

opposite a large mill; so it would be difficult to conceive of a more unattractive place than this house by the wayside.

Alma had not always lived there; she had been accustomed to a pleasant little cottage, surrounded by trees, near a clear running brook where the willows drooped, and the vines grew thick, and the bobolinks and cat-birds sang merrily through the long summer's day, and the whippowill's plaintive note, and katydid, and cricket were heard through the night.

But reverses came: Alma's father began to use liquor; her mother died; the pleasant cottage was sold, and ere long she and her father and little brother found themselves in a strange place, occupying a couple of small rooms in this large tenement house.

At first Alma was very sad and lonely, for she mourned for her mother and sighed for her home; but she knew it was not right to give up to despair, and so she tried to be cheerful and to do all she could to make the dreary place comfortable for her



ALMA'S FIRST HOME.

father and brother. She had to do all the work, excepting the heaviest, with her own little hands, which kept her so busy that it diverted her mind, a part of the time at least, from her troubles.

But poor little Ollie could not be comforted. He cried for his mother and moaned for the green fields where he played with the lambs, and for the little brook where he watched the tiny fish and sailed his paper boats, and ere many weeks had passed by the poor little sorrowing, homesick boy had grieved out his weary life. At first Alma could not be comforted; but then she remembered what her mother had taught her, and she dried her tears and checked her grief, and commenced again to perform her daily duties. But, poor child, her heart ached so that it seemed as if she could not live, and in these hours of loneliness and sorrow she had no one to console her, for she shrank from the rude people who lived in the same dwelling, and the villagers all shunned the tenement house. Her father came home from his work nearly always intoxicated, and she had no solace only in praying to the good Father, and this sustained her.

Alma had always loved flowers, and she pined so for them that she made a little bed under one of the windows and planted a few morning-glories, hoping that they would twine up and blossom before the summer was quite past. Every morning she would rise early and run out to see if they had not come

up, and when she saw them peeping out of the ground she was so delighted that tears of joy sprang to her eyes. Day by day she watched them with increasing interest, and her sad heart was cheered as she saw the beautiful green leaves putting rapidly forth and the tendrils clinging to the strings which she had arranged for them to twine around.

But, alas! one day when she went out to look at her vines she found, to her great grief, that they had all been destroyed. A stray cow had chanced along and cropped them all off close to the ground. Poor Allie! she was so overcome by the loss of her beautiful vines, which she soon expected to see covered with lovely flowers, that she could not control her feelings, and she burst into tears.

The children that had gathered around her, instead of pitying, derided her, and so she ran into the house and crept away off up into the garret to avoid their noisy mirth. It was some time before she could compose her agitated feelings; but by and by she grew calm, and she rose from the floor, upon which she had been sitting, and bringing out an old rickety chair from among the heaps of rubbish piled up in the corner, she drew it up to the window and sat down. While she sat there looking off in the distance, her eyes brightened and a rosy flush dyed her pale cheeks, for she saw vine-clad hills, and green fields, and the white houses of the village gleaming through the trees, and it seemed to her desolate heart like glimpses of the far away. Happy land! Never before had she been up into that garret, and the discovery which she had made thrilled her heart with delight, almost compensating her for the loss of her vines. She had a passionate love of the beautiful; her heart yearned for it, and the scene which that narrow window disclosed to her view was more beautiful to her than the lovely visions which she sometimes saw in her dreams.

Among the other things which were stored away in the garret was an old trunk, and in this Alma put her books, and every leisure hour was spent by that little window alternately reading and looking out upon the lovely prospect. But some days it would be too warm to stay in the garret, and then, O how she would wish that one of the lovely old elms which she saw in the distance stood right by the door, so she could sit under its cool shadow and hear the birds singing away up among the branches and the wind sighing amid the leaves. But all Alma's wishing brought the elm no nearer; and when the midsummer sun beat down upon the roof, heating up the old garret like a furnace, she would get her bonnet and go down to the village just to stand awhile under the beautiful old trees.

