

Sunday before, but how could she learn this Sunday afternoon any more than last when she, and she alone, knew of something nobody else even suspected.

Repeating the words mechanically, her eyes roving hither and thither watched for the slightest sign, and after a little while it came. With a louder rustle than any she had yet made, heralding her approach, little fairy Shining Eyes looked through the straw for the third time.



“IS IT TO MAKE A NEW PETTICOAT FOR LADY SABINA JANE?” SHE ASKED.

Now this was too much for little Philippa. Surely, surely when she appeared for the third time she would speak! So throwing her prayer book with all her former precautions to the winds, she moved softly across the narrow space between them, and with outstretched hands entreated:

“Dear, darling, beautiful little fairy Shining Eyes!” And little fairy Shining Eyes responded—not in a soft, low, fairy voice—but in an unexpectedly high, clear “mew!”

For one breathless moment little Philippa was stricken dumb with mingled disappointment and amazement. Was her beautiful,

beautiful castle tumbling about her ears? Was little fairy Shining Eyes no fairy at all? Even as the thought flashed through her brain, little fairy Shining Eyes pushed through the straw and stepped down before her.

She was no fairy, but if anything could console little Philippa for that bitter discovery, it was to find her a beautifully friendly and engaging little cat.

It had always been one of the standing grievances of Philippa's small life that her father would not allow any cats at the Vicarage. “Detestable brutes!” he called them, and had sternly forbidden her to bring any about the place; but this little stranger had come of her own accord, and as little Philippa's hands gently stroked her silky coat, she purred in ever-increasing volume as she rubbed her soft tabby sides against the little girl's dress.

If any shred of disappointment still lingered in Philippa's heart, the one thing needful to dispel it happened at that moment. From amongst the hay rose a tiny piping voice, little fairy Shining eyes turning anxiously in the direction of the cry to assure herself it was not one of distress.

As for little Philippa—actually trembling with excitement, she was upon her knees before the straw in a moment, and by pulling some aside, and burying her fair head in the fragrant mass, she found a little round, warm nest with four little gently twitching, softly breathing grey balls.

Tenderly slipping her hands under the fluffy, round objects she raised them up, and clasping them to her, pressed her cheek against them, kissing them with almost inarticulate words of endearment, while little fairy Shining Eyes climbed into her lap and purred to keep them company.

This new discovery was far more than little Philippa could keep to herself; she must tell someone what she had found, but alas, the pitfall she invariably fell into was rushing through the first open door she came to, and pouring out her story to whoever she met inside, and this day was no exception to the rule. If she had been a wise little girl