

CHILDREN'S CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN.

Any boy or girl who likes to become a cousin can do so, and write letters to 'COUSIN KATE, care of the Lady Editor, GRAPHIC Office, Auckland.'

Write on one side of the paper only.

All purely correspondence letters with envelope ends turned in are carried through the Post office as follows:—Not exceeding 40s, 4d; not exceeding 40s, 1d; for every additional 10s or fractional part thereof, 4d. It is well for correspondence to be marked 'Commercial papers only.'

THE 'COT' FUND.

I HEAR that the 'cot' will cost £25 a year, and the initial expense, that is the bedding and cot, will be about £5. Therefore we have to raise £31 the first year. Can we do it? I have promises from Cousins Mariel, Agnes, Lou, and Ida, and also that El I had offered me at first. I hope to raise a little myself, and now appeal to any readers of the GRAPHIC if they will help the Cousins' Cot Fund to maintain a deserving and destitute sick child for one year at the Auckland Hospital, where it can have proper food, medicine, and nursing. Any donations can be sent to the Lady Editor, NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC, Shortland-street, Auckland, and they will be duly acknowledged in the GRAPHIC Collecting cards will be printed as soon as a sufficient number of cousins apply for them.—COUSIN KATE.

I have received the following satisfactory and courteous letter:—'MADAM,—I am directed by the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board to thank you, and, through you, the GRAPHIC cousins, for the proposal to furnish and endow a cot in the Auckland Hospital for one destitute child, and in reply, to say that if the proposal can be carried into effect, the Board most cordially approves of it and gives it its official sanction. With regard to your queries as to cost, etc., I am to say:—(1) That the sum of £25 a year (paid in quarterly sums of £6 2s 6d at the office of the Board) be accepted so long as the Government continues the subsidy of 2s in the £ on voluntary contributions for charitable aid. (2) That the probable cost of a cot and furniture would be £6. (3) That the cot, which must be of iron, may be purchased subject to the approval of the Board, as soon as convenient to the Cousins, and by them. (4) That the child to occupy the cot from time to time must be sent to the Hospital subject in all respects to the rules for the admission of patients. I send you a copy of the Hospital rules for your information.—I am, madam, yours faithfully, H. N. GARLAND, Secretary.'

Home once every four months, and each child takes the piece of work which she has made between the visits. I walked down to Khandallah yesterday to the League, but it rained so hard that I came back in the train instead of walking. The railway line between Johnsonville and Wellington is a very pretty and interesting one. On each side are hills covered with bush in some places. There are some lovely ferns growing in the bush and the clematis is out now and it looks beautiful amongst the green leaves. While in the train you can see several glimpses of Wellington harbour. Have you ever seen the broom, Cousin Kate? There are some bushes of white and yellow, coming a hill near us. I think Cousin Mariel's idea of a cot is splendid, so will you send me a card to collect, please? The buttercups are out now and the fields are just covered. Their golden caps look beautiful when the sun is shining on them, especially when the dew is on the ground. I went for a long walk last Sunday with two friends. We went to Tawa Flat, which is about five miles from here. The road there is very pretty, and a broad stream runs near the road with lovely weeping willows on each side.—I remain, with love, COUSIN IDA.

[You can speak to the boys, but I am much afraid it will do no good. Boys who are usually, or often cruel, feel no shame. They only mind a few sharp strokes with a birch rod, and I don't think they mind that after the pain has gone away. I did not think of asking you to help our 'cot' fund, as you already work for little children, but I shall be very glad indeed to send you a card. I have not been by train round Wellington at all, not even to the Hutt. Yes, I have frequently seen white broom. Both it and the yellow have a nice perfume. You are a good walker to manage ten miles. I sometimes walk eight with a rest in the middle.—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE—I think that of all the 'suggestions' and 'ideas' which we cousins have troubled you with, Mariel's is the best, and most worthy of consideration and support. You have always been so good in 'falling in' with our plans. Cousin Kate, that I think every cousin should now try to further the one, of which you heartily approve, and evidently have at heart. I, for one, will promise to collect 5s a year for the 'cot', and will do my best to get more. It would be very nice to have you to be hon. secretary and treasurer in my opinion, because we could all correspond about our 'cot', and know how affairs are progressing. So, Cousin Kate, send me a collecting card, and you may depend upon some help from COUSIN LOU.

[Your cheery, breezy note is a great comfort, Cousin Lou, as I am feeling a wee bit hopeless about the 'cot'. I don't like to ask for money, and am afraid I am a very poor beggar. But your note will help me much, thank you for it. I dare say the cousins are just waiting to secure promises before writing to me. I cannot, of course, get the cards until I have sufficient promises to make the 'cot' a success. However, I will keep on reporting progress. What unpleasant weather we have had! I hope it will be fine for Christmas, as, of course, you do.—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE—I have not written to you for a long time, but somehow I could never make up my mind to write. Would you please tell me what the Colossus was? It was a big statue at Rhodes, was it not? There is to be an Industrial Exhibition here, and though it is specially for school children, anybody can go in for that. There is to be a Spelling Bee at the Exhibition, and I am going in for that. Every morning my teacher gives me some 'catchy' words to spell, and some of them make me think a good deal. I have heard of the Giant's Causeway in the north of Ireland called the eighth wonder of the world. I must stop now as I have my lessons to do.—With love from COUSIN ALICE.

