

LITTLE FOLKS

The Star-Stone.

(By S. Alice Ranlett.)

Eons ago, when the precious stones were a-making in the mysterious dimness of ancient caves and rock-fissures, the great Master gave to each its principle of growth, its rule of life, and set before each its own ideal, the beautiful perfection into which he willed that it should grow. He gave to each the needful materials out of which it might make itself a thing of beauty; it was theirs only to obey the law of the life which he gave and grow into that which he willed.

And the stones gathered up the atoms—silica, alumina, carbon, magnesia, and drew them together by the mysterious law of crystallization, and slowly, very slowly, the ruby grew, glowing with its fiery flame, the topaz with its golden sun-like gleams, the diamond with its frozen rainbow hues, and all the wonderful 'blossoms of the rocks.'

Now, in those days, among the other gems, a sapphire was striving after its own ideal of beauty, gathering up the atoms of pure alumina, and the tiny particles of coloring matter, which belonged to it. But, just at the critical moment of crystallization, when the sapphire was to put on the form which would be its own through all the ages, something happened. There fell into its limpid drop, a tiny fragment of strange matter which it could not remove and could not assimilate and make one with its own pure substance.

A solemn moment in the life-story of the growing sapphire.

But it was what the wise men call a 'good crystal,' and it would not allow the intruding element to interfere with its own beautiful growth. Had not the Master given this rule? By no means was that to be disobeyed. The sapphire knew nothing of what the result would be; that did not belong to it, only the growing. Resolute and firm, the stone followed its law of crystallization; gathered into itself the foreign atoms and gradually formed its perfect six-sided prism.

The intruder could not be removed, but it could be forced to obey the sapphire so long as that stone was strictly true in its own obedience to its God-given law. So the alumina crystallized with exquisite accuracy about six white

thread-like rays directed toward the six faces of the prism.

And one day, when all was fulfilled, the sapphire had become a thing of rare beauty, a transparent crystal of the pale blue hue of the northern sky, holding, imprisoned in its heart and reflecting the light, a wonderful six-rayed star. The hindrance which had threatened to destroy the sapphire and which would have succeeded had the crystal been weak or irresolute, had become its transcendent glory. And the Master took the precious stone in its beauty to shine forever in his own crown, saying: 'Thou hast been tried and found faithful.'—'Forward.'

The First Wrong Button.

(Children's Treasury.)

'Dear me!' said little Janet, 'I buttoned just one button wrong, and that makes all the rest go wrong,' and she tugged and fretted,



as if the poor buttons were at fault for her trouble.

'Patience, patience, my dear,' said mamma. 'The next time look out for the first wrong button, then you'll keep all the rest right. And,' added mamma, 'look out for the first wrong deed of any kind; another and another is sure to follow.'

Janet remembered how one day, not long ago, she struck baby Alice. That was the first wrong deed. Then she denied having done it. That was another. Then she was

unhappy and cross all day because she had told a lie. What a long list of buttons fastened wrong, just because the first one was wrong!

Two Little Kittens.

A little girl, whom we will call Lucy, had two little kittens; both of them were white, with pretty pink eyes. One was called Blonny and the other Snowy. When she came home one afternoon, she ran at once to the dining-room, as usual, to take a peep at her kittens. There was little Snowy sound asleep on the hearth-rug before the fire, but little Blonny was not to be seen anywhere. Lucy ran upstairs to her room to see if she was on her bed; but, not finding her there, she went to her mother to ask about her pet. 'No, dear,' replied her mother, 'I don't know where Blonny is; and now that I think of it, I have not seen her for some time. I don't suppose she has gone very far though; you will soon find her.'

So Lucy started off on her search, calling 'Blonny! Blonny!' all over the house, and looking everywhere—under the beds, into the cupboards, and into ever so many places where even a kitten could not get. She then went into the garden and had a good search there, but without finding the least trace of Blonny. Her heart is full, and now and then a tear rolls down her cheeks, for she fears she has lost her kitten!

Her mother also joins in the search, for it is getting dark, and she knows if the frail little thing is not soon found, it will be exposed to the cold night wind, and it may die, if some one has not already run away with it. Away goes Lucy again round the garden, calling 'Kitty! Kitty! Blonny, Blonny!' and the hot tears are rolling fast from her eyes, when, just as she thinks her kitten must be lost, she hears a faint little mew. 'Here's Blonny, mamma!' she shouts; 'here's Blonny!' 'Where?' replies her mother, coming to her. 'Under this bush, I think, mamma; I heard her cry.' And stooping down, whilst her mother held up the branches, Lucy held out her hand, and tried to get Blonny to come; but it was no use. She called and coaxed, but the timid little thing would not come. At last she had to crawl under the bush and