



# Children's Page

## COUSINS' BADGES.

Cousins requiring badges are requested to send an addressed envelope, when the badge will be forwarded by return mail.

## COUSINS' CORRESPONDENCE.

Dear Cousin Kate,—Although news is not by any means plentiful in this part of the world just now, yet I feel that I really must make an attempt and tell you what little there is, as I know what a fearfully bad correspondent you must think me. We went for a lovely ramble on the Port Hills one evening last week. We had tea early, and then started off. There was no wind, or, at least, only the faintest breeze, and so walking up-hill was very pleasant. After walking some distance up we struck off the road, and, getting through a fence which divides the hills from the road, we climbed to the top of rather a higher hill than the rest. The sides of this hill are covered with rocks of all sizes and shapes, and in the protected nooks in the rocks a hardy species of maidenhair fern flourishes. We startled several rabbits who were sporting and frisking up and down the hillside, and didn't they run! They are such timid creatures, I think. They seem to know that "every man's hand is against them." When we reached the top we had a grand view of Christchurch and the surrounding country. We sat down on a rock and enjoyed the view of our perfectly flat city, now lighted by hundreds and hundreds of lamps, and while we watched a mist seemed to steal up gradually from the sea and envelop the whole town in a thin white shroud, which was only pierced by the gas lamps. The different streets could quite plainly be distinguished by the double row of lights which seemed to stretch far away into the sea. When descending the hill we found a few mushrooms, but they were not very large, as the weather we were experiencing then was not very favourable to their growth. The children were quite pleased with their find, for they all like mushrooms, but I think they are horrid things, and I cannot think how some people can enjoy eating them. When we arrived home it was a little after eight, and quite dark. It seems funny to talk of it being dark at eight o'clock, and it shows that the autumn is not far ahead. The MacMahon Dramatic Company are at present here. Dad took me last night to see "Called Back." I did not enjoy myself a bit, as I hate that sort of thing. Have you read a book called "Erchie," by Neill Munroe? It is a collection of droll Scotch sketches. I read the book the other day, and thought it very amusing. Yesterday I finished "A Double Thread," by Ellen T. Fowler, but I did not care for it very much. I was very interested in Cousin Doreen's new letter in last week's "Graphic." I should like to exchange post cards with her; so I will send her one this week. I have not seen a letter from Ethyll, our other Australian cousin, for some time. I hope she has not deserted our band. Well, dear Cousin Kate, please excuse this scrappy and

untidy note. I will try and write a more interesting and longer one next time. With very much love from your old cousin, Winnie (Christchurch).

[Dear Cousin Winnie,—I am afraid news is not any more plentiful in our part of the world than it is in yours, so, knowing from experience how hard it is to write when news is scarce, I am doubly grateful to you for your letter this week. You are so fortunate, I think, to be able to go for such lovely rambles. In Auckland one has to go such a long way before the pretty part begins that one is too tired to enjoy it properly. I suppose it is natural that rabbits should be more timid in the more populous districts. A short time ago I spent my holidays in the King Country, and one day when we were out driving we saw several rabbits; they didn't seem the least bit alarmed at our appearance, and simply moved off to the side of the road. Of course they are not the pest that they are in the South, though I expect they will be in time. You and I must be in the minority as regards mushrooms. Most people enjoy them thoroughly, but I never could make myself like mushrooms, oysters, or tomatoes. They must be an acquired taste, I think, don't you? I have read very few new books lately, and have not come across "Erchie" yet; if it is very Scotch I shall not care for it. It takes me such a long time to get at the meaning of it that I lose all interest in the book. One needs to be a Scotch scholar to appreciate them, I think. I have read "A Double Thread"—in fact, I think I have read all E. T. Fowler's, but I fancy I read them too close together, for they left an impression in my mind that there was a weariful sameness about them. Cousin Ethyll has not deserted our band yet, for there is a long letter from her on my desk, which I am just going to answer now. Did you see the news about Cousin Alison's sisters—in last week's "Graphic"?—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I am very sorry I did not tell you my age, which is thirteen, and I am in the sixth standard. I have a younger brother and two kind-hearted sisters. I think myself fortunate, don't you, Cousin? We have a beautiful red setter, who's name is "Pat." He frolics and plays with us just as if he were a human being. My father has a launch, and I often go out in it. Just recently my father, another gentleman and myself went out fishing with a net, and can you guess how many fish we got? Why, thirty-five! dozen lovely flat-fish! It seemed to me that on the following morning everybody in our vicinity had fish for their breakfast. I am glad you have accepted me as your cousin. I have not received my badge which you sent me. Love to you and all cousins,—Cousin Charlie.

