

swings always in. Songs were given by Madam Chambers and Dr. Keith, and piano and flute solos were given by Mrs. Rodgers, Miss K. Holland and Mr. Barber, respectively. We always look forward to these evenings, they are so thoroughly enjoyable. It is impossible to compute the extent of good feeling and understanding that is brought about by teachers, parents and pupils being brought into close touch. What was once stigmatised as the Truant School, has come to be noted for the courteous behaviour of its little people, and not only has the morale of the children been improved, but the neighbourhood in which the school is located. In a letter of a few weeks ago I made the following statement to you, which I now, in all humility beg to retract, to the effect that tamer pranks were played by colonial children than their English peers, and have to record a few pranks played by a cousin who shall be nameless. There have been holidays and—pandemonium! A party was given, and this cousin volunteered to work up the amusements of the evening. Which offer was gratefully accepted. To this end active rehearsals of two plays, adapted, I believe, from "Comic Cuts," took place, and the fun promised to prove fast and furious. The promise was fully redeemed, I do assure you. The evening arrived, and the play was presented to a small and select audience; necessarily small as nearly the whole party were included in the caste. I am sorry I cannot give you the name of the play, or a description of the plot, which is due to the fact that I have a very confused idea of both, for just when the actors had cast off the nervousness due to a first appearance, and were beginning to warm to their work, a syphon of soda-water from which the heroine's health was to be drunk later, went off, unexpectedly, and in the excitement of the moment (this scene being totally unrehearsed) the whole cast fled incontinently thinking the deluge had arrived, and like the Chinese in the Jap. War, waited until the weather and other things cleared up. The wardrobe and properties were fearful and wonderful. The genius of a Cruickshank would be needed to do them justice. The gem of the properties was a limousine cab made from a late spring motor-car. There is some talk of the play being resuscitated. A proposal to rename it "Waimangu" was not received in the kindly spirit in which it was offered. A traitor in the caste has been darkly hinted at, and further developments are expected. There are still some other pranks which I must tell you of later, if I am allowed to live after this expose; but already I hear the editor cry, "Hold enough room for our serial!"—which, by the way, is one of the most delightful stories I have read. A good book to read is one by Booth Tarkington, called "The Conquest of Canaan." Of course you will know that he is the author of "Monsieur Beaucaire." Tell me, will you, of a good book? With love to yourself and all the cousins.—I remain your loving Cousin Hilda (Ponsonby). P.S.—Pray forgive slovenly letter, as I am writing under great difficulties.

[Dear Cousin Hilda.—You give so much of your time to the Cousins' Page of the "Graphic" that neither the cousins nor myself have any business to grumble when you miss a week or two, though

naturally we miss your long newswy letters when you do. Cousin Ethyll seems to be a great devotee of the stage; and her descriptions of what she has seen are always remarkably good. One envies her her superior opportunities of seeing so much that we miss in Auckland. However, I, like yourself, am looking to see this particular play. Did you see "Veronique?" I must confess that I was disappointed in it; probably because I had heard so much about it beforehand. I always wish I had time to take up wood-carving. Were I a person of leisure I think photography and wood-carving would be my hobbies. I have heard of the Chapel-street School entertainments and of the great amount of good they are doing before, and had fully intended to go to the last one, but was unfortunately prevented. Colonial children play just as many pranks, I fancy, as their English cousins, but have greater facilities for (shall I say) "covering their tracks;" these particular ones are quite one of the most amusing I have heard of lately, though. Have you read "A Gentleman from Indiana?" It is by Booth Tarkington, too, and is, to my thinking, even better than the "Conquest of Canaan." Have you read "Lavender and Old Lace," or the "Scarlet Pimpernel?" they are both delightful books.—Cousin Kate.]

* * *

Dear Cousin Kate, I am having my school holidays just now, and I am staying at Wellington again, and mother and father are in Auckland. They have been to Te Aroha, and are back in Auckland now. They are leaving Auckland next Tuesday, and will arrive here on Friday morning by the s.s. Manuka, and then father will take me home on Saturday night. I came up to Wellington with father and mother in the s.s. Manuka, and we had a lovely trip. I am staying with Auntie Trot again, and I am enjoying myself very much here. Uncle Jack took Auntie and I to the Living Pictures, and they were splendid. Last night he took us to "Sinbad, the Sailor," and that was lovely. The theatre went in at a quarter to eight and came out at a quarter past eleven. After "Sinbad, the Sailor" was over we saw transformation scenes, and it was lovely, and we also saw Columbine and a clown, and the play finished up with "Fun at the Zoo," which made everyone laugh. Last Sunday we went up to Brooklyn in the car, and walked back. My doll Angelique is getting mended just now, and auntie bought it a silk dress, petticoat, and a bonnet, so it is a lucky doll. Auntie has a lovely dog, and it opens the gate and gives me a ride on his back, and his name is Strath, and auntie also has a polly and he says "Ta" for everything you give him, and he can say a lot of things. I must close now with love to all the other cousins and lots to yourself.—From Cousin DOREEN.

