

Cousin Kate's Correspondents.

TO OUR YOUNG READERS.

Our young readers are cordially invited to enter our wide circle of Cousins, by writing to

COUSIN KATE,
"The Weekly Graphic,"
Shortland Street, Auckland.

Cousin Kate is particularly desirous that those boys and girls who write should tell her whatever it interests them to tell, about their games, their pets, their holidays, or their studies. Their letters and Cousin Kate's replies will appear in the "Weekly Graphic," on the Children's Pages.

All Cousins under the age of fourteen are accounted Junior Cousins, all above that age Senior Cousins. Cousins may continue writing until quite grown up, and offer, if they wish to do so; for we are proud to number among our Cousins some who have passed out of their teens.

A badge will be sent to each new Cousin on the receipt of an addressed envelope.

LETTERS AND REPLIES.

Mount Eden.

DEAR COUSIN KATE.—I would like very much to become one of your cousins. I am ten years of age. I go to King's College, and am in Standard 2. I have two sisters, one seven and one four, and lots of pigeons and a pantom ben and rooster, and a lot of chicks. I also have a tortoise. It came from England a few months ago. I am going to Rotorna for my holidays, and I hope to have a long picnic. I have never been there before.—Cousin FRANK.

Dear Cousin Frank.—I shall be very pleased to add your name to our long list of cousins, but you have forgotten to send your full name and address, and until you do so I can't send you a badge. I am glad to see that you number your sisters among your pets.—Cousin KATE.]

Kaimiro.

Dear Cousin Kate.—Just a few lines to let you know how we are getting on. We are all quite well at present, and I hope you are the same. I have been sick for a few days, but I am better now. I missed two days at school last week. There is to be some Maori sports in New Plymouth tomorrow, and my mother and sister are going. Our little baby brother can walk and talk a little too, he is only one year old. Would you like to come and see just on the slopes of Mount Egmont, where you can see everybody that goes up there? We live on the main road to the mountain gate. I went up the mountain last Sunday, and got some lovely mountain views. If you ever go up the mountain you will see our house, because it is the third house on the left hand side from the Post Office. It is rather a big house. We are having lovely fine weather up here now, and I hope you are having the same. We have got four dear little black and white kittens. Do you love kittens? I do. Cousin ELLEN.

Dear Cousin Ellen.—Many thanks for your very nice letter and the pretty card you sent me. Nothing could like better than to spend a holiday on Mount Egmont. About six years ago I climbed right up to the top from the Dawson Falls side, and loved every moment of the time. I think it is a glorious mountain, and the view on the lower slopes is very beautiful. I love kittens, and wish they did not grow into cats.—Cousin KATE.]

Kio Kio.

Dear Cousin Kate.—We are having our holidays now. I do not like holidays very much. We have been harvesting for four and a half days now, and are not finished yet. Today when they had about eight loads to take in, it rained. We had a very large crop of hay. The paddock consisted of seventeen acres of thick hay. We go back to school on the 31st February. I am in Standard 6 when I go back to school. I think Standard 6 is the hardest standard to pass. Do you like music? I do when someone else is playing, but do not like practising myself. We are having very good weather for the New Year. It will spoil all the sports. We did not go to the Kihikihi sports today because we are harvesting.—Cousin PHOEBE.

Dear Cousin Phoebe.—I suppose you can not do much of even a good thing, but I always think of making a great fun. We had glorious weather till New Year's Day, and then the rain came, and it has been showery ever since. Don't be a silly girl,

but practise. You are sure to be sorry later on when you can't play well. I wish I had.—Cousin KATE.]

Wanganui.

Dear Cousin Kate.—I would very much like to join all the cousins. I am ten years of age, and my birthday is on 31st of October. Mother and father went to Auckland today. They are then coming home and going to Blenheim. My little friend Paul has had the chickenpox very badly. He is going away with my mother and father. I am in the fourth standard at school; the school is a district high school. I have a little brother named Allen, who is going to write to you shortly. We have had very hot weather here, but most of our time is spent playing the summer games. I have been in the hospital with scarlet fever for a very long time, and have just come out. I hope I am not putting you to any trouble by asking you for a badge, please. I am going for a long picnic next Wednesday. I forgot to tell you what colour I would like—a pale pink or blue.—Cousin PHYLLIS.