One afternoon, as she stood there looking up with eager eyes at the lovely green canopy over her head, some one hit her a rap upon her shoulder, saying:

"Massa sakes, Al, what you lookin' arter up in the tree, hey?"

Alma started suddenly, for her thoughts had been far away, and turning, beheld Becky Hunt, a girl that also lived in the tenement house, standing beside her.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Becky, opening her mouth to the widest extent; "did I skeer you, then?"

"No, you didn't scare me; but I was so busy a thinking and looking up at these beautiful trees that I didn't hear you, and you startled me a little, that's all."

"But what was you a lookin' so arter in the trees, Al?"

"Nothing; I was only looking to see the lovely green leaves, that's all."

Becky looked at her incredulously, as if she thought she were very foolish, and said:

"Well, I knowed the' was nothin' 'at growed on 'em to eat, an' I thought mebby you'd seen a squirl. Now I never looks at trees what ha'n't got nothin' 'at's good to eat on 'em. I knows where the's trees 'at's got somethin' on 'em 'at's better 'an leaves—red plums—eme,"—and she smacked her lips—"lots of 'em—an' I'se goin' arter some now. Don't you like 'em, Al?"

"Red plums? wild ones? O I guess I do!" exclaimed Alma, her mouth watering at the thoughts of them, for she felt very warm and thirsty, and she had not had a bit of fruit all summer.

"Well, come on, then, if you want some."

Alma hesitated a moment, for she did not like to be in Becky's company; but she craved some of the plums, so that finally she followed on after her. But, instead of conducting her to the meadows, as Alma expected, she led her around to the rear of a large garden where there were a great many trees, some of which were loaded with the loveliest early red plums.

"Now jest help yourself," exclaimed Becky, mounting the fence; "get jest as many on 'em as you want."

"No, I sha'n't touch one of those plums," replied Alma, quickly, "and you mustn't neither. Get down, Becky, right away."

"Ha, ha, Al, don't be skeert," laughed Becky, pulling off the plums; "the's nobody to hum. Don't you see the house's all shet up? So jest help yourself; the's nobody here to ketch you."

"I don't care if there isn't anybody at home, I am not going to steal, and you mustn't either. Come, do get down, Becky," and she tried to pull her from the fence.

But Becky pushed her off, saying, "Jest clear out, Al, I aint a goin' to be a fool 'cause you're one. I'll get my fill of these ere plums now I'se got the chance," and she was hurriedly making good her words when a strong arm seized her, dragging her from the fence into the garden.

Becky was terribly frightened, for she feared being taken to the jail, and she cried, and begged, and plead so hard that the gentleman released her, telling her that if he ever caught her there again he would see that she received the punishment she merited. Then turning to Alma he asked her name and where she lived, and spoke kindly to her—for, concealed by a tree, he had heard all that she had said to Becky—and filling a little basket with the choicest of the fruit, he presented it to her, telling her that she could come every day and gather all she wanted.

Alma was cheered by the kind words and delighted with the fruit, and she hastened homeward with her heart feeling lighter than it had done in a long time before. But when she reached home she found that another sad affliction had befallen her. Her father had just been accidentally killed while in a state of intoxication, and she was an orphan. Poor Alma! it was more than her young heart could bear, and she fell senseless to the floor, and for several hours she was in a state of unconsciousness. But at length she revived, and when she lifted up her eyes she found herself in a beautiful apartment, and saw the gentleman who gave her the fruit and a lady beside him leaning over her. The gentleman and lady were the owners of the mansion, whither they had taken Alma, and she became the loved child of their adoption, and never again did she have reason to sigh for the beautiful.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

"GOD IS HERE."



"H, FRANKIE, nobody here but you?" said a mother one day to her little son whom she found playing all alone in the nursery.

Frankie looked up, his face being radiant with happiness, and said:

"Yes, mamma, God is here."

At another time, when he was in the garden with his mother, a fierce gust of wind swept suddenly over it. Thinking that his mother shared the alarm he felt, he looked up into her face and said:

"God is with me, dear mamma."

That boy had learned to know that the great God