

THE BABY.

(By George MacDonald.)

Where did you come from, baby dear? Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get your eyes so blue? Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin? Some of the starry spikes left in.

Where did you get that little tear? I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high? A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose? Something better than anyone knows.

Whence that three-corner smile of bliss? Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get that pearly ear? God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands? Love made itself into hooks and hands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things? From the same box as the cherub's wings.

How did they all just come to be you? God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear? God thought of you, and so I am here.

FLOWER LEGENDS.

There are some very pretty flower legends woven about the history of the Christ Child. Here are a few of them:

The peasantry of Spain say that rosemary brings happiness with its perfume on Christmas eve, because the Blessed Virgin hung the little frocks of Jesus to dry upon rosemary bushes.

The snowdrops or "fairy" flower of February blooms in memory of the time when the Virgin presented Jesus in the temple.

The pretty little wayside flower known as "Lady's Bedstead" was so called because Mary made the manger bed of it.

The sycamore attains its great vitality and verdure because the Mohammedans say it is the tree of Joseph and Mary, and sheltered them in their flight to Egypt.

The Rose of Jerico is also called Mary's Rose. It sprang up wherever the Blessed Virgin's feet touched the earth on her way to Egypt.

"Once, as our Saviour walked with men below, His path of mercy through a forest lay;

And mark how all the drooping branches show What homage best a silent tree may pay.

Only the aspen stood erect and free, Scorning to join the voiceless worship pure,

But see! He cast one look upon the tree; Struck to the heart, she trembles evermore."

YOUR OWN BOSS.

Now and then I hear a boy say: "If I could only be my own boss, then I would be happy." Did you ever know of anyone that amounted to much who was his own boss? The only one I ever read about was Robinson Crusoe, and he was glad to quit.

You have heard of the "independent farmer." He is dependent upon wind, water and frost; he must be at home every morning and night to milk the cows. The physician must buy his clothes and groceries of his patients. Do you think that Marshall Field, the great merchant, was independent? Not a bit. He carried two great stores around on his back. He would have been unhappy if he had not been doing something for the thousands in his great army.

No one can be his own "boss" unless he goes out of the world, into the wilderness, and then he will find himself dependent upon the berries and animals.

There is, however, one way of becoming your own boss. Let me tell you. It is to stay right where you are, and begin by ruling yourself. That is the first step. Then begin to help other people, and after awhile you will find them willing to do anything for you. Your workshop will become a throne.—Selected.

Our Boys and Girls BY AUNT BECKY

The Secret of the Silver Lake

By Henry Frith, Author of "Under Bayard's Banner," "For King and Queen," etc.

CHAPTER I.—Continued. The land was a long way off, and pulling was very hard work. There was not much water and very few provisions in the boat, but, fortunately, all had had a good meal before quitting the ship. After a while the sailors became tired, and Mr. Belton and his elder son tried, but the land did not appear much nearer when night came again with a chill south wind.

"Shall we die, father?" whispered little Robin. "I am so cold!" His father comforted him, and one of the sailors kindly wrapped him up in his coat. The waves drove the boat on and rolled it about. One of the sailors went asleep in the bow, and in the middle of the night the sea got rougher. In the morning the poor sailor was missed!

"Where is Jackson?" was the question no one could answer. Poor kind Jackson, who had lent Robin his jacket, had tumbled overboard when the rough waves had turned the boat: he was fast asleep, and had been thrown out. Poor Jackson!

The Beltons had quite lost sight of the other boats, but the young people did not despair. They pulled on all day, and as the setting sun sparkled in the water, the quick-eyed sailor who was steering saw the beams glinting on the sand. He steered to the bright place, and found that a steam was flowing down into the little bay, and that the boat could be steered up the opening without being upset by the waves. Rocky cliffs extended from one end of the bay to the other, and the only stretch of beach was a few hundred yards on each side of the stream which—though the voyagers did not know it—rose from the snow mountains.

No wonder they had missed the other boats. Our travellers had gained the north island, a wild and rocky coast, while the other boats had steered eastward. Back inland, was a dense bush of pines, birch-trees, and other dusky foliage, and beyond the bay many miles away, were the mountains, and a volcano called Ruapehu.

Slowly sank the sun into the ocean, and our voyagers hastened to land. They succeeded in doing so safely and dry; but had they known the character of the natives, they would have hesitated. Some provisions were eaten, and preparations were made for sleep: the sun disappeared, and in a short time darkness fell thickly.

"We shall never see Uncle Manton again," said Ernest, half-crying. "This is awful! Isn't it dark!" "Don't whimper, silly!" replied Stephen. "Look at Amy: she is quiet and plucky. Cheer up! Hark, the birds are actually singing!" "Do you call that singing?" exclaimed Ernest. "It's most melancholy; miserable!"

They all listened and heard the piping of some birds, the cry of the hooters and the scolding of the parrots, mingled with the cooing of the wood-pigeon called ku-ku. Suddenly all were silent.

"They have gone to bed," remarked Mr. Belton. "Let us do the same." The travellers prepared, but the noises soon re-commenced. Nevertheless, the party lay down on the verge of the bush and slept soundly. As the moon rose a dark figure glided out from the thick darkness and gazed

at them. He seemed very much surprised to see Amy, and hurried away. After a time he returned with an old woman, and pointed to Amy and the other children. But the old woman shook her head. Then the native pointed to the boys and Amy; one, two, three. The woman nodded, and the natives slipped away unheard and unseen.

