

connection with "Nature Study." There is not much news, Cousin Kate, so please excuse this short note.—Your loving Cousin Dorothy, Whakatane.

[Dear Cousin Dorothy.—Many happy returns! You say you have not much news. Why, there is quite a lot in your letter, Dorothy. What music are you learning—the piano, I suppose? I came across a very pretty piece of music the other day. It is the Corelli Gavotte, arranged by Friedenthal, the clever pianist who was recently through New Zealand. It is a very dainty melody, but perhaps rather difficult for you just yet. Your sister must have looked very nice. What did she wear? Do you like "Nature Study"? It seems to be getting quite popular nowadays, especially at Home. We never had anything like that when I went to school. Perhaps it would have been more interesting if we had. We have also been having very cold weather up here, but spring will soon be coming now, and then we will have forgotten all about the cold and wet.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate.—It is such a long time since I wrote to you that you must have forgotten me, but I have really had no time. I am going to try to write to you every three weeks now I have started. School breaks up on the 28th inst., I am sorry to say. I like holidays very much indeed, but I would rather be at school. We have three weeks' holidays, and I think we are going away. Did you see the Governor, Lord Plunket? I did, and saw him four times, so had a good view of him. Did you go to hear Mr Wragge? I did, and liked it very much indeed, especially the coloured pictures of all the places.—Yours sincerely, Cousin Daisy, Parnell.

[Dear Cousin Daisy.—It is quite a long time since you wrote me, but I have not forgotten you by any means, and now that you have started again you must write regularly. Do not forget to tell me all about your holidays. I saw Lord Plunket, but only in the distance. No, I did not hear Mr Wragge, and regret it very much, as all my friends who went were charmed with his lectures. How are your beautiful collies? Did you see the very handsome dog called "Sir Thomas" which took the principal collie prizes at the Auckland Dog Show? Judging from the photograph we had of him in the "Graphic" he must have been a beautiful animal.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate.—We have just been enjoying the first snow-storm we have had this winter. I have not been out for a snow-ball yet, because I am just getting better of that horrible influenza, which seems to be so prevalent now. I have not seen this week's "Graphic" yet because it was too cold last night for anybody to get it. Do you like hockey? Next Saturday week there is to be a match—the Ladies' Malvern Club against the gentlemen. The latter are coming out in trained skirts. A gentleman down here the other night showed us some lovely views of Auckland. I should like to go up for a holiday, but dad says he is going when the tunnel through Cook

Strait is completed. I have some relations living at a place called Waiki, about 85 miles from Auckland. I must stop now, with kind regards to yourself and the cousins, Cousin Myrtle, Waddington.

[Dear Cousin Myrtle.—Your letter reached me on August 11. You had dated it the 14th, and had a reference to the New Zealand-Great Britain football match, of which you say you "had not yet heard the result." I should be rather surprised if you had under the circumstances. I have heard of Japanese and Chinese reading backwards, but really your letter looked at first as though we had someone in New Zealand who "lived" backwards! I envied you that snow-storm. We had some beautiful snowy pictures in last week's "Graphic" which made one feel "shivery" to look at them. Yes, I think hockey a grand game for girls. Waiki I know quite well. Some time ago I spent the fortnight there, and went all over the famous Waiki mine, which is one of the biggest in the world. I am sure you would like Auckland, and you must try and come up for a holiday without waiting for the Cook Strait tunnel, and if you do be sure you come and see me.—Cousin Kate.]

A Boy's Appetite:

My boy, you really must acquire Some limitation of desire; Your freaks of appetite are dire. A score of apples, somewhat green, With many nuts consumed between, And pasties—was it not thirteen? Of melon many a juicy slice, Quite indigestible, though nice, And several cups of raspberry ice. Some gingerbreads, a hunch of cake, Two pennyworth of almond bake— Of course, you have the stomach-ache. And after this, I truly deem 'Twas ill-advised in the extreme To feast on jam and clotted cream. While more to crown the surfeit—did To eat so large a slice of pie Was courting trouble by and by. Be warned in time, and eat no more, Or, when the passing joy is o'er, Digestive fangs will cost you care.

A. LESLIE.

With Ludicrous Effect.

