think they will clear over £350. It would not be much fun writing letters and not having any answers, so I can quite understand your not writing; but we will be sorry to lose you.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—It was very nice of you to say that I couldn't write too often. I love writing to you, and I love getting your letters in return. We are having our holidays just now, and they are so nice. We have had three weeks, and we go back to school a week to-day. I went to "Humpty Dumpty" twice when it was here—once in the afternoon and once in the night time. I liked the night time the better, but I thought it was lovely any time, didn't you, Cousin Kate? We have had such a dreadful earthquake since I wrote to you last. I am so frightened of them, aren't you? It is nice weather down here just now, and I hope you are having the same. I was asked to do a fancy dress dance the other night, and I went as a Caecilia Girl. It was such a lovely dance. Yes, it was the other cousin's name that I meant. No,

I did not write your name in my birthday book, Cousin Kate, because if ever I come up to Auckland I want you to put it in yourself for me, please. I got Ethel Turner's new book the other day, called "That Girl." It is such a lovely book, I think. Have you read it? Well, dear cousin, I think I had better stop now, with lots and lots of love for yourself and all the cousins. From MÄRJORIE.

[You seem to have longer holidays at this time of the year in Napier than our Auckland schools allow. All my small nieces have been having holidays, too, but they only had three weeks. I am glad you enjoyed your holidays so much. Wasn't it a good thing that the fine weather came in holiday time? We have had some lovely weather, too, but to-day it is wretched, raining and blowing, too. I suppose it is the commencement of the equinoctial gales. I don't think I have ever experienced a really severe earthquake, so I don't know whether I should be frightened or not; but the small shocks have only given me a nice creepy feeling, without being afraid, though the people I was staying with were terrified. We never have shocks here, you know. I liked "Humpty Dumpty" very much, but I liked "Mother Goose" better, didn't you? I haven't had time to read "That Girl" yet, but I hear it is very good, so I must get it.—Cousin Kate.]

OLDER COUSINS' LETTERS.

Dear Cousin Kate,—I suppose you will be wondering what has become of me, for it is, as Cousin Hilda says, "ages since I wrote," but I have a good excuse to offer. As you will see by the above, I am in Rotorua. I got an appointment in the Telephone Exchange again, and was sent here, which was a pleasant surprise for me, as I had never been to Rotorua before. I had only two days' notice, and so did not have time for letter-writing. Since coming here about six weeks ago, I have scarcely stopped going. There is so much to see besides my duties to attend to, that I didn't

know whether I was on my head or my heels for a bit. I suppose you have been up here, Cousin Kate. I think it is a beautiful, as well as a wonderful place, and I am sure I shall never tire of it. I have been for some lovely trips, and enjoyed them immensely. Aren't the blue and green lakes beautiful? I went out to Wairoa one Sunday; it was a perfect day, and the lakes looked too beautiful for description. We had a lovely view of Lake Tarawera, and the mountain. It seems dreadful to think that hundreds of people were buried there at the time of the eruption. We all had our photos taken at the buried church, and also at the falls. Whakarewarewa is a most wonderful spot, and it fascinates me so much that almost every spare afternoon I have I go out. Dear old Sophia is a great friend of mine, and she talks to me by the hour. Maggie also is very nice, and so well educated too. I intended going to Auckland for fleet week, but came up here instead. I saw the American officers here, and met quite a number of them. I was very lucky in seeing Wairoa Geyser play. It was soaped for the Admiral and officers, and played to about 120 feet. It was a great sight. The opening of the new Bath Buildings was a grand affair, and the Maori demonstrations were splendid, especially the poi dances. I had a bath in the new baths last week for the first time. They are very luxuriously furnished. Beautiful red plush lounges and chairs, and lovely long white mirrors; it makes one feel out of keeping with it all. The entrance hall is magnificent, and there are five or six beautiful statues surrounded with ferns. There is also a piano in the upper hall. You must come up and see it all for yourself, for I am a poor hand at describing anything. The evening the fleet were here the Sanatorium grounds were exquisitely lit up with hundreds of Chinese lanterns, all colours, and it presented a very pretty picture. I expect you were all very gay fleet week in Auckland. I was longing to be there. Well, dear Cousin Kate, I must stop now, as my friends are waiting for me to go for a bath. Wouldn't you like to be here to come, too? Fond love to you and all the cousins.—From your loving BILL.

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