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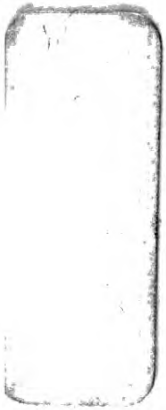
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COCK-O-LORUM



2527
£ 1408

CECIL ALDIN
LETTER BOOK
SERIES



2527 E 1408



COCK-O-LORUM

THE GREAT



By **CECIL ALDIN**

Humphrey Milford : London

My dear

This is a little story about a very conceited cock, and shows how he had the conceit taken out of him.

Stalking importantly through the yard with a collection of dejected-looking wives following behind him, the great Cock-o-lorum puffed out his chest with pride.

He was a regular Bluebeard, as far as wives were concerned, but among his wives there was one hen, a tiny weeny little bird, whom the King of the poultry yard could not overawe or frighten. She answered him back when spoken to, refused to wait for her supper, as you will see on the opposite page, until his Highness had finished, and altogether treated Cock-o-lorum, the King, in what he considered a most insolent manner.

What particularly annoyed him was that she refused to follow him about all day, as other wives did, in the manner wives should do; but strolled about independently on her own.

One day while making his morning tour

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Bill Low

the farmyard he noticed that she had been missing for some time from the string of wives following behind him, and decided there and then to make an example of her.

Full of importance, as husband and head of household, he called his wives together with a loud crow, and ordering them to march past in line, called out the name of each as she went by. "Caroline" - "Priscilla" -

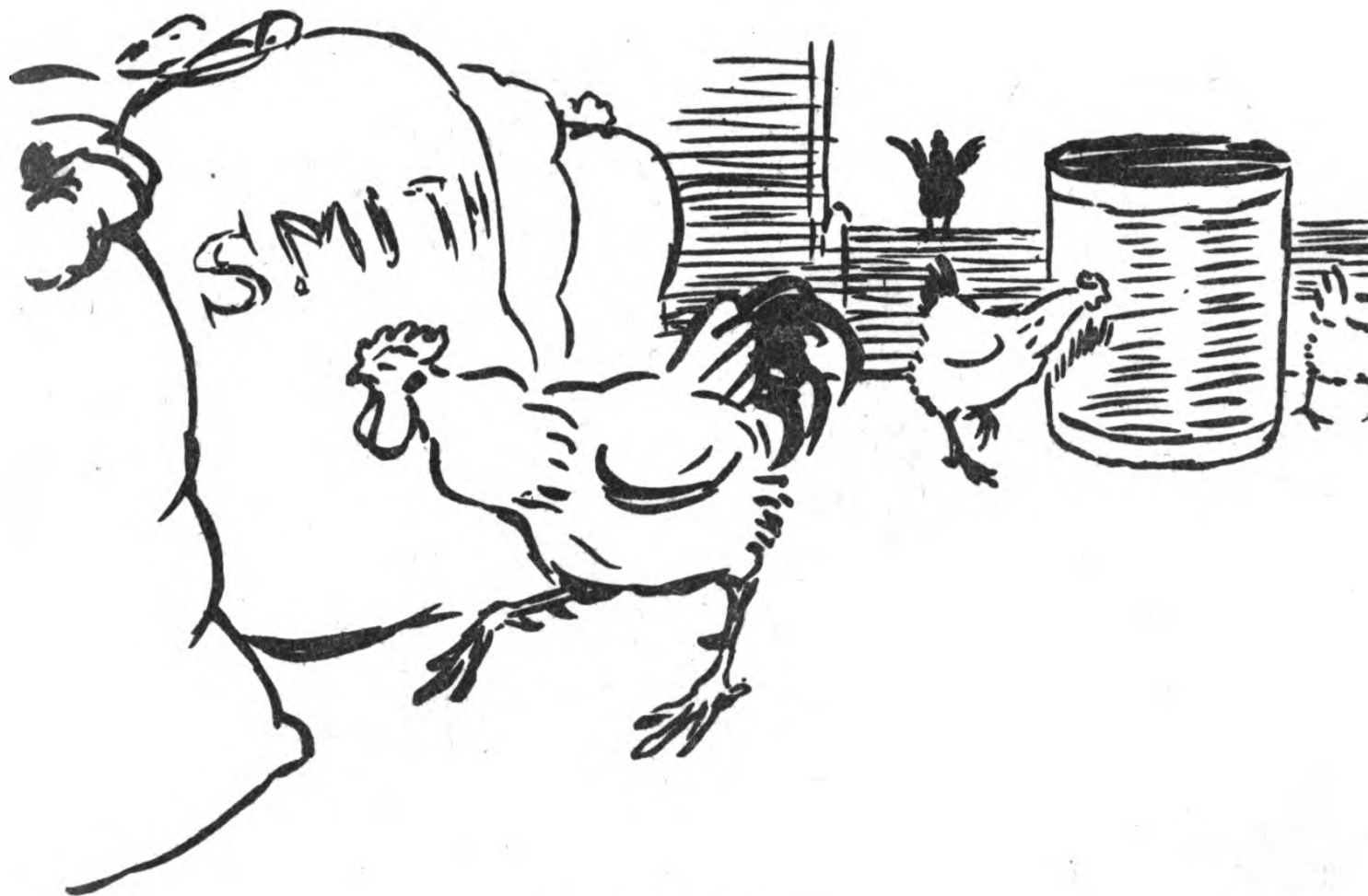
"Penelope" - "Poppet" - to which they all answered "here", like soldiers on parade.