Mr. Belton woke early, and did not disturb the children. He roused the one remaining sailor, and with him set out to find means of escape. Stephen was awakened by feeling his arm grasped. He looked up: a tall man, dressed in a kind of kilt and a mat, stood over him, and in a moment the lad was seized; other natives rushed in, and taking up Amy, and Ernest also, carried them off into the bush as fast as ever they could, leaving Robin, asleep on the ground by himself!

The three young people were so surprised and alarmed that they did not cry out until they were quite out of hearing of Mr. Belton and the sailor. The natives who had so suddenly carried them away did not hurt them, but they quickly prevented them from giving an alarm.

Stephen and Ernest were very angry, and struggled violently, twisting and wriggling about. But Amy, more prudently remained quiet, and was glad to find that her captor was accompanied by the old woman, who seemed kind, though of course Amy could not understand anything that was said. After a while the boys became quieter, and felt easier about Amy when they saw that no one wished to harm her.

Indeed, it seemed to Stephen, when he and Ernest were allowed to walk and talk, that the natives were rather afraid of Amy. Why were they so polite to her? What had she done? This was very curious; both boys wished to speak to her, and called out. Amy immediately turned round and stopped. Then the men and women bowed to her respectfully, bending their heads low, and stopped too.

"Amy," cried Stephen, "what is all this? They seem to like you. What can we do? Will they kill us? This is dreadful! What horrid creatures these wild people are!"

"Oh, Stephen, I am in such a terrible fright. Poor papa! And Robin too! Where do you think these natives are taking us to?" "I don't know. This is awful! What does the old woman want?" cried Ernest.

Amy looked and saw the old wizened female begging for something, and pointing in a certain direction. Then she looked at the sky and shook her head.

"I think she means to tell us that we must go on, and get shelter for fear of bad weather," said Amy. "That's right," said Ernest. "I suppose we must go. But can't we escape?"

"Suppose we did, we should only get lost," replied Stephen. "We must remain: there is some mystery in this, depend upon it."

At length, after a toilsome march, a kind of encampment was reached. The huts were really only of boughs, so arranged as to shelter and partly screen the natives. Beyond the village, if it can be so called, lay a small lake. There were very few people to be seen. The English children were very tired and soon lay down to rest. When



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Up to this time the boys had behaved very well. They had been afraid; but when they saw how the people treated Amy they took courage.

"I say, Ernie, I think I know the way back," said Stephen. "Let us run away."

"And leave Amy?" cried Ernest. "You would never do that, I am sure, King."

"Well, but you see they are treating her like a queen, and they do not care for us. They may kill us; and then Amy would be worse off than ever. If we escape and find father again, we can come and rescue Amy. Hist, Amy! Are you asleep?"

"No," answered Amy. "What is it, Stephen? I am watched by this woman: I wish she would go away. What are we to do? Just think of father. We are in a terrible scrape, boys. I think we ought to say our prayers, Stephen. Come here you and Ernie."

The boys approached, but were prevented from kissing their sister, as they intended. Then Amy pointed to the boys and herself. The old woman understood, and at Amy's request allowed the boys to kneel with their sister.

"They won't hurt you, Amy," whispered Ernie, after prayer. "Ask them to let us go, and we can come back for you."

"But suppose they move away?" she replied. "Oh, Stephen! don't leave me alone with these horrible brown creatures. I shall die if you do!"

"Perhaps they will let us all go, if we promise them money," said Stephen.

"But we have no money, and cannot understand their language," cried Amy. "Oh, can no one help us? Can't we get away? What shall we do?" And Amy began to cry.

Now, it was such an extraordinary thing to see Amy cry that both her brothers were indignant; and I really think they would have carried her away, but just at that very moment a tall man, dressed in a better costume than the natives, and more like an emigrant, suddenly entered the village. He carried a gun and wore a blanket or mat over his shoulder: but his legs were not bare, as the others' legs were. He looked around for a few seconds, and then, after saying something to the old woman which sounded like Paheka, he turned to Stephen, and said, in English—

"Are you English, sonnie?" Stephen looked up in surprise.

Here was a wild man of the wood, as he believed, talking in English. Was ever so astonishing a thing heard of?

"Of course we are English," he replied. "We have been taken prisoners. Will you help us?"

"Well I'll see, but I suspect you won't get off in a hurry. I will do my best. Who are you?"

They told the man, who intended to be kind, all about their voyage, and the reason why they had come out with their father, the manner in which they had been taken by the natives, and so on.

"Then you have come on a very curious errand," said the man. "Why these people have captured you only on account of missy yonder. They want her, but they don't want you, and when the chief returns, perhaps they will leave you in the bush, or kill you, or torture you: which will be worst of all!"

Stephen and Ernie turned pale. Fancy being treated like this: roasted and eaten, perhaps by these wicked people! The man saw their terror, and heard Amy's appeal.

"Oh, sir, help us, and father will reward you! God will reward you too!"

"I'll do my best, missy. I had a little girl of my own once. But I

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am only a Scout, you see, engaged during the war by the English to help them with the friendly natives. So you see, when the Britishers went off, I stayed here with these Maoris.

The hunters, the men, will be here soon, and then you will hear your fate. I will help you all I can, but you may have to run away, sonnies." The natives who had been referred to as hunters had been on the lake, and in it, fishing, and throwing their boomerangs at birds in the trees. The boys had already watched them throwing something up in the air, and the weapon—which was a boomerang—after turning and circling round many times, hit the bird in the tree, and then came circling and skimming back again to the man who had thrown it. Other men had been fishing with spears, which they darted into the water at the fish. Now they had sufficient food, and they were coming back to light fires, and to roast the birds and the fish for supper. (To be continued.)