

**The Lost Gem.**

BY THE REV. MARK TRAFTON.

A SHIP sails out on a summer's day,  
And the breeze flows fresh and free;  
A woman bends over the quarter rail,  
Drops a gemmed ring into the sea.

She sees it flash, as it sinks from sight;  
" 'Twas his dying gift to me,"  
But never again will gladden her eyes,  
That gem that is under the sea.

A maiden sat by her lover's side;  
She said, "It can never be:"  
A thoughtless word, but it left from his heart  
A gem that is under the sea.

A youth went out from his childhood's home  
To the city with heartfelt glee;  
The siren sang—his honour now  
Is a gem that is under the sea.

In the halls of State stood a noble man,  
Prophetic, a leader to be;  
The bribe touched his palm—the crown is gone,  
A gem that is under the sea.

The rich man looks with a father's pride  
On his boy, caressed on his knee;  
He filled his glass with the ruby wine,  
That gem is under the sea.

O thousands there are spend life in toil  
To rear a family tree;  
But the very greed is a worm at the root—  
That gem is under the sea.

So in every heart there's a vacant place  
To be filled by hope's Eden-tree;  
But the serpent's trail is on every leaf,  
A gem that is under the sea.

Ah me, it hath been in my checkered life  
With a pearl that should comfort me;  
Now I linger alone, stretching trembling hands  
For a gem that is under the sea.

Yet I wait and hope that when death shall clip  
The bond that shall set me free,  
I shall see and clasp, in some brighter clime,  
The gem that is under the sea.

**PILGRIM STREET:**

A STORY OF MANCHESTER LIFE.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

**CHAPTER XIX.****THE LOCKED DOOR.**

ALL the mill hands were leaving Worthington's mill at the usual hour one night, when Nat Pendlebury reached the gates to enter upon his duty as night-watchman. Two or three of the clerks were detained by business a little beyond six o'clock, but they also were soon gone, and Nat was left alone with Colin, his little watch-dog. There was a small office just within the gates, where a fire was left burning for him, with a table on the hearth, upon which he carefully deposited his supper, which he had brought in a basin, tied up in a blue and white check handkerchief.

It was quite dark now by seven, for the shorter days after Michaelmas were come round again, and Nat lighted his lantern and called his dog, to make their customary round through the mill, before settling down for a quiet hour or two, until it was time to fire his gun at ten o'clock, and again make the round to see that everything was quite right. He mounted to the topmost story of the building, and descended slowly from floor to floor, passing through every part of the factory, where the ghostly machinery, only a short time ago so full of whirl and motion, now stood still, waiting, as it seemed, only for a word or a breath to start it off again on its restless labours.

The dog ran in and out amongst the looms, as he had been trained to do, and once he gave a sharp, sudden bark, which arrested Nat's steps for a moment, and made him turn his lantern about in every direction. But as soon as he whistled, Colin came up quietly and quickly enough, without any further sign of excitement; and Nat went on from room to room, until he came back to his own little office.

It was Nat's custom, as soon as he had made his first round, to kneel down and ask the protection of God for himself and the mill during the night, after which he had a vague but pleasant feeling of having angels about him, commissioned to take charge of him, and to keep him in all his ways. He could not read, but his mind was always active, as he could remember much of what Alice read to him before setting out on his night's work.

As it would not do for a faithful watchman to be found sleeping, he employed himself in repeating aloud every passage of Scripture which he could recall, and in singing, one after the other, all the hymns he knew—an employment which carried him far on into the night; for now and then he was obliged to stop to rest himself, and to take breath. Whatever Nat did, he did with all his might, and singing was no languid exercise with him.

He was just pouring some coffee into a stone bottle to warm up on the hob, ready for his supper at half-past ten, when there came a ring at the gate bell, which caused him to suspend his occupation with a feeling of surprise, and some little uneasiness. It was already after nine o'clock, and it was an unusual thing to have any visitor so late; but Nat did not linger to indulge in any guesses, but going briskly to the gateway, opened a small, square trap door, through which he could speak, or take a survey, without throwing open the great gates.

"It's only me, Mr. Pendlebury," said Tom's voice. "Father's never come home yet, and I came along to ask if thee had seen aught of him to-night. He's not used to be so late."