Last of all he called "HETTY" in his loudest voice, but no answer was returned.

He crowed and called, getting redder & redder until his face looked like a turkey cock when annoyed.

He fumed, stamped and stormed up and down expecting every minute to hear his missing wife come clucking towards him; finally he stamped off in a furious passion to look for her, more than ever deciding to administer the correction which he for some time had considered necessary for her wifely education.





They searched the barn and all the hedge rows in the neighbourhood, and in the end came back to the farmyard, not a of Hetty being found.

Now in the far corner of this yard, round behind the cart-horse stable, was a heap of rubbish and odd thrown-away things. Only the day before, old George, the cartman whose wife had given him a new hat, it being his sixtieth birthday, had taken his old worn-out one on to this heap.



From this rubbish-heap corner present
came a pleased and proud cluck, c
clucking.

The whole search party stopped & listen
and, recognising the voice of Hetty, a
knowing smile spread (I nearly spelt
this word wrong; it's "spread") over the face
of the other wives.

Cockalorum, still furious, also
recognised it and stumped over to the
corner from whence the voice had
come, followed by his smiling wives.



Arrived at the heap, they peered here, there & everywhere, but no Hetty could they see, until finally her little head appeared above the brim of the carters old hat.

at this sight his wives broke into loud shrieks of laughter, but Cock-o-love felt more furious still, as he considered he was being made a laughing stock in front of them.

He ruffled his neck feathers, & struck & scratched the ground with his claws as he started to rush at the offending wife, intending to pull her out of her hat, but as he put his head over the edge of the brim, such a mass of infuriated beak claws & feathers met him that he was rather taken aback. Moreover he received some very nasty pecks on his smart red comb, and in consequence beat a hasty retreat out of reach of the lady.

Priscilla, Penelope & some others of the wives then walked up to Hetty.

With great pride she stood on the edge of the brim of the hat, and shewed to the admiring hens two tiny little eggs lying snugly in the bottom of her novel nest.

"They are sweet, my dear," said Priscilla whose own eggs were always great clumsy things, "and such a beautiful shape and colour."

"You may look but you must not touch," said Hetty, with pardonable pride, as she once more sat upon them to keep them warm.

For some minutes the hens then had an animated discussion on "eggs and how to rear them", as hens are apt to do with each other when a new egg arrives. All this time Cock-o-loorum, dripping a

of blood from his damaged comb, was standing, fuming & crowing, some little distance outside the admiring circle. As King of the Farmyard he could not allow it: eggs should be laid in the proper place, the hen house, and not in such an awkward place as this old hat, which made a laughing stock of him as husband. And now I want you to turn over to the next page for a minute and you will see Hetty's twins in their nest.

.....

"Get out of the way!" shouted Cock as he once more charged down on the hat, fully intending this time to draw the offending Hetty out by her comb and administer the correction he considered she deserved.

On the next page I have drawn him charging at Hetty.

