

Reading Gazette

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J. LAWRENCE GETZ, EDITOR.

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Parody.

GOOD FRIDAY.
BY PAIR BENJAMIN.

This is the Holy Day,
Upon your heads, low-bowed,
Laid penance be cast,
And let us each adore
Our souls in sorrow for His death.

He died that we might live,
And meekly yielded up His breath,
Bearing uncomplaining agony,
That sinners such as we
Might heavenly hope receive,
And with him joint heirs be
Of immortality!

Toll, toll, ye solemn bells!
Your funeral music toll!
For His departing soul!
The soul of Him, who dwells
Eternal in the Heaven—our Lord!

And unto each of us
That filled the living nations kneel to pray,
Yelling their praises to the grand,
White steeple, sadly, on the pulseless air,
The requiems resound.

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Since Christ, our brother, died,
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As frail as theirs whose falling footsteps slow
Following, their murdered Master bore,
And, in a seamless robe arrayed,
His incorruptible body hid
Within the sepulchre that he kept
For the brief hours in which the Saviour slept.

Let us lament that lamentable day
On which the Son of Man was heard to say
"Why am I thus forsaken, oh, my God?"
When He alone the bloody vine pressed
And for a ransom gave His life away;

Oh, words more mournful than were ever spoken
By any human heart with arrows broken!
"My God! my God! why am I thus forsaken?"
And "It is finished,"—as he bowed his head
In that unutterable, parting pain,
When with a mighty groan his soul was shaken,
And from his side the blood-drops fell like rain,
Till the Redeemer of the world was dead.

Also! also! let all the people say,
And this day of anguish we will never cease to pray,
And they no more should look upon the light,
But only on that sad and awful night—
Christ's crucifixion—which to us appears
Vital through all the intervening years.
Toll, toll, ye solemn bells! ye organs, peal,
Your deepest notes for us, for more than all,
Whom upon man's salvation set the seal
Of His own sinless nature on the cross.

THE FADED VIOLET.

What thought is folded in thy leaves!
What tender thought, that speechless pain!
I hold thy faded lips to mine,
Thou darling of the April rain!

I hold thy faded lips to mine,
Thou thought and art that art is dead—
O dry, mute lips! ye are the type
Of something in me cold and dead!

Of something wilted like thy leaves!
Of fragrant down, of beauty gone,
Yes, for the love of those white hands
That found thee, April's earliest-born!

That found thee when thy downy mouth
Was parted with a smile of wit—
For love of her who loved to smile,
I hold thy faded lips to mine!

That thou shouldst live when I am dead,
When thou art, for me, and I am dead,
For this, I fold thee to my song.

Gales and Sketches.

THE HEAVY CROSS.

A STORY WITH A MORAL.

Robert Hodgkins had lived in the village, next door to Samuel Hullins, at least a dozen years, and no doubt the two neighbors would have been good terms together, but unluckily for the peace of Robert Hodgkins, Samuel Hullins had a pension account of a wound which he received when fighting as a seaman under Admiral Nelson, at the battle of Trafalgar. Every week, when Hodgkins went to pay his rent, he muttered and grumbled all the way there and back, because his neighbor could afford to pay his rent so much better than himself. An envious, discontented spirit is one of the worst qualities a man can foster in his bosom; it sours his sweetest enjoyments, and plants silencing nettles in all his paths along the journey of life.

For a time, Hodgkins growled and grumbled to himself, but afterwards his discontent grew louder, till, at last, it became his favorite topic to lament his own ill luck, and to rail against those whose money came in whether they would or not, and who had nothing else to do but sit in an easy chair from morning till night, while he worked his heart out to get enough to support himself and his family.

It was on a Monday morning that Hodgkins, who was sadly behind in his rent, walked up to Mr. Starkey's to make some excuse for not paying up what was due, when he met his neighbor Hullins, who was as regular as clock work in his weekly payments. The very sight of Hullins was as bad as physic to Hodgkins, who as he nodded his head in reply to Hullins's salutation, looked as surly as a bull about to run at a pointer dog.

Hodgkins entered the house, and was soon reproved for not paying his rent by his landlord, Mr. Starkey, who told him that his next door neighbor, Samuel Hullins, regularly paid up every farthing.

"Yes, yes," replied Hodgkins, "some folks are born with silver spoons in their mouths." Hullins is a lucky fellow; no wonder that he can pay his rent with such a pension as he has got."

"Hullins has a pension, it is true," said Mr. Starkey, "but he carries a pretty heavy cross for it. If you had lost your leg, as he has done, perhaps you would fret more than he does now, notwithstanding you might in that case have a pension."

"Not I!" replied Hodgkins; "if I had been lucky enough to lose a leg twenty years ago, it would have been a good day's work for me, if I could have got as much by it as Hullins has a pension."

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Our souls in sorrow for His death.

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