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# UGLY DUCKLING

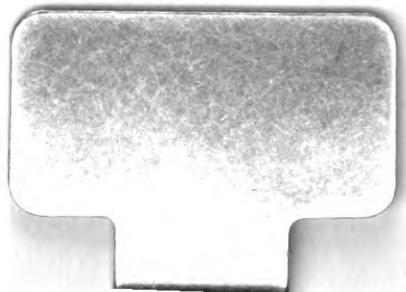


2527  
£ 14.09

CECIL ALDIN  
LETTER BOOK



2527 E 1409



# UGLY · DUCKLING



BY

CECIL · ALDIN

Humphrey · Milford : London

THE KENNELS,  
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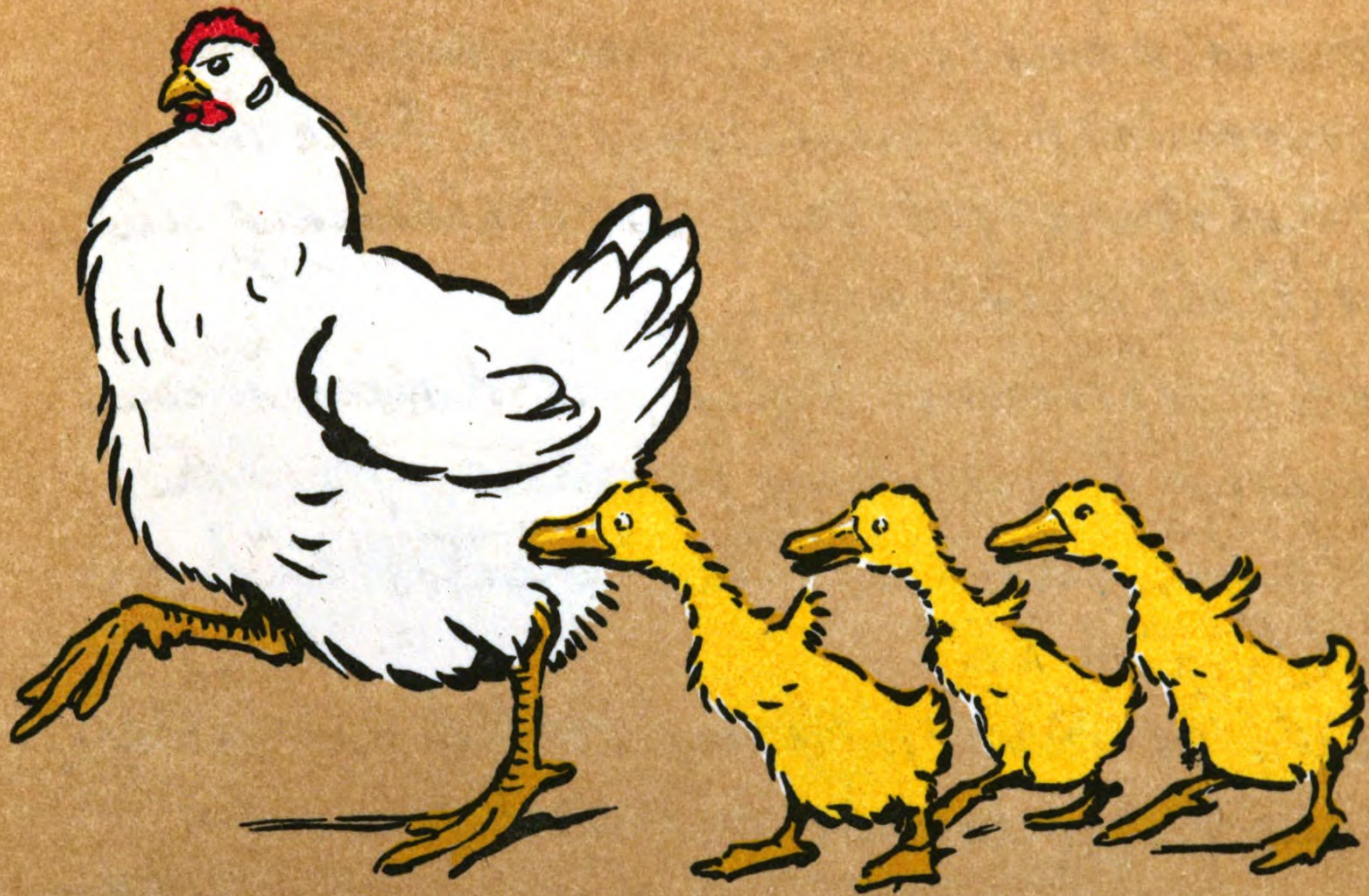
My dear

