

Friday, June 19.—Watching and working. Neh. iv., 9.

Saturday, June 20.—The work of God. Neh. vi., 15, 16.

Sunday, June 21.—Topic—What the wall-builders teach me. Neh. iii., 28; iv., 6, 13-23.

# Temperance

## A Fight Against Odds

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

### Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Mr. Kilgour, a railway conductor, is killed in the wreck of his train caused by the blunder of a drunken engineer. His son Ralph takes a position as clerk in a hotel and the second son, Willie, is offered the place of assistant, but refuses from a nameless fear of having anything to do with the 'Thing' that caused his father's death. Allie, the only daughter, has a position as stenographer. Claude, the youngest, a fine boy of twelve, handsome and gifted, generous and loving, is in school. Willie's action in refusing a position connected with the sale of liquor comes to the notice of the W.C.T.U. women and the ministers of the city, who make much of him socially, while a Methodist 'pillar' gives him a good position, and he makes new friendships among the best class of people. He soon becomes a Christian. Claude fails in his examinations, acts moody and sour and is discovered smoking a cigarette. He promises to reform, but continues the practice in secret.

### CHAPTER III.

Willie sat up until midnight devouring the literature and statistics which Miss Meredith had given him on the subject of cigarette smoking. He learned of the woefulness of the accursed habit, of the youthful criminals crowding the jails and reformatories, of the thousands filling early graves, of the thousands more in hospitals and asylums. Then he dropped on his knees and groaned, 'O God, help me, help me, help me, help me to save our baby brother!'

The next morning he took Claude aside and accused him of untruthfulness. Claude pathetically and plausibly denied having lied, and almost succeeded in making Willie feel ashamed of falsely suspecting him. However, Willie was not deterred from making a thorough and systematic inquiry that night before he slept, and he learned from different sources that Claude had been smoking cigarettes for nearly a year, and that he often consumed as many as six or seven packages a day. Willie made use of his first opportunity to inform Ralph of his discovery, and that young man was at first incredulous, then horrified.

'It is perfectly appalling, simply incomprehensible,' he exclaimed, 'to think that Claude has so completely deceived and hoodwinked the whole family for such a length of time. I would have given worlds to know of this at the beginning. I tell you, Billy, the ravages of whisky cannot compare in hopelessness to those awful cigarettes. I have seen enough of their terrible work to make me hate the sight of one.'

'Why, Ralph, I never heard you even mention the subject before.'

'I don't know that I have ever talked about it, as it always seemed a subject remote from any personal interest of our own, but I have always made a practice of discouraging any fool youngsters I saw monkeying with the vile things. A person is apt to be callous to any existing evil un-

til the thing is brought home to his own door, but I tell you it is then one becomes all eyes and ears to ward off a peril. It's a beastly, selfish, uncaring world this, Billy boy, and no one of us is better than his neighbor, I'm afraid. But I could give you some eye-openers on the effects of cigarette smoking.'

'I know,' replied Willie, soberly. 'I read it up only last night.'

'Well,' said Ralph, with a sigh. 'I wish this were a thing you and I could engineer ourselves without worrying poor mother, but we are going to have a fearful tussle before us to get Claude broken off, and we shall need her help and Allie's too, to watch him.'

The grief and consternation of the mother and sister were indescribable upon learning that their dear Claude was a sneak and a liar. The mother was hard to convince, and evidently could not grasp the seriousness of the cigarette-smoking in itself, or connect it with Claude's deceit.

'Why should he tell an untruth about it?' she asked piteously.

'Yes,' agreed Allie vehemently; 'of course it was very wrong and all that, for Claude to smoke on the sly, but then even the best of boys will sometimes get into mischief and do very wrong things, but it is out of all nature for him to lie about it when found out and questioned. That is what I cannot understand.'

'Why,' explained Ralph, patiently, for the tenth time, 'that's all part of the smoking. Haven't I been trying to tell you that the use of cigarettes utterly destroys all moral sense, sort of deadens the discrimination between right and wrong, makes the conscience and perceptions all callous and hard. Why, I have known scores of young fellows who have formed the habit, and I cannot recall one of them who has reached a certain stage, but would just as soon tell a lie as the truth any day, and what is more, there is not a confirmed cigarette user I know of whom I would trust with any money of mine. That's a fact! They lose all sense of honor, and most of them would think as little of pilfering from a till as of lying. They seem to lose all idea of decency and ambition, they read nothing but bad books, seek nothing but low company, won't work, but turn tramps and loafers till they die off or get hanged.'

'Oh, stuff!' exclaimed Alice impatiently. 'I know lots of people who smoke. Why, Uncle Jim has always smoked, and you couldn't find a better, more high-principled man in Ontario. Claude is just turning into a wicked, bad boy, and a good talking to and punishment will bring him around.'

'You see, Allie,' said Willie, 'it's some sort of opium or arsenic poisoning in the paper around the stuff that does the mischief. Seems it has the same effect as that experienced by confirmed opium eaters.'

It was agreed that every cent of Claude's pocket money should be cut off and that he should not be allowed to leave his home either for recreation or for any other pretext—that while he might retain his situation at the hostelry during the brief remainder of the holidays, he should be strictly under Ralph's eye all day. It was further determined that by every art and resource which love and anxiety could devise, an endeavor should be made by the now thoroughly alarmed mother and brothers to rescue 'the flower of the family,' from the grip of this monster. 'We must not tire or become weary or careless, or lose vigilance for an hour or a day, or even be deceived by apparent reform or assertions to that effect,' said Willie, who had been well coached by Miss Meredith.

And thus it was done as agreed upon. At the end of three months Claude's reform seemed so assured that the watchfulness was slightly relaxed, and he was allowed more liberty.

Then it was that Miss Meredith came to Willie. 'Willie,' said she. 'Claude is in the habit of going down to Armand Renaud's fishing shanty to drink beer with a gang of young toughs, while his mother thinks he is at choir practice.'

Willie could scarcely express his feel-

ings. 'Blessings on you, Miss Meredith,' he finally blurted out. 'You are worth the whole shooting match of us put together.' His lips were very white.

Miss Meredith laid her fair hand on his arm.

'Don't forget to pray unceasingly, dear Willie; I am praying, too.'

'I do, I do,' he exclaimed earnestly, his brown eyes filling with tears.

(To be Continued.)

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