

and day. Why, we shall soon be looking forward to beautiful "Spring" again, the very thought of which quite delights me, for I am a true lover of nature; are you, dear Cousin Kate? And in addition to our expectations of spring, what about the coming of the American Fleet? What a sensation it is causing, to be sure. Why, our little Auckland is all astir. I wonder if you are an enthusiast. I think that I have forgotten to mention to you before, that, on my fourteenth birthday I was the recipient of a most beautiful autograph album, and I have thought if I could but personally meet Cousin Kate, I might coax her to write something especially nice for me. I have already some pretty and quite original little sketches in it. And now I must not tire you, Cousin Kate, for I know you have a number of letters to read and to answer; so good-night. From Cousin ALBERTA.—(Ponsonby).

Dear Cousin Alberts,—Your breezy little letter was one of the late arrivals last week, so I was obliged to keep it back for this week's issue. I hope you were not disappointed at not seeing it before. I think most people appreciate a comfortable home, but certainly the rough weather we have been having ought to make us all think more, and do more to help those who are not so comfortably situated as we are. The arrival of the American Fleet is causing a great commotion, is it not? But I am afraid I am hardly looking forward to it with altogether pleasurable feelings. You see it means a great deal of extra work for us, and some of us are wondering how and when it is going to be done. I'm afraid even if you did have a personal interview with "Cousin Kate," you could not persuade her to write anything in your autograph book. Long ago I decided never to do so, and so far I have not broken my rule.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I wish to become a cousin of yours. I am eleven years of age, and go to the Parcell Public School, and our examination comes off shortly, and I will be able to pass. I have one brother, whose name is Stuart, and no sisters. I have two cats, one beauty named Tabby; he sits on the fence and plays with people as they go past. The other cat's name is Fluffy, who is not so nice as Tabby. I have a double-pointed doll. I have been staying over at my granny's place for my holidays, and the weather has been so bad that I have not been able to go out much. My granny has a funny little dog named Sammy. When my Auntie Lily shows him a picture of another dog he goes up to it and tries to bite it. I hope you will not think my letter too long, so I think I will close now. And, Cousin Kate, if you will be kind enough to send me a red badge I would be very pleased. Good-bye, Cousin Kate, with best love.—From Cousin OLIVE.

Dear Cousin Olive,—Of course, you may become a cousin; you know I am always delighted when new ones join our band, and I will post a badge to you at once. Wasn't it a pity you did not have a few fine days during your holidays; you must have found it rather a difficulty in amusing yourself when you had to stay indoors all day? Some of the schools are going to have another week's holiday when the American Fleet comes in; are you going to?—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—Again I will take the pleasure of writing to you. I like those funny pictures in the "Graphic" as well as Buster Brown. They seem to have week about now. I enjoy reading the other cousins' letters. Cousin Hilda must have travelled about a good bit, as she seems to know a lot about places. She always has long letters, and I wish I could also write a long letter to you every week. We are to have a week's holiday next week, but I do not think I am going away. I hope you received my last letter safely. There was a hockey match here between Feilding and Bulls yesterday. At the first half Feilding had one while Bulls had none. After that Bulls got four, and Feilding did not score again, so Bulls won by 4 to 1. Bonnie is sent away to be trained, and I expect I will not see him for six months. I expect him to be a different dog when he comes back. Donald is growing very big now. We have a new horse called Nugget, and it is driven in the brake. There was a hunt in the paddocks near the school last Wednesday. It was at a place about two and a-half miles away. They came down to the school after a

have, but soon left it. They were trying to find a rabbit or hare. Soon they spied one, and there was a chase through the paddocks. There were a few ladies and a great many men. They had an awkward jump. It was over a fence, and there was on the other side a hill. Most of the horses jumped the fences except two. They lost one of the rabbits in a ditch, but soon put up another. This one was in the paddock next to the school, so we had a fine view. The dogs were very tired, so they could not catch it. As it came on raining they were asked into a huntsman's house. Before that they blew the horn for the dogs to come in. I went for a walk to-day. I have no more news to tell you, so I think I must close soon as I am short of news. There has been a lot of improvements at the cemetery lately. I must close, with love to all the other cousins and yourself. —I remain, yours truly, MYRTLE.

P.S.—Please excuse smudges and writing. I hope my last letter will be in the "Graphic" next week or this one.

Dear Cousin Myrtle,—Are you wondering when you are going to see your letter in print. The cousins have been so very good lately about writing that there has not been room for all of their letters, and so each week I have had to keep back a few of the later ones. I hope you enjoyed your holidays. I expect you did, even though the weather was so bad. It seems hardly worth while going away for a week, especially in the middle of winter. I expect all the children would be quite pleased if the hunt came close to the school oftener. You must have had a splendid view. I expect a good many of you would have liked to be able to join in, too, wouldn't you?—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I received my badge safely, and thank you very much. The weather has been very wet, lately. Have you had any rain up at Auckland. We live quite close to the Waian River. We had a fair number of apples this year, but we children are such terrorists to eat them. I have had toothache for a long time, but yesterday I had my tooth out. We live four miles from the bush, but we do not go very often, because we have to cross the same river four times to get to the best part. Well, Cousin Kate, I think I have told you all the news, so good-bye.—I remain, your loving cousin, EDIE.

