

# CHILDREN'S PAGE



## 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 tied in, are carried through the Post Office as follows:—Not exceeding 30s. 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.

Dear Cousin Kate,—Nettie is writing to-night, so I thought I would write too. I am in the second standard. Our examination is next month, and I hope I pass. We have a dear little fox-terrier; we call it Terry. She has two little puppies. We are going to give one away and keep the other and call it Tim. Tiny is such a little pet; she always wants to come in our bed in the morning. Sometimes we put her in and cover her up like a baby and she will stop there till we take her out. Mother has a canary; he sings lovely. He always sings most when we are all at our meals. I hope the little boy in the cot is getting better. We were in Auckland about two years ago. I thought it such a pretty place. I hope my letter is not too long.—Cousin Amy.

[Your letter was not a bit too long, Cousin Amy. I was most interested to hear of your fox-terrier, and so I am sure the other cousins will be. They are such nice little dogs, but I am afraid I hope the cold weather will not hurt the little puppy. I had a canary until last week when I gave it to a friend for a birthday present. She admired it so much and I am so long away from home in the day time that I seldom heard "Dicky" sing so I thought it would give more pleasure to my friend. I quite agree with you that Auckland is a very pretty place.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I am very sorry we did not get the "Graphic" soon enough, as I intended to make a little frock for the competition. By the time we get the "Graphic" it is too late to send an answer in before the competition closes. I feel very sorry for the poor little boy in the cot. If you send me a card I will try to collect something. We had a full of snow a short time ago, but it froze too hard, so we did not have much fun snowballing. We had grand fun last year, as I think I told you before. The snow was on the ground for a fortnight, and did not get hard. We had never seen snow before, and thought it was very beautiful. It was over three feet deep in our garden, and we made a snow man. I told father you would like a photo of the lighthouse to put in the "Graphic" and he has already sent one. With love to

all the cousins, I remain, your loving cousin, Nettie.

[Dear Cousin Nettie.—It is really kind of you to promise to collect for me as I can assure you I want ever so much money for the cot. I do hope all the cousins will try and collect something, however little. I will send you the card by this mail. I hope to get the photographs of the lighthouse in soon; perhaps this week.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—To-day Cousin Phoebe and I went for a long walk, which I will tell you about. We started from Thorndon shortly after noon, with the intention of going for a short walk round Oriental Bay. When, however, we had gone as far round as Roseneath, the beauty of the day tempted us to go over the hills to the Mount Victoria signal station. After we had gone for about a mile our troubles commenced, as we did not know the way. Meeting a little boy we asked him if we could direct us, and he told us to go straight ahead until we came to three cross paths and then to take the highest. This we did, but soon found we were completely off the track, as we were making straight for Island Bay, and we surmised that if we kept on as we were going we would have to make a complete circuit of the range, which we calculated would take us days before we reached our destination. Then we took a spell and began philosophising on the vanities of life, especially those which put it into people's heads to go for tours of exploration without an iota of knowledge of the country over which they intended to go. This refreshed us wonderfully. The day was simply charming, and the view which we had of Cook's Straits and Lyell's Bay magnificent; so we argued that if the view was so grand from where we then were, how much more so must it be from the highest point of the range. So we made a bee line for the highest hill we could see, Cousin Phoebe meanwhile quoting, "Steep hills grow less as we ascend them," but imagine our distress of mind when we had ascended it to find there were still more hills, and some so steep that in the distance they looked almost perpendicular and impossible to climb; but what was far worse was that for all the distance we had gone we had never once caught a glimpse of our destination—Mount Victoria. However we were determined not to be done, and with grim, set faces and muttering "Nil Desperandum" through hard-set teeth we made another start. The time was then about four o'clock.

After having traversed a short way we suddenly espied a half broken down gate, and we argued that if there were gates about there must be people not far off. Making for it we found ourselves on a high, rocky, deserted mountain side, with only a cattle trail to show that once it had been inhabited. This we followed for nearly a mile and a half when we struck off to the right and wandered on for about an hour, going through barbed wire fences and getting bogged on an average of every ten minutes. We were properly lost. When our Spartan courage was almost exhausted and dismal thoughts were entering our heads of spending the night on the hills, Cousin Phoebe gave such a joyful shout that I really thought for the moment that she had taken leave of her senses. Following her gaze I saw in the far distance the rising peak of Mount Victoria. Our relief was so great that our spirits rose immediately. Pursuing our way up the hill the landscape broadened, and then we sat down once more to admire the view. It was simply perfect. The whole harbour lay before us. The sun was just setting; the water looked like one vast sheet of glass. Wellington, in the distance, resembled a fairy city, and afar off across the

Straits the snow-capped Kaikouras, with the towering ridge of Mount Fife glistening out in the sunset, made up one of the most picturesque scenes I have ever witnessed. The place was so quiet and lonely that the magnificence of it quite awed us and nearly took away our breath. Pulling ourselves together with an effort we made straight for the signal station, the rest of our way after reaching it being all plain sailing. No worse calamity happening to us than that Cousin Phoebe stumbled into a big hole which had been dug to plant a tree, at length we arrived home, tired, mud-stained, and hungry, but, nevertheless, having enjoyed ourselves immensely.—With love from Cousin Elsie.

