



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 8oz, 1d; for every additional 2oz or fractional part thereof, 1d. It is well for correspondence to be marked 'Press Manuscript only.'

Please note, dear cousins, that all letters addressed to Cousin Kate must now bear the words, 'Press Manuscript only.' If so marked, and the flap turned in, and not overweight, they will come for a 1/2d stamp in Auckland, but a 1d from every other place.

THE 'GRAPHIC' COUSINS' GOT 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 to write to you several times, but have always forgotten. I am glad all the cousins enjoyed themselves at the picnic. I did. I think we could easily start an athletic club with such fast runners as Cousins Florrie, Nat, and also Pa. I went to Ngarawabia on St. Patrick's Day, and our crew won one race. In the afternoon there was a banquet in the hall, which was the best part of the programme, so we all thought. Did you go anywhere in the Easter holidays? I went up to Heilier's Creek on Friday, and on Monday I went all round the Harbour in a skiff as far as Cheltenham Beach, where I saw Cousins Charley, Harry, Edward, and Nat out sailing. I think it was the best day we have had this summer. Did you go down to see Butler when he arrived here? I do not think many people saw him the way the police looked after him; as if he would melt if anyone saw him! My sisters went up to the Hospital to see Florrie last week and took her some books, but I must stop now. With love to all.—
COUSIN ANDY.

I am very glad your good intentions have at length taken effect. Yes, a GRAPHIC Cousins' Athletic Club would be rather a good idea. You seem to have had a capital holiday on St. Patrick's Day. I did not go anywhere in the Easter holidays, in fact, I came into town both Monday and Tuesday and worked. You may be quite sure I did not go near Butler. I prefer looking at good people, and pretty and pleasant things, instead of making a bad man feel himself an object of interest when he should be so awfully ashamed of himself, he ought to refuse to be seen at all.—
COUSIN KATE.]

CUNNING HUNTER.

DESERVEDLY has Master Fox served for ages as the representative of craft and guile. He evidently has a brain, and means to use it in preserving his life and stocking his larder. The author of 'Forty-five Years of Sport' says that a fox was one day seen coming out of a pile of stones near the water side.

He hid in the heather for a while, and then pushed out something on the water, which proved to be a bunch of moss. The wind took it into the middle of the lake, and blew it past some ducks, sitting on the surface.

Having watched his venture for perhaps ten minutes, with apparent satisfaction, and observed that it reared the ducks without arousing their suspicions, our friend began to collect another and larger bunch of moss, which he allowed to float in the same direction, but this time he swam behind it, taking care to show only his eyes and nose above water.

Just as it was passing the group of ducks, he made a sudden dive, pulled down a bird, and swam back to shore under water. Arrived there, he carried the duck to the pile of stones, where his wife and daughter were no doubt waiting to enjoy the fruits of his labours.

A LORD INCOGNITO.

A STORY was recently told about a brewer who, on a train in England, met an unpretentious man who seemed to know all about the brewing business, and finally offered the man a modest situation in his establishment. Whereupon the unknown person remarked that 'his name was Bassard' (that of the most famous of British brewers), after Lord Burton. This is really a warmed-over story about the Earl of Rosse.

Lord Rosse was an expert mechanic, and was also somewhat careless about his dress. One day he went over a great manufactory. The manager, seeing that he seemed to know a good deal about things, fell into conversation with him, and presently said to him:

'Look here, my man, I'm looking for some such intelligent workman as you seem to be. Do you want a job?'

Lord Rosse thanked him, but said he was obliged to decline the kind offer. On another occasion the earl was looking through the engine-room of a large manufactory. He suddenly became much interested in something he saw, and looked apprehensive. The engineer came up.

'Well, what's up?' he growled. 'What are you shaking your head and looking at your watch for? What have you got to find fault with?'

'Oh,' answered Lord Rosse, 'I'm not finding any fault. I am just waiting till the boiler explodes.'

'Till the boiler explodes? Why, you're crazy, man! You'll have to get out of here.'

'Well,' said the earl, 'if you work ten minutes longer with that screw loose there, the boiler certainly will explode.'

The engineer looked at the screw indicated by his rough visitor. He jumped at the screw, and fastened it as soon as he could.

'Why didn't you say that sooner?' he demanded. 'Why should I?' answered Lord Rosse. 'I never yet have had an opportunity to see a boiler explode!'

ODD FRIENDS.

LAST summer, while in the country, I witnessed a very curious comradeship. It was at a farmhouse. The hens had all been carried to another farm, leaving at home a solitary rooster who had refused to be caught with the rest.

There was a large white cat about the premises, and soon the rooster began to follow her around, talking to her in his rooster fashion.

At first the cat seemed to dislike so much attention, and would hide away, sometimes for hours; but whenever she reappeared the rooster would run toward her with great delight, assuming the air of protector and provider. He would look up articles of food, and call her to partake, evidently expecting her to respond.

After a while the two became inseparable during the day, and even when night came the rooster would linger around as long as possible before going to roost. Frequently the cat followed him to the shed, and looked up at him on his perch, while he talked to her as if urging her to come up too.

On this point, however, habit proved stronger than affection, and she slowly wended her way back to the house. But when morning came, they were always found together again.

The rooster would stand quite still, and allow the cat to rub against him, and she seemed to take care not to rub the feathers the wrong way. It was extremely amusing to watch them, day by day, growing more and more attached to each other. They sat side by side, wandered about together, and whenever one was called the other followed closely behind.

