

FORGET-ME-NOT.

BY ELIZABETH ABERCROMBIE.

(From the German.)

I wonder if you ever heard why the forget-me-not, that lovely little blue-eyed flower came by its name?

I know, because the brook told me about it one day, and if you'll pay great attention I'll tell you about it too.

Once upon a time, ever and ever so many years ago, there lived two people in a certain little cottage—a little boy and his mother.

The latter was a good woman, brave and kind and industrious, and she loved this little son of hers with all her heart.

She lived for him, and labored for him, and took care for him night and day, while her life was spent in striving to bring him up to be a good and noble man.

But unfortunately this little boy liked to be naughty, and in spite of all his mother's faithful teaching, he grew more and more wilful every day. This as you may think, made the poor mother unhappy indeed, so that often in the quiet of the night, instead of sleeping she was weeping and praying to God to help her bear this trial that was so heavy for her.

Really the child loved his mother and he loved God too, altho' he was hardly conscious of it. When he saw the tears in his mother's eyes, it made him sorry to the depths of his little heart, only as he had no firm intention of becoming obedient and unselfish and good, he soon forgot his sorrow again. Now his mother was ill, and the day came at last when she grew so weak that she felt she must die. So she called her child to her bedside, and said,

"Dearest, I must leave you, for God is calling me. Promise me that you will never forget me."

When the little boy heard these words he was grieved to the heart, the hot tears began to roll down his face, he begged her to forgive him for all his naughtiness, and said if she would only stay with him, he would be oh, so good, so good, from that day forth!

"I cannot stay," said the mother, "but if God will permit it, I will watch over you from heaven and will help you to remember this promise which you have just made, and to think of me. Farewell, my child, and—forget-me-not!"

After she had said this the mother closed her eyes in this world and she never opened them again.

Forget-me-not was her lost word.

After all was over the little boy's Aunt came and wanted him to go with her to her distant home. He was very angry at this, and with his heart full of passion he ran away to the churchyard, where he threw himself on his mother's grave. His soul full of longing for his mother, and anger was in his heart against God for having taken her. Instead of praying humbly, he murmured bitterly against his fate.

And suddenly as he was lying there, it seemed to him as if a falling star came straight down out of the quiet heavens on to his mother's grave, and on the spot where he thought it fell, he noticed for the first time, a little flower with five delicate petals as blue as the very heavens above, and bearing in its heart a tiny gold star.

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Just at that moment, the murmuring of the breeze through the pine trees seemed laden with his mother's last words—forget-me-not, forget-me-not!

And the child's hard heart was softened and his tears began to flow again, but they were no longer tears of anger. For the first time he prayed that all might be forgiven him, and that he might become pure and good. And God's peace came over him.

After this he stooped down and picked that first forget-me-not. And the next day taking a root of this little comforting plant from his mother's grave, he went away with his aunt to her distant home.

There he planted the forget-me-not. It grew and multiplied, and since then has spread far over all our fields and beside our brooks.

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THE FOUR TRUTHS.

There was once an old monk who was walking through a forest with a little scholar by his side. The old man suddenly stopped and pointed to four plants close at hand. The first was just beginning to peep above the ground; the second had rooted itself pretty well into the earth; the third was a small shrub; whilst the fourth and last was a full-sized tree.

Then the old monk said to his young companion:

"Pull up the first."

The boy easily pulled it up with his fingers.

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"Now pull up the second."

The youth obeyed, but not so easily.

"And the third."

But the boy had to put forth all his strength and use both arms before he succeeded in uprooting it.

"And now," said the master, "try your hand upon the fourth."

But lo! the trunk of the tall tree (grasped in the arms of the youth) scarcely shook its leaves; and the little fellow found it impossible to tear its roots from the earth.

Then the wise old monk explained to his scholar the meaning of the four trials.

"This, my son, is just what happens to our passions. When they are young and weak, one may, by a little watchfulness over self, and the help of a little self-denial, easily tear them up; but if we let them cast their roots deep down into our souls, then no human power can uproot them; the Almighty hand of the Creator alone can pluck them out."

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