Here are a few ludicrous notices which a cousin has seen and noted during his travels: A tinsmith in the south of England has a sign which reads, "Quart measures of all shapes and sizes sold here." At a market town in the Midlands the following placard was affixed to the shutters of a watchmaker who had decamped, leaving his confiding creditors mourning: "Wound up and the mainspring broke." In one of the principal streets of another small town the same shop was occupied by a doctor and a shoemaker, the man of medicine having the front and he of the leather working in the rear. Over the door hung the sign: "We repair both body and sole." On the window of a coffee-room there one day appeared the notice: "This coffee-room removed upstairs till repaired."

Kept His Word.

A certain schoolboy named Michael, in a remote part of the country, boasted constantly that the master was afraid to flog him. Why? Oh, because his father had said that if a hand was ever laid upon the boy there would be trouble. But one day Michael misbehaved himself, and the flogging was not long in coming. The boy went home indescribably enraged. He sought out his father. "Father," he said, "didn't you say that if the schoolmaster ever caned me there would be trouble?" "I did," the father answered. "Well, I was caned to-day, and only for throwing paper pellets about the room." The father frowned. "I never fail, my son, to keep a promise," he said. "There is going to be trouble. Fetch the strap."

A Tale of Long Ago.

"Where did you live when you were quite a little girl, Mother?" said Cissy to her mother one evening as they sat by the fire. Cissy was playing with her dolls and her brother Bert was trying to make a cardboard model of a castle and fort. "Where did I live, dear? When I was quite a little girl I lived at a place called Lower Slaughter in England." "Lower Slaughter! What an ugly name!" cried the little girl. "Why ever did the people give it such a name as that? Wasn't it a pretty place, then?" "Oh, yes... I used to think it a very pretty place, and do so now. You have seen a photograph of the village, and the house where we, that is, Grandpa, Grandma, and I, lived." "But why did they give it such a name as that, then, Mother? Surely someone could have made up a better one." "Yes, dear. I often used to wonder why it had that name. And then, you know, there are other places with curious names close by that village. There is Upper Slaughter, and Upper and Lower Swill, and another place called Blington. There's a list of funny names." "That must be a funny country!" chimed in Bert. "At least, I think the people must have been funny who gave the places such names as those. Didn't you ever ask why, Mother?" "I often used to wonder, and ask the old people in the village, but all they could tell me was that a very long time ago—that is, hundreds of years ago—a great battle was fought there, and the names were given to the places because a great number of men were killed and buried there. In some of the fields, they said, the ploughmen even then turned up old swords and armour and bones." "Oh, how dreadful!" said Cissy. "When did it all happen, and what did the men fight about?" "Did you ever find out what it was all about, Mother?" asked Bert eagerly. "It is like history, and I like history. Do tell me, please, Mother!" "Well, I will try to tell you a little about it; but I did not find out till long after I had lived there." "Was it in the Civil War, Mother?" asked Bert, who wanted to know everything all at once. "It was in a civil war, perhaps, but not the Civil War. The old people of

the village used to speak of it as the Civil War, although they did not quite know which war they meant. It all happened a very long while ago, before the time of King Alfred. We really do not know very much about it, for the only record is found in some ancient writings that even very clever scholars have found difficult to translate, and say exactly what places and men are referred to. It is an old poem, or song, written some hundreds of years before William the Conqueror came to England. We do not know really who wrote the song or story. Probably it was one of the minstrels, or singers, who used to follow the chiefs or kings, who ruled the various parts of the country, and record their fights and heroic deeds. A great deal in the story appears to be fable, and is evidently a tale of adventure very much exaggerated. This was not at all an unlikely thing to happen when the minstrel was singing of the deeds of the king or chief he followed. He would be expected to make the most of his master's bravery and heroic actions. The story tells us of a King Offa, who fought a battle with another king whose name was Alewih. Offa, we are told, was blind till he was seven years old, but we are not told how he came to receive his sight; and, moreover, he was deaf and dumb until his thirtieth year, and it was at that time that he was attacked by Alewih. The danger was in and the excitement caused him to recover all his faculties, and so brave was he that he was quite ready at once to lead his followers against the enemy. They met on the banks of a stream called the Avene, and after a severe fight Alewih was defeated near a place called Fifield. The slain were buried under great heaps of stones, and the burial place was called Qualinuh, or Slaughter Hill, while the name of Blodewald was given to the battlefield. "Ah," interrupted Bert; "now I think I begin to understand." "Do you, really?" said his mother. "Well, now, if you get your map of Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire you will find, just near the borders, a small stream called the Ewanode, that flows into the Thames above Oxford. The Ewanode is believed to be the Avene in the story, and the village of Fifield is on the border of Oxfordshire. We cannot

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