Dear Cousin Edie,—I am glad your badge arrived safely, and I have been wondering when you were going to write and acknowledge it. We have had plenty of rain in Auckland, quite enough to last us for the rest of the winter, I think, but then I hate wet weather, so am very soon satisfied. Most children are terrorists to eat apples I think, and one can't blame them, for they are most delicious fruit, aren't they? We had very few apples on our trees this year, so I did not have a chance to prove whether I was a "terror" or not. I should not think you would very often walk all that distance to get to the bush. How do you manage to get across the river when you do go?—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—Thank you very much for the badge; I think it is very pretty. Our little kitten, Tui, died about a week ago, and we were very sorry because she had become such a pet among us. Last time I wrote you did not seem to understand my name—ATA—it is my own, and full name. "Ata" is a Maori word, it means "the dawn." Are you fond of reading, Cousin Kate! I am. I had a book given to me a short time ago called "A World of Girls," by L. T. Meade. Our school will close for the winter holidays, of two weeks, next Friday. I am going up into the country, twelve miles away from the nearest station, to a place called Nobles. I do not think it will be very cold, because we are having a very forward spring; there are violets, daffodils, etc., out here now. We also take the "Canterbury Times," and I went in for one of Aunt Hilda's competitions, and got first prize; wasn't I lucky? I have a cousin staying with me, his name is Rudall; he is seven years old and in the first standard. He is a nice little boy, and we often have fine games together. We have been having lovely fine weather lately, and I hope it will keep like this for a while. With kind regards, your sincere friend ATA.

[Dear Cousin Ata,—Now that I know the meaning of your pretty and uncommon name I like it better than ever. I am very hopefully ignorant of the Maori language, so, though I guessed your name had a Maori meaning, I hadn't the faintest idea of what it meant. I am very fond of reading, indeed, and I am particularly fond of some of Mrs. L. T. Meade's books. I hope you will enjoy your holidays; I should hardly think the country would be very nice at this time of the year, everything will be so wet and muddy.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate,—I hope you are well. On Saturday, July 4th, I went with mother to a "tangi" for a Maori chief that died. Well, Cousin Kate, it was very cold there, and the little village is about 36 miles from here. The dead chief is going to be buried at Waihaha. On the same afternoon, as we were leaving for home, the body was taken to Oranui, another small village. Well, Cousin Kate, we are having awfully bad weather here. I have no more to say, but oceans of love to you and other cousins. Cousin JANE.

[Dear Cousin Jane,—It is quite a long time since I had the pleasure of a letter from Taupo. How are you all! I have never been to a tangi, but of course I have heard a great deal about them. I should very much like to go to one some day, but I don't think I am quite enthusiastic enough about it to travel thirty-six miles in this cold and very unpleasant weather to see one.—Cousin Kate.]

OLDER COUSINS' LETTERS.

Dear Cousin Kate,—I was delighted to read in our pages last week that a new Cousin had joined the older Cousins' band. May I (as Cousin Bill was good enough to mention my letters as being interesting), assure her that it is only a question of time before she will be able to write quite as long, and as interesting letters, as she is pleased to say mine are. Letter-writing, like every other accomplishment, improves with constant practice. But, unlike music, drawing, painting, etc., it is not likely to be taken up as an accomplishment, or study, unless the pupil has a love of, and an aptitude for it, as the art of letter-writing has never been considered (in the fullest sense) an integral, or a compulsory part of a girl's education, and so is only likely to be cultivated by those who really love it, and use it as a medium of outward expression of "thoughts that burn, descriptive of people, things, and places, that have inspired or repressed, instructed, or perplexed, interested, or amused." I liked Cousin Violet's Wanganui letter very much. Wanganui must be a sort of Colonial Rugby. I wonder whether the boys have tack shops like they have at Rugby. At the beginning of the term, and especially the New Year term, the boys are very liberal in their expenditure, and I have seen boys go in to a favourite cake shop of mine, and empty a whole dish of rich lemon cheese cakes, in almost less time than it takes me to write this. But I love school boys, and one of the sights that affected me most when "at home" was the sight of fifteen hundred (I think it was) Rugby schoolboys walking four abreast into chapel. And the sweetness of their voices, as they sang "Our Blest Redeemer," was a thing I shall ever remember. A splendid book to read is John Oxenham's "Pearl of Pearl Island." Pearl Island is Mr Oxenham's romantic name for Sark, in the Channel Islands. The quality of the book may be guessed at by its opening sentences—"If you want murders, mysteries, or mud—pass on! This is a simple, straightforward love story." And not only is it a simple, straightforward love story, but it exerts in beauty and vividness of description any description I have ever read of Sark and its neighbourhood. The simplicity and the hospitality of the inhabitants of Sark, together with the description of the customs, superstitions, and the quaint laws, under which they live, make up a story which, if not as exciting or as deep as some of Mr Oxenham's stories, is more than compensated for in breeziness of atmosphere. The illustrations of the book are as beautiful as they are illuminative. Cousin Diana, it seems, is not in favour of Women's Suffrage any more than I. I wonder whether Cousin Diana saw an article on Women's

Suffrage in one of our daily papers. It scorned the idea that woman was in any way unfitted for the franchise, and quoted our late Queen as an example, of how well and wisely a woman could rule. Curiously enough, in the next day's issue of this paper, appeared an extract from Sir Theodore Martin's book on Queen Victoria, in which, in very plain language, Her Majesty expresses her detestation of the woman who is now known as the suffragette. So illogical was the article on Women's Suffrage as a whole that one might almost have imagined that it had been written by a woman. It is so well known that Her Majesty (as Cousin Diana says) was guided almost entirely by her Ministers, and the beloved Prince Consort, in her ruling, that it is scarcely necessary to point it out. But Queen Victoria, as an example of the fitness of woman for the franchise, is too funny for words. To use her Majesty's own words—"God created men and women different—then let them remain each in their own position." And this is what I think. It will be interesting to hear what Cousins Alison, Violet, and Bill think, will it not? I wish Cousin Winnie (Christchurch) would give her.



Before going out
drink a cup of
VAN HOUTEN'S
The Cocoa that
Warms, Comforts
and Cheers.