

where they were hidden. Perhaps they were in his pockets and bag. At that moment the clerk looked up sagaciously at the fallen hero.

'I thought you would bring the umbrella back,' he said. 'I guess I needn't prepare your room here.' A laugh arose at this reply.

In despair Burt beckoned him to come nearer. 'Look here,' he said; 'I must send a telegram off.' He flashed a contemptuous look at the sheriff. 'Then take me to the goal at your peril!'

His captors laughed. No one thought that a mistake could have been made. They had forgotten their momentary doubts in the applause of their admirers.

The clerk dubiously took the telegram from the boy's hand and promised to send it. It ran thus:

Dr. W. S. Farrand, Editorial Rooms of *Amsdale Religious Influencer*.

I am in a fix. Have been arrested for a burglar. Put in gaol. Send word immediately or come to identify your son.

BURT FARRAND.

Burt slipped a half-crown into the hands of the clerk, who eyed it suspiciously, as if he thought it might be counterfeit. Burt now breathed more freely. Whatever came could not last long. But the possibility of one night in gaol, and of the boys getting hold of the fact that he was arrested as a burglar acted as dampers to his rising buoyancy. He knew it would never be forgotten at college, and he sadly saw in his imagination cartoons in the *College News*, and quibs in the *Junior periodical*.

'We'll put him in Number Three,' whispered the gruff, black-haired man, with his hand on Burt's arm, to the bank president.

'Have you got the cash?' was asked quietly, in return.

'No. There was rocks in his pockets and bag. A clever dodge to throw us off the scent. We'll run it down yet. Don't you worry.'

'All right,' was the hopeful response. 'Guard him carefully, or the boys will get after him. They are terribly angry now.'

So they were. It was best to whip up the jaded horses again. The goal was at the other end of the town. An egg broke on Burt's coat; jeers echoed on all sides. The officers protected him by surrounding him.

Two hours and a half after Burt Farrand had come to Helenville, a happy, hopeful, innocent seeker after quartz crystals, he was locked up in cell Number Three in the town goal.

Never before since a mob had assembled to prevent the painting of the Helenville school-house any other colour than yellow, or at least since the 'great' town-meeting was held to decide about continuing to ring the nine o'clock bell, had this tranquil town been thrown into such perturbation. Its only bank and jewellery store had been completely sacked. Two of the audacious villains had been captured immediately after the robbery. The third, who had been seen and closely pursued by several, had escaped. He had the treasure. Expecting a detective, the populace had turned out to watch the train. Burt's irregular appearance, tallying closely, even down to his shoes, with the description of the thief, immediately turned the suspicion of the local police and town against him. He was dogged, permitted to go, as the people supposed, to get his plunder, and now was securely locked up.

During this hubbub, in which the entire village had joined—for real excitement was only to be had there once in two or three years—an old gentleman and a young lady walked up to the desk at the office of the hotel and examined the list of arrivals for that day.

'Why, father!' exclaimed the pretty girl, 'if Burt Farrand isn't here! See, here is his name in his own writing.' He wrote me he might come at any time this summer.

'That's good. We'll hunt him up,' answered her father. 'What room did you put Mr Farrand in?' he said to the clerk, pointing to the name.

'That! Why, that's no real name! It's some bogus alias. He's the thief! They have got him in the lock-up now. He's just been carried there. He's one of the three that made the break last night.'

The old man could only utter an inarticulate 'Whew!' The daughter looked at her father blankly; then her face gradually brightened, and she finally burst into a hearty laugh.

'What a splendid joke on Mr Farrand! He will never hear the last of it. Why, you've made a perfectly ridiculous mistake,' she said, turning to the bewildered clerk. 'That is our friend, Burt Farrand. That's his handwriting. He is the son of the editor of the *Religious Influencer*. What a joke on Helenville! What a joke on Burt!'

She burst into another peal of laughter in which her father gaily joined.

'We will have to get him out immediately,' said the old gentleman.

'Here is a telegram he gave me,' said the clerk, beginning to look sheepish. 'I thought it was a bluff, and didn't send it. Will you look at it, sir?'

He produced from his pocket a paper that looked as if it had gone the rounds of fifty dirty hands. This the father and daughter read. The handwriting was Burt's, beyond a doubt, and they laughed again.

'He has got a pretty specimen this time,' said the young lady. 'Do go and let him out, papa. Hurry!'

In about fifteen minutes Burt Farrand, looking pale and decidedly the worse for his incarceration, was bowing his thanks to his old friend. In ten minutes more the town had heard of the mistake. Apologies were profuse. The young guest had become the martyr and hero of the hour.

