

"WHY DIDN'T YOU STRIKE BACK?"

"Why didn't you strike back, you goosie?"

I paused in my sewing and looked out unobserved upon a group of little folks playing near my window. One child was running away rapidly, the other stood beside little Amy Horton, who gazed ruefully at her own fat hands, and tried hard not to cry. Such a little girl was Amy! the only child of a young widow lately moved into town.

Of Mrs. Horton we, the people of R—, knew, as yet, nothing; but by manners which we usually judge, she was a lady in every respect, gentle, quiet and refined. I had not yet given myself the pleasure of calling upon the new neighbor. Little Amy, however, child fashion, had grown familiar with the children of the neighborhood, and they had made a pet very quickly of the five-year-old stranger.

What could be the matter now, I wondered, seeing Amy's flushed face and catching the scowl on the questioner, who asked: "Why didn't you strike back again?" I listened for the answer with interest.

"Cause—cause—my mamma would—wouldn't kiss my hands—if I struck anybody!" sobbed the injured little one, rubbing the red hand with the other white one, evidently quite hurt both in flesh and feelings.

"Wouldn't kiss your hands!" exclaimed her listeners wonderingly. "What do you mean, Amy? What a queer ideal!"

I was as much interested as either of the children, and, peeping through the vines clustering around the window, quite safe from the childish observation, I listened for Amy's explanation.

"Mamma always kisses my hands when they haven't been naughty, and it is naughty to strike. That little girls mother won't kiss her hands to-night, will she?" Amy's blue eyes looked up into the faces around her, and, full of wonderment at her words, the sympathetic children kissed and pitied her to her heart's content.

Then I went out and talked to the little one, with a new respect for the mother, who, more than ever, I desired to know, "Will you take me to your house, dear?" I asked offering my hand with a smile, and stooping to kiss the small grieved face.

"O! Mrs. —," cried the children in chorus, "what do you think! That Sally Jones struck Amy real hard on her arm and hand, just because—because Amy didn't want to walk with her! Wasn't it the meanest thing?"

I agreed rather indignantly that it was the meanest thing, and then we walked along the pleasant road where Amy's mother lived. At my suggestion the children remained outside while I made my long-intended call upon Mrs. Horton. After a while I repeated Amy's remark, and asking pardon for curiosity, begged to know more about the sweet idea.

Mrs. Horton laughed, but I saw the glisten of tears in her eye as she replied:

"Maybe I am foolish, Mrs. —, but ever since she was given me, I have loved to kiss the baby hands as well as the baby lips. I used to lay the soft little white palms upon my mouth and kiss them until my baby laughed!"

"As she grew older I still kept up the custom and when night came, and undressing her I failed to kiss the little hands. Amy knew it was because they were not clean from naughtiness; if they had been lifted in anger during the day, if they had struck her nurse or a little playmate, mamma could not kiss them because they were not clean. And to miss the kiss was very hard for my baby. I assure you. It was the same with the lips, if a naughty word had escaped them, I mean a willfully naughty word—or if my little girl had not spoken quite the truth during the day, I could not kiss the lips; although I always kissed her on the cheeks and forehead, never allowing her to go unknissed to bed. But she cared more for kisses on her hands and lips than for anything else in the world, I believe; my loving little Amy! And gradually the naughty ways were done away with, and each night my baby would say 'Tea hannies tonight, mamma! Tea hannies for 'oo to tiss!' 'And even now—though she is five years old—I keep up a custom which she has known from her birth, because I think it helps her to try to be good. You will laugh, maybe, Mrs. —, but I do want my little girl to grow up pure and sweet; and if the love of mamma's kisses can keep, by God's help, the little hands, lips and heart clean, I think I shall continue the custom until Amy is old enough to understand fully things too hard for her as yet." My own eyes were tearful when Mrs. Horton's sweet voice ceased, and I envied Amy her beautiful young mother's companionship. Did I think it a foolish idea? Ah, no indeed! But the truest, sweetest custom in the world—keeping her small hands clean for mother's good night-kisses; and that is why Sally Jones was not "paid in her own coin," as the saying is. That is why the sweet lips made no angry reply. Mamma's kiss was too precious a thing to be given up for the gratification for one moment of evil speaking. *Sel.*

Robert Barclay, was once attacked by a highwayman, a pistol levelled at him, and a demand made for his purse. Calm and self-possessed, he looked the robber in the face, and mildly assured him that he was his and every man's friend, and willing to relieve his wants; but free from the fear of death, he was not to be intimidated by a deadly weapon. He then appealed to him whether he could have the heart to shed the blood of one who had no other feeling or purpose but to do him good. "The robber was confounded; his eye suffused with tears; his brawny arm trembled; his pistol fell to his side; and he fled, abashed, from the hero who had dared to 'resist not evil.'"

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THE MISTAKE OF TO-DAY.

REV. B. B. HOWARD.

Jesus Christ came that men might have more abundant temporal, spiritual and eternal life. He says he came "to save men's lives." His kingdom is not of this world, and his subjects do not fight. His kingdom is peace. We pray with him that it may come. We join with him in the supplication that he may be one as Christ and the Father are one.