I think the last letter I wrote to you was about a little puppy called Black Billy - or was it about his brother? In any case, this story is about a duckling and not about a puppy. It is the story of - the Ugly Duckling.

Ugly was always plain, to say the least of it, even from the day he emerged from his shell, a few minutes after his two elder sisters had hatched out.

For about a week they tottered about after the old white hen who was

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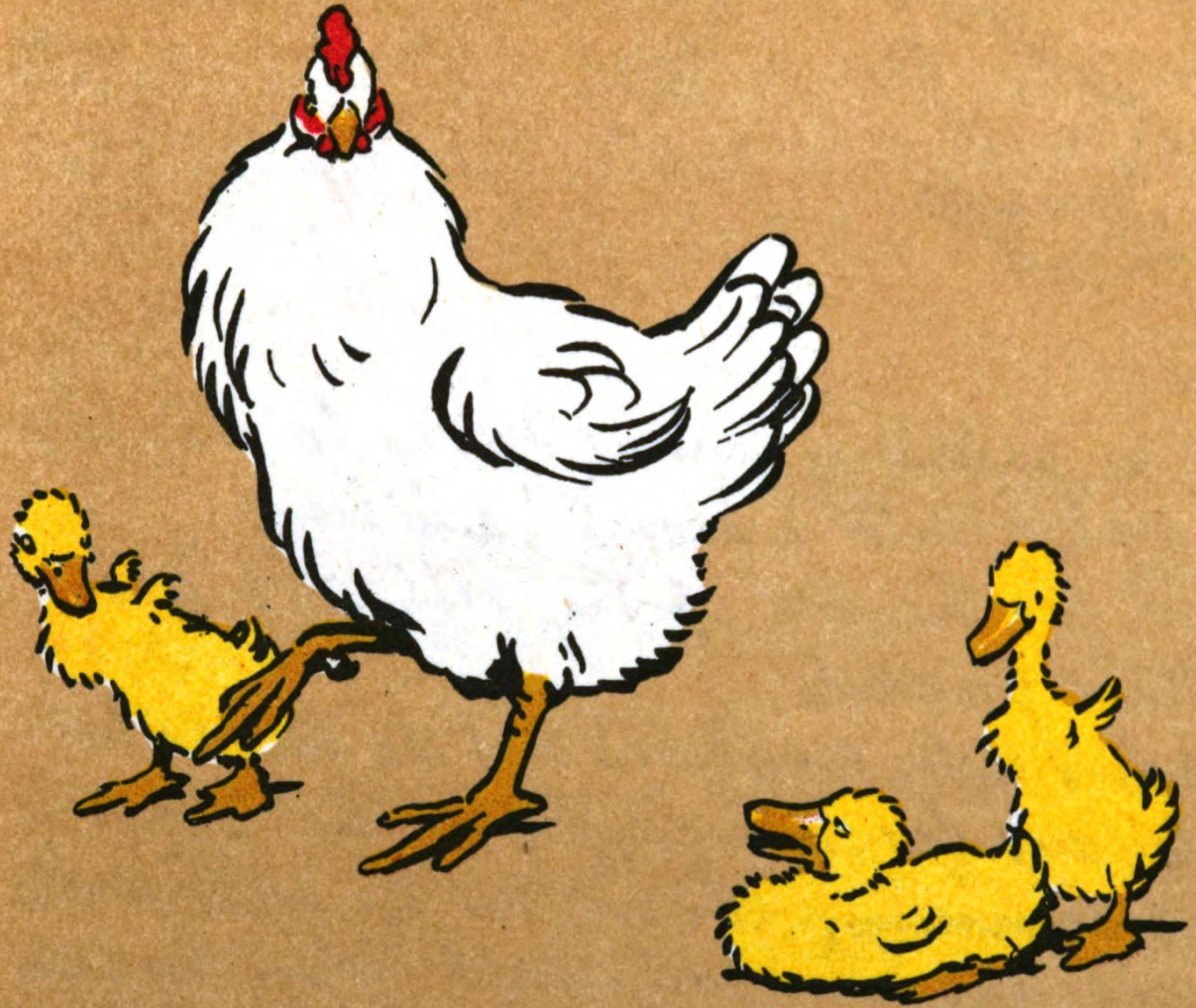
their foster-mother and who had nursed them while they were in the egg stage.