[I wish you success with your spelling bee. It is a great institution, and very useful. I think the Giant's Causeway might well be classed amongst the 'wonders', but it seems more modern, in point of discovery, than the others. The Colossus of Rhodes was a brazen statue of Apollo, 105 feet high, erected by the Rhodians in recognition of their regard for the wisdom of their ally, when the city was besieged by Demetrius, king of Macedonia. Please make up your mind to write again. You don't know what pleasure the cousins' letters give me. Do you feel inclined to help our cot fund?—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE—I am so glad you thought my last letter was neat. I hope I am not sending too many letters. The dog I spoke of in my last letter arrived from Sydney about a week ago. He is a St. Bernard, and he is a splendid specimen of the breed. His name is St. Elmo Roy. We are going to send him to the dog show, which takes place in November. I think we are going to send our horse to the show at Petone, which also takes place in November. I am going to make a bouquet of roses for the Flower Show, which is on the 19th and 20th of November. I went for a long walk to Wadestown on Sunday afternoon, and I enjoyed it very much. Last Wednesday was Demonstration Day, but we did not get a holiday. I am very glad we did not get one, because it was so terribly windy. There has been a very heavy sea running in the harbour for the last two or three days. The concert that I promised to give you an account of in my last letter came off on Friday afternoon. It was highly successful. The play was acted by the old High School girls, and was entitled 'My Lord in Livery.' The respective characters were extremely well done. One, an old butler, named Spigot, was very amusing. Two of the actors danced a minuet which was encored. I liked it very much. The concert was opened by a very pretty piano duet, but as it was played behind the scenes we could not see the performers. The entertainment was brought to a close by a song and three more piano duets. After this afternoon tea was handed round to those who cared to partake of it, the modest sum of sixpence being charged for it. The entertainment was repeated on Saturday afternoon. I went both days. On Saturday afternoon after the play was over another girl and myself happened to go up to the Lower Fourth classroom. Seeing a lot of smoke we jumped up on to one of the forms by the window to have a better look. As it seemed to be near our place we hurried away from school as quickly as we could. When we got to the bottom of Sydney street we saw that the old St. Paul's schoolroom was enveloped in flames. It was not till the school was one mass of flames that the fire was got under. Had the wind been blowing in our direction we should have had a narrow escape, our place being next to the schoolroom. Miss Ringwood lost all her gymnasium fittings and her piano. The organ belonging to the

Sunday school was also burnt. A number of girls who go to our school lost their gymnasium dresses and are all lamenting over their lost property. I, too, like the bagpipes, but as you said, 'round the next corner.' (In New Year's Eve they are played till midnight in the Government House grounds. The Tennis Tournaments are to begin next week. I have entered for the Juniors. Have you ever read a book called 'Held Fast for England,' Cousin Kate? I have. It is such a lovely book. It is a tale of the siege of Gibraltar. As I cannot think of anything else to stretch into small talk, I must now close my letter.—With much love to yourself and the cousins, dear Cousin Kate, I remain your affectionate little COUSIN LAURA.

[What a capital letter, cousin Laura! We also had a fire on Saturday night, quite close to us. The heat was so great that at eight o'clock I was sitting on our verandah with no hat or wrap on watching, and hoping it would not come our way, as all our men folk were, of course, at the scene of the conflagration. No water was available, and the house just burnt steadily down to the ground. A fire close at hand makes one feel 'queer,' does it not? I have not read 'Held Fast for England,' but it sounds a good title. I hope your dog and horse will come off prize winners—like yourself! We had a 'Flower Service' last Sunday, two clothes' baskets of lovely bouquets. What roses shall you use?—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE—I am going to tell you about a concert which was held in St. Paul's (Tinakori Road) schoolroom on Friday evening. It commenced with a well-played violin solo, then there was a scene from King John. After this followed the principal part of the programme. It was a short comic play called 'The Pickle.' Jack, the Pickle, knew her part to perfection, and kept the audience in fits of laughter all the time. The performer who took the character of the aunt did her part equally well, and behaved as a model aunt should, namely, sticking up for her nephew when he was in the wars. The boy who was the uncle did his part so well that you would have thought he was an old man. The servant, schoolmaster, and other minor parts were also well done, Jack playing tricks on all of them, his old aunt and uncle also, who thought there was not such a boy as their Jack. After the play there were some tableaux, the best of which was 'The Dirty Boy.' I arrived home at a quarter past ten, having spent a thoroughly enjoyable evening. I must now close this letter with much love from your affectionate COUSIN ELSIE.

