

Bravo, Adolphus!

Some people seem to have a peek of trouble. For instance, there was the Fitzdolor family. The father, poor man, was swallowed by a tiger, and all that was left to identify him by were ten metal buttons. The mother was caught in a mining machine, and being chopped up into ever so many little bits, there was an end of her. Obadiah, the eldest son, was unfortunately shipwrecked on one of the Cannibal Islands, and as he was never heard of again, it is feared that he furnished a repast for the simple savages.

These sad events happened within a week, and at the early age of eight Adolphus Plantagenet, the youngest son, was thrown an orphan upon the cold world. Just then the bank failed, and he lost his little all. And then—would you believe it?—the family residence was totally destroyed by fire! Oh, poor Adolphus!

No, he did not abandon himself to despair. Resolutely dashing away the unbidden tear, he set himself bravely to consider the history of bygone heroes.

"Let's see!" said he, totting them off on his fingers, "there was Jack of boastful notoriety, Aladdin of the wonderful lamp, Dick Whittington and his cat, who was three Lord Mayor of London. With such shining examples before me, it is strange if I can't make at least a living. I will start with three strings to my bow—beans, lamps, and a domestic cat."

Such was his resolve. A sympathising corn chandler gave him some beans; another sympathiser an assortment of old lamps; and he made friends with a cat, which was, like himself, an orphan—its name was Nebuchadnezzar. He and the cat agreed to adopt the simple life, and set up house-keeping together in a nice dry cavern on the mountain side.

The beans were planted in a neat double row before the door, and although they disappointed expectations in not shooting up to the sky, they grew at least seven feet high, and their leaves protected the occupants of the cave from the sun. The cat kept house whilst Adolphus went to market to sell his beans. They fetched 2/ per peck, and the proceeds of his sale he invested in oatmeal and lentils for himself and a pennyworth of lights for Nebuchadnezzar. And as the total expense of house-keeping was two groats a week, there was always something over to put in the savings bank. Of the beans that remained unsold, some they ate and some were stored for winter use.

As to the lamps, no amount of polishing brought a genie, but the cleaning made them at least salable.

As to the third string Nebuchadnezzar, he was both ornamental and useful and it remained to be seen what more.

It chanced one day that Grey Malkin, the Emperor's chief monster, died; whereas His Imperial Majesty was in great distress. Wringing his august hands, he cried:

"Toll, toll for the cat, Grey Malkin is dead, and having said that, there's no more to be said."

How great was his worth! Where, where shall I find, such another Grey Malkin, a cat to my liking?

It was, indeed, a serious condition of affairs for the country might now be overrun with mice.

Then said the Lord High Chamberlain, "Let us insert an advertisement in the daily press, and see what will come of it."

"Bravo!" cried the Emperor; "very good indeed, pray draw upon my treasury for any sum you need."

On the strength of that, the following advertisement appeared in the "Imperial Scribbler": "Wanted, an AI up-to-date cat. A regular mouse terror. None other need apply to, in the first instance, the Lord High Chamberlain."

In consequence of this, his Lordship was besieged with cat applicants: Persian, Maltese, Manx, yellow, piebald, cross-eyed. After sorting out the lot, six only remained, and they were turned loose in the granary to see what business they could do. The best caught twenty mice a minute, whereas the deceased could catch fifty. When this was reported to the Emperor, he wept.

Now Adolphus Plantagenet heard of the advertisement and the terrible up set at the palace, one day when he was marketing. And he said within himself, "I know why those cats failed, they were all too plump and well fed!" When he went home he told Nebuchadnezzar what he had heard, and ended by



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 must write you a decent letter now, I think, but I am an awful letter-writer. We had our mid-winter holidays last month, but we only had a week. I did not go anywhere, but, really, I would rather have one long holiday than several short ones. We have had awful weather lately, haven't you? It has been wet and cold. Today we had a flood, bigger than any that I can remember. My father said the last big flood came right under our house, but this one did not come quite up to the house. Looking out from our balcony, several fields that were covered with water looked like one huge lake that was divided by fences. I had to hunt up our fowls to shut up, but I could not catch them all. Happily, none of them were drowned. I took my guinea-pigs into shelter yesterday, and I am so glad I did, because on looking out this morning, I saw that the place where they had been was covered with water, and very likely they would have been drowned. Last Friday when I was at school, and when the girls had gone out to wash their hands before sewing, we were trying to smear each other's face with soap. I was held in one corner, and being soaped, when I kicked something, and made a great noise. I rushed out, and fell, face downwards, on the scoria, and several others fell on top of me. When I got up I hardly knew myself. My nose was bleeding, and was nearly covered with scoria. I look very pretty now, you know, with my nose nearly all skinned. I am afraid to go anywhere for fear of being laughed at, but will have to stand it, I suppose.—Good-bye, with love from Cousin ROSA.

P.S.—Have you ever been up to Kaupakapa?—R.