We content that all things of this sort should, and do remain as they were before the fathers fell asleep. We postpone goodness and love to the Millennium. We make one law for persons, and another for nations. We substitute a sword of steel for the sword of the spirit. We ignore the angel's song and the prayer on the cross as impossible to realize. We are faithless as to the duty of abandoning war "now." We wait for a more convenient season, when men and nations will improve, before we obey Christ, and do our duty.

We quote heathen maxims, and explain away the Sermon on the Mount. We narrow and limit the Lord's beatitude: "Blessed are the peacemakers." We make a new one: "Blessed are the warmakers." We quote, "He that taketh a sword shall perish by the sword," as if justifying, not only rebuked Peter but the church as a whole, in doing violence.

We try to forget that tremendous word "now," which Paul used at Athens, when he uttered God's universal commandment to repent, and we go back into the Old Testament to justify our disobedience.

(We can find little distinct condemnation there of the use of intoxicating drinks, the enslavement of men, and the practice of polygamy; all of which we condemn.) If God no longer "winks at barbarism, why should we? We may drive sheep and oxen out of the temples with whips of small cords, if we act by his express authority and strike their woolly and hairy hides as gently as did Jesus, using words as terribly true and expressive as he. We may have indignation even, if it be as holy as was that of our Lord when Pharisee and disciple rebuked the bringing to him of little children, But God has given us no warrant to tell even our Herods that God will smite them, (much less dynamite them).

The Holy Spirit convicts, divides, separates, calms, soothes, comforts, saves. His era is ours. His work ours. The sword of the spirit, our weapon; love our inspiration; salvation our aim.

What room is there in the kingdom of God for revenge; for duelling with fists or pistols; for wars and fightings, by men or governments? Into that kingdom each child of God has entered.

Into it he is bound to bring Jew and Gentile, bond and free, person and people, individual and nation, until the Lord's prayer is answered, John's vision realized, and the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ, and He reigns forever. In this work we may use military figures of speech, (as did Paul, who was bound to a dead soldier many months,) but no carnal weapons; the persuasiveness of both law and love, but no violence, no coercion, no torturing of the body to correct the errors of the mind.

Bloody men shall not live out half their days. The nation and kingdom that will not serve God shall perish. It shall be utterly wasted. He that taketh a sword shall perish by the sword. God is demonstrating that truth in the pages that record the closing history of Mohammedanism. He has often repeated the same lesson in the collapse of fighting sects. The Church had to abandon persecution to save itself from annihilation.

Protestantism as represented by English-speaking peoples, must, with Malancthon and Erasmus, protest against war, or it will perish by it. If fostered and permitted to grow among so-called Christian nations for the next half-century, as it has been for that just closing, this monster of iniquity seems likely to gain such proportions as to threaten the entire system of world wide missions, and turn back Church and State to the darkness of the Middle Ages. Aug. 1887.

WASTE OF BRAVE LIVES.

Archibald Forbes thus depicts Skobelev's assault on the defenses of Plevna, in 1877: The assaulting column moved forward, rifles on shoulders, with music playing and banners flying. But the Turkish redoubt flamed and smoked, and poured forth such a torrent of bullets that the Russian line was staggered. On the panting soldiers pushed steadily against that deadly shower of Turkish bullets: men were falling by hundreds, and the issue swayed to and fro in the balance. Skobelev had now in reserve but two battalions of riflemen; but they were picked men, the best soldiers in his command. He reached the wavering, fluctuating mass, swaying there in the hell-fire, and sent, thrilling and tingling through it, the sublime inspiration of his own high courage. The whole redoubt was a pandemonium of flame and smoke, from out of which rose screams, shouts and cries of agony or defiance, along with the deep-mouthed bellowing of the cannon, and the steady, awful, ruthless crash of the deadly rifle fire. Skobelev's sword was cut in two in the middle, as he waved it above his head. A moment later his horse rolled on the ground; the horse shot and done with the rider alive and unharmed. Skobelev sprang to his feet with a shout. Then with a sharp savage yell, the whole mass of men streamed after the white coated leader across the ditch, up the face, over the parapet and swept down into the redoubt like a whirlwind. There ensued a few moments of desperate hand to hand fighting; then numbers and the bayonet captured the redoubt. But at what a sacrifice! In that short rush of a few hundred yards, three thousand men had gone down. He had lost 50 per cent of his command!

And after all this massacre, a loss of 6,000 Russians alone, the Turks retook that redoubt to the awful slaughter was fruitless in its object. What a world of suffering and woe was involved in this single battle. *Herald of Peace, London.*

I well know that it is often said and sincerely believed by nearly all Christians, "Convert the world to Christ and wars will cease." Very true, if truly converted to Christ: but it must be to a better religion than now prevails, or ever has in either New England or Old England, which lands claim to be the most highly Christianized of all the lands in the whole world. Most truly did that good and able minister of the Gospel, the late Dr. E. A. Stearns, of Boston, say: "A triumphant gospel, such as is now preached and practiced in Christendom, would not put an end to war: but such a gospel as Christ and his apostles preached would speedily abolish it." Now let it ever be kept in mind, that a Christianity that allows war cannot be depended on to prevent war. *J. H.*

"Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." He who would have perfect blessedness, so far as it can be enjoyed here, must attain to this, and become a Peacemaker."