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PALE · PETER



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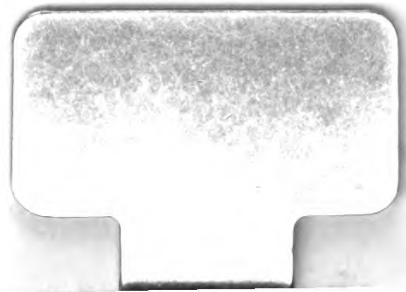
CECIL · ALDIN
LETTER BOOK



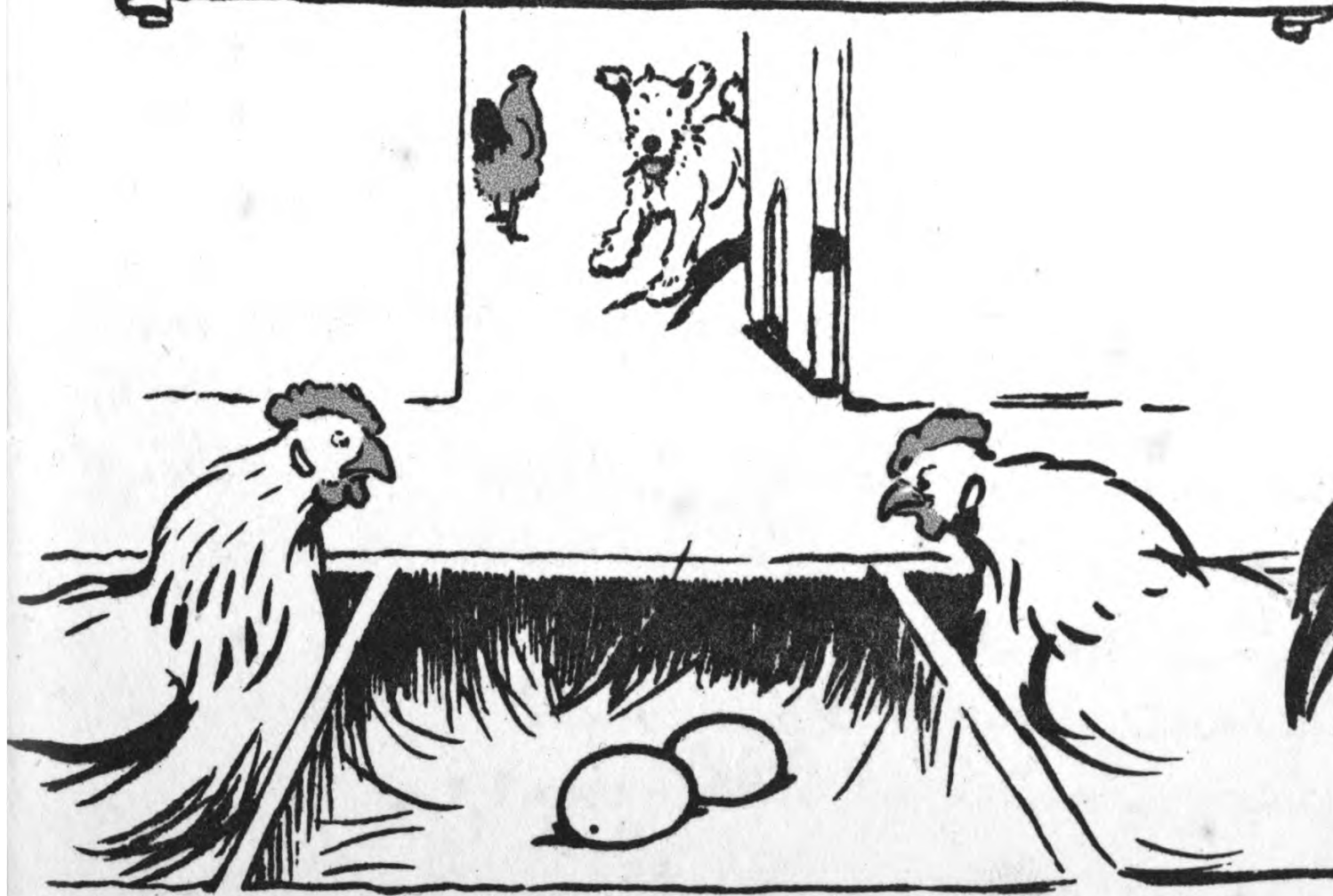
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PALE·PETER



By **CECIL·ALDIN**

Humphrey·Milford: London

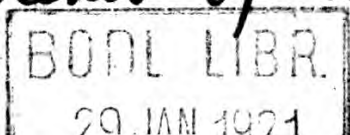
THE KENNELS,
PURLEY,
NEAR READING

My dear

As I told you in my first letter, about Black Billy, you must fill in your own names (I have so many little friends I cannot remember them all at the top of this letter.) When it makes it very own.