[Dear Cousin Charlie,—You are a fortunate boy to have a companion to play with and two sisters to look after you and mend your clothes for you; but perhaps they (your sisters) are younger than you too. I am even better off than you, for I have three sisters and two brothers. I used not to care for dogs at all, but have changed my opinion lately. Some of them are so cute and clever that they are almost as good com-

panions as human beings. A friend of mine told me the other day that his dog could do everything but talk. I suppose, as you have a launch, you must live quite close to the beach. What a splendid haul of fish you got; it was no wonder that all your neighbours had fresh fish for breakfast. I wish I lived close to you, too, for there is nothing I like better for my breakfast than a fresh flounder.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—Again I take my pen in hand to indite these few lines to you, hoping they will find you well, as they leave me at the present time. You will see from the style in which I begin this letter that I have been taking lessons in letter-writing from the Ancients. I have read that we don't write letters now, that it is a lost art. We just post a picture post-card with a very much boiled-down description of a holiday trip, such as: "Been to Jericho for a week; had a ripping time. Ta-ta." The Ancients had more time than anybody can get now. I suppose the days were longer, or is it the nights that is the proper period for letters to be manufactured? After having got their pen well in hand and settled the subject of bodily condition, they continue something like this: "The weather is settling, and if it only holds up long enough we shall be able to get in the hay, God willing." The latter expression is frequently interpolated, much as though it were a pious swear-word. Then it goes on: "The cocks do crow, the kine do low, the ducks quack-quack, and the maids clack-clack, their tongues wag, work or play. Hark, hark, the dogs do bark, the beggars are come to town; get ready your dole, for to save your soul, or you'll get the jests of the clown." This will do for a sample. Polite letter-writing in the olden days was a science we decadent mortals of the twentieth century cannot approach without holding our noses. Anyhow, they had to sweat their brains to fill up the paper when letters cost a shilling postage, and took as long to reach the next town as they are now in getting to the other side of the world. I hear that you have been mourning me as dead. I am not quite dead yet, so you may dry up your tears, and if I get overdue again at Lyod's, don't post me up amongst the missing. I might turn up at any time, a la Rougemont, and give you a thrilling story of life on a Pousouby desert.—Cousin Lyn.

[Dear Cousin Lyn,—I certainly thought you were lost to sight (tho' to memory dear), but after your letter this morning I am quite satisfied as to your health, for I'm sure you must be a long way off "dead" yet. Do you know I am beginning to think it is true that letter-writing is a lost art, or at all events it is rapidly becoming so. I suppose because we live in a rush and whirl, and so can never settle down to write really good, well-expressed letters. Talking of letters, of course you have read "The Letters of a Self-made Merchant to his Son." What did you think of it? I don't think the expression "God willing" is quite so ancient as you may imagine. I remember when I was a child we had an old gardener who always said, "If it is anyways fine, and God's willing, I'll do it, mmm, to-morrow," when told to do a certain piece of work. I don't believe the Ancients found it any harder to fill up their letters than we do, for I know heaps of people who sit and look at a sheet of paper in front of them for half an hour at a time, and groan out at intervals, "What shall I write about?" Did you come into town to assist at the welcome of our foot-balls? What an enthusiastic reception they had, hadn't they?—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—What an age it is since my last letter appeared in the "Graphic." I intended writing before, but did not seem to have enough leisure moments, and then the heat has been so oppressive that I hope to be forgiven this time. Hasn't this summer weather been very trying? (Even the smoke from the surrounding bush fires, combined with the intense heat, makes life almost unbearable. Have you read the accounts of the disastrous bush fires in Gippsland? I think nearly everyone has heard of the losses sustained by the farmer and others in that part of the colony. They have started a relief fund, and nearly everyone has responded liberally, the collections taken in the State schools alone amounting to six hundred pounds. What a number of interesting letters have appeared in the children's column lately? I like Cousin Doreen's very much. Don't you think the manager of Bushwood Settlement very thoughtful for others, although he did not choose a very appropriate name for the road? I have seen a picture of the real Apia Way, and the scenery is totally different to any I have seen in Australia. I am glad Cousin Alison has started a discussion. It ought to prove very interesting if the cousins take it up. I haven't seen many opinions in the letter as yet. I do not quite agree with Cousin Alison in saying South African girls are too continental. They are only following a custom which, in my opinion, will never be altered. No matter how much we would like to mould others' ideas, principles or manners, to the pattern of our own, when the majority are against us, I am afraid success would not crown our efforts. Have you ever visited Melbourne, Cousin Kate? Lately there have been several improvements made in different portions of the city. The Botanical Gardens are very beautiful at present, and are much frequented by pleasure-seekers. Then there is Prince's Court, an ideal pleasure resort. It is situated near Prince's Bridge. There are all kinds of amusements for the younger people. You can shoot the chute, try the helter-skelter, enjoy a Katzenjammer Brezze, and various other joys; then join the cate chantant and dance. Lately they have added a menagerie, and from all accounts other amusements are to be provided. Miss Titled Bruce is playing in Sardou's great tragedy of intrigue, "La Tosca."

## Washing Without Work!

**B**LANKETS, Woollens, Silks, and Laces all come alike to SAPON—the "Wizard of the Wash-tub."

Saves Time, Labour, Clothes, and Hands. There is no rubbing to do! SAPON, the Oatmeal Washing Powder acts as the gentlest of solvents—and the dirt drops out.

Soft as Sunshine! Pure as Snow! Dainty Fabrics never Suffer.