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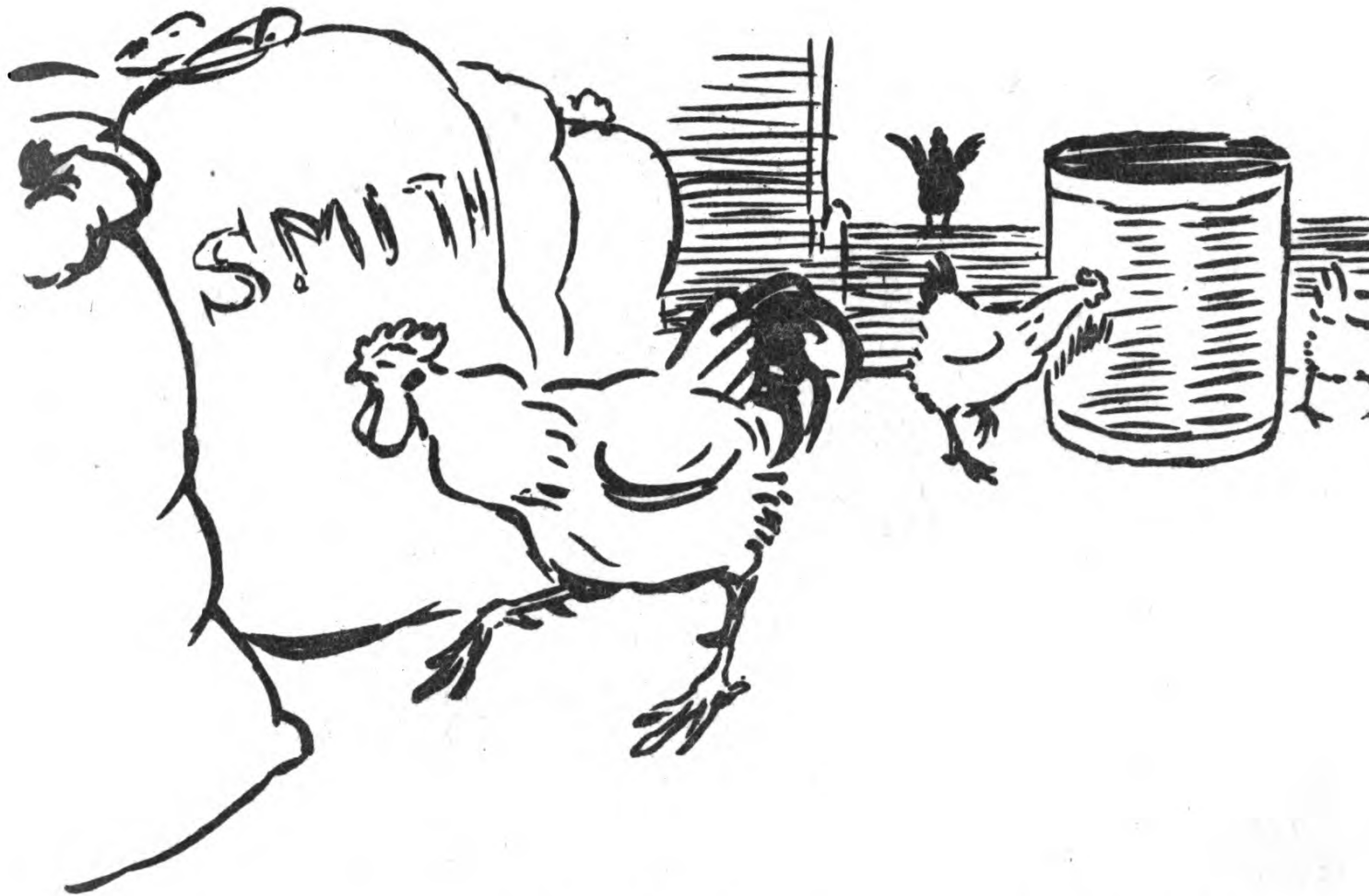
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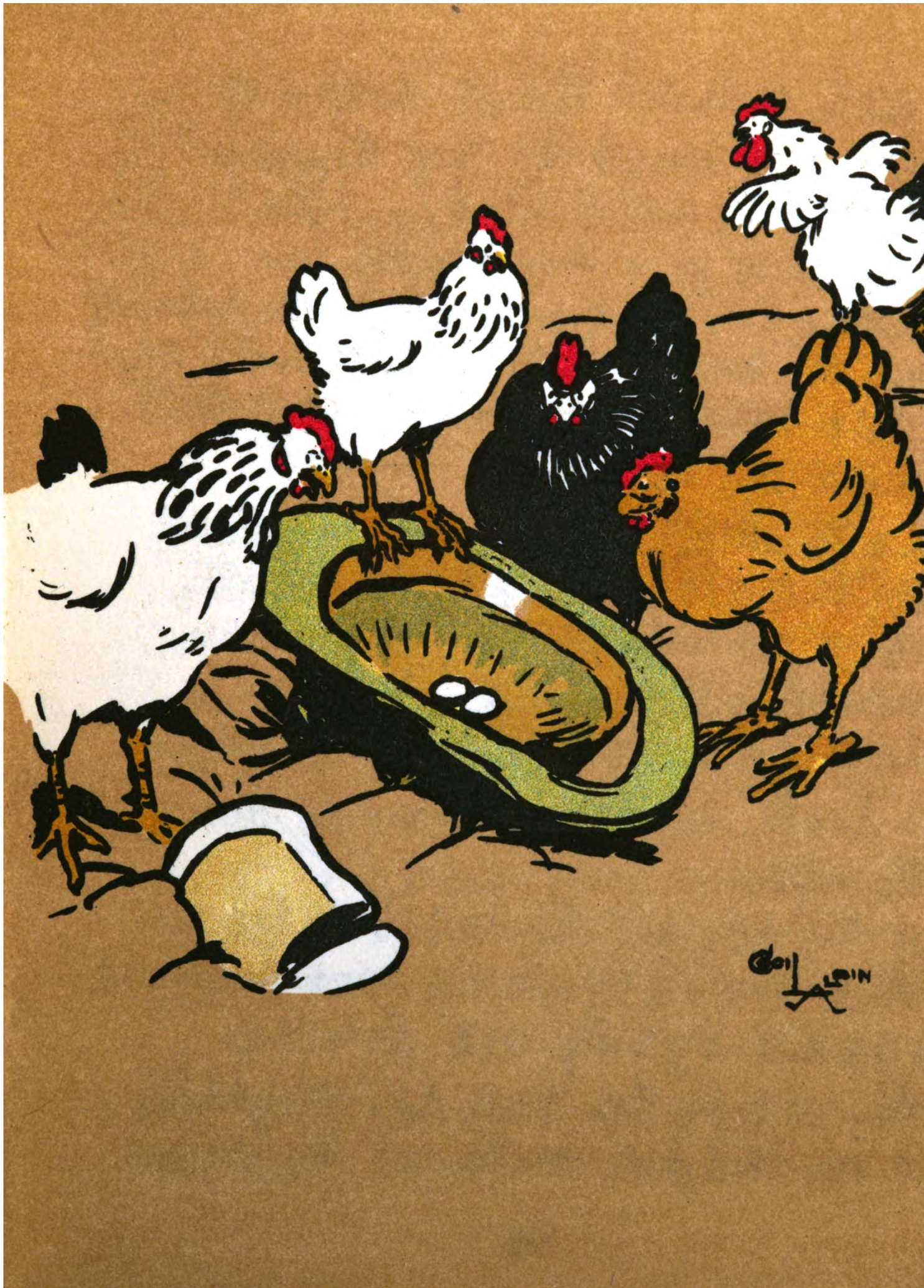
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Away flew the hens loudly clucking, so
to hear the crash & smash of Betty's beak
eggs as Cock-o-lorum landed in the middle
of the nest. On rushed the infuriated
Cock-o-lorum; but just as he was about
to land in the hat, & was in mid air for
the spring he had taken from the ground
he was once more met by the sharp
feet & beak of Betty. How this time



