

**Early Lost, Early Saved.**

WINDS her downy cradle, there lay a little child,  
And a group of hovering angels unseen upon her smiled.  
A strife arose among them—a holy, loving strife,  
Which should shed the richest blessing over the new-born  
life.

One breathed upon her features, and the babe in beauty  
grew,  
With a cheek like morning's blushes, and an eye of azure  
hue;  
Till every one who saw her was thankful for the sight  
Of a face so radiant with ever-fresh delight.

Another gave her accents and a voice as musical  
As a spring-bird's joyous carol, or a rippling streamlet's fall;  
Till all who heard her laughing, or her words of childish  
grace,  
Loved as much to listen to her as to look upon her face.

Another brought from Heaven a clear and gentle mind,  
And within the lovely casket, the precious gem enshrined;  
Till all who knew her wondered that God should be so  
good,  
As to bless with such a spirit our desert world and rude.

Then outspoke another angel—nobler, brighter than the  
rest—

As with strong arm, but tender, he caught her to his breast;  
"Ye have made her all too lovely for a child of mortal  
race,

But no shade of human sorrow shall darken o'er her face:

"Ye have tuned to gladness only the accents of her tongue,  
And no wail of human anguish shall from her lips be  
wrung;

Nor shall the soul that shineth so purely from within  
Her form of earth-born frailty, ever know the taint of sin:

"Lulled in my faithful bosom, I will bear her far away,  
Where there is no sin nor anguish, nor sorrow nor decay;  
And mine a gift more glorious than all your gifts shall be—  
Lo! I crown her happy spirit with immortality!"

Then on his heart the darling yielded up her gentle breath,  
For the stronger, brighter angel, who loved her best, was  
DEATH.

**PILGRIM STREET:**

A STORY OF MANCHESTER LIFE.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

**CHAPTER XXII.**

## PILGRIM PLACE.

WHEN Banner left the ward where Tom's life of poverty and privation had been exchanged for a rich and glorious immortality, he went out into the noisy streets of the city, looking upon every one whom he met, but especially upon the street boys like Tom, with a new and deep interest. He was sad; but the words Tom had spoken were so occupying his brain still, that he could not help murmuring to himself: "We needn't be afraid of loving God." He had been influenced, hitherto, chiefly of wholly by the dread of standing at the bar of God, and all his religion had been darkened by the dread of him as a Judge. When he was about his duty—and he had striven hard to be a conscientious and efficient police-officer—he had been constantly engaged in suspecting, accusing, and arresting wrong-doers, and bringing them to justice, until his heart had been closed against the thought of the compassionate and tender relationship which God is willing to enter into with men—even the chief of sinners. But Tom's words had pierced through all the hardness which had gathered round him, and had placed God before him in a new light.

Yes, God was our Father; not only Creator, King, and Judge, but, above all and beyond all these, our Heavenly Father; and every one who would truly hallow his name must know him by the name of Father. Each one of the wretched

and degraded creatures who looked askance at Banner as he passed by, or slunk away out of sight down back streets and narrow slums, might, through the grace of Christ, become a child of God. With what different eyes did he regard them, and how pityingly he began to think of their condition! He marvelled at his own hard exactness, when he had pursued them with the rigour of the law, and he said to himself: "They are my brothers and sisters; and they also may become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty."

IN one of the pleasant suburbs of Manchester, about two miles from the busy and noisy heart of the city, there is a cemetery, where the din of the streets can be scarcely heard, and where Tom had sometimes been with Nat Pendlebury and the children, walking with them quietly amongst the trees and flowers which are planted round the graves. Here, in a sunny place, farthest from the noise of the road which passes by the gates, they buried Tom, with many tears, yet thinking of him as having gone to the true home, from which he should go out no more for ever. It was a long way from Pilgrim Street, but as they stood looking down into the open grave, Nat and Alice said to one another that their walk would oftenest be to see that it was kept free from weeds, and that flowers bloomed upon it, as upon many other graves in the pleasant cemetery. They lingered for a while in the quiet of the place, as if reluctant to leave the spot where their loved Tom was lying; but at last, when the shadows of the coming evening fell, they turned away with a feeling of peaceful sadness, and with slow footsteps went back through the bustling, noisy thoroughfares, where no one knew and no one cared either for the sadness or the peace, until they reached their own dark but familiar Pilgrim Street.

