

parly, and came home with the first prize. It was a cut-glass silver-mounted bottle. I went as "Love me, love my dog," and not one guessed it. Well, now I must say good-bye. From your loving Cousin FLORENCE.

[Dear Cousin Florence.—I was just telling one of my cousins that I had not heard from you for quite a long time. I am glad you were pleased with your badge. We have had the most lovely weather up here. I hope you had the same kind for your picnic. There is nothing so uncomfortable or depressing as picnicing on a windy or showery day. You will enjoy the extra week holiday more than all the rest just because you didn't expect it. Book-tittle parties are great fun, aren't they? Some of the representations are so awfully amusing and quite unguessable. I am glad you enjoyed yours so much and got the prize. Such a nice one, too. But how did you manage to represent "Love me, love my dog." I would like to see it.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate.—You must think I have forgotten all the cousins, but I don't think I can ever find much news. It is my birthday on Monday, and I will be twelve years old. I have not written to you since fleet week; you must think I am awful. I don't like writing unless I have a lot of news to tell; all my letters are short. Well, I think this is all the news till next time. I remain, your loving Cousin LEONARD.

[Dear Cousin Leonard.—It certainly is a long time since you wrote last, but when you haven't any news letter-writing becomes really hard work; I don't believe I could write at all if I had to sit and think, and think of something to write about. What presents did you get on your birthday? I am always wanting to know what kind of present to get for a boy; it is so easy to get things for girls, but when my nephews' birthdays come round I am always at a loss to know what they would like.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate.—You will think me a long time writing to you. How often do you like the cousins to write? I was pleased to see my letter in the "Graphic." Everything looks lovely and green down here, and the fruit trees are in blossom. We are having our Michaelmas holidays, but they are about over now. We got medals for Dominion Day. I learned to drive during the holidays. Can you, drive, Cousin Kate? We have a photograph and 74 records. Please may I have a red badge? I shall conclude with love to you, from Cousin KATE.  
P.S.—If you have not a red badge, a blue one will do.

[Dear Cousin Kate.—Writing letters when you don't feel inclined is a bore, and I don't want any of my cousins to be bothered ever, but I would like them to write often, not at set times every week, but every fortnight or three weeks at least. I am glad you are pleased with your letters. Doesn't it look different in print, so short and business-like. The fruit trees do look lovely now; two old pear trees in our garden are just one mass of white blossom. I hope the wind will not blow them all off. What kind of medals did you get on Dominion Day. What were they for? Yes; I can drive, but we don't drive very much in town, only in the country, and as a rule I would rather ride; riding is lovely, I think. Certainly you can have a red badge when they come.—Cousin Kate.]

Dear Cousin Kate.—It is a long time since I last wrote to you, but I know you have such a lot of cousins' letters to answer, that you cannot answer them all at once, so I thought I would wait a little while before I wrote again. My uncle Sydney has gone up to Rotorua for his health. He has been ill nine months, but I hope the baths up there will do him good. We have lots of young lambs over here, and I love watching them run about the paddocks. The other day I had two of my friends down to play with me, and as I was making tea I scalded my foot, and it has been very painful for three days. I am going to have a party next Saturday. That story about Tom, Harriet, and the electric man is very good; did you print it? My canary is laying, but the eggs are no good. I think it is such a pity, because I might have had some little canaries to sell. The last time she laid, she brought out five—but I only managed to rear one, and

its wing looks as if it is broken, but it isn't. I am saving up my money to buy a canary to mate with the one I have now. Once a fortnight we get two little books called "Home Chat." Do you get them over in Auckland? I think they are so nice. Old Bob the pony, and Billy the goat are getting along all right. I must now close with best love to all the cousins and yourself, for it is bedtime now. With love from Cousin MABEL.