I think in the one about Black Billy, I promised to tell you about Pale Peter, his younger brother. Peter was a very thoughtful puppy, and although he was not so bright & sharp as Billy, he turned things over in his brain, and as you will hear later, made, all by himself, a very wonderful discovery.

Peter was white or mostly so. He did not romp about the place much like his brothers and sisters, but would sit for hours thoughtfully pondering over the problems of his young life.





His mistress thought he was not quite right in his head - but it was not this. It was really that he had too much brain for his age - the brain of an old dog - and never was really a puppy.

Now one evening Peter followed his mistress round the farm yard, when she was collecting the eggs the hens had laid during the day. He was very interested to discover that they seemed to lay eggs in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, as well as in the little square boxes in the hen house where eggs are usually found; and that, after first clearing these, a search had to be made in the hedge rows, round the ricks, even in the mangers of the cart-horse stable, and all the odd sheds on the farm.



Peter found this egg hunt quite amusing, and the next & following days at 6 o'clock there was Peter at the kitchen door, wagging his tail, & waiting for his mistress to go her rounds. At the end of a week he became quite an expert at finding the eggs for his companion to place in her basket, and every evening trotted gaily in front of her his nose high in the air, sniffing for the sniff of egg.

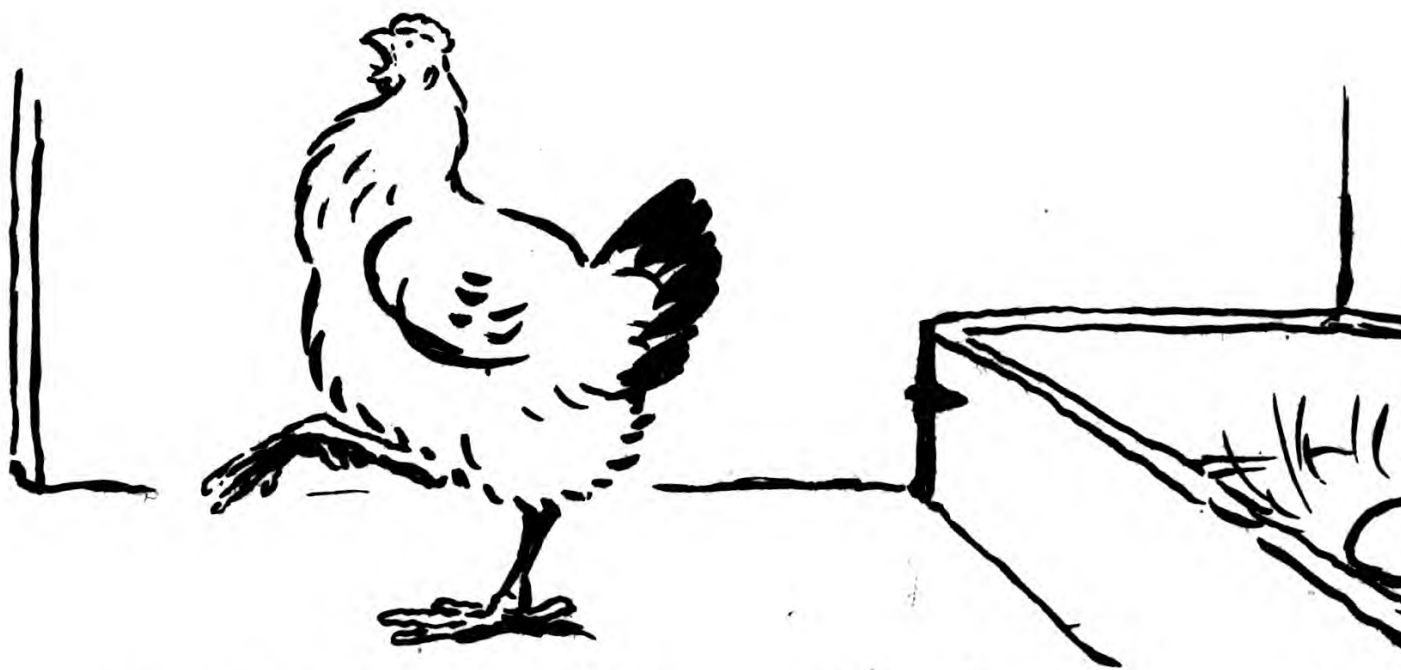
Now one evening they found so many that the basket became very full, and one egg dropped out and was smashed.