[Dear Cousin Doreen.—It was very nice to hear from you so soon again. What a lucky little girl you are to be having such lovely holidays. You have had two trips to Wellington since Christmas. I hope your father and mother have enjoyed their visit to Auckland and Te Aroha. I'm afraid they would not have very nice weather. Te Aroha at this time of the year is very

quiet and father cold. Last time we were there we found it dreadfully cold, there was snow on all the hills, and we are not used to that in this part of the world, you know; but the hot mineral baths are lovely. I think they take away all one's aches and pains, and that is worth being very cold for, isn't it? I wish you could have come on to Auckland too, I should have liked to have seen you so much; but it is better to come here in the summer time, the harbour looks so much prettier then and there are such lots of places to go to that are too cold to visit in the winter. What happened to Angelique that she wanted mending? She certainly is lucky to have so many new clothes all at once. Strath must be a grand dog. Do you mean that he can open the gate himself?—Cousin Kate.]

The Fairies' Dogs.

Once upon a time, near the borders of Fairyland, lived a King and his daughter. The Princess was only ten and had hundreds of dogs, and did nothing all day but play with them in the royal grounds.

She was so merry and so kind that everyone loved her, from the King, who almost worshipped her, down to the little scullery boy in the royal kitchen. He used to watch her as she played and wish that he could give her a dog.

One day when he was coming toward the palace he found in the road a little puppy, thin and lame and mangy. He picked it up carefully. "Perhaps," he thought, "if the cook is in a good humour she will give me something for him." So he asked her for some scraps. But the cook was very angry at his daring to bring such a puppy within the royal grounds. She called a groom and gave him the puppy to take away, while the poor boy ran out into the royal woods and threw himself on the ground and cried; he was so sorry for the puppy.

But the Princess, who saw him crying, came running to him, for she didn't like to see anyone unhappy.

"What's the matter, boy?"

"The groom will hurt the puppy," he sobbed.

"What puppy?" "And she called the groom back." "Is it one of my puppies, boy?"

"No, Princess, I found him in the road."

"Let me see him, groom. Why—I never saw a puppy like that before—he's so thin, and lame." And the Princess's eyes began to fill. "What are you going to do with him, groom?"

"Put him out in the road, Princess."

"Oh, Princess, don't let him!" begged the boy.

"No, boy, I won't. Will you give him to me, boy?"

"Oh, yes, Princess."

"Give him to me, groom. Don't cry, boy, he'll soon be well." And she walked quietly away.

Now, you see, the Princess had never been outside the royal grounds, so she didn't know that there were dogs that were not well fed and happy like hers. First she went to the kennels and ordered that the puppy be well taken care of.

Then she went into her father and told him all about it.

"Father," she said, and she looked so unhappy, that the King didn't know what to do. "Are there any more dogs like that poor puppy?"

Now the King had decided that the Princess should never know any unhappiness, and was almost angry that she had taken the puppy. But he was more afraid that she would cry, so he quickly said:

"Oh, no, my dear, there isn't any other puppy like that one," which, he added to himself, "is probably true."

So the Princess was quite happy again. After a while the puppy grew well, and one day the Princess took him around to the rear of the palace.

"Send the boy out to me, cook," said the Princess.

So the boy came out, and when he saw that the puppy was all well he jumped up and down with joy.

"I'm going to call him Boy, just as I call you Boy; and I thank you for giving him to me. I love him best of all my puppies. Good-bye." And she ran away.

And the boy was so happy that he turned three somersaults right under the cooks very eyes, and even smiled when she scolded, for he had at last given the Princess a dog.

One day Boy squeezed through one of the palace gates, and the Princess ran out after him. Boy ran down the road, and then stopped; and when the Princess caught up to him he was looking at a poor little puppy that was just as miserable as Boy had been when he first came to the palace. The Princess burst into tears; then she picked up the puppy and stumbled home, Boy following her. But they couldn't help the puppy, and the next day he died. And the poor little Princess cried and cried until the King sent to Fairyland for someone to comfort her.

The message came back from the Queen of the Fairies: "Send the Princess, alone, to the edge of the wood nearest the palace at sunset." So the Princess stopped crying a little bit, and went to the wood.

When she reached it, a fairy came to her and said, "Sit on the lowest branch of that tree, Princess," and as soon as she sat down the branch began to move and she couldn't see anything. Suddenly the branch stopped, and the Princess saw more dogs than she had thought there could be in the whole world, playing in a beautiful meadow.

"Oh!" she cried, for there was the puppy that had died, quite well and strong.

But suddenly the branch began to move again, and everything disappeared. When the branch stopped the Princess said, "I don't quite understand, Fairy."

"Every dog that dies comes here, Princess, to be happy forever."

"And may I come again, Fairy?"

"No, Princess. No mortal can ever come a second time, and you must never tell any one about it."

"Not even my father, Fairy?"

"No, Princess, but teach him to love dogs, and then we will show him what you have seen. The only person you know who has seen it is the scullery boy in your father's palace."

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