



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 102, 4d; not exceeding 402, 1d; for every additional 202 or fractional part thereof, 4d. 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 4d stamp in Auckland, but a 1d from every other place.

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 card will be sent on application.

Dear Cousin Kate,—I have not received the badge which you said you sent me. I hope it has not got lost. One of my aunts has just been up to your Exhibition. She thought it was splendid, and thinks Auckland a very nice place, and the people so kind to visitors. It is so hot here; I shall be glad to get away by the sea. My sister and I are going to have our photos taken in our fancy dresses this week. Would you like them for the 'Graphic'? I have cut out the cousins' photos that have appeared in the 'Graphic.' I should be so glad if you would come and see us next time you come to Wellington. With love to you and all the cousins, wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, I remain, your loving Cousin Athie.

[I am very glad your aunt was so pleased with Auckland. The reason you have not received your badge is that when I came to address the envelope I could not find your new address, so had to wait until I heard from you again. I anxiously opened your letter received to-day, but alas! there was no address at all, so again you will be disappointed. Please send me your full name and where I am to send the badge; a post card will do. Yes, also please send your photograph and that of your sister in fancy dress. It is very kind of you to hope to see me in Wellington, but I do not expect to be in that city again for ages. I hope you had a happy Christmas.—Cousin Kate.]

'If I were Santa Claus,' said mamma, softly, as she sat sewing on the first of January, 'if I were Santa Claus, I think I'd make another trip about New Year. I think I'd just peep in at the windows and see how the children used their Christmas things. And then I'd know whether to come next year or not.'

Nelly and Ned and Floy glanced quickly up at the windows. What cracks there were between the curtains!

'Why, of course, Floy,' said Ned, 'you can have my train of cars a while just as well as not.'

'Here's your ball, Ned,' said Nelly. 'I won't hide it again.'

And if Santa Claus had called within the next hour he would have gone away quite satisfied.

A MODEST PHILOSOPHER.

One day Faraday, the famous natural philosopher, was asked by the Assistant Secretary of the Royal Society, Walter White, who records the talk in his 'Journals,' if he were writing a paper for the society.

'No,' said he, shaking his head, 'I am too old.' He was then in his sixty-seventh year.

'Too old! Why, age brings wisdom,' replied the secretary.

'Yes, but one may overshoot the wisdom,' rejoined Faraday.

'You cannot mean that you have outlived your wisdom?' asked the amazed official.

'Something like it,' answered the modest philosopher. 'My memory is gone; if I make an experiment, I forget before twelve hours are over whether the result was positive or negative. How can I write a paper while my memory is unreliable? No, I must content myself with giving my lectures to children.'

The remark illustrates the philosopher's scientific spirit, and what is of greater value, his moral nature. He found his memory failing and his mental powers declining, and accepted the facts as quietly as he had accepted his discoveries in magnetism. He uttered no complaint, nor did he, as many old men do, attempt that which he could not achieve.

Calmly, without ostentation, he gave up whatever work he could not carry on, content to lecture to the children who gathered to see his luminous experiments and to listen to explanations that explained even to their minds the laws of chemistry and magnetism.

Faraday's moral nature appears in his freedom from pride and self-assertion. He gave generous recognition to the claims of his scientific contemporaries, made honourable mention of his assistants, thankfully accepted a correction, and made use of every expedient, no matter how humble the person who suggested it, if it would make his work more effective.

ACCLIMATISING ANIMALS IN ENGLAND.

The 'Spectator' contains an interesting account of the Duke of Bedford's successful efforts to acclimatise animals of different countries in his park at Woburn Abbey. The writer says:—

During the last four years the Duke of Bedford has carried out a scheme of animal acclimatisation in the park at Woburn Abbey on a scale never before attempted in this country. Birds as well as quadrupeds are the subjects of this experiment, and the magnificent pheasants of China and India haunt the woods in large numbers. But the greater number of the animals are various kinds of deer, of which no fewer than 31 species are in the open park or paddocks—bison, zebras, antelopes, wild sheep and goats and yaks. The novelty and freshness of this experiment consist not only in the accumulation of such a number of species, interesting as this is to the naturalist, but in their way of life, free and unconfined in an English park. That is the lot of the greater number of the animals at Woburn, some being entirely free and wandering at large, like the native red deer and fallow deer, while the others, though for the present in separate enclosures, are kept in 'reserves' so spacious, and so lightly though effectively separated, that they have the appearance of enjoying the same degree of liberty. Almost the first question which suggests itself is, What is the general effect of this gathering of over-sea animals, from the African veldt and Indian hills, the Manchurian mountains and North American prairies, and from wild-animal land quod ubique est, on the green pastures and under the elms and oaks round the home of a great

English family? Briefly, we may say that the effect is magnificent. During the journey back by train through Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, the valleys and meadows stocked with our ordinary domestic animals seem solitary and deserted after the eye has rested for hours on the varied and impressive forms that crowd the slopes, groves, and glades of this fine park. This effect is due in part to the largeness of the scale on which the stocking of Woburn with wild animals has been carried out. In the phrase of the farmer, the park 'carries a larger head' of animals than is commonly seen on a similar area, even in the richest pastures. The scene recalls the descriptions of the early travellers in Southern Africa, when the large fauna roamed there in unbroken numbers, and with little fear of man. The coup 'd'oeil in parts of the park where the animals gather thickest is so striking that the mind descends reluctantly to the identification of the species, or to details of dates, origin, and management. From one position, looking up a long green slope towards the abbey, there could be seen at the time of the writer's last visit between two and three hundred animals, both birds and beasts, feeding or sleeping within sight of the immediate front of the spectator. These varied in species from cranes and storks and almost every known species of swan to wapiti stags, antelopes, and zebras, walking, sitting, galloping, feeding, or sleeping. For quite half a mile up the slope the white swans and other wildfowl were dotted among the deer and other ruminants, presenting a strange and most attractive example of the real 'paradise' which animals will make for themselves when only the good beasts are selected to live together.

