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PUSS PUSS



2527

& 1410.

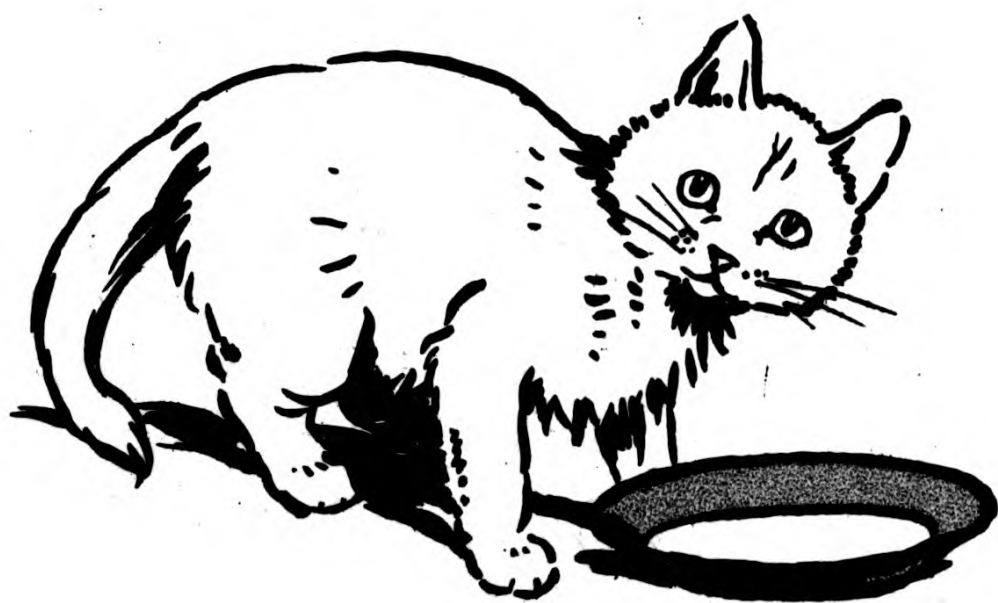
CECIL ALDIN  
LETTER BOOK  
SERIES



2527 E 1410



# PUSS - PUSS



BY

**CECIL · ALDIN**

**Humphrey · Milford : London**



My dear.

All my other letters to you have been about dogs or ducks or cocks and hens; this one is about a little white kitten.

how we have always been told that a cat is supposed to have nine lives, but I think Puss-Puss must have had nine hundred, because I am going to tell you of nine narrow squeaks from being killed which she had in one day only, and yet she still survives.

Born under the manger in the cart horse stable, she was very nervous of strangers or dogs, but of the big stamping cart horses she had no fear. When quite young the family would play hide and seek round the old grey's hairy heels, and the number of times they escaped an early death from being trodden on must have been enormous. On the day that I have carefully kept a record of Puss-puss's escapes, she



crawled out of the window in the stable where her home was very early in the morning. It was so early that no one was about; and the carters had not yet come to feed the horses in the stable before they went out to work.

Puss-puss clambered down the stable wall into the yard and wandered off towards the hay ricks.

How loose at night in the farm was a savage watch dog. Although he was always kept chained up to his kennel in the day time he was left free until the carters came in the early morning. As the kitten walked round the corner of the big rick she heard a low growl, and at the same moment she saw this big dog dashing at her. Taking to her heels as hard as she could go, with Bob gaining on her at every stride, she darted for the orchard and scrambling up the nearest tree, heard his gaunt jaws snap, as she got out of reach, within an inch of the end of her tail. This was her first escape that day.







how when Puss-puss got into the tree she was so frightened that, instead of staying out of reach of her enemy on the lower branches, she clambered up and up until she was at the very top of the tree.

Here the branches were thin & hardly able to carry even her small weight.

Presently she heard the carters arrive and whistle for Bob, who trotted off to them to be chained up for the day, and now began to wonder how she would ever get down again.

"Miaow, miaow," called her mother at the foot of the tree, having come out to look for her.

"Miaow miaow," called back the kitten. In her excitement in trying to get down she put all her weight on a rotten twig, which snapped off.