Dear Cousin Phyllis.—I am very pleased to enrol you as a cousin. We are a large, happy family, and always pleased to welcome new cousins. I shall be very pleased to hear from your brother. How did you like being in a hospital? I expect you got very home and mother and I am glad you are better. Please only write on one side of the paper.—Cousin KATE.]

Hareape (Raglan).

Dear Cousin Kate.—I suppose you think I am getting slow at writing, but I have been into Frankton for a week's holiday. I am going for a long picnic next Wednesday, Christmas Eve, and I am going to hang up my stockings to-night. We are not going anywhere from town. I am going to have a good time these holidays. Our school shut for the Xmas holidays last Tuesday. Wishing you the compliments of the season.—Cousin GEORGE.

Dear Cousin George.—I think you are a very good cousin, you write so often. I don't expect letters in the holidays, but am very pleased if they come. I hope you found your stocking nice and full with the things you wanted most.—Cousin KATE.]

Nikau.

Dear Cousin Kate.—You will, I am sure, think me a very inconsiderate cousin. I will tell you about rescue. Rescue is a grass something like oats. We have about 20 acres of it. It grows in bunches around and in rushes. You can't see a cow in it unless on horseback, and even when I am on Dolly (the horse) it is over the saddle, so when it is raining it wets you through nicely. It is impossible to walk through it on a wet day. I am sending you a stem of it. It is terrible grass in some ways. For instance, we have a cow lame with it now. It gets in between their cloven hoofs, and causes the hoof to swell to the size of a goose egg. Then the cow can't possibly go about and get its food. It then goes dark, and it is so painful then to see the cow limping on three feet. They get so thin; some die. But the cows like it very much. I went to my aunt's on Xmas day, and my pup came with me. As I was turning Dolly she trod on the pup's leg and broke it. So I put him on her neck in front of me, and Doll started darting from side to side. What was I to do? The pup could not walk through the fence. So I let her shy till we came to the creek, and Doll gave one bound and

over. The pup started scrambling down, and away went Doll. I had to let the pup down, or I don't like to think what might have happened. Then when I got home I went back for the pup. He is nearly better now, and he is a very good cattle dog. My brother is removing the windmill, and it is so awkward. I have a calf to look after now, and when it follows me its mother gets jealous and bellows like any thing. We also have a heifer which wouldn't take any notice whatever of its own calf, but when it saw any of us in the paddock or anywhere it bellowed and rushed up to us then licked our hands. I think she reckoned we were her calf. She is a nice thing, and simply bates dogs. Once she batted Laddie up, and mind you Laddie was chained to his kennel. She batted him against the kennel and started to horn him. She was simply mad. We had to clear out of her road. She saw my brother, and rushed to him and licked his hand. The dog never had a scratch on him. She couldn't get her horns low enough or he would have been ripped to pieces. Well, dear cousin, I suppose I am tiring you with the happenings on a farm. I will conclude, wishing you a Happy New Year.—Cousin LENA.

Dear Cousin Lena.—Far from tiring me, I enjoyed your letter very much. There always seems such lots of things happening on a farm. You had indeed a busy time getting the pup home. I am glad he is getting well. You must be a good rider to have stuck on so well. What wonderful grass rescue must be, but rather sad for the cows when it hurts them.—Cousin KATE.]

To Kaha, Bay of Plenty.

Dear Cousin Kate.—Our school holidays began on Friday. The weather is very hot here just now. I went to a Maori wedding last week, and it was very enjoyable. My mother has twelve turkeys a fortnight old. They are pretty little things. Sometimes they get lost in the grass, and I have to look for them. I must stop now, wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.—Cousin IRIS.

