



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 4oz, 1d; not exceeding 4oz, 1d; for every additional 2oz or fractional part thereof, 1d. It is well for correspondence to be marked 'Commercial papers only.'

THE 'GRAPHIC' COUSINS' COT FUND.

THIS fund is for the purpose of maintaining a poor, sick child in the Auckland Hospital, and is contributed to by the GRAPHIC cousins—readers of the children's page. The cot has been already bought by their kind collection of money, and now £25 a year is needed to pay for the nursing, food, and medical attendance of the child in it. Any contributions will be gladly received by Cousin Kate, care of the Lady Editor, NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC, Shortland-street, or collecting cards will be sent on application.

DEAR COUSIN KATE.—I have intended writing to you for some time, but I have been trying to finish a scrap-book for the cot. I will try to write oftener. We have just gone back to school after having two weeks' holidays. I think it would be very nice if all the cousins could assemble together once a year. I went for a very enjoyable picnic in the holidays. We walked to a place called Crofton, where we rested for about five minutes. Then we went in the bush and gathered ferns and mosses. I must close this short letter now, as I have finished this side of the paper.—From FRANCES RONAYNE.

P.S.—I hope Florrie is getting better, and how is Johnnie, please?

[Thank-you for the proposed scrap-book. As you would see last week, Florrie is not any better yet. I did not hear about Johnnie, and I have such a severe cold that I do not care to go near any sick people for fear of giving it to them. You are beginning picnics early. We quite intended making up one to the beach last week, but the weather forbade such a step, as it turned very cold and wet. I have sown some pinks and sweet peas, but cannot see any sign of them, though they should have been up. Perhaps the ground is too cold, or, worse still, perhaps they appeared early in the morning, and the slugs got there first. Cousin Jack also put some in his garden, and he says they have completely vanished! Yes, I do wish we could all meet annually. What a gathering we should have! I suppose you have no holidays now till Christmas?—COUSIN KATE.]

BY THE CLOCK.

A CASE was being tried in a country court. A horse had been stolen from a pasture, and the evidence all pointed to a certain doubtful character of the neighbourhood as the culprit. Though his guilt seemed clear, he had found a lawyer to undertake his defence. At the trial the defendant's attorney expended his energy in trying to confuse and frighten the opposing witnesses, especially a certain farmer whose testimony was particularly damaging. The lawyer kept up a fire of questions, asking many foolish ones, and repeating himself again and again, in the hope of deceiving the witness into a contradiction.

'You say,' the lawyer went on, 'that you can swear to having seen this man drive a horse past your farm on the day in question?'

'I can,' replied the witness, wearily, for he had already answered the question a dozen times.

'What time was this?'

'I told you it was about the middle of the forenoon.'

'But I don't want any 'abouts' or any 'middles'; I want you to tell the jury exactly the time.'

'Why,' said the farmer, 'I don't always carry a gold watch with me when I'm digging potatoes.'

'But you have a clock in the house, haven't you?'

'Yes.'

'Well, what time was it by that?'

'Why, by that clock it was just nineteen minutes past ten.'

'You were in the field all the morning?' went on the lawyer, smiling suggestively.

'I was.'

'How far from the house is this field?'

'About half a mile.'

'You swear, do you, that by the clock in your house it was exactly nineteen minutes past ten?'

'I do.'

The lawyer paused, and looked triumphantly at the jury; at last he had entrapped the witness into a contradictory statement that would greatly weaken his testimony. 'I think that will do,' he said, with a wave of his hand. 'I am quite through with you.'

The farmer leisurely picked up his hat, and started to leave the witness stand; then turning slowly about he added, 'I ought perhaps to say that too much reliance should not be placed upon that clock, as it got out of gear about six months ago, and it's been nineteen minutes past ten ever since.'

A TRUE HERO.

ALL Omaha is proud of one small public schoolboy just now (writes a correspondent). He is less than fourteen years old, and his name is Offie Downs. Until a few days ago he was just one boy among hundreds; but at present he is the one boy that every other boy would like to be.

The 'fire-drill' is common in most Western schools, especially where the children are crowded in large buildings, which it is desirable that they should be able to leave rapidly and in order. They are drilled frequently; at a given signal every child is taught to take his place in the file, and moving in precise step and time, to vacate the schoolhouse without confusion or haste.

In order to accustom the children to a sudden call, signals are given at unexpected times, and it is the boast of many schools that they can empty their buildings of five hundred children or more in a very few minutes.

Such a training had been given to the children of the Dodge-street School in Omaha, and the position of drummer was held by Offie Downs. Principal Allen was proud of the fact that his five hundred children could be marched out of the big building in about two minutes. But everybody hoped there might never arise a serious occasion to test this.

On the 23rd of January the occasion came. One of the teachers dashed into the principal's room with the cry that the building was on fire. The principal rang his gong, and there was an immediate alarm, followed by a stampede of children from the rooms. No one remembered the fire drill or the drum, except the drummer.

