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fairies looked sad, and Maria could not pass.

"Oh, fairies, fairies!" she cried. "cannot I pass?"

"Not yet," they said. "You are not fit for the Fountain of Beauty."

"And what must I do?" asked Maria, sadly, while tears were running down her cheeks.

"For three weeks," said the fairies, "say no unkind word to anyone."

"For three weeks!" exclaimed Maria. "Oh! how can I do it? It is so nice to speak crossly when one feels cross."

"Then you cannot bathe in the fountain," said the little fairies, which were like birds chirruping.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" sighed Maria, from a full heart. But there was no help for it; so she went home, and tried and tried.

For a week all went well. But then there came a great temptation, and she was so cross with her brother, oh! so very cross, that at last she spoke unkindly; yes, very unkindly indeed.

Yet at the end of the three weeks she went back to the hill. The green fairies let her pass, for she had done no unkind deed; but the blue fairies were sad, and the blue spots on their wings waxed dim, and they did not drop their wands.

"Not yet, fairies?" she implored. "It was but once!"

"Not yet," they said. "We know. Go back and try again."

So she went back, weeping bitterly. Yet she tried again, tried harder, and for three weeks she spoke no unkind word.

Then she went again to the hill with a light heart, and the green fairies smiled, and let her pass; and she ran on, and the blue fairies smiled, and let her pass; and there above her was the hill-top and the Fountain of Beauty. Yes, surely she could see the rainbow glitter of its spray, and the waving of the delicate boughs that shaded it.

So she ran on. But a third more of the way was hardly passed when she was aware of a ring of white fairies, oh! so lovely, with gold spots on their wings and gold wands; and they were sad, and she could not pass.

Then Maria threw herself down on the turf in sorrow and despair. She had made so sure of bathing now in the fountain, and of being beautiful.

"Oh, cruel fairies, what more?" she cried.

Then a tender, loving fairy came forth and smoothed her hair as she lay weeping on the grass, and said:

"Not yet, little girl; you are not yet ready for the waters of that fountain. Go back, and for three months think no unkind thought."

"Three months? Oh! I cannot," she cried. "Let me pass! Let me pass!"

But the fairy shook her head. "There is no other way," she answered.

So Maria went home sadly. And it was not once nor twice that she had to appear in vain before the pure white fairies. But she tried and tried, and did not tire, and people began to say, not "Maria is ugly"; but, "How kind Maria is; we love Maria."

At last there came a day when Maria set out very early for the hill, and the green fairies smiled and dropped their ivory wands and let her pass; and the blue fairies dropped their silver wands and let her pass; and now, even the severe white fairies dropped their gold wands and let her pass.

"Now! Now!" she cried. And she sped onwards. And as the sun rose, she reached the brim of the Fountain of Beauty. It lay like a diamond in the soft green grass, and its spray sprang up to heaven, and the sun turned each drop into a gem; and on the bank were lilies and violets and other flowers. Oh! it was fair indeed.

Filled with joy and thankfulness, Maria was about to fling herself into the waters, when she heard a small, shrill voice cry, "Stop!"

She looked, and beside her was her fairy godmother.

"Oh, surely now," she cried, "I may bathe in the magic waters?"

"First, look down," said the fairy. "What do you see?"

Maria looked, and the waters were clear as a mirror, and in them, set in the reflection of the blossoms as in a frame, she saw her face.

But was that the ugly Maria of former days—that bright, kind face, with love in every line? She clasped her hands, and murmured low: "Why, Godmother, it seems to me that I am beautiful!"

And so she had already bathed in the Fountain of Beauty.—Mrs. Jerome Mercier.

EVERYBODY'S PETS.

Almost everyone likes to have a pet of some kind. Dogs and cats, birds, rabbits, gold-fish—one cannot count up how many kinds of pets there are. Perhaps the lamb, that country children keep, is one of the nicest of all. A pet lamb can be known afterwards, among the flock,

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by its woolly tail, which grows long, heavy, and large; while the tails of other sheep are quite short. Grazers can point out among the sheep in their fields the few that were once pet lambs.

Sailors and soldiers are very fond of having pets. We once heard of a sailor who, having nothing else to make friends with, kept a big cockroach in a box—a long Indian cockroach, which grew still longer and very fat on the tit-bits with which poor Jack fed him. The cockroach was called Izky, from a curious noise it made with its wings, which seemed exactly to say "Izky! Izky!" And it got to know the sailor and to come at its name. There is something touching about this story of a sailor's pet. Poor fellow! he was nearly as badly off for something to care for as the boy whom Dickens mentions—the boy that kept an oyster in a jar, and called it Tom.

There have been many pets kept by soldiers; and it would take far too long to tell you about them all. If you ever see the Scots Fusilier Guards, with their band in Highland dress, wearing kilts, plaids, and silver brooches, and carrying the bagpipes, you will see, going before them, the goat of the regiment. When one goat dies, the soldiers get another; and you may depend that goat has a fine life and happy times. When we saw him, some time ago, marching to the tune of the bagpipes not far from Buckingham Palace, he was as handsome a goat as you could see, and he went along before the soldiers, half dancing and half trotting, with a march of his own, carrying his horns high in the air, and shaking his head proudly from side to side.

If you go to the United Service Museum, you will see there, stuffed, a dog that was out with our soldiers in the Crimean War. Poor dog! he was run over by a baker's cart after his return home. Another of the soldiers' dogs at the same time was Sandy, the dog of the Sappers and Miners. Sandy was wounded at the battle of Inkerman and afterwards received a medal, which he always wore.

After one of those Crimean battles, a little pet kitten was found in the knapsack of a dead Russian soldier. The English soldier who found it

there kept it for his own; but before long he was wounded, and taken into the camp hospital. There he died, and the kitten was found nestling under his shirt. The poor little thing, which had lost each of its kind masters in the war, was then adopted and well cared for by the hospital nurse, who had taken it from the dead soldier's bed.

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