Dear Cousin Mabel.—We do get a lot of letters sometimes, but we always want more because at other times perhaps only four or five write. I hope the baths at Rotorua will cure your uncle; it must be awful to be ill for so long. Why, we think it is awful if we have colic or influenza for a week. It is pretty to watch the lambs, isn't it. They look such funny clumsy little things, with those long thin legs. Your foot must have been very painful. What did you do for it? Will it be well enough for you to enjoy your party next Saturday, do you think? I scalded mine once in just the same way. I could not put it to the ground for over a week—I could not put on my books for quite a long time after that. What is the matter with the canary's wing, don't you know?—Cousin Kate.]

**The Elephant and His School.**

The great white elephant left the show—  
He said he was too refined;  
The ways of a circus did not suit  
His most superior mind.

"A creature as big and wise as I  
Should be teaching school," said he;  
"And all the animal little folk  
My scholars they shall be."

So into an empty schoolhouse near  
He marshalled them all one day;  
("Twas in vacation time, and so  
The children were all away.)

The kittens and puppies, the pigs and  
geese,  
Were put to work with a will;  
But the squirrel and fox to the platform  
went.

Because they would not keep still.  
And then he began to teach his school  
The various things he knew;

"There's much cut down in the books,"  
said he,  
"That you ought to know how to do."  
And first he showed how to flap the ears,  
But their ears were far too small;  
And then he showed how to wave the trunk,  
But they had no trunk at all.

The only thing that he taught his school  
That the scholars accomplished well,  
Was when he called to the peanut man,  
And taught them the nuts to shell.

The elephant soon dismissed the school,  
And packed up his trunk to go;  
"For, after all, my talents," said he,  
"Are best displayed in a show."

**Home-made Sweets.**

Peppermint Toffee: Melt 3oz. butter, and then mix with it a pound of brown sugar, stir it on the fire for a quarter of an hour, add a little essence of peppermint, and pour it out on an oiled slab; divide it into two parts, and when you can bear to handle it, work it well till white, then cut it into lozenges. You may mix a little that has been worked with some that has not been touched, and then cut it into lozenges the form you like. You may vary by dropping in essence of lemon in place of the peppermint or any other essence you like.

Ginger Candy: Melt a pound of lump sugar with the third of a pint of water, let it dissolve clearly in a preserving pan, and boil till a clear syrup. Have ready a teaspoonful of grated ginger, and mix it gradually with three or four teaspoonfuls of the syrup, and then stir it into the whole. Watch it carefully, and when it begins to fall in flakes throw in the freshly grated rind of a lemon, and work the sugar round quickly, as you add it, keep stirring it round until it is done; this will be when it falls in a mass from the spoon, then drop it in little cakes of tablets on cold dishes, and before they are quite cold you can raise them from the dish to dry, but if touched when hot they will break.

Chocolate Drops: Break in a mortar that has been heated some cake chocolate, and work with a pestle until it is a fine paste; add some vanilla essence, and work it well with an equal weight of sugar until well blended; then make it into balls or little cakes, and lay them on sheets of writing paper until cold; shake over them either nonpareil comfits or coarse white sugar, when they are warm, or they will not stick.


Chocolate Almonds: When the chocolate has been softened, as before directed, put in the middle an almond that has been blanched, or a pistachio nut, and then work them into balls as before, and roll them in comfits or sugar.

**Weather Signs.**

Any one can be a weather prophet, more or less infallible. The following rules are laid down by an expert—"Bees work with redoubled energy just before rain. If the flies are unusually persistent, either in the house or around stock, there is rain in the air. The cricket sings at the approach of cold weather. The buds of deciduous trees have a firmer protecting coat if a severe winter is at hand. If the poplars' leaves turn up the under side, rain will soon follow. If the camphor bottle becomes turbid it is going to storm; when it clears settled weather may be expected. This idea has seemingly been utilised in the manufacture of barometers. The main trouble is they seldom foretell the change until about the time it arrives. Last, but not least, rheumatics can always tell it in their bones when a storm is approaching, and of this prognostication the octogenarian of to-day is as firm an advocate as were his forefathers."

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