

MAY 19th, 1912—We leave to-day, Nella and I, for Mangawhare. It is raining ; we need it, for the water is low in the tanks. Nella and I have each planted a tree in memory of our visit. Mine was a wattle about three feet high. This is the incantation I said to myself as I planted it:—

“Grow, wattle, grow, and be a strong tree,
Don't laugh at my premature fancies,
But I hope I may see, long ere I dee,
My grandchildren play in your branches.”

Leslie killed three turkeys with one shot last evening. Two we take to Mangawhare.

I made pastry, apple pies, etc., this morning. We both have made our rooms neat and clean so that Mrs. Rettie will not think us a trouble. I really believe she will miss us, she is so fond of chatting. We often wonder how her work gets done, she stops so often to talk.

As I was busy in the kitchen, Rettie was hunting up pannikins for the Maoris who come on Wednesdays for crutching. He was working hard to get them clean and free from rust, and said to me in a hurt kind of voice. “These Maoris, they are that particular, and it's not so very long since they were cannibals.” I said, “What about the Scotch folk? Have you read ‘The Grey Man’ by Crockett.?” He laughed, and said, “They were a wild lot in those days.”

Mr. Waterhouse came about 2 p.m. and off we started. It was raining a little. The road is very up and down and round corners. I attempted having mal de motor and was glad when we reached Mangawhare about 5 o'clock. Such a nice home. I had quite a pleasant visit, they are all so kind. Mrs. Waterhouse is such a good housekeeper. I love to see her make the tea at breakfast. She has the tea kettle boiled on the table and the tea in a caddy. I see her make the teapot hot and infuse the tea. You feel it must be delicious, and it is.

I think, as I watch her, of a terrible upset some friends of my cousins had long ago near Masterton. Quite a big family party had just finished afternoon tea. The tray had gone out about five minutes, when Jane, the maid, rushed in with a scared white face, saying, “Oh, Mrs. B. . . ., do look what came out of the teapot.” and there in the colander, in the hot, wet tea leaves, lay a very small snake, somewhat swollen and looking most horrid. Everyone was terribly alarmed ; they sent for the doctor at once, thinking they would all be poisoned, emetics were talked of but it was needless, most of the party were sick without. However, all ended well and no one was any the worse.

Poor, silly, nasty little baby snake, how did it come into the tea box? Had it wandered away from its mother, I wonder, and got into the hot pan for drying the tea, and at dusk perhaps, when some plantation coolie came, was thrown with the dry tea into a bin, then afterwards

into a lead-lined chest and shipped out here. The maid most probably just went to the tea box in a dark cupboard, or without looking put a handful of tea into the teapot. Never can an accident like that happen at Mangawhare, not when Mrs. Waterhouse is at the head of the table.

Nella took me for a drive to the Blow Hard Ranges. We saw some curious rocks, one they call the Devil's Pulpit, and another place was called Hell's Gate.

TUESDAY.—Mr. Waterhouse has so very kindly telephoned for a car to come for me. It will be so much nicer than the coach.

WEDNESDAY.—Reached Hastings mid-day yesterday. The drive was very enjoyable, such a perfect view all the way of Hawkes Bay, and the Kidnappers in the distance. J. and S. met me, drive to the Grange to luncheon, then back to Hastings, where I stop to-night, leave by express for Greytown to-morrow.



My Mother