Down she crashed through the leaves and branches, clutching & clawing at everything but failing to get a hold, until at last she found herself falling through the air between the lowest branches and the ground.

How a marvellous thing happened.  
Dore was falling, as you might expect, with all her legs in the air, flat on to her back on the ground.

Just at the last minute, when she was within a foot of the hard ground, she managed to wiggle her body over while still in the air, and landed on her four feet instead of on her back, as you and I would have suspected.

That was her second escape that morning. An hour or two afterwards, while playing on the edge of the pig-wash tub, she overbalanced and fell in.

You know what a pig wash tub contains: potato peelings, the water the vegetables are cooked in, bacon rind, in fact all the refuse from the kitchen and scull. So you can imagine what a nice mess it was for her to fall into.







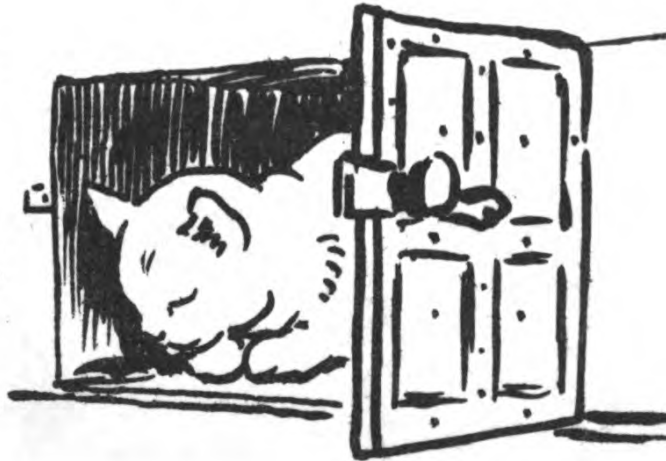
The sides of this tub were very slippery from all the grease etc, and there is no doubt that she must have been drowned, had not the kitchen maid heard her cries from the scullery window. She was just sinking for the third and last time when Jane pulled her out.

That was escape number three.

She was taken into the kitchen and put by the fire to dry, but here again even she got into trouble. Cook had left the oven door open for a minute or two and Puss must crawl up into it. Finding it nice and warm she dozed off to sleep, until Cook returning, slammed the door, without looking inside.

Luckily for Puss puss there was not a very big fire at the time, but the oven got hotter and hotter as she yelled to be let out.

She would have been made into roast or stewed cat - I don't know which it is an oven does - had not



Screams been heard + she been let out  
Escape number four of a busy morning  
Just as she rushed out of the back  
door, the wind blew it shut with a  
bang + just missed her tail by a  
sixteenth of an inch. Her fifth  
escape. And her sixth came almost  
immediately afterwards, for in her  
hurry she ran right into the middle  
of the flock of geese in the yard, and  
every one of the whole sixteen took a  
peck at her or struck at her with  
her wings or feet.

That was the end of her morning, and  
she returned to her home under the man  
for a quiet mid-day sleep.



About three o'clock she awoke feeling a little stiff and cold, probably from the effects of her cold bath in the pigwa and moved out into the sun, settling her for another doze right in the centre of the narrow stable doorway.

Now Puss who slept peacefully on had forgotten that the big cart horses returned from work in the fields about four o'clock, that <sup>they</sup> were taken down to the pond to drink first, and were then allowed to return to their stable matters while the carters went to the corn bin to get their feeds ready.

When Dick the big grey arrived, being the first one to return after his drink, he stopped and sniffed at the little white ball curled up right in the centre of the doorway. Then with great care, having discovered by smell who the ball of fluff was, he stepped with all four clumsy feet over Puss.