Dear Cousin Iris.—We have had some lovely hot weather, but now it is raining again, which does not matter so much now that the holidays are over. I have never seen a Maori wedding, but I suppose, if they are civilised, the ceremony will be the same as ours. I hope you enjoy your holidays.—Cousin KATE.]

Hanilton E.

Dear Cousin Kate.—Please may I become one of your many cousins. I have two pets, a cat and a horse. Our pony got away this morning. I am eight years old, and will be in Standard III when I go back to school. I have one sister, and she is writing to you. My father has put the tent up, and we play house in it. We have six weeks for our holidays, but some schools have seven weeks. I have two dolls, and one of them is a baby doll. Please will you send me a blue badge. I must not forget to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.—Cousin VERA.

Dear Cousin Vera.—I shall be very pleased to accept you as a cousin, and when you send me your full name and address I will send you a badge.—Cousin KATE.]

The White Mouse.

A Fairy Story Translated from the French.

HERE was once a villainous King of France, named Louis the Eleventh. Generally the superstitious and sickly old King reigned unseen behind the walls of his castle; but towards the middle of the year 1483 he went on a pilgrimage, accompanied by his executioner, his physician, and his priest.

This King had many memories which troubled his conscience, and he repented of many of his cruel deeds. He repented, but he did not atone, and at the very time when he was making his pilgrimage one of the innocent sons of a duke who had rebelled against him was languishing in a dungeon at Plessis-les-Tours.

A most wretched dwelling-place was that castle; its vestibules dark with priests, its courtyards glittering with soldiers, its chapels ever ablaze with candles, gave to the aspects both of a citadel and a convent. People talked in whispers, and walked on tip-toe in its great halls; captives by hundreds lay hidden from the world in its vaults. And it was in this castle that, idle, though with an adventurous spirit, the Dauphin Charles, then in his twelfth year, was being reared. (The King's son in France was called the Dauphin.)

Poor King's son! He sought in vain

to rest his eyes from the horrors surrounding him, but examples of his father's cruelty were all about him.

One day, however, his looks and gestures betrayed less weariness than usual.

The noonday bell had already been rung, and his morning meal, consisting in accordance with his orders, of light pastry and sweetmeats, stood untouched on a table, which the young Prince rapped impatiently. Every now and then he rose from his seat, panting with hope, and called:—

"Blanchette! Blanchette! Why don't you come? The breakfast is melting in the sun, and if you don't soon come the flies will eat up your share!"

And as no answer came to his appeal, the poor Prince continued to tap the floor with his feet and become more and more uneasy. Suddenly a slight sound in the tapestry made him start; he turned his head, uttered a cry, and sank back on his chair, filled with joy, and murmuring a sigh of immense relief:—

"At last!"
No doubt you will imagine that the "Blanchette" so much desired was some noble lady, a sister or cousin of the young Prince. She was nothing of the sort. Blanchette was simply a little white mouse, as her name indicated:—so lively that, on seeing her run across the floor, she might have been mistaken for a flirting sunbeam.

Charles caressed his pretty visitor, gazing at her with delight while she nibbled a biscuit in his hand; but then, remembering that he owed it to his dignity to scold her a bit, he said to her in a pleasantly grave tone:—

"Now, Miss, will you tell me what you think I ought to say to such conduct? Here, I treat you like a duchess; yet every evening, ungrateful that you are, you leave me to rave about the fields like a mere vagabond mouse! Where do you go to in this way, heedless of your own danger and of my anxiety? Where do you go?—tell me; I insist on knowing!"

Pressing though the question was, poor Blanchette, as may be imagined, returned no answer to it; but, with a look of sadness, fixing her intelligent eyes on those of the scolding lad, she turned over the pages of the book of the Gospels, which was lying upon the table, and placed her rosy paws upon these words: "Visit the prisoners."

Charles was surprised and confused, as happens to presumptuous persons when they receive a lesson at the moment when they think they are giving one. For more than once he had heard tell of strange things concerning the inhabitants of the underground vaults in this castle, and more than once he had meditated making a pious pilgrimage to the prison of the young captive who has al-

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