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**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,—I have been to the Exhibition and think it is just lovely, but I liked Wonderland best. I was only down at the Exhibition for three weeks, and the rest of my holidays I spent up here with two little friends to stay with me. Who got the prize for the painting competition? I have seen nothing about it in the "Graphic." We had such a lot of raspberries this summer; we had raspberries and cream every day. We had sports out here not very long ago, and we all went out to them, and had a lovely picnic, and one of our men won a silver cup and a pound by racing. I have been for eight baths this summer, and such a lot of lovely rides. Please, Cousin Kate, give me Cousin Winnie's address again, for I have lost it. This will be a very short letter, as I have to go and get ready for school. With much love to yourself and all the cousins, I remain your loving Cousin, CECILY.

[Dear Cousin Cicely.—Thank you very much for your letter. I was so pleased to hear what delightful holidays you have been having. Didn't you manage to see all you wanted to at the Exhibition in the three weeks? I suppose you spent all your spare time there. Most people say that they liked "Wonderland" better than any other part of the Exhibition, so I was delighted when I heard the other day that there is some talk of a Wonderland being opened in Wellington, and also one in Auckland. Raspberries and cream are delicious, aren't they? quite as good as strawberries and cream, I think. Cousin Winnie's address is Miss W. Vincent, Barretta-road, Spreydon, Christchurch. It was a pity you lost her address, otherwise you might have looked her up while you were in Christchurch. Write again soon and then I think I will excuse the very short letter you have written this week. —Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I have been thinking of writing to you for a long time. We have two cats, one is called Tiger and the other we have not named. Will you please send me a blue badge? I am nine years of age, and I am in the fourth standard. My sister went to the convent, and received a gold medal for good conduct. Good-bye, Cousin Kate. EILEEN.

[Dear Cousin Eileen.—I am so glad that you have made up your mind to write to me at last, and I hope that you have broken the ice you will now write often. I have presented a badge to you, as blue is your favourite colour; I suppose it must be as you asked for a

blue one. Do you go to the same school as your sister. You will have to work hard, and be very good in school so as to get a gold medal too, won't you?—Cousin Kate.]

**Margery Redford and the Missing Pearls.**

By Mrs M. H. Spielmann.

CHAPTER I.

Not very far from London stood, in its own beautiful grounds, Mrs Jameson's old established boarding school. It was one of those crisp sunny mornings at the end of March, when one feels that summer is restless to make it known that her annual appearance is fast approaching.

The noontide recreation bell had not ceased ringing when a bevy of hatless young girls ran out of the house, scrambling into jackets, chattering and laughing, as they scattered themselves about. Some hurried to get to the swing first, others began to dispute, a few turned their attention to their little private garden-plantations; couples with arms entwined sauntered lazily about, while Noreen Grey, a slight, graceful girl of about fifteen, was the centre of an interested group who stood around her on the lawn.

"Is it from the dear uncle, Major Edward Skringour Grey?" sarcastically inquired an olive-skinned Mexican girl with bright black eyes and a high colour.

"Yes, Julia," answered Noreen, shortly—Julia was no favourite of hers—as she hastily tore open the envelope; then, as her chum Margery looked over her shoulder, she read aloud the following letter:—

"Dear Girls: I am sending you a present. I have bought you a pearl necklace. (Noreen stopped short and clasped her hands together, with a little gasp of pleasure and surprise.) My intention to give it to you when you are rather older has been modified. I hope you'll like it when it arrives. My respects, please, to Mrs Jameson, and ask her if boarders of fifty-five are eligible, as I should like to improve my calisthenics at her fascinating establishment. Your affectionate, —UNCLE TEDDY."

There was a burst of laughter at the ending of the letter, accompanied by giggles and murmurs of congratulation; and then a little English girl springing bore witness to the impression it had made.

"Lucky creature! Much better than the hanger he sent last year!" exclaimed Margery Redford, the eldest of them all, and head of the school—a quiet, thoughtful girl, daughter of Sir John Redford, M.P.

Five minutes later, everyone in the grounds and in the house knew that Noreen Grey's uncle was giving her a pearl necklace, and nearly everyone was wishing that instead of that it had been a large hamper of good things to eat and drink, such as he had sent last year before Easter.

Noreen was too excited to sleep much that night, and was on tenter hooks of expectation all the following day, though she pretended she was not. It was only on the evening of the day after that the eagerly awaited parcel was brought to her in the big drawing-room by Birding, the old-established parlour-maid of the old-established school.

The pupils were then all gathered together as usual after the day's work, to pass a couple of happy hours, in the genial company of Mrs Jameson, who sat sailing in their midst—a charming personality gowned in black silk, with a white lace cap set far back on her white hair.

"It's my pearl-necklace!" cried Noreen. The exclamation arrested everyone's attention, and Birding withdrew reluctantly. A duet of Diabelli's that was in progress came to a sudden stop, needle-work, chess, and loto were abandoned as though the words had proclaimed a general strike; and the girls all crowded around as Noreen cut the string and broke the seals.

"Value £200!" she read in a loud whisper, as she tore off the stiff outer cover. With Mrs Jameson's scissors she prized open the wooden box, and Margery, who was close by, helped her take out the plentiful packing of tissue paper and cotton-wool.

"Better throw all that in the fire, Margery dear, you are making such a litter," advised Mrs Jameson, laughing at the girl's embarrassment as the scraps of paper kept dropping on the floor. The fire leapt up with the contribution, and Julia's eyes gleamed enviously as she pushed forward.

"Well?" asked Mrs Jameson from her corner. "What's the necklace like?"

"I haven't opened the case yet," replied Noreen, in such tragic tones that there was a chorus of laughter at her impatience. In her hurry, the case she drew forth from the box slipped out of her hands. Julia picked it up from under the table for her. The next moment Noreen stood before Mrs Jameson. Tears were streaming down her face. "It's not there!" she sobbed; "the case was open—and and—it's empty!"

Mrs Jameson rose and patted her kindly on the shoulder. "Let me see," she said, as she peered under the table. Then she looked serious. Margery hurried to her friend; "Perhaps it's dropped out," she suggested. "Of course," said Mrs Jameson. "The girls searched the floor with feverish vigour; they examined their dresses to see if it had caught on fringe or trimming; the wooden box was emptied of its last paper and turned upside down to make very sure—but no pearl necklace could be found."

In the silence which ensued, Julia remarked ironically: "Perhaps it was among all that cob-

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