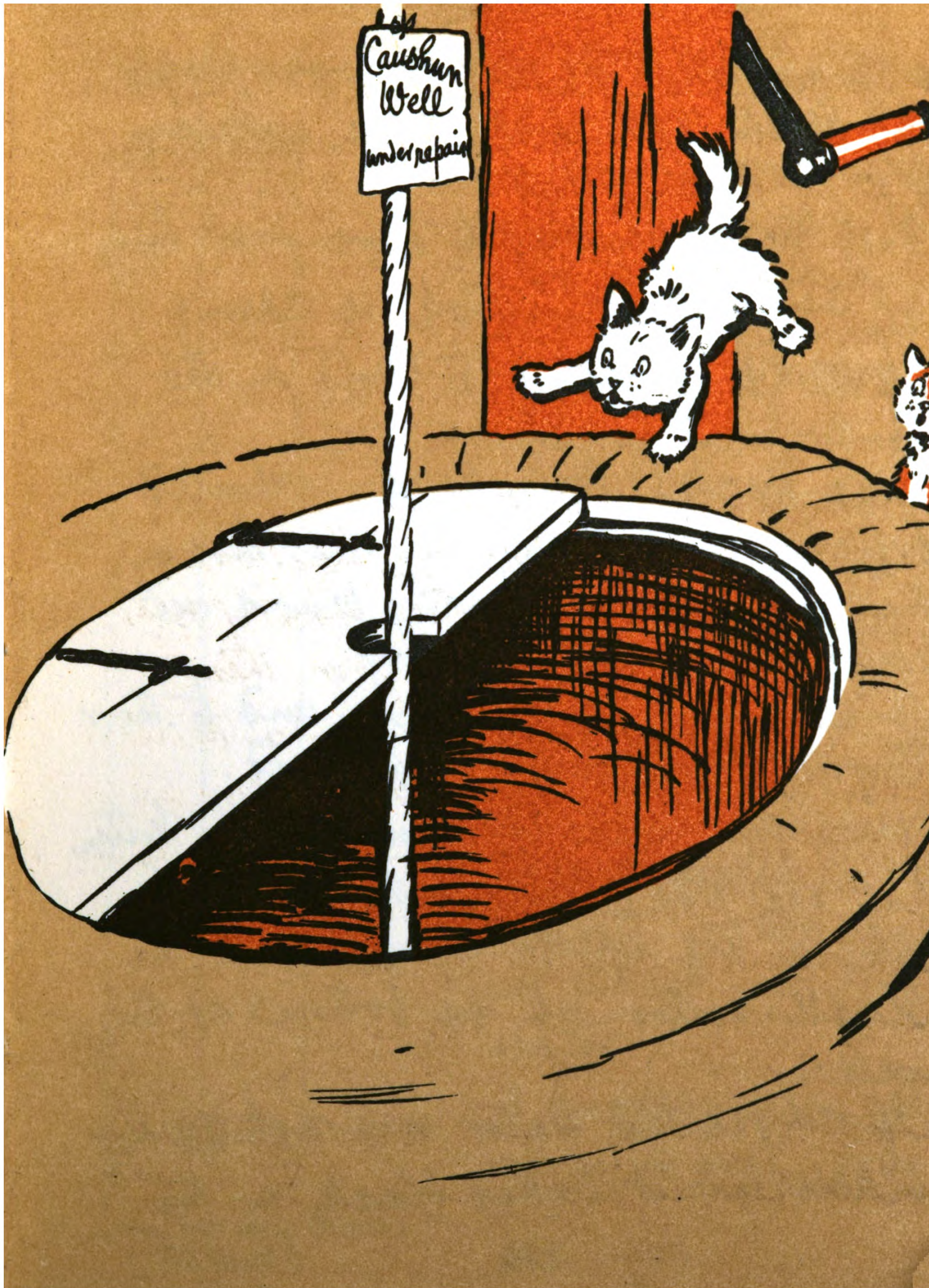


All the remaining four horses belonging to the stable did exactly the same thing while the kitten slept peacefully on, and I think we may call that escape her seventh. Fancy lying down in a doorway while five great cart horses stepped over you! I don't think I should care to do it, and I don't fancy Fuss would had she known.

When the carters came in they woke her up, & seeing her sisters playing near the well, she ran off to join them.

Now the lid of this well was a double flapped trap door, which was always kept shut when not in use, and on this lid the kittens were in the habit of playing "King of the Castle" on fine afternoons. The day before, the carpenter had taken away one side of the lid, as it was not safe and wanted repairing, and had put up







a paper tied to the rope to warn people  
(He was like both of us, I see, not very  
good at spelling.)

