

Easter Lilies.

BY LUELLA CLARK.

EASTER lilies, spotless, white,
Fashioned fair of snow and light,
Out of the chill and darkness born
On this resurrection morn.

What persuasion, strong and sweet,
Led you thus this day to greet?
What within your sealed tomb
Wrought this miracle of bloom?

Not as when the violets wake,
Or the passionate roses break
Into blossom—fortunate flowers,
Nursed in dew and sun and showers.

Not as when so warmly wooed
By the sky's most generous mood,
Sister lilies late unfold
On the fields their cloth of gold.

Not as when, in hues that burn
From rich autumn's emptied urn,
Courtiers robed in king's array
Crowd to greet each royal day.

All in gold and purple clad,
Roadside, field, and wood grow glad,
As if summer came once more
Bringing some forgotten store.

Let me, O ye lilies fair,
Learn your lesson: Take no care,
All will come in God's good time,
Summer's warmth and winter's rime.

If skies frown or smile above,
Still may blossom trust and love,
Hope and patience—flowers divine—
Why should any choice be mine?

How or in what clime they grow,
Fostering sunshine, chilling snow,
Dearth or dew, if all forecast
Bud and blade and bloom at last?

What care I in this glad light
For the wintry chill and blight,
If I may with offering sweet,
Kiss my risen Saviour's feet?

PILGRIM STREET:

A STORY OF MANCHESTER LIFE.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER VII.

BRIGHTER PROSPECTS.

At a convenient time the next day, Nat accompanied Tom to the house of old Crocker, the owner of the donkey and donkey-cart, with whom they made a very good bargain. The old man was pleased with the manner in which Tom handled the donkey's ear and scratched his long nose; and the donkey himself seemed to accept him willingly as his master. Crocker said he would sooner let Tom have him for a shilling a-day, than most boys for eighteenpence. It was agreed that he should pay that sum each day in advance, and keep the donkey in food.

When the bargain was struck, Tom was obliged to change his beautiful sovereign, which he did with a thrill of regret; but there was no help for it. He forgot his regret the next morning, however, when at five o'clock he and Phil, with Nat as a friend and adviser, drove to Shude Hill market, to stock his donkey-cart.

It was not a very handsome cart; in truth, it was little more than a few rough boards, hanging loosely together upon an old axle-tree and wheels. But both Tom and Phil were intensely proud of it; and after they had purchased some herrings and potatoes, for, as Nat observed, folks could not eat herrings without potatoes or bread, and after they had driven to a woodyard, and closed a hard bargain

for a stock of chips, they started back again triumphantly, in the early sunshine, to Pilgrim Street.

From Pilgrim Street, though it was something out of their way, they were to set off on their first day's round, and Alice was to make the very first purchase from Tom; for it was a known fact amongst all the neighbours, that Alice's handsel was lucky; and if the dwellers in Pilgrim Street could only persuade her to lay out a penny with them before they started out with their goods, they were sure to be lucky all day. Alice and all the rest, including Kitty—for it was not yet six o'clock, and the mill did not open till then—were watching for their appearance at the bottom of the street; and every one gathered about the donkey-cart, while Alice made her selection of the chips and potatoes she required.

At last they fairly started off; Nat, with Suey in his arms, waving his old cap, and all the lot cheering after them as long as they were in sight. Then Tom saw that business was about to begin, and he was gravely happy as he trudged up Market Street at the donkey's head, while little Phil sat proudly in front of the cart. They passed Banner on the way, and he gave them as benignant a smile and nod as could be expected from a policeman in a stiff stock; and Tom wished that Will Handforth, and others of his old comrades, could have seen it. But a wide gulf seemed to lie between himself and these old companions already. He had taken a great stride towards decent respectability and honesty, and he trembled at the thought of falling back. If he met any of his former friends he would show them pretty plainly he meant to have nothing to do with them.

"Tom," said Phil, leaning forward, and touching him with a green branch given to him by a market-woman, "Tom, last night I dreamt God called me, like little Samuel."

Tom had had no dream like that, as he fell asleep in his solitary hole—for the cellar still remained unoccupied by any regular tenant—but his thoughts had been again of the dreadful God who never ceased to watch him for a single moment. But now, as he looked back at Phil, he was amazed to see how bright his face was, and what a light shone in his blue eyes. It was a clear, fair face now, for Alice took care to wash it well, and Phil looked very beautiful in Tom's eyes.

