



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,—It is more than a month since I wrote to you, although I always mean to send a letter regularly—the time goes so fast that it is hard to keep pace with the months. However, you are in for a big dose now. My brother and I have just returned from a fortnight's holiday, which we spent at French Hoek, a lovely little village 86 miles from Cape Town. It is simply surrounded by range after range of glorious blue mountains, and is noted for its vineyards. The first Huguenots settled in French Hoek, and one day we drove over to see the oak which they planted over two hundred years ago. You may be sure we gathered a few acorns from it. It is an enormous tree—the sort that spreads all ways and is low on the ground. We stayed on Mrs Krell's farm, which is at the very foot of the largest mountain. We spent our time walking, climbing, cycling, and lying under some beautiful pines below the orchard, but always took grapes with us there to pass the time eating them. At ten o'clock on the moonlight nights four of us ran down to the vineyard, and having eaten as many grapes as possible we carried some up for the other girls. The people staying on the farm were fairly jolly, and altogether we had lots of fun. We often rode in farmers' carts, and ran wild generally, while we had the chance. After walking a terrible distance to the Burg River (almost dry), one day, we stopped at a small farm where one solitary man was living, and he invited us in and gave us a water-melon, all of which he cut up and we finished. The house was very funny—the Dutch style in the country where there isn't a wife or sister to improve it. It was quite bare, with floors made of mud. We were very sorry when the time came to come back to horrid old town to work once more; it was grand being outside all day. I enjoyed "Veronique" immensely when I saw it played last week. It is quite as pretty as "The Clugalee," and of course quite different. I suppose it is being played in Auckland now, so you will see it. Beyond that and a beautiful sacred concert in the City Hall I have had no excitement, so must fall back for news on other things. I was so glad to see one of Henry Newbolt's poems in the children's page. I have learnt it now, and love it. Don't you think his poems are all lovely? I have just finished "Barbe of Grand Bayou," by J. Oxenham—liked it exceedingly. It is rather an uncommon story, and Barbe is one of my favourite book-girls now. I had a grand time with "Princess Paucilla's Fortnight," the latest by the authoress of "E. and Her German Garden." There is something so natural and dainty about all those stories that they are favourites with most people. It was some time until I read those two books since I had allowed myself a story, so I enjoyed them more than usual. I love R. L. Stevenson's books, and have just bought myself "Memoria and Por-

traits." My brothers and I have had our usual long Sunday cycle rides. Last time we went to Coburg, and were caught in a few showers. We had some foggy days, when nothing could be seen, and Sunday was fairly bad. We managed to get about 28 miles in all, and on the whole enjoyed the day. When the weather is hot and cloudy the sunsets are too glorious to imagine, unless you had seen some. I can't describe them. To-night great banks of cloud turned pink, golden, and then as the sun went down were left a marvellous scarlet—quite a blood colour, mixed with streaks of bright yellow. The sea is always tinted with the same colour as the sky, so when the sunset is yellow, and the sea has been blue, the latter turns an uneasy shade of purple. I have also seen sunrises lately, as during the last week my sister and I have slung two hammocks on the balcony and slept there all night. It is simply grand, and I shall hate having to sleep inside the house again. We have had letters from some jolly Irish girls who lived in Auckland, and who are now travelling, and they are giving two of their cousins from Switzerland letters to us. They arrive in Cape Town in about a month's time, and are, the Irish girls say, very nice. I hope they live near to us, as I should like to have two more girl friends, especially when they have travelled and will have plenty to talk of. Cousin Winnie sent me a grand long letter last mail, so I have that on my mind whenever a boat goes to New Zealand. She is a treasure as regards correspondence, and gives me all the news, and tells me of the latest things in books she has met with. I notice that our page is simply overcrowded with letters from Dora. She is fairly mean where writing is concerned, and it is a good long time since I last heard from her. From Cousin Hilda's description I think the Pigmies must be in appearance very like the Bushmen who live in caves in the bush far back in Central Africa. They, too, are tiny and very ugly, stunted people, with no intellect apparently. They are rather like monkeys, and their short hair (or wool!) grows quite close round the face. They are below even the Hottentots, who are quite horrible enough. It is hard to believe the Easter holidays are almost here. We haven't arranged anything, so they will be deadly dull, I expect. They are usually pretty bad, even when fine, but we think they will be wet this time, as the weather has broken up. Just now nothing of interest is happening here; everything is slow, and nearly every week some man commits suicide, which facts, with cricket and Natal disturbances, form the topics of conversation. We have had few south-easters, so after saying how wonderful the weather is, they fall back on the other three matters. I have none to fall back upon, so must stop writing and making this dull letter still worse. With love to you, dear Cousin Kate, and all the cousins, I remain, your absent cousin, Alison. Easter Monday: I have not posted this letter, so shall add a little. We saw "The Prodigal Son" played on Thursday night; it was very good, and though sad most interesting. I liked the book better than the play, but the scenery was so beautiful that it made up for the omission of anything which we

