

THE WEST SHORE.

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THE SHADOW OF THE GALLOWS.

BY J. A. CRUZAN.

Portland sits awe-stricken with the black shadow of the gallows resting upon her. True, the hand of the Governor has been laid upon the hand of the carpenter, and the noise of the saw and the hammer has ceased for the present. But still the black shadow rests upon us. Two young men, hardened, desperate criminals, before thirty years have passed over their heads, sit heavily ironed in their grated cells, counting the few days which are left them of time, and then Eternity!

To me, the lesson of this dark hour touches not these two men so much, as scores of others. It puts itself in the form of a question, which every man and woman in Portland should give earnest thought:

"WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR THE YOUNG MEN IN CITIES?"

Nay, what can be done for the young men of Portland? I mean, those who are not criminals now, but are in danger of becoming such.

Young men from the country are flocking into the cities. They are coming to Portland in shoals. Reader, put yourself in the place of one of these young men. He leaves his country home with a father's blessing, and his mother's kiss, and the tears of a sister upon him. This young man weeps, also, as he bows under his father's trembling hands; that mother's prayer for God's guidance and protection to be with him as he goes out among strangers to carve out his fortune, sinks deep in his memory.

The city is reached. More fortunate than nineteen out of every twenty such young men, he finds work. The days wear away in unwonted, wearying toil. Each evening he drags himself to his cheerless boarding house, or cheap hotel.

Now, tell me, can that young man be expected to be strong enough to sit through the evening in his cold, cheerless, unadorned room in that boarding house, when there is a street full of light and life surging below?

It is impossible!

He has purchased by the toil of the day the right to some recreation and society at night. Where can a pure young man find that which is suitable in Portland? Let me tell where this young man, whom we are following in imagination, does find it: He goes into the street, and looks into the sea of strange faces, and as he looks he feels ten times more alone than when shut up in his cheerless room, for this truth cuts him to the heart: "Of all these multitudes hurrying past not one, not one, cares anything for me!" And he turns away from selfish humanity and hunts up and down the shop windows hour after hour, and finds there something to interest him. This he does for a little time. But soon he has seen all the show-windows, has become familiar with many faces that haunt our streets, but has found no friend—no society. His heart burns and bleeds for that. He must find it somewhere. He looks about him.

All the homes are shut!

All the hells are open!

He has never been within one of those "dives." He stands on the threshold looking in. There are music, gayety and life. There are those who are social. The pious world has closed its doors. But here comes up something to meet the demands of his social nature. He trembles a moment on the threshold. The beam poises and balances on the pivot of his destiny. A father's counsels, a mother's prayers, a sister's tears hold him back. From the light, and the music, and the laughter within, hands beckon him to enter. The beam slowly turns. The hands of sin so near, grasping the wants of his social nature, are stronger than those loved hands far away in the country home. He goes in—he is lost!

Hell has its hand on him now!

In a few years he washes up to the surface of society a bloated wreck, or dangles a felon! Who murdered him? Where is the guilt? Not all upon his own head. Part of it upon the respectable, moral, Christian men and women of Portland! Tell me, men of homes, was he not as good as your son

or your daughter? Came he not from a father's prayers and a mother's tears? Yes. But you shut him out, and the Devil got him!

God pity us in our exclusiveness!

Two thoughts:

Part of our work should be to reach these young men and feed them socially. We have not done all our duty when we furnish a dingy Y. M. C. A. hall, and hold a prayer meeting Thursday night down under-ground in a damp basement. The Devil has his recruiting sergeants on every street-corner, watching every steamer and hotel-register, that he may enlist these young men in his service. The saloons, gambling dens, and brothels offer them on every hand, bright, cheery, well-furnished rooms, music and sociability. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." If there were more homes open for these young men; if there were more warm hands reached out to them; if there were less starch and dignity, and more of the winning approachability which Christ had, in us, there would be less work for courts and jailors; there would be fewer young men wounded and dying on our "Jericho-roads," and the "Shadow of the Gallows" would not rest so heavily upon us.

Young men in country homes, discontented, restless, yearning for the excitements of the city—for God's sake stay where you are! The city is overrun. Men willing to work, but unable to find it, have walked these streets for weeks. There are scores of such men in Portland. Men who are penniless. Men who do not get one meal a day. For every place there are scores of applicants. Let a merchant in Portland advertise in THE WEST SHORE for a clerk, and before night there would be a hundred applicants for the place. "Hunger has no law." Starvation beggary or crime stands before some young men already in the city. Don't add to the number of possible criminals, young men.

Stay where you are!

PORTLAND, OREGON, Feb. 6, 1879.