



My dear Little People,

Are you all back at school now? I think you must be, even those who went to the back of beyond for their holidays I can see by some of the essays I have received that you had good holidays. This week eight came in - one each from Hastings, Dipton, Cronadun, Pomolaka, Wangaehu and Geraldine; and two from Te Wae Wae. The first three on the list did not put their exact ages on their essays. Will they please send them in to me as I want to be quite sure and quite fair.

This week we are not crowded out with letters, only three, so, what about a story for a change. I wonder do any of you know it? If not, so much the better, but even if you do, we'll go over it together and it will be ever so nice. Come along then all of you, let's get away into some shady corner where there are no horrid mosquitoes, and I'll tell you about:

DIPPY, THE DONEY.

Dippy was born in clover, a whole field of it, which was perhaps as well, for when his mother saw him she said, "Well of all the long-legged babies I have ever seen you are quite the longest and thinnest, I must feed you up."

At that moment a very dainty old lady walked into the field, she moved very slowly, and leant on a stick. "Dear me! Queenie," she said, "so you have a baby, how sweet of you and what a darling he is, what shall we call him?" and she stroked the baby donkey as gently as the breeze. Just then an animal rushed up making horrible noises. Poor Dippy was so scared that he turned and fled, but his mother called after him, "don't be afraid of Nigger, he won't hurt you, he's our greatest friend and takes care of our mistress and ourselves." All the same Dippy thought he looked very fierce with his gleaming teeth and long red tongue, but when presently, Nigger went up to him and made a fuss of him, they became sworn friends from that moment.

"Now, come and make friends with me Dippy," said the mistress, and that was how the baby donkey learned that his name was Dippy. It may sound rather a funny name, but it is really very nice and affectionate once you get used to it. While this was going on the groom harnessed the mother donkey, Queenie, to a pretty little carriage, and when Dippy saw his mother strapped and led up with a heavy burden to pull, he said "Oh! mother I don't like to see you all fixed up like that." But Queenie told her little son that she did not mind a bit, in fact that she loved to be of service to the dear mistress who was so kind to her. Off they set, the mistress driving, while Dippy ran happily by his mother's side. First of all they went to a farmhouse to get some new milk, and Dippy having nothing else to do, followed the farmwife into the cowshed and saw a maid milking. But the cow saw him with the corner of her eye and she got such a fright that she kicked over the milking pail, upsetting all her beautiful warm milk. Also, she tossed her long horns in such a threatening way that poor little Dippy went for his life and told his mother what had happened. Queenie explained to him while she gave him a tender licking, that Rusty was all right, but that she had a wee little calf just out in the yard, and that very likely she mistook Dippy for someone come to take little Blossom away. She told him

at the same time not to be surprised if any horses they met snorted and made a fuss, because horses didn't seem to like donkeys at all. Why, she didn't know, unless it was because they were jealous of donkeys' lovely ears.

From the farmhouse they trotted to the village butcher and he was most polite to the gentle old lady, coming to the carriage to take her orders. "I do wish," she said to him, "that you would take Dippy to see his father."

"Certainly Madam," said the butcher, "he is just running the sausage machine," and he led Dippy by the mane through a yard into a large shed. In the centre ran a handsome donkey with a halter round his neck, a length of iron connected the halter with a machine and as the donkey ran so the machine turned, chopped up masses of meat and poured it into sausage skins, which were then twisted—the long strings of sausage that you see in the shops come from the machine. The butcher slipped the halter from the donkey and introduced Dippy to his father. Mokey was very pleased to meet his son and hee-hawed with delight. He told him that he was very lucky to be so young and free, for he found it very tiring and trying to run in a circle.

(We'll go on with Dippy's story next week.)

ANNE.

My Dear Anne—All last year I have been reading the little folks letters, and they were lovely and interesting. So this year I would like to become one of your little band. I am 12 years old and in Standard 4. I have 3 Sisters and one brother. We go to the Convent School it is quite near our home. My brother's name is Verdon. This is a riddle Anne. Two men had shorn a 100 sheep in a day if I man shorn 5 sheep more than his mate how many did each shear. Well dear Anne if I write much more I will be filling up the peoples page. Yours sincerely, Molly McMenamin, Milton.

(Welcome Molly glad you like us well enough to join up. Look out for your riddle in a week or two.—Anne.)

Dear Anne—I have written to you before but you did not reply. I would like to be a member of the L.P.L.C. I like your idea very much. I will try for the prize from ten to fifteen years next time I write. I have one sister older than myself and five brothers younger. I am ten years old hope to be in standard four when school opens. We have no Convent here but I was three years at the Convent in Timaru. Your new friend, Denise Mulvey, Geraldine.

(Am sorry Denise that you got no answer. Wasn't your name included in the trips or lists at all? Perhaps the letter was lost. Glad to welcome you now.—Anne.)

Dear Anne—I would like to join the little people page. I am 8 years on August 25. I go to the Florry Vally school and am in the 3 St I have 3 brothers and one Sister. I was at the Teatavere Sports on New Year Day and I enjoyed them fine. I am going to the Pictures to night. We are milking 18 cows and feeding 16 pigs. I am staying with my Grandad for a few days. We are going to have a Misson on the 10 February for one week. 2 of my cousins write to you I always read the children's letters and I like them to, no more this time Anne. Goodbye and love to the children and also you. Your little friend, Filleen Sheehan, Happy Valley.

(Glad to welcome you Eileen and hope you'll write again. We're going to have a rattling good page this year, I think.—Anne.)

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