



A Fight Against Odds

(Kate Anderson, in the 'Union Signal.')

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

[The Kilgour family are engaged in a desperate struggle to save the idolized youngest son, Claude, from the curse of cigarette smoking and the evil life it has led him into. The death of his brother, Willie, seems to arouse his weakened manhood, and he is allowed to go to work in a shop, since he will not attend school. It is soon found that he is continuing his evil course of stealing, lying, gambling and using tobacco.]

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

Almost simultaneously with the arrest of the prisoners, Ralph Kilgour arrived on the scene, accompanied by Mr. Hector Gaspard, man of letters and breeding, city clerk, and father of Adrien, one of the misguided runaways.

The story of the crime can best be told in Claude's own words, when put on the witness stand at the assizes:

"We never intended to kill the old man. We had made our way along without harming anyone. We wouldn't deign to rob a poor person, but we have no use for rich, old curmudgeons who don't help humanity. We are socialists and believe in equal rights for all parties, and that the bloated rich man should be forced into sharing alike with everybody. Whatever we took from anyone who had too much (a series of robberies had been traced to the trio) we always shared up with the first fellow we came to who was in hard luck. When we got to this hamlet we found ourselves down in our luck. We'd been put off the freight and needed money to get on with. We found out about this old man and made up our minds he had got to disburse. He had more hid away than he would ever use. He was an old man, though, so we made up our minds not to scare him or harm him, but just to tell him our views and make him come down reasonably. We waited till dark, and then we started for the place. When we knocked at the door he opened it and asked us who we were, and we told him just some visitors who wanted to see him on important business. We pushed in, and he lit a lantern. My pard (indicating Adrien) told him what we had come for and how we had got to have some of his pile, and if he wouldn't give in quietly we'd get it anyhow. The old man showed fight, so we tied him up and gagged him while we searched the room. We found forty-three dollars in a little tin box on a shelf, and we were looking for more when we saw a light. It seemed to be coming across the field. We got frightened, and we made up our minds to quit with what we had. The old man didn't seem scared, but he was very angry. I think he understood we didn't intend to do him any harm, only just to teach him a lesson that it wasn't good for rich men to do as he was doing. Frank told him that we were going to ungag him and set him loose, but that he must promise not to raise any outcry for at least twenty-four hours. Then Adrien and I ungagged him, and he set up such a row that we didn't untie him. Frank took out the revolver and told him if he didn't stop instanter he'd be a dead man. We had begun to be scared at the noise he was making, and Frank did that to frighten him, but Adrien thought maybe Frank was in earnest, and he said:

"We'll gag him again and leave him here." The old man was quiet by that time, and Frank said, "Will you promise to do what we ask?" The old man wouldn't

answer, and then Frank and Adrien began to row. Frank was for threatening him till he promised to give in, and Adrien was for leaving him tied there, and getting away. Adrien tried to get away the revolver, and it fell on the floor, and I picked it up and said to the old man:—"Here, now, you'd better give in!" Before God, I didn't intend to shoot, but Frank made a grab for the revolver, and it went off and hit the old man. Adrien said, "Now you've done it!" and we all got away as quickly as we could."

Cross-examination failed to elicit much change in Claude's original story. Adrien Gaspard's evidence substantially agreed with that of Claude's; Frank Fulton denied every detail which would tend to set blame on his own head and charged Claude and Adrien with all responsibility. Adrien stuck to the story of the altercation as related by Claude, but it could not be determined by his evidence as to which of the other two the crime rested upon. Claude stoutly denied any intention to shoot when he picked up the revolver, and he maintained that he had meant nothing in the way of a threat when he advised the old man to surrender. He had picked up the weapon because, although Frank had borrowed it that day, it belonged to him, and he intended to put it into his pocket and end the altercation, but before he could do so, Frank had reached for it and the shooting had occurred.

Thus the issue rested between Frank Fulton, a young man nineteen years old, who had possessed an unsavory reputation as a transgressor from early boyhood, and Claude Kilgour, who, despite his extreme youth, had displayed such a total lack of remorse and emotion, such an unabashed front to the court, that the hearers set him down as the most hardened young reprobate of the three—a degenerate, a moral idiot.

The judge's speech to the jurors was marked by depth of feeling, profound thought and judicial understanding of the case from every standpoint. He used to the uttermost his advantage to point out the awful effects of yellow literature on the youth of the generation, to refer to the evils of cigarettes, of bad companionship and of defective home training. He pointed to the late alarming increase of youthful criminals. He likewise discoursed well and soundly upon the prevalent and pernicious practice of the free handling of firearms by foolish, wicked and irresponsible persons, pointing out that scarcely a week, even a day, passed that did not unfold some fresh tragedy of 'accidental' shooting. It was becoming too much the fashion to threaten, whether in jest or anger, and in either case it should be regarded and punished as a crime. It would take only heroic measures to check this fast-growing evil, which was engendering in the breasts of many, carelessness with regard to the sacredness of human life. Where firearms and threats were freely used in connection with a foul and cowardly robbery, the question of actual intention was an unimportant issue. The life had been taken, human blood shed, and it was high time a grave example should be made.

The verdict was 'Guilty.' The sentence was, fifteen years imprisonment for the lad Gaspard, and hanging for Frank Fulton and Claude Kilgour.

(To be continued.)

Always the Wine Glass.

Miss Ricketts writes in 'Our Sisters in Other Lands': 'I once asked several Chinese artists, in different cities, to illustrate for me the parable of the Prodigal Son. Most of the artists were heathen, but heathen and Christian alike depicted the far country as an opium den. One artist went further back than the story, and showed the two brothers as children walking out with their aged father, the prodigal showing his unfilial proclivities by refusing to hold his father's hand, while the elder brother is dutifully clinging to the old man. Another artist skilfully introduced the household dog barking at the figure in

rags, in whom he failed to recognize his master's son. All artists represent the father and son meeting, without the father's open arms and kiss; he simply stands and the son kneels to him. The feast is always a great feature, at which, alas, foreign wine-glasses hold a conspicuous place, showing that the Chinese consider wine as a necessary part of foreign festivity.—'Spectator.'

Brandy in Fainting Fits.

The question is often asked, What shall we give when a person faints, in place of brandy or sal volatile? 'Health' has a word to say on this subject: 'To give spirits to a person who has fainted, is a mischievous custom. Allow the patient to come to and then let him slowly drink a cupful of cold water and no harm is done. But if brandy is given the patient may pass from one fit to another, or become ill from the drink given. Persons subject to these attacks should keep out of close, hot and unventilated places. Tea and coffee should be largely avoided, and if women, they should not wear corsets. Men must not use tobacco in any form or drink intoxicants if subject to such attacks.'

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