





HIGH PRIEST, WITH BREAST PLATE

PRECIOUS STONES.



REVISED BY D. P. KIDDER.

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PRECIOUS STONES.

“HERE comes Aunt Andrews, and she will tell us all about it. Aunt Andrews, we want you to tell us the difference between a jewel and a precious stone.”

“Just as much difference, my little dears, as there is between me and your Aunt Andrews.”

“O, aunt! You and Aunt Andrews are the same.”

“And so are a jewel and a precious stone the same. Sometimes an ornament has many precious stones in it, and then the ornament altogether is called a jewel; but, for all that, every precious stone is a jewel!”

“Thank you, aunt! Thank you! We know, now, what we wanted to know. Do you know how many kinds of precious stones there are?”

“No, indeed, I do not. Do

you take me for a countess, or a duchess, that you think I must be acquainted with such things?"

"We do not take you for a great lady, but we take you for a nice, wise, good, and kind Aunt Andrews, and that is a great deal better. But you know the names of some of the precious stones, no doubt."

"Well, my dear children, I do; and anything that I know, you shall know and welcome. You want to hear the names

of some of the precious stones, do you?"

"If you please, aunt. Anything about them will please us very much."

"Suppose I tell you what precious stones the Chinese mandarins wear in their caps."

"O do! do! But first tell us what a Chinese mandarin is."

"A Chinese mandarin is a magistrate, and there are nine classes of them, one above another. Every class wears a particular button in the cap,

made of a jewel, or of gold or silver. The higher the mandarin is, the more precious is the jewel in his cap."

"What an odd custom, aunt!"

"It appears so because it is new to you, but we have quite as odd customs among ourselves. The first, or highest class of mandarins, wear a ruby button; the second, a coral; the third, a sapphire; the fourth, a turquoise; the fifth, a crystal; the sixth, a pearl; the seventh, wrought

gold ; the eighth, plain gold ; and the ninth, silver."

"Then the ruby button is the highest, and the silver button is the lowest."

"Exactly so ; and now I think of it, there is in the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Exodus an account of the precious stones in Aaron's breast-plate. I will read it to you."

"You always have your pocket Bible ready, aunt."

"This is the account: 'And thou shalt set in settings of

stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like

the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.”

“O, what a cluster of precious stones! Good Aunt Andrews finds almost everything in her Bible.”

“Do you remember the description in the book of Revelation, of the heavenly Jerusalem, where a splendid collection of precious stones is set forth in two or three verses?”

“No, Aunt Andrews. Please to read it to us.”

“I will, my little dears: ‘And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a

topaz; the tenth, a chryso-
prusus; the eleventh, a jacinth;
the twelfth, an amethyst. And
the twelve gates were twelve
pearls.' Rev. xxi, 18-21. I
hardly think that you ever
heard of such a splendid col-
lection of jewels as this any-
where else."

"Never! never! And now
please to tell us which of all
precious stones is of the most
value. You must know, for
you know almost everything."

"O children! children! you
never made a greater mistake

than in thinking so. If I only knew a hundredth part of what I do not know, then should I be, indeed, a wise woman compared with what I am now."

"But cannot you tell us, then, what precious stone is of the greatest value?"

"Yes, I can tell you that. Of all precious stones the diamond is of the greatest value. It is the hardest of all bodies, and sparkles beautifully. Its color is clear like water. Next to the diamond comes the

ruby, which is of a brilliant red color. The sapphire is blue and follows the ruby in costliness, and after the sapphire comes the yellow topaz ; so that you now know which are the four most precious stones in the world."

"Yes! that is just what we wanted to know. Thank you, Aunt Andrews."

"We read of a Roman lady who, being asked to show her jewels, brought forward her two sons, saying, 'These are

the only jewels of which I can boast.'"

"How very pretty! She must have been a very kind lady. It seems, then, that there are other jewels besides precious stones."

"Indeed there are. All precious stones are jewels, but all jewels are not precious stones. God's holy word speaks of wives adorning themselves, not with gold, but with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in

the sight of God of great price.' 1 Peter iii, 4. So you see that a 'meek and quiet spirit' is a jewel, and one of great value too."

"Very true, Aunt Andrews. Are there any other jewels in God's holy word?"

"O, plenty! Truth is a jewel of far greater value than the diamond; knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, and brotherly kindness, are excellent jewels; and then there are faith, hope, and charity. The most valuable

of all, however, is the 'pearl of great price,' spoken of in the 13th chapter of Matthew."

"O! what is that, Aunt Andrews?"

"I hardly know whether it is particularly described in Holy Scripture, but I call it, in my plain way, the gift of eternal life, through the merits and sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who died for sinners on the cross, that all who believe in him, and love him, may live for ever; and this is worth more

thán all the rubies and diamonds of the world, if they were to be put together and piled up as high, and higher, than a church steeple."

"What a deal you have told us, dear Aunt Andrews, about jewels and precious stones! We are so much obliged to you!"

"You are very welcome, my little dears; but mind, when you think about jewels, that you never forget the 'pearl of great price,' which

is so far beyond them in
value:—

‘How poor is earth, with all its glittering
toys,
Compared with heaven and everlasting
joys!’”

HAPPY IS THE MAN THAT FINDETH
WISDOM. PROV. III, 13.

“How happy is the child who hears
Instruction’s warning voice,
And who celestial wisdom makes
His early, only choice.

“For she has treasures greater far
Than east or west unfold ;
And her rewards more precious are
Than all their stores of gold.

“In her right hand she holds to view
A length of happy days ;
Riches, with splendid honors joined,
Are what her left displays.

“She guides the youth with innocence,
In pleasure’s path to tread,
A crown of glory she bestows
Upon the hoary head.”

