



## A LESSON FROM THE GALLOWS.

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A FEW days ago a young man suffered death on the gallows in this city. His story is a sad one, full of interest and warning to parents and children. He was a child of Christian parents, a Sunday-school boy, and his education at a boarding-school in the country was enough to qualify him for success and usefulness.

He is spoken of by those who knew him wel

as a boy of good disposition, uncommonly mild and amiable. Fond of the society of young fellows, and of a gay and frolicsome turn, he was easily led into bad company. He was put into business, but he would not stick to it, being led away by his associates, who were idle and profligate. He became wild, reckless, and lawless. He refused to submit to parental authority, and found congenial companionship in a lower grade of people than he had been accustomed to meet in his father's house.

It is not proper to invade the sacred precincts of the domestic circle, and inquire into the circumstances that led to a fatal mistake in parental treatment of a wayward son. I will allude to nothing which has not been publicly stated in the newspapers and never denied.

His wild and extravagant habits led to his being cast off by his father, who, when he could no longer restrain him from his evil courses, refused him the protection of his home, and left him to the chances of life, in the dangerous vortex of this great city. His

downward course was more rapid, for it is with men as with things, that falling bodies sink with uniformly accelerated velocity. When this boy began to drink intoxicating liquors with his companions is not known. But when he became so reduced in his circumstances as to take a situation as conductor on a street-car, he had formed such bad habits that he did not hold it long. He was out of business, even as car conductor, when, riding in one of these cars and inflamed with rum, he insulted women, and murdered their innocent protector. I need not recite the facts so often repeated: how he was rebuked for his insult; how he brooded over the rebuke, muttered vengeance, selected a fitting weapon, with the use of which he was familiar, and smote his unsuspecting victim in the dark on the head and slew him. For this murder he was tried and convicted. The case was carried up through all the courts, and the just sentence maintained by the wisest and best judicial minds. The Governor of the State, in whom resides the power to pardon or commute the

sentence of death to that of imprisonment, was then appealed to, and a pressure was brought to bear upon him such as no Governor ever before experienced. Friends who had forsaken the young man when he might have been, perhaps, restrained and saved, now strove to deliver themselves from the disgrace of his shameful death, and all that eloquence, ingenuity, and money could do, was done to rescue him. Intense sympathy was excited. A whole city was moved with pity for the young man and his afflicted friends. His wife, true to him who had been so false to her and her children, was a mute appeal to the heart of the whole community. But the majesty of justice was greater than all. There was no possible ground on which to base a successful plea for the poor, wretched youth condemned to die. Of the scenes that followed when the last hope was quenched I will not write. It was cruel to delude him with the vain expectation that he might be saved through the mercy of the Governor, for it made the anguish of the last week of his life only the more bitter

when despair followed the blight of that hope.

But there are lessons for parents and children in this terrible tragedy. The ruin of this young man was due to the influence of bad company, intoxicating drink, and parental unfaithfulness. Young people are greatly exposed in city and country to the corrupting influences of evil associates, and they are to be guarded from the danger by judicious counsel, by decided authority, and by making home attractive. It is not every parent that has wisdom and tact to guide well a household. But when children show a tendency to seek associations among the wild and dissolute, parents ought to rouse themselves to make some compensation for what they have already lost by failing to entertain and instruct their children at home. The father, tired with business, comes home to rest, and thinks it enough that he has worked all day for his family. But young people will be amused. They will meet. In every city and village there are ways and means of furnishing rational and delightful

amusements to young people which they relish none the less for being taught the law of God at the fireside. To mingle wisely and well the sobriety and power of religious culture with the fun and frolic of cheerful family and social life may not be an easy art, but the failure to do it has sent many and many a boy to the bad. There is nothing in the Bible, the Creed, or the Catechism to discourage amusement in its season; and if young people cannot have it with the company or consent of their parents they will have it on the sly, and to do any thing on the sly is to be in league with the devil.

In the case of this young man who recently died for murder, the fatal mistake of the father was casting off the son: leaving him to himself; giving him up; refusing him the refuge of home and the shelter of a father's arm. Our heavenly Father never does so by us. We are wayward, wicked, ungrateful, rebellious, profligate. But while we are yet a great way off, he has compassion on us. There is no crime so great as to justify a parent in

disowning a child. The son may become a drunkard—the most hopeless of all failures to which humanity is exposed. But a drunkard is not altogether lost. And the cases are so rare as to be almost unknown where children have gone into vice and ruin unless some defect in parental culture paved the way.

Honor to parents is the virtue that has promise of long life and prosperity. And disobedience of parents, neglect of their counsels, and rebellion against their authority, make victims for the gallows.

When I was wandering in the Holy Land I noticed near the towns a valley or hole into which the carcasses of beasts were thrown, and there dogs and birds of prey devoured them. And then I knew the meaning of that prophecy: "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it." The child who begins his career by despising parental restraints will grow up a bad man, break all law, come to a sad end, and be cast out as executed crim-

inals were, into the valley of the slain, and there the birds of prey would feed on him. And so have I seen in my own country, that the food of the gallows is furnished by lawless, disobedient, profligate sons. God set the world in families, and life is blessed or cursed as the sacred relation is honored or despised.



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