Peter stopped behind and smelt it, and then began licking up the yolk, which he enjoyed very much and found quite to his taste. On page 8 you will see him lapping it up with evident enjoyment.

While they were collecting the last two or three eggs he heard one of the

fowls give a proud

Cluck, Cluck! Cluck eer!



and turning to Peter his mistress said,
"That's another one, Peter; we must go
and collect it."

Across the yard they went to the hen
house. The old brown hen walked
out as they walked in, and there
sure enough, to Peter's astonishment,
was a beautiful brown egg in the
hen's box.

"I wonder how my mistress knew that
thought Peter, and Cluck! Cluck
Cluck-e-er! kept running through
his little brain.



That evening he was more thoughtful than ever, and dreamt of the beautiful taste of eggs.

Now next morning Peter awoke with a determined look in his face, and directly he was let out he strolled into the centre of the farm yard, + lay down in the sun thinking.

He lay there for some time; when suddenly the Cluck! Cluck! Cluck ever of a hen in the usual proud voice came across the yard.

Peter sat up with his head on one side and his ears cocked

listening. Then he strolled across to the wood shed from where the sound seemed to come.



as he got to the door an old brown hen came clucking out,



He sniffed with his nose in the air, and suddenly felt a delicious whiff of egg run up his nostrils. Following the scent, he worked his way round behind a bundle of faggots as the smell got "warmer", and there sure enough he found a nice brown egg! Picking up the egg, he broke the thin shell at once + safely lapped up the contents.

how Peter spent half-an-hour in the shed thinking with all his might until he felt his little brain would burst. Then suddenly he seemed to have solved the difficulty that had been worrying him, and started off to sit once more in the centre of the farm yard.

This time he did not doze: he listened. For an hour he sat perfectly still listening until

Cluck! Cluck! Cluck-eeer. sounded a long way off, right out by the barn. Immediately off went Peter at a jog trot towards the now familiar sound.

Into the barn he went, and once more a hen walked proudly out as he walked in.



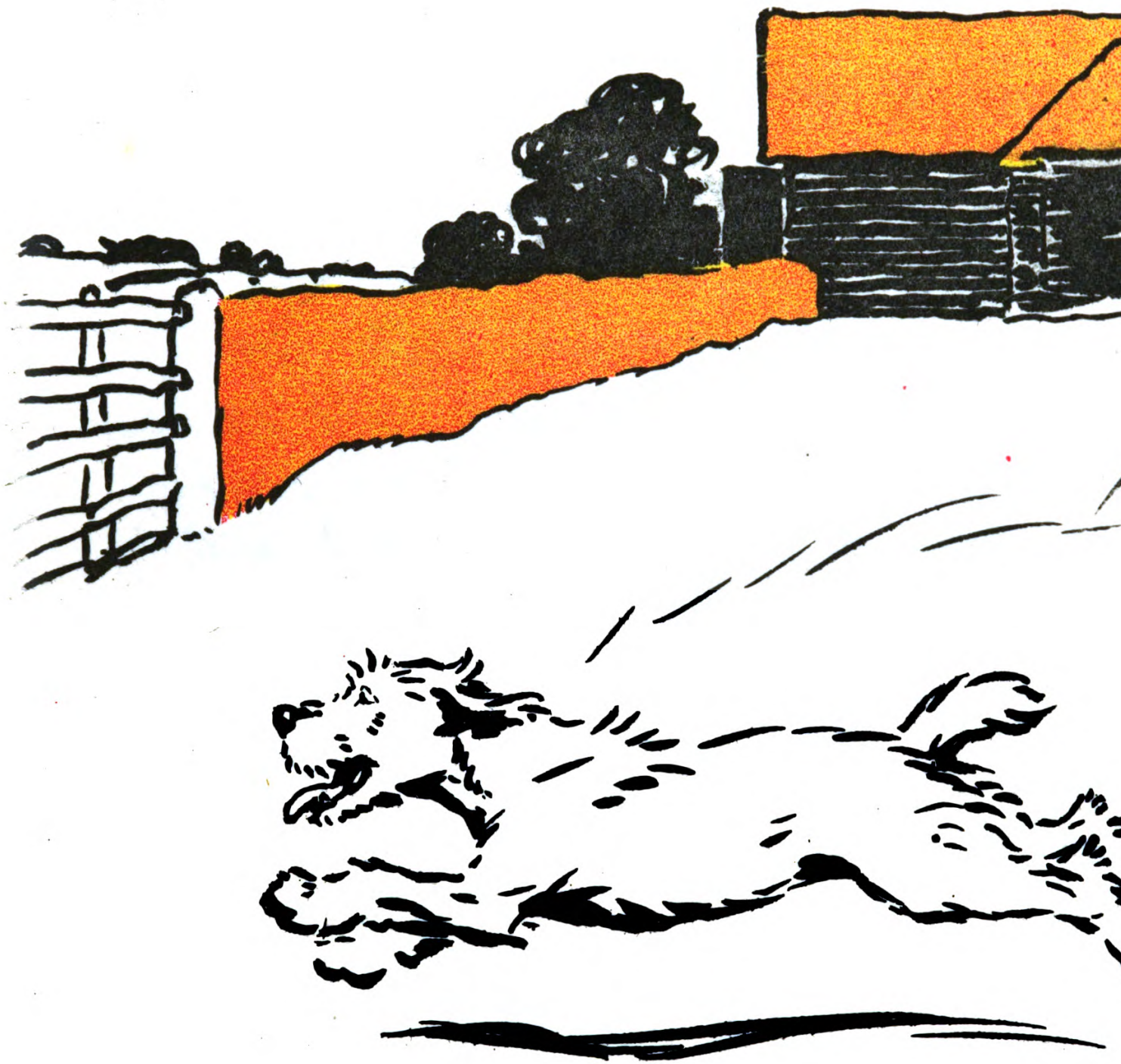
Hot on the scent, he sniffed, and in a few moments was tapping the yolk of another delicious egg.