'You see, you answered to the description almost to a dot,' said the hotel proprietor, trying to find an excuse for his part in the matter. 'Same complexion, same height, same clothes, same shoes. We thought you supposed you were unrecognised last night and so ventured to town boldly to get your plunder and rescue your pals. When you ran, that settled it. You oughtn't to have run.'

The 'detectives' were marched in and numbed their apologetics.

'He'd made a good burglar, anyhow,' said the black-haired man, as he made his way out again amid the taunts of the fickle crowd.

'Well,' said the proprietor, half to the crowd and half to Burt, 'we'll have to make it up to you somehow. What do you want by way of a set-off?'

'Quartz crystals,' said Burt. 'That's what I came here to get.'

Burt remained two or three days at the house of his

hospitable friends, the fact of whose residence there during the summer he had quite forgotten when his difficulty overtook him.

When he went to the station to take his departure the town had turned out again; and upon the platform were several bulky boxes marked with his address. All the local hoards of quartz crystals had been depouled of their best specimens for his benefit. They had been brought to the station in the same waggon and by the same horse which had pursued him on the road—both decorated for the occasion.

'Well,' said Burt, as he glanced at the boxes, 'I don't know but I'm glad I ran, after all!'

HERBERT D. WARD.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

LITTLE PEOPLE'S LETTERS.

SOLUTION OF PICTURE PUZZLE.

THE LIVING SNOWBALL.

DEAR COUSIN KATE,—You should have heard the yells of delight when Robin Hill first saw snow. He had lived all his short life in Wellington, and was spending his winter holidays in Dunedin. One morning, on looking out of the window, he saw that the ground and the trees were covered with snow. He became so excited that he could hardly wait to put his clothes on. As his aunt, whose place he stayed at, lived in the country about two miles out of town, there were not many boys whom Robin could play with, so on this morning he had to play by himself, and he made snowballs and pelted them at the fence. Then the snow looked so tempting that he thought he would like a roll in it, forgetting that he was on the side of a hill. So he rolled and rolled down the hill till he came to the foot. If you had seen him then you wouldn't have thought there was a boy at all. There was just an immense snowball, with two boots sticking out at one end, and head at the other end. Robin might have stopped there till the snow melted if his howls had not been heard by a labourer who was going past. This man had a spade with him, and he soon dug Robin out. Robin was almost frozen, and he had a few bruises, but he managed to limp back to the house. He never wanted to see snow so much after that.—ZOE, Wellington.

[DEAR ZOE,—What a very nice little story you have made out of the puzzle! It was his father who dug him out, but your idea is very good, too. I hope to hear from you again.—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE,—It was winter and the snow was on the ground. A boy stood with his hands in his pockets as if considering what to do for amusement. At last he seemed to have come to a conclusion, for he rolled over on the snow-covered ground till he was in the centre of a snowball. He continued to roll for some time, when he came in contact with a fence. A man, apparently his father, came to the rescue, and with a small spade dug him out. The boy seemed to be very frightened.—S. H. S. Bay of Islands.

DEAR COUSIN KATE,—One day Jack Brown woke up and went to the door, and the ground was covered in snow. He had never seen snow before, and he was frightened, and didn't want to go to school, but his father made him go, so off he went. He had to go down a hill, and as he was going down the path he slipped a little way; then he thought it very nice, so he got up and slid down, and over, and over, and as he rolled the snow stuck to him so tight that when he got to the bottom he was like a big round snowball. He screamed, but nobody heard him, and screamed till he could scream no more, for he was so cold. At dinner he was missing, and they thought he had been throwing snowballs at somebody, or he had tumbled into a ditch, so Mr Brown went to look for him. When he got to the top of the hill he saw a snowman. He thought his son had put it there and played the tally, so he thought he would stand it up and frighten his son when he came back. He went down to it and tried to stand it up. To his surprise he found out it was his own son, with one leg sticking out one end, and his head sticking out the other, and his arms sticking out both sides. He got a spade and dug him out of the snow, then he got some snow and rubbed his arms and legs and face; then he took him home to bed.—BELLE ALLEN, aged 8 years. Picton.

I have never been to school before, but perhaps I may go next year.

[Yours is a most amusing little story, Belle, and a very good guess, too. You are the next youngest who has written it out correctly. I hope you will write again.—COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE,—I read the GRAPHIC, and like it very much. I do not go to school, but we have a governess who teaches us at home. I am in the Second Standard. I have two sisters older than myself; they both learn the violin and the piano. I will give the readers a riddle to guess: 'As I was going o'er London bridge I met a London scholar; he took off his hat and drew off his glove; and what was his name?'—AMY SINCLAIR, aged 9. Glenheim.

