

ARE THERE ANY PACIFISTS?

A TRUE STORY.

It was in a large hall in one of the small University towns of Germany that I first heard his story, after an address on the "Religious Foundations of Pacifism." Someone had got up in the discussion and begun the old objection: "Yes, very well, but if my wife and grandmother were attacked. . . ."

Then he rose, and quietly, but with great inner fervour, began:

"It was in the days of the first Russian Revolution, in 1905. The mob flooded the country, burned the houses, and killed the people wherever they went. Nothing was safe. We were living in the South of Russia in a small German Mennonite colony. The Mennonites had big estates at that time.

"One day our neighbour came running to our father. 'Tell me, friend, what you will do when they come? Are you armed enough? My six sons and I, we have all got guns, and of course we'll defend ourselves, we'll shoot 'em. . . .'

"No," my father quietly replied. 'We have no arms in the house, not a single gun. I do not believe in that sort of defence; that is no safety.' The neighbour went off, shaking his head over the madness of his friend. 'You'll see what will happen to you.'

"The next day the news came that he and the whole of his family had been murdered the night before, and that the bands, after having taken away all that they wanted, had burned the houses. And now my parents thought that our turn had come for the following night and we were all terribly afraid. All, except my father, who seemed as quiet as usual. At dinner-time he asked my mother to provide a good supper for this evening, for he expected guests. 'Guests?' we asked, and were glad. They would at least bring some cheerfulness. 'And then,' father said, 'prepare beds for about ten people.' Then he disappeared. And we children went round the whole house looking for him, and could not find him. Peeping through a key-hole, I discovered him on his knees; he was praying.

"When the evening came, we all crowded into one room with mother, looking out of the window into the

deepening twilight. Everything was quiet, no one spoke. . . .

"Then, suddenly, we heard steps, many heavy steps. And we saw them coming round the corner—they were terrible to look at; a crowd of about twelve evil-looking men, with black, bestial faces, their clothes torn and spattered with blood, clubs in their hands. 'Hands up! Surrender!' suddenly a coarse voice shouted. And we saw how father came out of the house to meet them, and how he fearlessly went up to one of the wildest-looking men, probably their chief, and linked his arm in his. 'Come in,' we heard him say, 'all we have is yours, if you want it; but first come into the house to strengthen yourselves; supper is prepared for you.' We saw them casting threatening glances at my father, and heard them murmur: 'We won't be caught by that fool. We have come to kill him, not to sit down and eat.' 'I know,' father said, 'You can do afterwards what you feel you must do.' Reluctantly they went in with father, and on tiptoe I went to the key-hole again to see what would happen in the other room.

"They really sat down, measuring the room with dark looks, and father sat down with them. But they all seemed to have lost their appetite! Father began to talk, and after a while he told them that he had no weapons in the house. He told them also, why: 'We are Christians, you see. One who follows Christ cannot take up arms. God is always with us and protects us, so we need not fear.' And then father quietly took out his Bible and read the Sermon on the Mount to them.

"There they sat, not one of them spoke a word. They were looking queer; what would happen now? Cheerfully father said: 'But now, won't you go to bed? The beds are prepared for you; you will need a good rest before to-morrow's work.' They really went off to bed, all of them. And father came in to us.

"We did not go to bed that night, but remained sitting together. Some of us children cried, all was quiet in the house.

"Then, suddenly, long after midnight, we heard steps again. The door opened, and the chief appeared, with rolling eyes, his face in wild commotion: 'We must leave,' he cried. 'We had come

to kill you! But your non-violence has conquered us!'

"And quickly, silently, they left the house. During the whole Revolution we were never attacked again."—From "Reconciliation."

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

(Contributed.)

Because the New Zealand Alliance activities in connection with the Band of Hope Movement have been so successful during the last year, it has been deemed advisable to form a Union to unite the various Bands.

For this reason, meetings have been held throughout South Canterbury and North Otago, resulting in a Conference of Delegates being held at Timaru on the 10th inst.

The Conference was attended by delegates from Ashburton to Oamaru, as representing the five Electorates: Ashburton, Temuka, Timaru, Wairarapa, and Oamaru.

Mr Mackesy was in attendance, and submitted a provisional Constitution and Rules for a Band of Hope Union, which were adopted with certain alterations, and an Executive Committee set up.

Mr J. I. Hayman, of Waimate, was elected Chairman and Mr Frank L. Trott, of Oxford Buildings, Timaru, as Secretary and Treasurer.

To promote uniformity and progressive series of Temperance lessons throughout the Area, the Executive decided upon a course of set subjects for the monthly meetings of the various Bands of Hope throughout the coming Band of Hope season.

The Executive also undertake to provide the Movement with necessary apparatus required for ocular demonstration and illustration, that the alcoholic contents of the liquor beverage is harmful.

The Committee will commence a campaign to greatly increase the existing number of Bands of Hope within the Area under its jurisdiction, and to which it will supply the material necessary to assist such newly-formed Bands to become a success.

Reverend W. Marshall, of Tinwald, presided over the Conference as Chairman.