[Dear Cousin Rosa,—Thank you very much for your nice long letter this week, and I wish I had time to answer it with one as long, but I am rather behindhand with the letters this week, so I shall have only a few minutes to scribble an answer to yours; but I will try and write more next time. We certainly have been having some rather wet weather, but I would rather have it wet in the winter-time, when one expects it, than in the summer-time, wouldn't you? I came down from the Waikato last January just after the floods there, and it was really a wonderful sight to see the river in some places. Of course, it had subsided a great deal before we saw it. I am glad your fowls and guinea-pigs did not come to grief. Was there much damage done to the fences, etc.? I expect your face was rather painful after being so closely acquainted with the scoria, and, no doubt, it is not an improvement to one's appearance. I know I was a disgusting sight after I fell one night when I was skating, so I can sympathise with you.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I started a letter to you some time ago, but it got lost. We all went to town the other day for a treat, and bought a birthday present for dad, and tried to get one for mother, but could not see what we wanted, so will try another day. We each bought a very nice hoop, and have been having games since we came home. When we were in town we saw the Frenchman making sweets in the road, and mother bought me some, and I did not like them. We took our tricycle down the Avenue yesterday; it is a nice flat road to ride up and down. One of our little cousins has got the measles. I am down at dad's office writing this on the typewriter. I hope you are quite well. Would you tell me when your birthday is, because I would like to put it in my birthday book? Have you had the measles yet? I have never had them. I might go to the buck-jumpers this afternoon if it's fine. It has been very bad weather lately. Do you remember that I told you I learned music, and you asked me if I had learned "In Happy Moments Day By Day"? Well, I have learned it now, and I think it is very nice. In the bad weather the fowl-yard fence blew down, and now we have built an iron one. I collect post cards, and I have quite a lot now. I think I have told you all the news this time, and I will write to you again soon, so good-bye. Love from Cousin SYDNEY.

[Dear Cousin Sydney,—I really think you and Bobs are such clever little people. Lots of grown-up people could not write a letter nearly as well on the typewriter as you two can, and it is so nice and easy to read it, so I hope you will often write to me from dad's office. I haven't seen the Frenchman making sweets yet, and I don't think I will buy any when I do, as you don't like them. I should think it would be grand fun riding down the Avenue on a tricycle, but it must be rather a pull going up against it. I am sorry your little cousin has the measles, and hope she will be alright again soon. You must be careful not to catch them, too. If you send your birthday book to me at the office I will put my name in it for you and send it back. Will that do? I wish I could hear you play "In Happy Moments Day By Day." Can you play it without the music?—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—It is very cold up here lately, and is very windy, too. I nearly forgot to write to you again. I do not like writing letters, so that is why I always forget. My brother likes reading the cousins' letters, and I suppose he will join in, too, some day. I can't think of anything to say, so this is all I can write. With kind regards to you and all the cousins. From ELLEN.

[Dear Cousin Ellen,—I am glad you did not quite forget to write to me again, and you know I am satisfied with quite short letters, so I think you might try and write, say, once a month. I used to hate letter-writing before I went into the "Graphic Office," but now I am getting quite fond of it, just because I have so much of it to do, I suppose. I hope your brother will join the cousins' band. I always like new boy cousins, because I haven't nearly so many of them. The

weather has been wretched lately, hasn't it? But every day brings us nearer to summer now.—Cousin Kate.]

+ + +

Dear Cousin Kate,—I would very much like to become a cousin. I am staying with my aunt in Wellington. My home is in Devonport, Clarence-street, Auckland. We live on an old hill. Before I return home my auntie is going to take me to Napier to visit my grandfather. He is an elderly gentleman, aged 90. He can see to read and write without glasses, and is always so bright, kind, and nice. He has a number of children and some grandchildren.—I am, yours sincerely, CATHA.

[Dear Cousin Catha,—I shall be very glad indeed to have you for one of my cousins, and if you send me an envelope with your name and address on it, I will post you a badge. Would you like a blue one or a red one? Do you know Cousin Kathleen? She lives in Clarence-street, Devonport, too. What a lovely trip you are having. I expect you will be quite sorry to come home again. I have often heard of your grandfather, and I think he must be a wonderful old gentleman. My grandfather was 95 when he died, and he was able to read and write without glasses quite well, only he was rather deaf. Write again soon, won't you?—Cousin Kate.]

+ + +

Dear Cousin Kate,—I received the badge safely, and think it very nice. I have not been to school for two weeks now, because I have had a sore throat. I have a very sore hand, and can hardly write. We have two cats; one's name is Gusker, and the other Mooky. Gusker is blue, and Mooky is dark, and striped like a tiger. He is very playful, and will let you dress him up, and will sit in a pram. I do not think I have any more news.—I remain, yours truly, Cousin KATHLEEN.

[Dear Cousin Kathleen,—I am glad you got the badge safely, and that you liked it. I hope your throat will be quite well again before you see this in print. It is such a horrid thing to have, and you are missing such a lot of school. It is to be hoped your examinations are not coming off just yet. What sort of a cat is Gusker? I don't think I have ever seen a blue one. Mooky must be a grand pyrotechnic. There are very few cats which will allow themselves to be dressed up and put in a pram, I think, don't you?—Cousin Kate.]

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the scowly-looking individual, when he had been prevailed upon to come to the platform. "I will confess that I was once addicted to strong drink, but now—"

"How long ago was that?" called out somebody from the audience.

The scowly individual gave one glance at the man who had interrupted him, and satisfied himself that he had been recognised.

"I should judge," he said, with an air of a man who was trying to stimulate his memory, "that it was between fifteen and twenty minutes ago."

Thus it happened his speech never was made.