



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 enclosures turned in are carried through the Post Office as follows:—Not exceeding 4oz. 4d.; not exceeding 4oz. 1d.; for every additional 2oz. 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 cards will be sent on application.

GRAPHIC COUSINS' PRIZE COMPETITION.

A prize of half a crown will be given for the most correct solution of the following children's picture puzzle. Here is a story, where words are missed out, and replaced by little pictures. The pictures tell you what the word should be. For instance, the burglar heeys: 'Hark I hear a sound; I guess its time for me to —' Then comes a picture of a bolt. So the sentence is, 'I guess its time for me to bolt.'

You may get your parents to help you to do this, but you must write out the story in your own handwriting, and place your full name clearly at the bottom. You MUST also cut out and enclose the puzzle story itself, pasted on the paper on which you write. All the answers will be placed in a box till the competition closes, and then, if, when they are opened, more than one boy or girl has decided correctly, the prize will be given to the one whose letter was opened first.

Here is the puzzle:

"Hark! I hear a sound; I guess it's time for me to . Well, I have about  the plunder I can , so I will skip out before it is . Every moment  to my danger. This was a hard piece to enter. A high wall seemed to  it all round. When I tried to  the wall, I hurt my hand. I think I must have managed to  with my . Before I go I think I'll take a little from this side . Here is a  and some . Ha! some one is surely coming. I  a shadow moving. It is quite  I am discovered. But the alarm didn't . Well, I must  up and myself away from this tempting spread. I entered the house without much for y, but as a there is danger leaving that coming in. I will blow out this r, for my safety on getting away in the dark. My friend the housemaid gave me good when she told me to nt this cold pie. She's a nice girl, and so sentimental. I guess I'll a of my hair as a souvenir. I'll it to this card, and sign my name,—yours truly, , and now I'll my way quietly out."

FOR PITTY'S SAKE.

(Continued.)

Maggie took out to Barney every day, and soon he began to hold up his head and give a friendly 'Hu-hu-hu!' away down in his throat when she appeared. When a week had gone by he made stiff little attempts to prance, by way of showing his appreciation of the good things she brought him. At the end of a month Maggie herself pranced and capered every time she looked at him. To her he seemed no longer recognisable as Lee Frye's Barney.

Another fortnight went by, and the old horse had enjoyed six weeks of 'good time,' as Maggie told him when she carried him another brown mash, with chopped carrots in it, to say nothing of two eggs that she had found in a 'stolen' nest under an alder bush. She never forgot how he rubbed his velvety nose against her cheek that evening. She liked to think afterward that some mysterious presence of what was coming had been accord-

his old stable. It would have broken her heart, yet she would have done it. But now—

Lee Frye was repeating his demand in a voice and manner that brooked no denying, and presently Miss Walker appeared.

"Good morning, Mr Frye," she said. "Good mornin'," growled the visitor. "I've found my horse, you see."

Miss Walker thought his tone and manner so peculiar that she glanced over his shoulder in a puzzled way at the animal alluded to.

"Is it—it can't be the same horse, surely?" she questioned.

"Yes, ma'am, it's the same identical horse, or will be when I've worried some of the fat off him that you've taken the unnecessary trouble to put on."

"Me?" snapped Miss Walker, for there was no mistaking the intentional offensiveness of the fellow.

"Yes, ma'am, you. Now you needn't put on airs, nor try any tricks on me. I found my horse in your stable, eating your feed that your beggar put carried to him, for I saw her with my own eyes. I don't want any better case against you than I've got, and I'll land you in the penitentiary if there's any law in the country; and it's too good for you, too. There's only one thing fit for a horse-thief, and that's a rope over the limb of a tree."

For once in her life Miss Walker could think of no word that she

and slapped her face repeatedly, interlarding the stinging blows with a gasping tirade of censure.

"Do you dare to tell me that you're a horse-thief?—that you sneaked out and went three miles—in the night—and stole Lee Frye's horse—and put him in my stable—and fed him on my feed? Do you know that you'll get twenty years in the penitentiary?—that you've disgraced me, who've been a good friend to you and given you a good home? Oh, that I should live to see—this—day!"

With the last explosive word she flung the child violently from her, and stood glaring down upon her. Maggie was sobbing piteously, but she struggled to her knees and pleaded not to be called a horse-thief.

"Oh, I only took poor Barney for a little while," she sobbed; 'because I pitied him so, and wanted him to have one little good time before he was quite beaten to death. Oh, I didn't steal him. I knew I'd have to take him back some time. Can't you tell Lee Frye that, Miss Walker?"