[You and Cousin Laura are excellent correspondents, and both your concert descriptions are good. I was trying to make out all through which parts you and she took, or whether you were merely audience! I think you have capital times. When I was at school we were very hard-worked, and very strictly kept. Turned out of bed at 6 sharp every morning, winter and summer, and in the former dressing by gaslight. Prayers at 7, breakfast at 8.30, and so on. No speaking allowed in the dormitories. And oh! the examinations! A Cambridge man in cap and gown, who dosed us with three stiff subjects in one day. Ugh!—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE—I have not kept to my word in writing every fortnight, but I have been very busy with a 'doll's bazaar.' On Saturday I gave a doll's bazaar. Some of my little girl friends helped me to make some things. Of course we did not take real money; we had counters for money. I had two stalls, one sweet stall and one doll's store, and to make it popular a 'bran tub.' One little girl was dressed in green and white paper as a fairy, and presided over the bran tub. After everything had been given away we played 'hunt the thimble,' and school and other games. Yesterday I went to another 'doll's bazaar' given by a little girl friend, and I enjoyed myself very much. After everything had been sold for our counters, we played 'hunt the thimble' and 'cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe,' and school. After that we had a lovely tea and went home. I have changed my school since I have come home.—With love from COUSIN AMY.

P.S.—I will send some riddles.

[I am sure the cousins are often too busy to write, so I am always willing to think that is the case when I do not hear from them, especially near Christmas, when, of course, there are presents to prepare and all sorts of things to be done, are there not? Do you make your own presents or buy them? I think our fathers and mothers prize most what we have lovingly made with our own hands. So Daudin is your home. Have you lived there long, and were you just visiting the North when I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance (on paper)? The Dolls' Bazaars are grand ideas; no doubt some other cousins will try them. Will you help the 'cot'.—COUSIN KATE.]

PUZZLE COLUMN.

(1) What relation is the door-mat to the door step? (2) What two poet's names would a policeman in flames suggest? (3) When do two and two not make four?—COUSIN ALICE.

(1) Can a man's pocket be empty when he has got something in it? (2) What is better than presence of mind in a railway accident?

(3) My sides are firmly laced about,
You're nothing here with a
You'll find my body strange indeed,
It's nothing else but skin.

What is it? (4) What is the difference between a person late for the train and a school-mistress?—COUSIN AMY.


GOOD ADVICE.

'EAT at your table as you would eat at the table of the king,' said Confucius. The Chinese sage meant that good manners can only be acquired by private practice.

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AWARD OF PRIZES IN THE
COUSINS' STORY COM-
PETITION, 1895.



I HAVE much pleasure in announcing the result of the Prize Story Competition, my only regret being that I cannot give prizes to everyone. As a whole, the stories were good and the ideas original. The great fault was in the working out of the plot or idea. In the senior competition the voting at first was equal for Cousin Elsie's and Cousin Laura's stories, but a third reader gave his vote—not knowing what the others had said—in favour of the latter. All the same I must congratulate Cousin Elsie heartily. Cousin Dagmar's was also good, but rather too sad.

In the juniors, Cousin Marie ran Cousin Winnie very close indeed, but in the opinion of the judges the style and general neatness turned the balance in favour of the latter. Cousin G.B. did very well. The ideas were excellent, but would have been much more likely to attract the judges if arranged in regular story form. Cousin Fergus also did very well indeed. The last of the series is, I think, a most creditable production, especially considering the age of the author.

To all those who were not successful I beg to tender my thanks for having at least tried, and to hope that they will be more successful another time. I was a little disappointed not to see amongst the competitors the names of one or two from whom I expected good stories.

PRIZE LIST.

Seniors, under seventeen: First prize, COUSIN LAURA, Wellington. Highly Commended: Cousin Elsie, Wellington; Cousin Dagmar, Remuera. Honourable Mention: G.B.; Beryl; Thelma.

Juniors, under fourteen: First prize, COUSIN WINNIE, Eltham. Highly Commended: Cousin Marie, New Plymouth; Cousin Hms, Hawera. Honourable Mention: Cousin Phoebe, Cousin Fergus.

Juniors, under ten: Prize, COUSIN SYLVIA, Gisborne.

The prize-money will be sent as soon as I have the full addresses. Cousin Laura's I have, but Cousin Winnie's does not seem sufficient. Cousin Sylvia's I shall have when Cousin Fergus answers my last letter. If he has not sent it up I hope he will do so immediately.

Sincere congratulations to the prize winners, whose full names I have not published, but would like to do, if they do not object.—COUSIN KATE.

DEAR COUSIN KATE,—Thank you very much for the badge, which I received the other day. Dear Cousin Kate, if you belong to the Humane Society, can you prevent any one from ill-treating dumb animals? because most of the boys about here are very cruel to dumb animals. I go to Khandallah every fortnight to see for the little children in the Children's Cottage Home in Wellington. We visit the