"Excellent," said Peter to himself; "they ring the bell when dinner's ready. Hens are of some use after all."

Now two eggs were not much for Peter. He felt he could eat fifty a day, and ^{as} the supply seemed unlimited he trotted back once more to the yard.

Almost before he had got there Cluck! Cluck! Cluck-e-er! sounded again. "Bell again," said Peter, & off he dashed at a sharp gallop towards the sound, in a few minutes returning with egg all down his shirt front.

Ten times during the morning did he rush off at the familiar call, and ten times in the afternoon did he



do the same thing.

.....

About 6 o'clock, when his mistress started on her rounds, she was surprised to find no Peter there to accompany her. After half an hour she returned, looking rather worried, carrying a large basket, but with only one egg in it.

"The chickens don't seem to be laying," she said to the cook.

"I was only able to find ~~about~~ one egg instead of about twenty to-night. Peter's the dog to find them: I must take him again tomorrow."

The next day the same thing happened and at 6 o'clock no Peter could be found. This state of affairs lasted for a week. Peter when seen was looking wiser & wiser, & fatter & fatter each day, but mysteriously disappeared at egg-collecting time.

On the Saturday (some friends of his mistress's were coming on Sunday) it was decided that Peter should have a bath.

This was Peter's undoing.

At ten o'clock his mistress bathed him and at the same time noticed how yellow & stained his nice shirt front was.

"It looks as if you've been sitting so long on Peter. I think," said she thoughtfully, "I'll shut you up this morning."

Peter was then led off to one of the horse boxes & shut in in the nice clean straw to dry.

Inside this box he spent an agonizing morning.

Cluck Cluck Cluck-er! sounded at frequent intervals from the adjoining farm yard.





He bit the bottom of the door, he gnawed the woodwork in his endeavours to get out, and as the morning wore on he got more and more hungry.

About one o'clock his mistress appeared, and over her arm hung a basket full of eggs which she had just collected.



Not a word did she say to Peter, although she had more eggs in her basket than she had been able to collect during the whole week. She just opened the door & let him out. Now Peter, in his excitement, forgot that other people might have brains besides himself; and dashing out, he went straight for his old listening post in the cent



of the farm yard, while his mistress
quietly watched him from the stable door.
Almost at once the well-known
Cluck! Cluck! Cluck-e-e-e
sounded, and off dashed Peter for his
long-delayed breakfast.

A broad smile overspread his mistress's face
as she walked into the yard to meet him
coming back once more with an egg
"shirt front."

"How we know how we lose the eggs," said she
as she went back towards the house, Peter
tucked tightly under her arm, to get a sm
stick, which would explain to him that
eggs must not be eaten unless paid for.
Peter learnt his lesson — but not until
the gamekeeper had taken him in hand and
explained the matter even more forcibly
to him.

The moral of this is that when you are young
and without knowledge of the world you
may be too ~~clever~~ — (I spelt clever with
clever and so get into trouble.

Your affectionate friend
Ceil Aldin

P.S. on the next page the reformed Peter egg collecting