The creatures in this animal Arcadia were grouped nearly as follows:—In the foreground was a large pool, circular, with clayey banks, one of a chain of ponds of all sizes, from that of a fishpond to a large lake which lies lower in the park. On and around this pool were many species of swans, and eight of foreign geese, but the greater number of these were scattered, as we have said, over some 100 acres of park. In the centre of the pond sat a cormorant, and on the grass by the margin some gigantic cranes were running and 'dancing' in honour of the sun, which was making its first appearance during four days. On the hill to the left, where the abbey lies, were five distinct herds of deer. Three of these were fallow bucks and does. One herd was of red deer and hybrids between the red deer and the wapiti. On the sky-line were a herd of pure-bred wapiti, with three huge stags, their horns just cleared from the velvet. In the centre slope in diminishing perspective, till they appeared mere dots among the trees, were mixed groups of Japanese deer, the same breed which had thriven so remarkably in the parks of Sir Edmond Loder and Lord Powerscourt, fallow bucks and does, red deer, both 'red' and pure white, of which variety the park holds a considerable number, a few other and smaller foreign deer, and a group of five Nighau antelope from India. Three of these were reddish-grey in colour, while two were real 'blue bulls,' very fine upstanding beasts, well suited to woodland scenery. On the right, within a hundred yards, lying down or feeding under an ancient elm, were a small herd of zebras, as quiet and at their ease as so many New Forest ponies with their foals. Picture this animal population among the groves and ancient timber of an English park in May. Nor is this more than one among many such sights visible in this unique paradise.

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ENGLAND'S GREATEST.

The 'Independent' contains some reminiscences of Gladstone, suggestive, as all such reminiscences must be, of his wonderful intellectual and moral power. He learned French late in life, incited to do so by his enjoyment of French literature. At eighty-six he mastered Danish. A few years ago a dinner was given him by Jules Simon and other distinguished Frenchmen.

'Shall I speak in French or English?' he asked an American friend, on arriving.

The American would not venture to advise Mr Gladstone in anything, but added:

'If I were expected to speak and could do so in their own tongue, I should certainly use it.'

'I will speak in French,' said Mr Gladstone, and so he did for half an hour, to the astonishment and delight of all who were present.

No subject seemed too slight to attract his interest. Some American apples were placed on the table near him, and one of our countrymen remarked: 'Those are rather fine apples.' 'Yes,' said Mr Gladstone. 'You sent us seven thousand three hundred and sixty-five barrels last year.'

Among the two hundred guests present, possibly there was not another one who could so promptly have stated a fact of such merely general interest.

It is good to hear the generous (or just!) commendation of one great man for another.

'When you meet Mr Gladstone,' John Bright once said to a visitor in England, 'you will see the greatest Englishman of our time.'

A titled lady was one day railing at Mr Gladstone, as was the fashion in England until recently. Suddenly Mr Bright turned and asked:

'Has your son ever seen Mr Gladstone?'

The son was at that moment standing beside them. 'No,' was the surprised answer.

'Then, madam,' said Mr Bright, 'permit me to urge you to take him at once to see the greatest Englishman he is ever likely to look upon.'

VISITING A SHRINE.

The town of Kum, one of the walled cities of Persia, ranks second to Meshed in sanctity, on account of the famous shrine of Masuma Fatima, sister of the Imam Riza, a famous saint of the Mohammedans. While Lieutenant Rawlinson was on his way to Teheran he heard much of this sacred city and the glories of the shrine, which, it was said, no European had ever entered. Death, so rumour whispered, would be the portion of the audacious infidel who should be discovered within its precincts.

To a young and ardent spirit a dangerous adventure is an irresistible attraction. Young Rawlinson determined to visit the shrine. Disguised as a Persian pilgrim, thousands of whom annually journey to the sacred city, he joined the crowd of pilgrims. His knowledge of Persian and of the customs of the country enabled him to pass undetected through the temple gates, and to make his way to the tomb of the saint. The guardian gave him the customary form of words and he repented them.

But his curiosity almost caused his detection. Attracted by magnificent suits of steel armour which hung on the walls, he was gazing at them, when suddenly he found that he had turned his back upon the sacred shrine wherein the saint was entombed.

A thrill of alarm startled him; but the discourtesy, impossible to a 'true believer,' had not been noticed. If it had been there would probably have been no further career for the young lieutenant, who subsequently became the decipherer of Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions and texts, and died the renowned Orientalist, Sir Henry Rawlinson.

Their Journal of Horticulture.—Tuesday, a.m.: Taken up horticulture; m.: planted an apple seed; p.m.: dug it up to see if it has grown.