



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 at 20c as follows:—Not exceeding 40z, 4d; not exceeding 40z, 1d; for every additional 20z 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.

OUR COT.

THE last news from the Hospital is that Florrie is just about the same, and is exceedingly pleased with her beautiful scrapbook. She gave Johnnie the magazines in it which Cousin Phoebe kindly added for him. Johnnie is better. He was delighted with the nice book which one of the boy cousins was good enough to send him some little time ago. Johnnie was out of the Hospital when the book came, so I waited to give it to him through his sister. However, he has now received it himself.—COUSIN KATE.

DEAR COUSIN KATE.—I have not written to you for a long time. I will tell you the reason; it is because the annual examination was being held. I came off well, and the class was put up a few days after the examination was finished. I was in the Fifth Standard before the examination, and now I am in the Seventh Standard. I will tell you why I missed a standard. It is because I am young and passed well. Four more boys and five girls were put up with me. I often go out fishing with my father, and often get a few fish. The name of our dog is Leo, and he often used to chase the fowls. Our canary got away. The bottom of the cage fell out, and of course the bird flew away, so we wasted our trouble. I will send in some riddles this time.—Your loving cousin, Boz. Masterton.

[Let me congratulate you, Cousin Boz, on your great success at school. What are you going to be when you leave the Seventh? Are you a successful fisherman, or should I say, boy? I used to like fishing, but I am not in the way of it now. The only fishing I indulge in is fishing for money for the Cot Fund. That is better, anyway, than fishing for compliments, which, you would say, is the sort of fishing most girls go in for. I laughed when I read that the bottom of your cage fell out, though I daresay you did not think it a joke at the time. I am sure your father did, though he would not hurt your feelings by showing his amusement. Many thanks for the riddles. How did you cure Leo of chasing the fowls? We had an exciting rat hunt last night. A rat got into the pantry through a hole, and we tried to kill it with a bar. He got back to his hole, and I threw the pepperpot at it! Some mouse has got into Mr Rat's eyes, for he squeaked horribly.—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE.—I did not get the badge or card. I went to the post office to see if they had come. Cousin George's father's place was burned to the ground on the Prince of Wales' Birthday. I went with the Good Templars for a picnic at Te Aute. It is a pretty place all surrounded by hills. The place we went to was smothered with ferns. We had dinner early, and after playing for some time we went to find a swimming place. After we had a swim we went to see the College sports. There was a bit of fun in the obstacle race. Cato, when halfway under a heap of wood, was stuck, and so the other got away. When it was over we went and had tea. After tea we had some more games, then we went to the station, and so home. We have got two horses, one we had for a long time, and the other a new one, which we call Bessie. I must now close.—From COUSIN FRANK.

[I cannot understand, dear Cousin Frank, why the card and badge have not arrived. Please send me the name of your house or street; or give me your father's

name, and I will post others to you. The new cards are ready now, and you shall have one of them. Your letter is nice and interesting, and you seem to have had a good time at Te Aute. I am so sorry about Cousin George's home. Where are they going to live? Did you see the fire? Did you collect any ferns at the picnic? Have you a garden? Most of the children are busy with the Flower Show, which comes off in a day or two. I am glad to see that many boys are exhibiting.—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE.—I must acknowledge the receipt of a collecting card which you sent me last week concerning the Cousins' Cot Fund. I will do all in my power to collect and fill the card, and will send it back at the shortest possible notice. I am going to play a violin solo at a concert in Parnell next Thursday evening. I am not at all nervous, as I have played in public on previous occasions. I went to an afternoon tea at Judge's Bay last Saturday, and enjoyed myself fairly well. There were not so many there as on previous occasions, owing to the many counter-attractions on that day. We have a cat named Trilby. She is a great pet with all of us, and I am afraid, is greatly spoiled. Her original name was Floss, but as everyone is 'Trilby-mad,' we had to be in the fashion, too, you see! I must conclude now with love from COUSIN SYBIL.

I, dear cousin Sybil, have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of a very prettily-written little note. I quite thought I had sent you a card before, and it was only on writing out my list of cousins for the paper that I discovered my omission. I conclude since you have honored DuMaurier so far as to name your cat after his heroine, that you liked 'Trilby.' So did I, and yet I heard people say they would not cross the road to see it! I have not yet made your personal acquaintance. I hope before very long to meet all the Auckland cousins. I do not know whether you have a badge. Would you like one? They cost 6d.—COUSIN KATE.]

PUZZLE COLUMN.

(1) Why is cutting off an elephant's head widely different from cutting off any other head? (2) Why is u the gayest letter in the alphabet? (3) Why do sailors know that the moon is made of green cheese? (4) Why should we never sleep in a railway train?—COUSIN BOZ.

READY FOR HIS OPPORTUNITY.

NEVER was a better story told of being ready to seize an opportunity than that of the pilot on a certain ferry-boat. The pilot was at one time a bootblack and often crossed to the other side on the boats. It was his delight to watch the pilot and engineer at work. Particularly was he fascinated by the engineer's manoeuvres in getting the boat into the slip, and this interest on his part stood him in good stead at one time.

'We were unusually crowded,' says the pilot, 'on the trip when my stroke of good luck took place, both gangways running past the engine-room being choked up with horses and waggons.'

'Most of the drivers had gone forward, and I sat in my usual place on the ledge at the engine-room door alone. Bang! the first bell sounded to reduce her to half speed, and I glanced around to watch the engineer shut off steam. He was sitting facing the engine in his arm-chair, his chin in his hand, and his arm resting on the side of the chair.'