"Oh yes; and much good it'll do. He'll have the sheriff here before night, and you'll go to gaol, where horse-thieves belong. Oh, that's the right name for you; you needn't try to creep inside of yourself. To think of your going and disgracing me like this. Get up and clear out of my sight."

Maggie went drooping out at the open door, along the path through the orchard, and on across the meadow to the woods pasture. It was the same path she had traversed daily on her loving errands to Barney. The stable was tenantless now, and poor Barney had gone back to his old misery. She flung herself upon the ground, and lay there, broken-hearted, crushed with shame.

The sheriff would come and take her to gaol; Miss Walker had said so. She would be prosecuted, like the thief that stole Mr Everding's silver-mounted harness. She told herself that she could never be a respectable little girl again, even if she lived 20 years and got out of the penitentiary; she would always be just a horse-thief; and by that time she would be an old woman, like Miss Walker, and poor Barney would be dead.

She wished that she might lie down in that deep pool in the brook and die, right now; but she feared that even God would close the door of heaven against a horse-thief.

She lay on the grass beside the path, awaiting the coming of the dreaded officer of the law. At first the slightest sound, like the flutter of a bird wing, would startle her; and at the rattle of passing wheels in the road she would lift her head and listen with a strained intendment; but at last, her body relaxing after the strain, she fell into a troubled sleep.

When she awoke there was a hand upon her arm, and a familiar face bent near. It was Mr Everding, a well-to-do neighbour, and behind him was a big man, with a pair of very blue eyes that twinkled down at her.

"Wake up, Maggie," said Mr Everding, kindly. "This gentleman and I would like to have a little talk with you."

"Is he the—sheriff?" she asked, in an awed whisper.

"Yes, but you need not fear him. He is an old friend of mine, and I have never known him to hurt any creature smaller and weaker than himself. Lee Frye went to swear out a warrant for Miss Walker's arrest; but he could not swear that he saw her go near the horse, and he did see you, and the whole matter was so mixed up that the magistrate sent the sheriff over to investigate before a warrant was issued. Now tell us truly what you know about it, Maggie."

Maggie's face flushed hotly, and her eyes sank, but the next moment she looked up, bravely.

"I—I took him, Mr Everding, but I didn't know it was stealing till Miss Walker told me. I took him just for a while, because I pitied him so, and I hadn't any money to buy him, and—oh, nobody who had money ever seemed to pity him, or care how much he suffered."

"That's what I call a home thrust," said the sheriff, reaching out and slyly touching Mr Everding's ankle with the toe of his big boot, whereupon it was Mr Everding's turn to flush.



HE RUBBED HIS VELVETY NOSE AGAINST HER CHEEK.

ed him, and that rare caress had meant a loving farewell.

By that time she had conquered the painful habit of listening for Lee Frye's waggon, and when, on the following day, the hated sound suddenly smote upon her ear, she almost dropped the plate she was wiping, so great was the start it gave her.

"Well, I declare," exclaimed Miss Walker, peering out at the edge of the blind, 'if Lee Frye hasn't got a new horse! Same colour as the old one, but land! this one's got meat on his bones. Why, he's stopped at my gate! He's coming in here! Do you hear, Maggie? Lee Frye's at the front door."

Maggie got up weakly and went to the door. She was dimly conscious that Lee Frye stood there, scowling at her and demanding to see Miss Walker; but she was looking past him, out to the road where Barney stood, harnessed to his old burden, in what seemed to her an attitude of piteous dejection. It was a sight she had known she must witness some time, but oh, not so soon. She had meant to keep him until the cold weather began to drive the cattle to the back stable; then some night she would have taken him sorrowfully to

might safely utter, for the conviction had seized her that the man was insane. Meantime Lee Frye was slumping down the steps and along the walk, grinding his heavy heels into the gravel spitefully. He mounted the wagon, whacked his unfortunate least and jolted slowly away. Then Miss Walker locked the door and turned upon Maggie, excitedly.

"Run to the field, quick, and call Mack! That fool may come back, and he's crazy! Think he found his horse in my stable! The ideal Run, I tell you, and call Mack!"

But Maggie stood still, a pallid picture of wretchedness.

"O Miss Walker," she gasped, 'Lee Frye isn't crazy. He did find his horse in your stable; and maybe he did see me carrying feed to him."

"Maggie Ransen! Are you crazy, too?"

"No, no! It's the truth! I took Barney, myself, out of Lee Frye's stable, in the night, six weeks ago. I couldn't help it; I pitied him so. I put him in the back pasture barn, and I've fed him and taken care of all this—even you didn't know him."

"Maggie Ransen!"

Miss Walker clutched the child's slim little arm, shook her violently