She taught them to find delicacies in various parts of the farmyard and surrounding buildings, but the three children got very tired walking about all day after her.

One afternoon Ugly sat down and refused to go any farther, so the old hen and his two sisters went on without him.

Ugly felt very lonely all by himself in the big farmyard; but having a nice sleep refreshed him, & he began to waddle about once more and explore things for himself.

Passing under the gate, where he had never been allowed to go before, he waddled across the broad road towards a pond, which seemed to have an irresistible fascination for him.

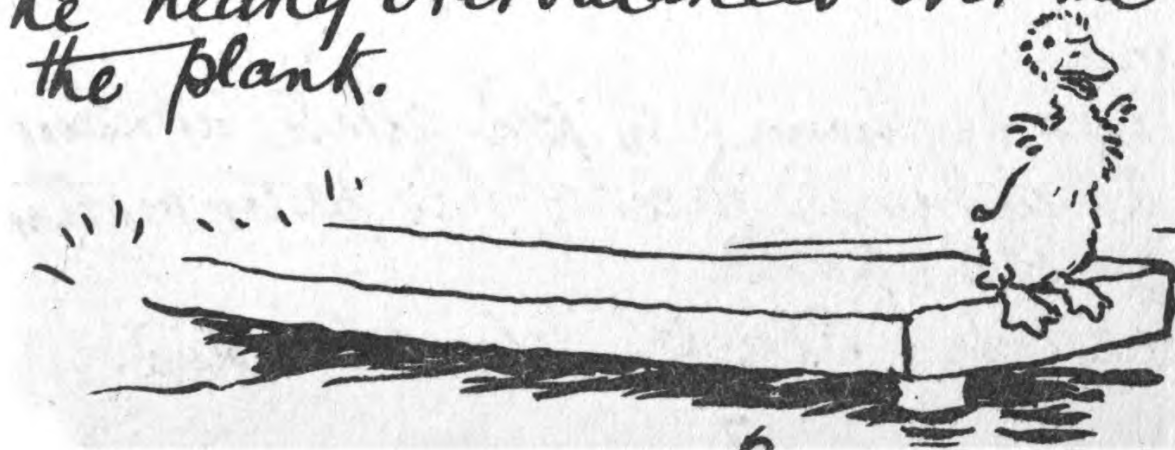






There was a pathway leading down to the edge of the water, and a plank had been put there for the use of the villagers when filling their buckets.

On this board Ugly wandered out as far as he was able and gazed longingly at the big ducks swimming about on the other side of the pond; and his excitement, when he saw one of the ducks put his head and half his body completely under water & wave his web feet in the air, was so intense that he nearly overbalanced over the end of the plank.



Just as he was once more regaining his balance, Bobs, the shepherd's dog, came rushing by, barking at his flock.

Ugly, who was still on the very edge of the plank, had such a shock that he then completely lost his balance and fell splash into the pond.