Puss-puss, meaning to have first turn  
at being "king", took a spring  
upwards intending to land on the  
lid.

"Come back!. Come back." shouted  
both her sisters as they saw her in  
the air, having already found out  
half the lid was missing.

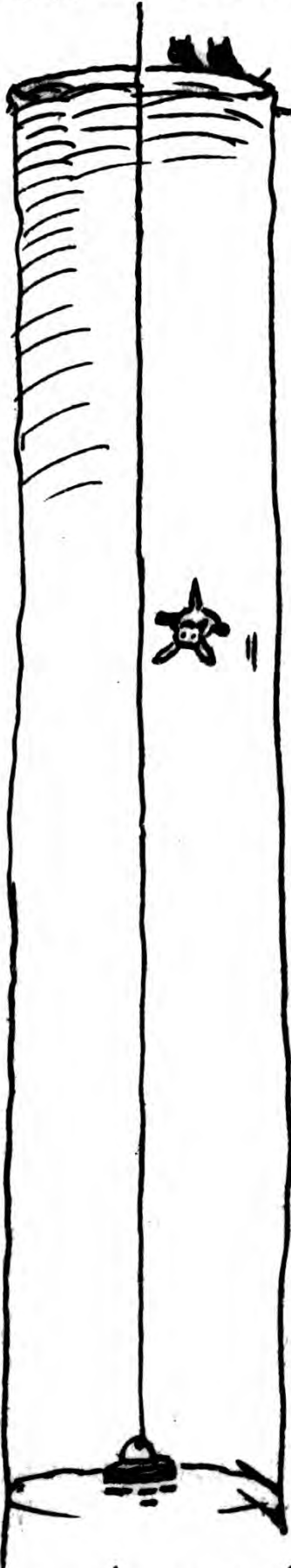
It was too late however, and to the  
horror Puss puss disappeared.

Hours and hours it seemed to the kids  
that she was falling, until at last  
with a big splash she fell into the  
black water at the bottom of the  
well.

Of course the water was not really  
black, but it looked black in the



darkness.