'I was surprised to see that he made no move, and thinking he was asleep, I ran in to shake him. By this time the pilot evidently thought something was wrong, and the big bell sounded twice, meaning, as you probably know, to stop the engine. I could not make the engineer move, and without hesitating I stepped across to the engine, and grasping the wheel, I shut off the steam and disconnected the eccentrics.'

'Of course the engine stopped, and the pilot, thinking everything was all right, commenced to send down his signals. I was a little frightened—more at the idea of my working the big engine than at making any mistake, for I knew exactly what to do.'

'Well, we had some trouble making the slip, and I had to back her out. I can tell you, working that lever bar was no easy job. Then came the sharp tingle for full speed, and shortly I had her well out into the river. Then came the bells to stop her, and again to reverse and go ahead under half speed.'

'By that time I was very tired, but no longer nervous, and when we again neared the slip and the welcome bell to stop the engine sounded, I was very glad. The double signal to back water came, and I pushed the lever bar up and down twice before I got my last signal to stop.'

'When I heard the rattle of the chains as they tied her in the slip I was worn out, and it seems to me I must have fainted, for when I came to, it was in the presence of the pilot, and some of the officers of the line. They told me the engineer had died of heart disease; and in recognition of my services they placed me at school and gratified my ambition to become a pilot, as you see.'

CONSIDERATE FATHER.

DOCTOR STONY, the father of the great Chief Justice, was a man of sterling commonsense and genuine kindness. One illustration of his method of family government indicates that he must have been greatly beloved for his sympathy with boyish fun.

One evening after the family had gone to bed the elder boys rose, dressed themselves and crept softly down into the kitchen. They built a roaring fire in the great fireplace, skirmished about the pantry, and having secured a plentiful supply of provisions, prepared to 'make a night of it.'

Suddenly, to their dismay, a knock was heard at the door. They put out the light, hastily hid the food, and concealed themselves about the room as best they could. The father's step was heard on the stair, and in a moment he entered, bearing a lamp.

The smell of food attracted his attention, and glancing round, he saw the leg of a boy protruding from under a table. Without a word he marched straight to the door and admitted his visitor, who had come to consult him professionally.

The two sat down before the fire and began talking together, but after a time a scrambling noise was heard under the table, and this the visitor commented on.

'Ah,' said the doctor, 'didn't you know we keep a dog?'

When the visitor took his leave the doctor retired and left the boys to their fun. He advised his wife to discourage such raids in the future, though he had not the heart to put an end to such hearty enjoyment when it was actually in progression.

PLASTERS.

PLASTERS, according to text-books on medicine, are solid compounds intended for external application, adhesive at the temperature of the body, and of such consistency as to render the aid of heat necessary in spreading them.

Most plasters have as their basis a compound of olive-oil and lead, while others owe their consistency and adhesiveness to resins or a mixture of these with wax and fats.

Plasters are mainly employed on sound skin as counter-irritants to draw inflammation to the surface, or upon cuts, etc., to draw the edges of the wound together.

Rarely if ever, are plasters used at present upon ulcerated surfaces, since they have been found to interfere with the process of healing.

All medicated plasters which are to exert a local effect should be made porous, to prevent excessive irritation by checking the natural perspiration of the skin.

Although about seventeen kinds of plaster are listed in medicine, only a few of them are in extensive use, and these are usually kept prepared by the druggist.

Probably the kind which is most often resorted to is the belladonna plaster. In many cases of muscular pain and weakness, especially in that form of rheumatism or neuralgia which attacks the loins, a plaster made of belladonna, either with or without the addition of cayenne pepper, is of decided benefit.

Plasters of gum ammoniac were at one time much in use as a remedy for swollen glands and enlarged joints. The action of the drug is slightly stimulating.

Capsicum, or cayenne pepper, plasters are of great value as counter-irritants, as the action of the drug is prolonged, and yet sufficiently mild to ensure only a healthy result.

Of the other plasters in common use, we may mention those made of opium and tar. For blistering, soap plaster, as it is called, will be found safe.

The surgeon's plaster, used to draw together the edges of wounds, is made up with lead which has slightly antiseptic properties.

It is needless to add that a correct recognition of the nature of the trouble must be arrived at before the proper form of plaster can be applied.

PRUDENT INVESTMENTS.

IT is a great blessing to have a cheerful confidence in the future. Two eminent French gentlemen who were great friends used to relate an amusing story of their impecunious days.

Neither fame nor fortune had come to them, but they were always hopeful. The years had weighed heavily enough upon Jules, however, for him to have become entirely bald.

One day Alphonse met him with a beaming countenance, and cried gaily:

'What do you think, Jules? I have been buying a strong box!'

'Then, Alphonse,' replied Jules, firmly, 'I shall buy a hair-brush.'

Pullman porters are said to regard anything less than a quarter as a very vulgar fraction.

The farmer leads no E Z life;  
The C D sows will rot;  
And when at E V rests from strife,  
His bones all A K lot.

Betsy, an old coloured cook, was moaning around the kitchen one day, when her mistress asked her if she was ill. 'No, ma'am, not 'xactly,' said Betsy. 'But the fac' is, I don't feel ambition 'nough to git outer my own way.'

'Ah, foolish boys,  
B'girt by joys,  
Ye wish that ye were men;  
The aged sigh;  
We would, they cry,  
That we were boys again!

TO DARKEN GREY HAIR.

Lockyer's Sulphur Hair Restorer, quickest, safest, best; restores the natural colour. Lockyer's, the real English Hair Restorer. Large bottles, 1s 6d, everywhere.—(Advt)