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he quite intended to pull Hetty out. Round and round the hat they flew and fought, but to Cock-o-lorum it seemed as if a very demon was attacking him. His blows & pecks invariably missed the nimble Hetty, while every blow of hers seemed to the larger bird to land straight on his face.

Finally Hetty, with a last charge at him, knocked the King of the poultry yard right over on his back. Then scrambling to his feet, dodging a shower of farewell pecks, he took to his heels, closely pursued by his little wife.

Now this was not the end: if it had been Cock-o-lorum ^{might} eventually have recovered his former dignity and position.

Hetty, who by this time had completely lost her temper, continued the chase



Round and round his other wives she chased him while they, to add to his loss of dignity, stood shaking with laughter. The King of the farm yard had never been seen to run from one of his wives before.

In the end, from going round and round in a circle, he got so giddy that he was forced to make a dart for the yard gate, with the little bantam hen close on his heels.



Nothing seemed to exhaust her, nothing to stop her. Through gates, over walls, round the ricks, & into the barn she chased the wretched Cock-o-lore. Every animal in the farm yard saw the chase & looked on laughing. At last her spouse was so tired & out of breath that he fell down on his side gasping, too tired & blown to return any of the pecks Hetty gave him. He thought his last hour had come, and lay flat on his back with his great legs waving aimlessly in the air, his final indignity, when all the other birds and animals had gathered laughingly round, was when little Hetty planted both her feet on his chest and gave



a mighty crow of victory.

After this day Cock-o-lorum was never
the same bird. Hetty ruled him
with a rod of iron; and now if
you go round the farm yard you
will see him following dejectedly
in the footsteps of his little wife.

From this little story you will learn
that it is not always the biggest
that are the best and bravest and
I have come to the end of all the
pages in this book I must
finish

Yrs sincerely
Cecil Aldin

P.S. Like all letters the most important thing
in the post-script Hetty hatched out
two beautiful little weeny chicks from
those eggs. The Heavenly Twins I called them
& will write you a letter about them later.
I knew you would be wondering what happened
to the egglets.