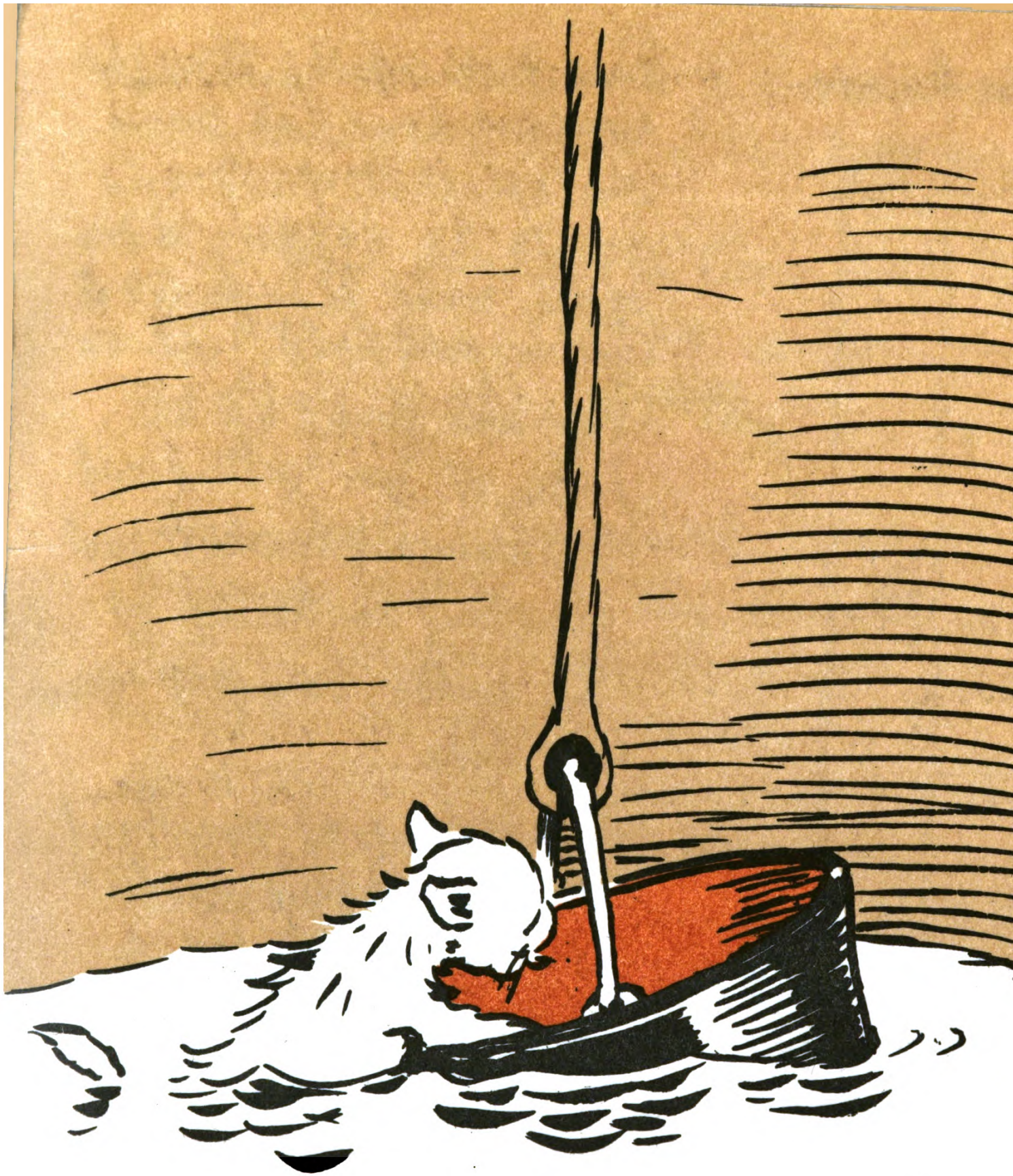
Pussy on her way down  
the well.

Puss puss really thought  
her last hour had come.  
She splashed round and  
round the slippery sides  
of the well but failed to  
get a foothold. Just  
she was giving up all  
hope of ever getting  
the hanging bucket,  
floating on the top of  
the water, bumped  
her side.

Clutching at anything  
she scrambled on to  
it and rested for a  
minute or two, half  
in & half out of the  
water.

I suppose when you  
are in a well you







have a feeling you must climb up anything  
however risky it may seem.

Anyhow, that was Puss-puss' feeling  
as she scrambled from the bucket on  
to the handle & then on to the swing  
rope. Up & up she climbed until at  
last she was able to clamber out over  
the pulley upon which the rope hung,  
and once more see daylight.

That was her eighth escape, and very  
nearly her last.

About 6 o'clock she heard her name  
called, & suspecting to find the usual  
bowl of milk, ran round to the kitchen  
door, but instead of this Cook, who was  
talking to a friend, immediately  
picked her up & pushed her into a  
small basket, shutting the lid down  
on top of her.

"You can have that one. We've  
got so many about the place.  
She's sure to be a good natter like  
her mother," and Puss knew that





she was being given away.

For about a quarter of an hour she felt herself being carried in the basket. Then the lid was opened and she was let out into a dark shed, a bowl of milk being placed on the floor for her.

When Puss-puss was left alone she determined to return home, and after a long search round the shed she found a small hole through which she crawled out.

It was getting quite dark as she scampered down the garden path and found herself in the village street, at the far end of which she recognised some of the buildings of the farm. Hurrying up the street, she was suddenly dazzled by two enormous headlights that came gliding swiftly towards her.

Before she was able to move or think, one wheel of the car grazed her tail, making her ninth and last narrow scrape that day; at nine o'clock she crawled wearily into the manger in the cart horse stable & fell at once into a sound sleep.

And that's the story of Puss-puss, and if nurse has been reading it to you I hope you will do the same.

Your affectionate friend

19 Scil Aldin