When food was given the cat, the two often ate from the same dish. The rooster seemed to take great delight in this proceeding, keeping up a constant chatter, as if encouraging the cat to eat all she could.

Their friendship continued uninterrupted through the entire summer, with none of those misunderstandings and coldnesses which often occur among a higher order of beings. But when autumn came, and the hens were brought back, the rooster left his summer companion, seemingly without regret.

TIT FOR TAT.

IN a Parisian omnibus, an ill-bred male passenger made a grimace when a very stout old lady got in. 'Hippopotamus!' he exclaimed under his breath, but so loudly that the old lady heard him.

'Sir,' she said, 'you know an omnibus is like Noah's Ark; it takes in all the animals—even donkeys!'

'It is wonderful what progress has been made in the way of machinery,' remarked Mr. Figg. 'I see that there has been a machine invented that can make a complete pair of shoes in sixteen minutes. Why, that is faster than Tommy can wear them out.'

The man who brought milk to Herbert's house drove two horses, one a very white one, the other a deep cream colour. Herbert saw them coming one morning, and called to his mother, 'Mamma, here comes Skim Milk and Cream.'

JAPANESE CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

It takes a long time to change a single flower to a double one, or to produce variations of colour and form. This holds true of the rose and other garden flowers, and when we consider the subject, it becomes evident that it must have been centuries since the Chinese and Japanese gardeners began to improve the chrysanthemum from the little single flower which is supposed to be the original of all the varieties now in cultivation.

Japan is really the home of the best varieties of chrysanthemum, as it is of the dwarf orange-tree, and of oaks a century old in six-inch pots. The highest distinction the Mikado can confer upon any of his subjects is the decoration of the chrysanthemum, and the flower is also the royal seal. For centuries it has been esteemed and beloved by the people, nobles and commons.

The Japanese guard the choicest flowers with jealous care, and it is probable that varieties are cultivated in some parts of the empire that are quite unknown to Western travellers. It is even believed by some enthusiasts that either in China or Japan exists that fabulous flower, the blue chrysanthemum, which figures on old porcelain and is mentioned in written works.

The author of the volume of travel entitled 'In the Track of the Sun' says that he found the chrysanthemum show of a Japanese city a curious sight. Abutting on a narrow street were numerous gardens containing grottoes and theatrical stages, some of them revolving, as they do in Japanese theatres.

On these were arranged in representation of historical or fabulous scenes, lay figures, whose clothing was composed entirely of growing chrysanthemums. In one place was a daimio, who was being dragged from his horse by a devil, and in another a warrior attacking a prostrate man, who shrunk back, endeavouring vainly to defend himself. All these figures were of life size, and were fashioned in growing flowers.

MISCALCULATION.

A NEWSPAPER prints a story which reminds one of the old saying about the shoemaker and his last.

A Yarmouth captain had a small coasting schooner lying in port, and decided to give a lesson to painters in general by himself painting the vessel's name on her bows. He could not reach high enough from the float, and did not care to put out a swinging stage, so he reached down over the side to do the lettering.

After finishing the job on one bow, he went ashore to view his handiwork, and this is what met his gaze—
H I O W K

TWICE SCARED.

THE author of 'Sports and Adventures Among the North American Indians,' says that he and a companion, whom he calls M—, had wounded a buffalo, and were following him through a country intersected by small streams. They came at last to a stream which had a very steep bank, about fifteen feet high. At the bottom they saw the buffalo waiting for them.

He came up the bank with a rush, and very nearly caught us, as we were not expecting such a demonstration. We both fired and bolted in opposite directions.

The buffalo took after M—, who, instead of going down the bank into the timber at the bottom, ran along the top. Things were getting dangerous, when I managed to get in a shot which struck the beast well forward. He turned and went slowly down the bank. Then he walked into the stream, lay down, and rolled over.

Thinking he was dead, we both went up to him, first leaning our rifles against a tree a few yards away. Before taking out his tongue, we sat down on his body and began to discuss the affair. While we were thus employed the buffalo gave a violent heave, nearly throwing us off, and then attempted to rise.

We went up the bank faster than we had come down, and I blush to say that we forgot our rifles in our hurry. However, it was only a last effort, and the buffalo was soon dead.

JUST THE REVERSE.

'Did you fall into the lake this summer, Bobbie?'

'Nope—just the other way. I took a little tin cup out with me, and several times part of the lake fell into me.'

Willie: 'Why, Maude, what's happened your dress? It looks as if it had been through a paint shop.' Maude: 'If you won't laugh I will tell you. Lillie and I were going up Garden-street, and right in front of that new house I got all spattered with mortar, I felt awfully mortified.'

Mr Sweet: 'Do you find it economical to do your own cooking?' Mrs Burnes: 'Oh, yes; my husband doesn't eat half as much as he did when we had a cook.'

A man becomes in time very weary of reading the tin-tack joke. Then he steps on one and begins enjoying it all over again.

The victor never reasons why. It is only the loser who gives explanations.

When a man takes your hand with a firm, cordial grasp, it is a sure sign that his heart is full or his purse empty.

Customer: 'You are quite sure that is the same razor as you used yesterday?' Barber: 'Oh, quite, sir. Quite.' Customer: 'Stropped the same way, eh?' Barber: 'Oh, yes, sir.' Customer: 'Then please put me under gas.'

Baby Fred has an auntie that he loves very much indeed, but of course no one can quite equal mamma in his estimation. The other day he was asked the familiar question: 'Whose boy are you?' 'I'm mamma's and auntie's,' he answered; 'but,' he added quickly, 'my head belongs to mamma.'