



## 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. The death of his brother Willie has aroused the remnant of his manhood, and he is now himself resolved to break the habit.]

### CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

Although strictly watchful eyes were upon him during the day of the funeral, he was allowed to be present, as he had been allowed out of his room on the day of his brother's death, which had occurred within twenty-four hours after the fatal meal of which he had partaken. It was, therefore, with the sincerest and most tender resolves that he put his arms round his mother's neck and sobbed: 'O, mamma, I am going to be good—I am, I am—just like Willie. I'm going to take his place to you, and I'm going to be just as I used to be. Please pray with me that God will help me.'

'Claude,' said his mother earnestly, 'if you keep your word I shall never again question or rebel against any sorrow that God sees fit to send me.'

'Claude means well,' remarked Ralph to Alice, after he had been talking with his brother, 'but there is one thing about his penitence which makes me uneasy as to his power of carrying out his resolves.'

'You mean that he is no longer capable of maintaining strength of will and resolution, or depth of resolve?'

'Exactly; I can't just put it into words, but I mean that something is not in him. There is no ground to work on, no depth to grow from. Take a naturally well-principled and honest drunkard, who had fallen so low—apart from all Claude's other wickedness, as to have been a steady pilferer and sneak-thief, taking every cent he could find from his self-sacrificing mother's hardly-gathered little hoards and a working sister's little savings, besides every other cent he could lay his hands on about the house, or whatever he could find not belonging to him that he could turn into money—why, I tell you that drunkard, when sobered up, would want to go and bury himself in a hole in a very agony of remorse. He could not look a fellow-being in the eye for shame. He would beg to be sent where he might not meet the gaze or hear the voice of an honest man. But, although I give Claude credit for being as remorseful as it is now in him to be, he is not weighted down with horror for the past. He actually doesn't seem to realize the awful depth of mire into which he has sunk. When I talk to him he can discuss openly and almost cheerfully his misdeeds—at least those which have been found out—but I do not believe a word he says about having made a full confession of everything. He seems to me the most baffling, unconcerned and artful liar I ever knew.'

'Can it be that Claude is one of those natural criminals, or degenerates—sort of moral idiots whom we often read about nowadays?' queried the sad-faced sister.

'That question has often presented itself to me,' answered Ralph. 'Claude is now at an age most trying to all youths, good and bad. It is at this crossing-place from boyhood to manhood that character is more rapidly moulded and developed than at any other time. Everything depends at this period upon careful, prayerful, healthful influence and environment in order to es-

tablish a character of permanency for good or evil. In the case of his being a moral degenerate to start with, it would be at this period of his life that natural evils which had lain dormant during his childhood, would now assert themselves. Still I greatly doubt Claude's having any screw seriously loose in his natural moral capacity. The very shape and expression of his head, features, hands and eyes would cry down that theory. By the way, have you noticed the physical change in him during the last year or two—the narrowing forehead, brutal expression, shifty eyes, and bold yet slouching gait? I admit that Claude may have lacked stamina, may not have had a sufficiently deep and serious appreciation of right and wrong—you know it always seemed to be his nature to do the right thing without effort or consideration—as a child, evil never seemed to have any attraction or temptation for him. If he only had been a soundly-converted follower of Christ, with soundly-engrafted principles on the subject of smoking and other evils which lie in wait to trip the unwary, it would all have been so different. But those deadly cigarettes got hold of him before he had left his careless childhood behind and got in their work during the character-forming, mind-forming, and body forming period, and now all we can do is to pray for a miracle of grace.'

Claude was a problem to the family. What could be done with him? They dared not let him take a situation of any kind and expose him to outside temptation in his present weakened moral state. School was out of the question for the time being. There were other boys who smoked, and Claude would be sure of a chance to break out again, and thus undo the weary work of weeks. Besides, he was incapable of serious study. Keep him at home and watch him? Idleness was the very gravest danger of all, and even in this alternative Claude would be able to elude them all, did he so desire. They could not always keep him imprisoned in his room. However, after the funeral, he was put back to that refuge for another fortnight, as Ralph was anxious to give him every possible opportunity to complete the beginnings of a cure, and he had learned better than to take any chances on either Claude's promises or his undoubted desire to reform. Anti-narcotic remedies were also employed to facilitate the cure, and of course Doctor Meredith and his daughter, Clara, were in the Kilgours' confidence. Strangers and acquaintances who missed Claude were told, where evasion of questions was impossible, that he was under treatment for nervous disorder (which was strictly true, as his nerves were shattered) and must be kept quiet for a few weeks, without seeing people. A report, naturally enough, crept about that Claude Kilgour had an attack of St. Vitus' dance, and the family were only too thankful that the neighbors had found so satisfactory a solution to the problem of Claude's temporary disappearance from society.