"Why, Phil, old fellow," said Tom, "that was nice, wasn't it?"

"Aye!" cried Phil, with a glad smile, "and I dreamt I tried to look up into God's face, but I couldn't, it was so bright, like the sun. Just try to look at the sun, Tom, and see how thy eyes'll wink."

The sun was shining the more brightly because the smoke from the factories had not yet clouded the atmosphere, and though Tom's eyes were strong, the lids closed as the light poured down upon them.

"That's not nice," he said; "it dazes me."

"And I was dazed," continued Phil; "and I thought God told me I should see his face some day, if I waited, and was a good boy. He said he'd make my eyes strong enough; and I thought I was going to ask him to let thee see his face, and then I woke up."

Tom walked on silently, for they were getting near to Ardwick and Longsight, and it was time to give himself wholly to business. The servants were beginning to light their fires, and he sold a few bundles of chips, and some of the herrings to be cooked for breakfast.

As the morning wore on, Tom and little Phil marched slowly through the streets, crying, in their shrillest tones, "Herring! Fresh herring! Fine

herring!" until they grew quite brave. But they were very fortunate in selling them; so much so that Tom treated himself and Phil to a small meat-pie, hot from the oven, about noon; and they ate it leisurely under the side-arch of a railway bridge, while the donkey feasted upon a few handfuls of hay and a turnip. Before six in the evening they had disposed of all their stock, and were wending their way slowly back again to Pilgrim Street, weary, but happy, the bag which Alice had made for their money being heavy with copper coins.

There was something mysterious about the manner of Nat and Alice, as they greeted their return; but Tom was too much elated, and too much engrossed in his own affairs, to perceive it. He emptied the money-bag carefully upon the table, and kneeling down beside it, he counted the pence into little heaps, each worth a shilling. It took both him and Nat a long time to do it; while Alice and Phil looked on eagerly, anxious to hear what was the result of the day's work. At last it was discovered, after every expense was paid, including the meat-pie, there remained a clear profit of one shilling and one penny, which Nat put on one side by themselves, with an air of delight.

"It'll be two shillings to-morrow, Tom," he said, "mark my words, thee'll have two shillings clear to-morrow. Not such a poor do, is it my lad? Thee'll make thy fortune some day, Tom. And now we've some good news to tell—haven't we, Alice? Something about thee, and Phil, and Polly, and all of us."

Tom's heart beat quickly. For a moment it flashed across his mind that, perhaps, his father had been liberated from prison with a ticket-of-leave, and his heart sank within him, and his brown face paled. But surely Nat would not look so joyful about that, nor would Alice fold her hands together, and purse up her lips as if she could hardly keep from speaking it all out at once, and smile with such a beaming face.

"Thee couldn't give a guess, I suppose?" asked Nat.

"No," said Tom, faintly.

"It'll be the real making of little Phil," Nat went on, laying his hand fondly on the child's curly head; "there'll be no more clemming for him, poor little lad; but good clothes and good victuals, and a good bed, and good learning. They'll make a scholar of him, Tom; and Alice says a grandly good one. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' We'll read that psalm to-night, Alice."

"Yes, father," said Alice.

"Not but what we might read it every night of our lives," continued Nat, thoughtfully; "but it 'ud maybe get all the same to us. Tom, thee minds the night we had the tea-drinking—how I told the Lord that Joey and Phil wanted some new clogs! I knew he could send them, and would, somehow or other, by giving me an extra job or two, or someway. And here they are, Tom. Joey's got his on, and ran out with the little ones to show the neighbours; and Alice has got Phil's. Where are they, my love?"

They were in her pocket, which was constructed to carry many things that were safer out of the little ones' reach; and she speedily drew them out, a good pair of strong clogs, new from the makers, such as had never been on Phil's feet before.

"That's not all," said Nat, laying his hand impressively upon Tom's shoulder. "And now I'll tell thee all about it. I was gone out with my bills, and Alice was all alone here with the children, when Joey runs in to say Mr. Banner was at the end of the street, with a lady, in a grand carriage—a grand carriage, Alice!"