Without a word to anyone, and without waiting for an order, he ran down two flights of stairs into the principal's room, seized the drum from its hook, slung the strap over his shoulder, and made his way to the post at the foot of the stairs.

The smoke was dense in the hall, and upstairs the teachers were shouting to the children, trying to calm the panic. The fire-engines were at work outside.

Just as the five hundred pupils appeared at the top of the stairs ready to rush down, to the certain death of many in such a crush, the first notes of the drum, pounded with all the drummer's might, were heard above the confusion. The sound acted like a spell.

The principal, pulling from under the feet of the rushing children some of the smaller ones who had already fallen, shouted for them to keep step to the music. Instantly the force of long habit asserted itself; the feet fell in orderly succession, and the entire mob of children came down the stairs as calmly and evenly as if on parade, as they had done a thousand times before.

The smoke was pouring about them, but in less time than it takes to tell it, the last child had passed safely out, keeping time to the music of the drum.

The drummer remained at his post until informed by Mr Allen that every one was safe. Then he came down the steps greeted by a storm of cheers from the crowd outside. He had saved the lives of a very large number of the children and teachers by his coolness and bravery, and to-day in many more than the five hundred homes he has saved from possible loss and death he ranks as a genuine hero, though he 'only did as he was told.'

CLOSE OBSERVATION.

THIS is the secret of the power of all great naturalists. They see what escapes the observation of others, and are able to discover the meaning of slight differences that ordinary men have not noticed at all.

A young artist once called upon Audubon, the great student of birds, to show him drawings and paintings. Audubon, after examining the work, said:

'I like it very much, but it is deficient. You have painted the legs of this bird nicely, except in one respect. The scales are exact in shape and colour, but you have not arranged them correctly as to number.'

'I never thought of that,' said the artist.

'Quite likely,' said Audubon. 'Now upon this upper ridge of the partridge's leg there are just so many scales. You have too many. Examine the legs of a thousand partridges, and you will find the scales the same in number.'

The lesson shows how Audubon became great—by patient study of small things.

There was company in the schoolroom that morning when the beginning class in geography was called. To the question, 'What is a cape?' every hand went up. 'Nannie may tell,' said the teacher. 'A cape is a point of land projecting to the water.'

WELL PLAYED.

A GENTLEMAN has a fine St. Bernard dog named Monk, who has been taught a trick of which his master is very proud. Upon a signal, Monk lies down before his master, with his big head stretched out on the floor before his outspread paws.

The owner begins, in a low voice, a thrilling story of a poor wanderer struggling up the passes of the Alps, lost in the blinding snow. Monk listens intently to every word. His voice growing stronger, the gentleman describes the wayfarer as overcome with fatigue, and tells how, thoroughly worn out, he lies down to rest.

At this point the gentleman stretches himself out on the floor, resting his head on his arm, face downward. Monk remains perfectly rigid. The gentleman goes on reciting in a tone growing gradually softer. He turns up his coat collar, and then, lifting one hand above his head, lets fall a shower of fine white paper.

As the pieces representing a gust of snow flurry down, Monk bounds across the floor, barking at the top of his lungs, and reaching the prostrate form of his master, lies down, stretching his paws across the man's back and poking his big black nose under his collar. He whines and snuffs and pounds the floor with his big white tail.

Finding that all such efforts to resuscitate the wanderer are unavailing, Monk rises, and lifting his head, sends forth a howl of woe that would unquestionably bring the whole Alpine hospice to the rescue.

Then comes the climax. Monk seizes the helpless man by the coat collar, and is about to drag him away, when life suddenly returns, and the exhibition ends with a lively tussle between dog and man, and joyous howls of delight on the part of Monk. Of course a round of applause always follows the entertainment.

PEARLS AND JOYS.

LITTLE boys are little joys,
When they are loving and true;
Little girls are little pearls,
When they are sweet—like you!

Jennie was learning to read and spell, but it was very hard for her to remember what her teacher told her about pronouncing a double letter when she came to one. She would say 'a' or 'e' or 't' instead of 'double a,' 'double e,' etc. Her teacher had one day drilled her considerably on this matter in spelling. Shortly afterward, Jennie was called on to read. The paragraph began, 'Up, up, Lucy' and Jennie read it triumphantly, 'Double up, Lucy!'

Woe Willie was learning to read and could not always tell the difference between a period and a comma. 'Now, Willie, how could you make a comma into a period?' asked his governess. All eagerness Willie stammered out: 'Why, you j-j-j-just w-w-w-wind his tail wight wound him!'

THE SOCIAL SCIENCE CONGRESS.—Dr. Child, of Oxford, says:—There were certain diseases which it was a disgrace to the country to allow to exist—such as typhus, typhoid, diphtheria and smallpox, and these might be eradicated with ordinary sanitary care and precaution. All should read a large illustrated sheet given with each bottle of ENOS' FRUIT SALT. The information is invaluable. ENOS' FRUIT SALT keeps the Blood pure, and prevents disease and premature death. Sold by all Chemists and Stores. (30)

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