For a second or two he thought he was drowned, but at last he rose to the surface, spluttering pond water from his mouth & eyes, and found himself floating comfortably on the surface of the pond. He began to enjoy the smooth sensation of floating, and finding that when he moved his little web feet about under water it sent him forward, he paddled himself to the center of the pond.

When he was beginning to feel quite at home he saw the agonized face of his foster mother on the edge of the pond.

"Clack! cluck! Clack!" she shrieked.



"You'll catch your death of cold and be drowned, you haughty boy."

Ugly however only laughed at her, standing up in the water waving his little wings (and now I want you to turn to page 13 of my letter where you will see the picture of Ugly and his foster mother

.....  
all these dots mean a little pause while you find the picture.

Where did we get to?  
Oh, I remember, when Ugly was waving his wings.

well, he waved his wings and shouted to his mother to "come in with him: it was lovely," and the noise of his shouting attracted his sisters, who came waddling up and gazed with envy and astonishment at Ugly.

Now Ugly rather liked "showing off" before his sisters, like most little boys, and remembering how he had seen the big ducks put their heads under water + kick their heels in the air, he plunged his head in, right under the water, at the same time making an enormous splashing with his feet.

The horror of the hen and the admiration of his sisters as he rose to the surface again, shouting, "It's so simple - why don't you all come in?" can only be described by a picture, so I have done one on page 16

.....  
another row of dots while  
you look at the picture.

This exhibition was too much for  
the two other ducklings, who immedi-  
ately dashed down to the water's edge  
& waded in to join their brother.

All this time Mother Hen was  
making herself very hot and  
hoarse with shouting to her  
family to come out. Up and  
down the bank she stumped  
Clucking & clacking, but the  
more she shouted the more the  
children turned a deaf ear  
to her calls.

Ugley was the hero of the hour,  
giving swimming lessons to  
each of his sisters in turn.

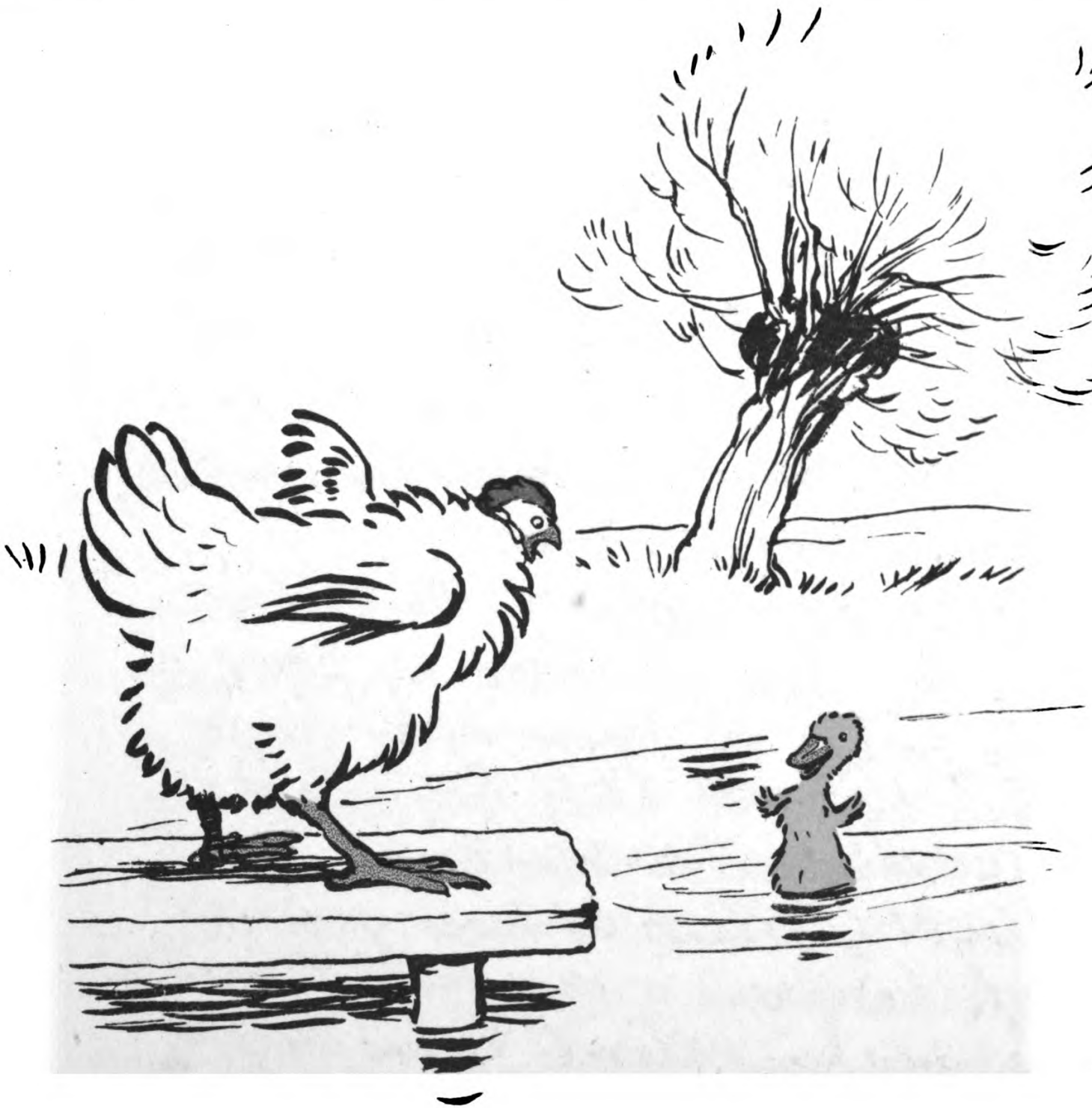
Finally the hen, finding persuasion and threats of no avail, turned back to the farmyard to prepare in the hen house some gruel for them to eat + some hot mustard and water to put their feet in when they should come out of the water.

