

Children's Corner.

CLEAN HANDS, PURE LIPS.

"WHY didn't you strike back, you goose?" 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 others stood beside little Amy Horton, who gazed ruefully at her own fat hand and tried hard not to cry. Such a little girl was Amy! The only child of a young widow but lately moved into our village.

Of Mrs. Horton, we, the people of B, knew as yet nothing; save that since by manners 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 my new neighbour. Little Amy, however, child fashion, had soon grown familiar with the children of the neighbourhood, and they made a pet very quickly of the five-year-old stranger.

What could be the trouble now I wondered, seeing Amy's flushed face and catching the scowl on the brow of 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 plump white one, evidently quite hurt in flesh and feelings.

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

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

"Mamma always kisses my hands when they haven't been naughty, and it's naughty to strike. That little girl's mamma 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 pure mother whom, 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.

"Oh, Mrs. —," cried the children in a chorus, "what do you think? That Sally Jones struck Amy real hard on her arm and hand just 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 road to 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 eyes as she replied,

"Maybe I am foolish, Mrs. —, but ever since my little one was given me I have loved to kiss the little baby hands as well as the baby lips. I used to lay the soft little pink palms upon my mouth and kiss them till 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 that it was because they were not quite clean from naughtiness. If they had been lifted in anger during the day, if they had struck at 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 little lips. If a naughty word had escaped them—I mean wilfully naughty words—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 her cheeks and forehead, never allowing her to go uncleaned to bed. But she cared more for kisses on 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 to-night, mamma; tea hannies for 'oo to tiss!"

"And even now,—though she is five years old,—I keep up my 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 fully understand things that are too hard for her as yet."

My own eyes were tearful when Mrs. Horton's sweet voice ceased, and envied little 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 mamma's good-night kiss; 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 one moment of evil speaking. Dear little Amy!

THE GIANT HUMMING-BIRD.

THE giant humming-bird of Chili is the largest of the family, and besides its size differs from all the rest in some very noteworthy respects. Mr. Gould describes it as a bold and vigorous flyer, quick in all its actions, passing from flower to flower with the greatest rapidity. Unlike other species of its family, it may be frequently seen perched on a small tree or shrub. It has a very extensive distribution over nearly all the

more southern portions of South America. M. Warszewicz collected specimens in Bolivia at a height of nearly fourteen thousand feet. The nest is a somewhat large, cup-shaped structure, composed of mosses, lichens and similar materials put together with cobwebs and placed in the fork of a low branch of a tree, generally one that overhangs a turbulent stream. Charles Darwin, in his narrative journal of the voyage of the "Beagle," refers to this species as a resident of central Chili during the breeding season, and his account of it differs, in some respects, from those of other writers, especially that relating to the absence of the rapid vibrations of the wings, generally supposed to be a peculiarity of all humming-birds, without exception. He states that this species, when on the wing, presents a very singular appearance. Like others of the family it moves from place to place with a rapidity which may be compared to that of the syrphus among flies, and the sphinx among moths; but, while hovering over a flower, it flaps its wings with a very slow and powerful movement, totally different from that vibratory motion common to most of the species and which produces the humming noise. Mr. Darwin had never seen any other bird the force of whose wings appeared (as in a butterfly) so powerful in proportion to the weight of its body. When hovering by a flower, its tail was constantly being expanded and shut like a fan, the body being kept in a nearly vertical position. This action appeared to steady and support the bird between the slow movements of its wings. Although it flew from flower to flower in search of food, its stomach contained abundant remains of insects which Mr. Darwin believed to be much more the objects of its search than honey. Its note, like that of nearly the whole family, was extremely shrill.

MISTAKES.

EVERYBODY makes mistakes. Things will not always come out just as we try to make them, because some little wrong thing is done or something that needs to be done is overlooked. Well, what then? Shall we get discouraged, and let things go as they will? Some people do; but such people have a hard life of it. They think themselves very unlucky, and complain of their hard fate.

The little fellow who is at work on his example in multiplication finds that he has made a mistake. What does he do? Drop his slate and go off fretting, and wishing there were no such things as old bothersome figures? No; he is puzzled; but he knows there is a mistake somewhere, and he means to find it.

"Try again!" is his motto. He will begin again, and go slowly and carefully through all the work. If he does not find the mistake then, he will do the same again, running through the lines of the multiplication-table in his mind or making them by additions on his slate. He will persevere until he gets the right answer, you may be sure.