"I will turn in with you, Nat," said Banner, who had been one of them at Tom's funeral, and lingered with them beside his grave, and walked leisurely home with them in the twilight. "I feel as if I should be lonesome in my lodgings, and I want to talk with you a bit. You'll let me come in, won't you?"

Would they let him come in! Why, Banner was like a dear old friend to them by this time, and not one of the little ones even was afraid of him. To the folks of the world outside, perhaps, he might seem as stiff and stern as ever, and that was a question in the minds of Alice and Nat; but to them his face was mild and gentle, and his voice the welcome voice of a friend. He might come in and out of their house as he pleased, and never see a cold or frightened look on their faces: and he, feeling sure of that in his inmost heart, stepped in, and took a seat in the chimney-corner, with little Joey on his knee.

"If only Tom and Phil were here," said Banner, glancing round him, "it would be something like the day we all had tea together, after poor Tom came home, the first time I ever had tea with you, Nat. Will you let me have some to-night?"

Would they! Whether Nat spoke first, or Alice jumped up first to put the kettle on the fire, it would be hard to say. There was still a vague sadness, and sense of something lost, clinging to them; but Banner's appeal to their hospitality recalled them to their usual activity, and Nat hustled about, and helped to set everything in readiness, whilst the water boiled in the kettle.

In an incredibly short time the tea was ready, and they sat down to it with grave but pleasant enjoyment. Perhaps they were not quite so long over it as over the feasts on Phil's holidays, and once or twice Alice had to wipe the tears away

from her eyes; but they were not melancholy. Why should they grieve as those who know not what has become of their loved and lost ones?

They gathered round the fire again when tea was over, and sang one of Tom's favourite hymns—that hymn which he sang to himself as he went home to his father's sordid lodging-room, after the pleasant day at Alderley. Tom's funeral-day had brought each one of them also "a day's march nearer home;" and when they came to the last verse they sang the chorus over three or four times, one after another beginning afresh, as if they could not leave off singing Tom's hymn. Then Banner, with Joey on his knee, looked hard at Nat, and a stern expression—the old, stern look—came back to his face.

"I've something to say, Mr. Pendlebury," he said, so severely, that Nat sat bolt upright in his chair: "I've been a policeman this fifteen years, and it's been my duty to take people up, and watch 'em, and spy after 'em, and generally to be rather pleased when I caught any of 'em up to mischief; all of which has been very much against me as a Christian man. More than that, I've lived in lodgings, and always been obliged to keep my eye upon my landlady, and be very sharp, lest I got cheated; and there's been nothing at home or abroad to keep my heart soft and loving. Before I knew poor Tom, and for a long time afterwards, I was a hard man; and I thought that God Almighty was harder than me, and was always watching for our sins, and reckoning them up, like a miser reckons his gold, as if he took a delight in judging us. Ah! he must judge us, I know; but, if I may so say, it's a grief and trouble to him, and he has given his only begotten Son to deliver us from his judgments. But the question with me, Mr. Pendlebury, is: How can I keep myself from being so hard?"

Nat was not sitting so upright now, and there was a smile upon his face very pleasant to see, before which Banner's frown quickly vanished away.

"I'm not a scholar," answered Nat, "but I can tell thee how I keep happy and content. I try to think of God, and look up to him, just like the little ones do to me. Why, bless thee, little Suey knows almost nothing about me, save that I'm her father. She doesn't know my name is Nathaniel Pendlebury, and I'm the watchman at Worthington's mill; and she doesn't know how I get the food she eats, and the clothes she puts on; but she does know I'm father, and loves her dearly. Well, we cannot know much more than that of God till we are grown up in heaven; so, when I begin to feel hard and mistrustful, I look at the little ones, and see how they trust me, and I go and try to do the same towards God."

"I haven't any little ones about me," said Banner, somewhat sadly.

"And then," continued Nat, "if I feel hard against other folks, I think, maybe, after all they'll go to the same home in the long run, and have the same Father, and it 'ud never do to shut your hearts agen your own brothers and sisters. The children never make me so angry as when they quarrel one with another, and, maybe, it is the same with him above."

"Nat," said Banner, after a few minutes of profound thought, "I've had a plan in my head ever since poor Tom died, which would be good for us all, I hope, and would make me a happier man. I've saved a good sum of money, being single and steady, though I say it of myself, and a few weeks ago I bought two cottages up near the cemetery. They are built with a little parlour and a bay-window to the front, and a bit of garden, and