OLD COLONISTS, MERCHANTS, AND OTHERS INTERESTED.—Old Postage Stamps from letters dated from 1850 to 1869 are of value, some being worth from 3d per doz. to 30s each. We are cash purchasers of all Old Australian and New Zealand Stamps Cash sent by return. STAMP COLLECTORS. The Improved Stamp Album No. 10, best and cheapest ever made, and notwithstanding which we will give with each album sold 50 stamps enclosed in pocket inside cover. Price 2s 3d post free. Collectors send for Approval Sheets.—A. E. LAKE & Co., 27, High-street, Christchurch.

OUR FAVOURITES.



It is placing our horses in rather a bumble position is it not? to bring them in at the very end of my little stories about our pets, but you see they really belong to father, and though we all are fond of them, they are kept for use, and not just for our own pleasure, as is the case with the others. We have had Kip for years and years, ever since I can remember, and now she is old, and only does a little work, but father says he will never part with her, but sometimes leads her a sad life, making a most wonderful and bit with the aid of string and a few links of old chain, which somehow came into his possession, and he canters about the paddock, his short fat legs stretched across Kip's bare back, to his own great delight, but not to hers, I am afraid. But she is a very indulgent old lady, and seems ready to give him pleasure even when at some cost to herself.

Father had one horse which mother liked very much, but father never cared much for him—a big white fellow called 'Shamrock.' He was devoted to father, and would hear his footsteps when he was quite a long way off, and would neigh with pleasure till father came up to him, when he would rub his head against him in the most affectionate manner. Sometimes in the evening when it was quite dark, and father was out, we would hear Shamrock neigh, and mother would say, 'That must be father coming,' and Shamrock was always right, for in a few minutes we would hear the front gate bang, and then the door would open and father would come in. He had such a funny way of kneeling down to drink if any water he wished to reach was too low down for him to get at it easily, and unless you knew what he was going to do, he was very apt to send you flying over his head when he suddenly popped down on his knees, and you felt as if he was going to double up.

We have got Selin now instead of Shamrock. He is all right as a horse, but not an atom interesting as a pet. He allows Kip to bounce him to any extent. I must own she is very greedy, and unless their feed boxes are well-separated, he has to submit to seeing her eat his feed, and then go happily off to her own. He does not seem to care for any of us, and I am sure none of us, except father, have the slightest regard for him. There is such a difference in horses' characters. Some are so interesting and lovable, and others are not the least attractive.

(GUY came home one day in a great state of excitement, begging mother to give him sixpence. I believe he promised to be good for the rest of his life if only mother would give him the longed for pennies. Poor mother was not overjoyed when she heard that with this wealth he desired to purchase two white rats, which a boy was willing to sell to him; but Guy's heart was so set on being the possessor of the coveted rats that mother yielded, and off went Guy with a rosy delighted face, and a box in which to carry his prize under his arm. Before long he returned, looking happier even than when he started, hugging the box, which with much importance he opened, showing mother the two sleek white rats inside. They are such plump wee things, with bright pink eyes, and with such queer little paws like tiny pink hands, with which they hold anything they want to eat, exactly as a squirrel holds a nut. Father made such a nice house for them with an upstairs, and part of the front closed in with fine wire netting, so that we can see them playing about, and when they are tired of being looked at they can retire into a little dark room which has a door out-side, and a small opening into the other part of the cage, but no window. Here they love to store their food, and when mother puts in fresh hay for them to sleep on, she unearths so many crusts and other treasures which they have hidden away. Guy was so pleased with his two rats that he got another, a big black and white one; then Mollie got one, so we have quite a large family of rats now. Guy soon neglected his, so father gave them all to Mollie. She, for a time, was most attentive to them, but gradually she also seemed to think them a bother, and before she started for school in the morning her last cry would be, 'Mother, please feed my rats,' so they came to be left to mother's care entirely. She did not feel much interest in them at first, but now she is quite fond of them, and they know her, and all come to the door when they hear her voice. They have the most amusing little games amongst themselves, playing hide and seek, and whisking about up and down the inclined piece of wood, which serves them as a staircase, into their little dark room, then out again, and every movement is so quick and yet so graceful.

(TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.)

Little Ethel went to church with her grandmother, and for the first time put two pennies on the contribution plate. Leaning over, she whispered very audibly: 'That's all right, grandma; I paid for two.'

FOR Invalids and Delicate Children, AULSEBROOK'S Arrowroot and Tea Biscuits are unsurpassed.—(ADVT.)

FLAG BRAND PICKLES and SAUCE cannot be equalled. HAYWARD BROS., Manufacturers, Christchurch.—(ADVT.)

Patent Wheels, Cycles, Perambulators. Agents wanted. DUNKLEY, Birmingham, England.—(ADVT.)

ORB CORRUGATED IRON will cover more—a long way more—than any other iron, and for quality has no equal.