[Dear Cousin Elsie,—You will see I have printed your very good letter in full, though to do so I have had to keep one or two Cousins' letters out. You have a really able faculty for descriptive writing, which you should carefully cultivate. In writing for the Cousins' Page in future, you might endeavour to condense a little. Your letter is just a trifle long for my limited space.—Cousin Kate.]

## THE TERRIBLE ADVENTURE OF SING HOP.

A STORY FOR LADS AND LASSIES.

Sing Hop is, as you will have guessed, a little "Chingy," and he lives in Auckland. He has made the acquaintance of little Frank Kelly, who is full of fun, but does not care so much for study as he ought. Frank knows more about what is going on than is known by half the men. Among his possessions is a "coaster," a sledge on wheels (you know the sort of thing), which he made, with the help of Tim Rafferty, out of the boards in a packing box, and four round pieces of wood that he picked up and used for wheels. His coaster has no brake, but it will run down hill with the speed of the wind. Frank manages to hold it back with a barrel stave which he pokes under the front of the wheels and grips with all his strength—when he wishes to go slower than lightning—which is not often.

Frank Kelly and Tim Rafferty have already begun to smile upon the Chinese merchants, who may, after a while, have stocks of fire-crackers and other noise-making inventions that help so well to celebrate Guy Fawkes Day when that glorious day comes round. Now Sing Hop, although I hate to say so, has "wagged" it from school like a white boy—that is, a bad white boy—sometimes. He was about to go to school when Tim invited him to go to Constitution Hill and have some fun. Frank and Tim overpersuaded Sing Hop. He was afraid to go, but the bad boys talked so much that he went with them.

When the three boys reached the hill, which is the steepest one in Auckland, all the other boys were in school and the two white boys had it all their own way teaching little Sing Hop to ride a coaster.—Frank Kelly's. Sing Hop was a little timid

to go down with Tim, who was working up to a great practical joke, and so humoured Sing to get his confidence. At last Sing agreed to take one ride alone—using the barrel stave for a brake as he had seen Tim use it.

"Now," said Frank to Tim, exultingly.

"Now," answered Tim, in a hoarse whisper.

Wheel! what a ery little Sing Hop set up when he started down the grade alone! In less than half a



minute he was the worse-scared boy in New Zealand. The barrel stave fell from his hands and he clutched both sides of the coaster. He had a clear course and a speedy track. Speedy? His flight down Constitution Hill will be historic for at least a year on the hill, which is a long time for boys to remember any one thing keenly.

One hundred feet down he found himself chasing closely a cur dog, which was more scared than he was. "Ki yi!" yelled the dog.

"Ki yi!" yelled Frank Kelly and Tim encouragingly.

It was a bad day for the dog. The coaster ran as if to make a record for speed. Little Sing Hop felt the wind sweep his face as if it were a hurricane speeding by. Behind him a large collection of stones chased the coaster, as if racing with it.

The two boys at the top of the hill and a passing man saw Sing Hop speeding on with the fury of a cyclone. Then came a collision. Another bark was wrecked—that is, the coaster hit the cur dog and threw it into the air with such force that it turned half a dozen somersaults before it struck on its feet. Then the coaster made a sudden curve and ran right in the direction of the passing man.

Blif! Crash! The passer is down. His hat is tossed in the air. His teeth are jarred. He can hardly realise what has happened to him.

"Go it, China!" yells Tim from above. Frank also lends his yell of encouragement.

I am sorry to tell what happened then, but I must. There was an ash barrel in the street into which the coaster had suddenly turned. Sing Hop saw it; perhaps the coaster had a grudge against that barrel. At any rate the barrel was in the path. Another flash of time and the coaster has struck the barrel. Then, for the first time since he started to "coast," Sing Hop loses his hold. The coaster rises like a skyrocket. Will it never come down? Sing Hop rises even



faster and falls as suddenly. Head first he strikes in the barrel, which is not very strong.

There has never been a barrel that could stand such a shock and come out as good as new. Sing Hop acts like a battering ram. A Chinese

at first. He stood by and grinned when Frank and Tim went down a steep grade. By and by he agreed