The experiment did Claude a world of good, at least so far as his appetite was concerned. He had actually passed more than a month without inhaling a solitary whiff of the destroyer. He was a little pale and languid from his long confinement, but was not at all seriously injured, for Ralph, busy young man as he was, had the window thrown open wide for half-an-hour at morning, noon and evening while he accompanied the prisoner in brisk club and dumb-bell exercise, which, with Claude's cold bath and plenty of simple, nourishing food kept him sufficiently invigorated. Besides, Alice and her mother saw to it that he was not left alone for any length of time and that he was provided with constant reading and employment.

'Only let us get the habit fairly broken,' said Ralph, 'and his mind and heart will gradually recover sufficiently for us to begin a reform in earnest, but we must be patient.'

One thing greatly encouraged them, while it could hardly be expected that Claude's morals and mentality had made more than a forced and temporary start,

the boy himself was enthusiastically determined on the resolve never to let another cigarette pass his lips. The horrible longing was past now, the suffering broken, even all ordinary desire gone, and Claude had sufficient wit and sense left to resolve mightily that he would never again be foolishly wicked enough voluntarily to re-enslave himself.

(To be continued.)

## Temperance Inspiration.

On the menu cards of Pullman dining cars on transcontinental trains the names of certain states are printed with the statement that wines and liquors will not be sold in them. Kansas is one of these states. That the rule is never violated we would not undertake to say, for liquor sellers as a class would violate any rule or law.

It is some satisfaction, however, to have deference paid even nominally to a law and a state which prohibits the liquor traffic. The educational influence of such a custom is worth something, and in Kansas we believe that prohibition is much more than a name, in spite of the fact that the dominant parties seem afraid to execute the law in a rigorous manner.

The following declarations have been gathered by somebody, and are well worth careful reading just for the temperance inspiration there is in them:

Prof. James H. Canfield, of Kansas state university, and president of the National Educational association, says: 'When I began work in the state university in Lawrence, twelve years ago, every student was obliged to pass thirteen saloons on his way to the post-office for his daily mail. There is not now a saloon in this city of 12,000 people, nor anything that corresponds to a saloon. The mass of our school children never saw a saloon, and do not know what it means. The moral sense of the community has so risen and has been so tempered that no conceivable conditions or circumstances could ever again make the saloon-keeper or the bar-clerk respectable.'

Judge W. C. Webb, one of the ablest jurists in the state, said: 'I voted in 1890 against the prohibitory amendment. For four or five years afterward I thought my opinion as to probable results was likely to be vindicated. But it is not so now. Prohibition has driven out of Kansas the open saloon, and has accomplished a vast deal of good—a thousand-fold more than any license law ever did or ever could. The whisky traffic never had a single virtue nor a possible merit. It was permitted only as a preferable to a worse evil, the prevailing idea for many generations being that unless licensed and taxed, and so brought within the control or restraint of law, it would be absolutely free to damn and curse and kill the human family. Now that it has been demonstrated that the law can and will prohibit its open and public sale, and prohibit the running of drunkard-making and beggar-making mills, there is no longer any occasion for men to choose between evils, for they can choose the good; and prohibition has proven to be and is unmistakably as good compared with open saloons.'—Michigan Advocate.'

## Carnegie's Temperance Attitude.

(The Herald and Presbyterian.)

Andrew Carnegie recently wrote to Dr. Cuyler, sending him a generous donation to the National Temperance Society. In his letter, he told him of the interest he had in the cause, and said: 'The best temperance lecture I have delivered lately was my offer of ten percent premium on their wages to all employees on my Scottish estates who will abstain from intoxicating liquors.' The fact is worthy of general attention. It shows how one successful business man estimates the difference in value between drinking and abstinent workmen, and how he emphasizes his estimates. It is a good suggestion.