"No, Tom," answered Nat, "I've seen nought of thy father to-day. The mill was pretty nigh loosed afore I came in. What makes thee anxious about father, Tom?"

"I don't know," said Tom; "father's been very steady of late—since he came to the mill. But, Mr. Pendlebury," and the boy's voice was lowered to a whisper, "there's a strange thing happened at our house. Thee knows father and I have been laying by our savings, and he said it was of no use putting it into the bank, because we shall want it soon to buy things for our new house, before Phil comes to live at home, and so we kept it in a place that only he and me knew of. But it's gone, the money is! There's the box all right enough, but the key was left in the lock, and the money is gone. Father has taken the money for something or other, and he is not come home to-night. It's nigh upon fifteen pounds, for he's been very saving of late. I don't know whatever to think!"

"He was gone," said Nat, "afore I got in, for I asked after him, to show him a door that doesn't shut quite right, and one of the hands said that he were gone. Maybe thee will find him at home by now, Tom."

"Maybe I shall," replied Tom; "for little Phil has been to see us, and he stayed till eight o'clock, and then I went to the school with him, and I came round by here, instead of going back. Maybe father's at home by now."

"Sure to be," said Nat. "Why, Tom, thou were dreaming to come after him! Thee only gave him two hours' grace. He's at home, sure enough."

"It's very lonesome inside the mill at night," remarked Tom.

"Not for me," answered Nat. "I'm as lively as a bird all night, Tom—Colin and me. The dog knows my favourite hymns, and listens to me singing quite reasonable. Oh, no! it's not lonesome at all."

"Well, good night, Mr. Pendlebury," said Tom. "Good night, Tom," replied Nat.

Nat listened to the sound of Tom's wooden clogs clattering along the quiet street—for Worthington mill was situated in a very quiet and lonely part of the city. An old mill it was, too, having been built by the present Mr. Worthington's grandfather, and it had been greatly enlarged and improved, though it yet bore an old-fashioned look, and the walls were grimy and black with the smoke of many years.

Nat turned into his room again for his lantern, and once more made a complete round of the premises. As the clock of the city struck ten, and most of the mills a gun was discharged, to show that the watchman was on duty; and Nat fired his as soon as he heard the first sharp report in his neighbourhood.

It was a little after ten before he had completed his circuit, and by the time he came back to the office his coffee in the stone bottle was nearly boiling, and the basin of mashed potatoes and bacon beside it was well warmed through. Nat spread an old newspaper on the table, and placed his supper on it; after which he opened his large pocket-knife, and was about to begin his meal, when Colin, after a low growl or two, sprang towards the door, and barked vehemently.

"What ails thee to-night, Colin?" asked Nat, getting up from his comfortable chair and opening the door, where he stood for a minute, holding the candle above his head, and peering into the darkness which lay beyond its feeble beams. Colin bounded out into the court, but he was pacified in an instant, and when Nat called, he came back again, and stretched himself once more on the hearth, which he beat softly with his tail, as if eyed Nat's movements with an air of lazy and perfect content. Nat sat down again, and went on with his supper, leaving a portion of it at the bottom of the basin for his dog, which was in a state of pleasurable excitement and commotion as soon as his master closed his clasp-knife and poured his coffee into a pint can.

"Colin, old fellow, there is thy share," said Nat, stooping to place the basin on the floor; but as he did so he fancied he heard a slight noise behind him, and turning his head round he saw that the door had been pushed ajar, and a hand was just taking the key out of the lock inside. His surprise held him only a moment; but before he could reach the door it was drawn to with a bang, as if a key was hastily fitted into the lock and turned, while Nat stood staring in amazement, and Colin, unmindful of his supper, gazed anxiously into his master's face.

As soon as he recovered himself Nat rushed to the door; but his fancy had not deceived him; the lock was secured from the outside, and he was made a helpless prisoner!

For a few minutes Nat remained motionless with his hand upon the latch, trying to realize his position. His room was a small office inside the factory, with the window only looking out upon the small square court about which the mill was built. He could see from it the windows of most of the rooms; but there was not the smallest chance of making himself heard into the street, which, of course, lay outside the buildings.

The bell which summoned the mill hands to the