She also borrowed the birch rod from old Cock-o-lorum.

Meanwhile the children spent a most glorious afternoon frolicking in the water.

They played "Touch-last", "Tom Tiddler's Ground", + every other game imaginable.

Ugly taught them to dive in the shallow water for tit bits from





the bottom of the pond, which was much more enjoyable than wandering round the farmyard with their foster mother.

With the novelty and excitement of all this fun, the children completely lost all sense of time.

The church clock in the village struck two - three - four - and five, as hour after hour flew by, and still they played and romped around.

About 6 o'clock, however, just as Ugly had found a very tasty morsel as was being chased by his sisters, they heard again the screams of the hen.

Suddenly they realized how quiet it had been before, the other ducks having gone home to roost some time ago, & that the sun, which

was high up when they started, had completely disappeared behind the distant fields.

"Come home, you naughty children come home, or a fox will get you," shrieked Mother Hen. At the dreaded word "fox", the three suddenly stopped playing. They had so often seen in the morning a trail of feathers from the farmyard, and been told that the fox had taken Quackles or Hetty, and that they would never see their playmates again, that they were really frightened. Mother Hen, giving one final call, turned homewards, a very sad hen indeed. After she had gone both Ugly's sisters began to think they were



Feeling rather cold, and Ugly  
himself thought his feet were  
rather chilly and that it would  
be best to return to the parsonage  
and go to bed.

A few minutes afterwards three  
tired little ducklings were seen  
waddling up the bank towards  
the barn, where, at Ugly's  
suggestion, they decided to sleep.





Later on, if you had been in the barn, you would have heard Ugly say to his sisters just before he dropped off to Sleep:

"You see, girls, it is not always beauty that has the brains, for if it had not been for me, the ugly duckling, you would never have discovered that we were ducks and not chickens, and would never have learnt how to swim."

The only answer he got from his sisters was two deep beaky snores.

And that's the story of the ugly duckling's great discovery, and also brings me to the end of my letter

your affectionate friend  
Cecil Aldin