liked in the story itself. The holidays were rather dull on the whole. We had a sad service in the cathedral on Good Friday, and the morning and evening services on Sunday were beautiful. The cathedral was full, and people stood in the porches as well as outside. The cathedral service is very High Church, and on festival days lasts nearly an hour longer than usual, as the processions take up a good deal of time. The music was grand, with a full choir, of course, and many anthems, etc. Low Church people consider it wrong to have candles, banners, processions, and so forth, but it makes the service so impressive and one which is not easily forgotten. I do like it, don't you, Cousin Kate? I gardened diligently all this morning, and went for a long walk later on. The day was perfect till about six at night, when the rain came down, and the poor picnic people came home by hundreds in carts of every description, and looked rather damp, not to say depressed. When you see others returning in the rain, while you are safely home, you can afford to laugh; otherwise the wet makes you feel somewhat enraged on a holiday. I received a post-card from Cousin Florence, but as I don't collect I should like her, if she doesn't mind, to send them to my sister, who will exchange. Her correct address is Miss M. Salmon, Fairfield, Green Point, Cape Town. The post-card, addressed to "Green Lane, S.A.," was a few days finding me! Now, dear Cousin Kate, you will be in despair if I write much more, so I must say good-bye once more. With love to you and all the cousins.—From Cousin Alison, Green Point.

[Dear Cousin Alison,—Is it really a month since you wrote to me last? I can hardly believe it, the time has gone so quickly. We must both have been enjoying life, I think, or we should have found time going very much more slowly. What a delightful holiday you must have spent at French Hoek. It is so nice to be able to run wild and do just exactly what one likes, even if it is only for a fortnight, but work seems less inviting than usual after such a holiday, I think. I haven't seen "Veronique" yet, but it is to be played here by Williamson's Opera Company this week, and I am going to see it if I can manage it. We went to "Utopia, Limited," last night, and were rather disappointed in it. Have you seen it? It is one of Gilbert and Sullivan's, but not to be compared with any of their other operas. We have been having such musical treats here lately, and for a long time we had nothing at all. Te Rangipai (Mrs Howie) gave two concerts last week, and Andrew Black gives three this week. It is always a pity, I think, when they all come together like that. I like to spread my treats out, don't you? I haven't come across "Princess Paucilla's Fortnight" yet, but I liked "Barbe of Grand Bayou" immensely. Another book I read lately that I thoroughly enjoyed was "The Scarlet Diaper." It is charming, so if you see it be sure and read it, and tell me what you think of it. I have always heard that the South African sunsets are wonderfully beautiful, but as you say it takes more than mere words to describe them, so I must wait until I see them for myself. The ser-

vices in the cathedral must be rather different to what we are accustomed to at St. Mary's, but I think I prefer the simpler service, though the other may be more impressive. Well, Alison, I really must stop now, or I shall never answer my other letters.—Cousin Kate.]

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Dear Cousin Kate,—I was very pleased to see my letter in the "Graphic," and I hope I will continue writing to you. I think that "Betty of the Wilderness" is a very interesting story, and I like it very much. Buster Brown is a very funny little boy, he is always up to mischief, is he not, Cousin Kate? I will give you the answer to my riddle, which is a very simple one. This is the answer: P A S H T O N. I will put another one at the end of my letter. I had a very delightful time at Easter. I did not go out anywhere, but enjoyed myself very much at home. I went out for long walks. Have you ever been to Waitara? It is such a pretty place. A little while before Easter mother and father, two of my brothers, and myself went over to Waitara in the boat. It is about 15 miles from our home. The day was lovely when we started, and the water was as calm as could be. We were going to come home again that night, but it started to blow, and so we could not return for about three days, and on the third day we started, and it was rough. We are having very cold and wet weather down here at present. I wonder what sort of weather you are having up there? I think I must close now, so with love to all the other cousins, I remain, your loving cousin, QUEENIE (Warkworth).

P.S.—This is the riddle: Why is the letter E like London?

[Dear Cousin Queenie.—I am glad you like "Betty of the Wilderness"—it is a charming story. I wonder how Betty would have managed if she had had Buster Brown to look after? I guessed your last riddle, but am afraid I cannot see any likeness between the letter E and London, so will have to wait for the answer until you write next time. Yes, I have been to Waitara. We stayed there for a week last year, and enjoyed ourselves immensely. I loved the baths, didn't you? But I think a week is quite long enough to stay there, as there really is not very much to do, unless one is a very keen fisherman, and I am not fond of boating at all. We are having very much the same sort of weather as you are, I fancy. It is raining hard this morning, and is bitterly cold. I am just wondering what I can do to keep myself warm. I don't care for winter weather at all, do you? Cousin Kate.]

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