

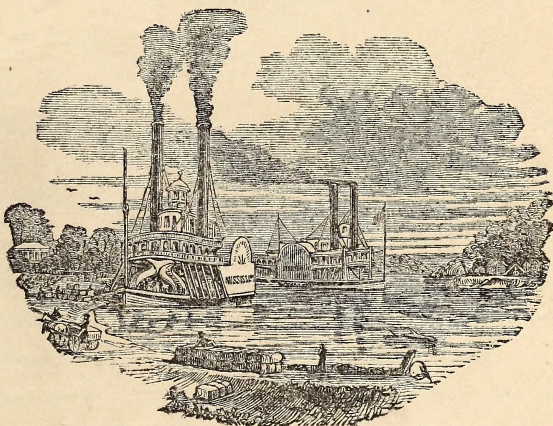
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STERLING'S SOUTHERN

FOURTH READER:

FOR THE USE OF

SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.



BY

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over the vast desert, a mark, a sign, and a wonder, for the wayfarers through this pilgrimage of life.

HON. WILLIAM GASTON.

Spell and define—

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|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Emergency. | Detection. | 4. Perpetuate. |
| Avail. | 3. Endowment. | Looming. |
| 2. Refrains. | Alliance. | Wayfarers. |

LESSON LXXXIII.

Spell and define—

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| 2. PRE-TER-NAT'U-RAL, beyond or different from what is natural. | SYM'BOL, a sign or representation of something. |
| SHRIV'ELLED, shrunk into wrinkles. | E-NUN-CIA'TION, the act of uttering. |
| 3. PROG-NOS'TIC, showing something to come. | U'NI-SON, agreement, harmony. |
| 4. MYS'TIC, sacredly obscure, involving some secret meaning. | 5. DIS-TOR'TION, a twisting out of shape. |
| | 9. POR-TENT'OUS, foretelling evil. |

THE BLIND PREACHER.

1. As I travelled through the county of Orange, my eye was caught by a cluster of horses tied near a ruinous old wooden house in the forest, not far from the roadside. Having frequently seen such objects before, in travelling through these States, I had no difficulty in understanding that this was a place of religious worship.

2. Devotion alone should have stopped me to join in the duties of the congregation; but I must confess, that curiosity to hear the preacher of such a wilderness, was not the least of my motives. On entering, I was struck with his preternatural appearance. He was a tall and very spare old man; his head, which was covered with a white linen cap, his shrivelled hands, and his voice, were all shaking under

the influence of a palsy ; and a few moments ascertained to me that he was perfectly blind.

3. The first emotions that touched my breast were those of mingled pity and veneration. But how soon were all my feelings changed ! The lips of Plato were never more worthy of a prognostic swarm of bees, than were the lips of this holy man ! It was a day of the administration of the sacrament ; and his subject was, of course, the passion of our Saviour. I had heard the subject handled a thousand times ; I had thought it exhausted long ago. Little did I suppose, that, in the wild woods of America, I was to meet with a man, whose eloquence would give to this topic a new and more sublime pathos than I had ever before witnessed.

4. As he descended from the pulpit, to distribute the mystic symbols, there was a peculiar, a more than human solemnity in his air and manners, which made my blood run cold, and my whole frame shiver. He then drew a picture of the sufferings of our Saviour ; his trial before Pilate ; his ascent up Calvary ; his crucifixion. I knew the whole history ; but never until then, had I heard the circumstances so selected, so arranged, so colored. It was all new ; and I seemed to have heard it for the first time in my life. His enunciation was so deliberate, that his voice trembled on every syllable ; and every heart in the assembly trembled in unison.

5. His peculiar phrases had that force of description, that the original scene appeared to be at that moment acting before our eyes. We saw the very faces of the Jews ; the staring, frightful distortions of malice and rage. We saw the buffet ; my soul kindled with a flame of indignation ; and my hands were involuntarily and convulsively clinched.

6. But when he came to touch on the patience, the forgiving meekness of our Saviour ; when he drew, to the life, his voice breathing to God a soft and gentle prayer of pardon on his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know

not what they do," the voice of the preacher, which had all along faltered, grew fainter, until, his utterance being entirely obstructed by the force of his feelings, he raised his handkerchief to his eyes, and burst into a loud and irrepressible flood of grief. The effect was inconceivable. The whole house resounded with the mingled groans, and sobs, and shrieks of the congregation.

7. It was some time before the tumult had subsided, so far as to permit him to proceed. Indeed, judging by the usual but fallacious standard of our own weakness, I began to be very uneasy for the situation of the preacher. For I could not conceive how he would be able to let his audience down from the height to which he had wound them, without impairing the solemnity and dignity of the subject, or perhaps shocking them by the abruptness of his fall. But, no: the descent was as beautiful and sublime, as the elevation had been rapid and enthusiastic.

8. The first sentence, with which he broke the awful silence was a quotation from Rousseau: "Socrates died like a philosopher, but Jesus Christ, like a God!" I despair of giving you any idea of the effect produced by this short sentence, unless you could perfectly conceive the whole manner of the man, as well as the peculiar crisis in the discourse. Never before did I completely understand what Demosthenes meant by laying such stress on delivery.

9. You are to bring before you the venerable figure of the preacher; his blindness, constantly recalling to your recollection old Homer, Ossian, and Milton, and associating with his performance the melancholy grandeur of their geniuses; you are to imagine that you hear his slow, solemn, well-accented enunciation, and his voice of affecting, trembling melody; you are to remember the pitch of passion and enthusiasm to which the congregation were raised; and then, the few moments of portentous, death-like silence, which reigned throughout the house; the preacher, removing his white handkerchief from his aged face, (even yet

wet from the recent torrent of his tears,) and slowly stretching forth the palsied hand which held it, begins the sentence, "Socrates died like a philosopher" — then, pausing, raising his other, pressing them both, clasped together, with warmth and energy, to his breast, lifting his "sightless balls" to heaven, and pouring his whole soul into his tremulous voice—"but Jesus Christ—like a God!"

10. This man has been before my imagination almost ever since. A thousand times, as I rode along, I dropped the reins of my bridle, stretched forth my hand, and tried to imitate his quotation from Rousseau: a thousand times I abandoned the attempt in despair, and felt persuaded that his peculiar manner and power arose from an energy of soul which nature could give, but which no human being could justly copy. As I recall, at this moment, several of his awfully striking attitudes, the chilling tide with which my blood begins to pour along my arteries, reminds me of the emotions produced by the first sight of Gray's introductory picture of his Bard.

WIRT.

Spell and define—

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| 1. Cluster. | Crucifixion. | 9. Grandeur. |
| 2. Palsy. | 5. Description. | Tremulous. |
| 3. Exhausted. | Clinched. | 10. Quotation. |
| 4. Distribute. | 6. Utterance. | Introductory. |

LESSON LXXXIV.

Spell and define—

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| 1. NOTE, notice. | 22. AB-SORPT', wasted, swallowed up. |
| 5. KNELL, the sound of the funeral bell. | 39. FAN-TAS'TIC, fanciful, existing only in imagination. |
| 9. VERGE, the brink, the edge. | 44. AN'TIC, odd, fanciful. |
| 14. AB'JECT, worthless, mean. | 46. SUB'TLER, more delicate. |
| 19. EX'QUI-SITE, nice, complete. | |