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VOL. XVI. EASTON, MD. SATURDAY MORNING, JUNE 15, 1833. NO. 24.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY
SATURDAY MORNING
BY ALEXANDER GRAHAM.

TERMS

TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS
Per annum, payable half yearly in advance.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Not exceeding a square inserted three times for ONE DOLLAR; and TWENTY FIVE CENTS for every subsequent insertion.

From the North American Magazine for May.

THE SUICIDE.

A short time before my admission to practice, but long before that practice commenced, when I had much more leisure of every kind than business of any kind, I concluded to spend a few days with my relatives at Mansfield, in New Jersey. I accordingly set off upon my journey, and had proceeded a few miles below Camden, absorbed in my own meditations, with nothing to attract or interest me, when suddenly the shady, solitary and apparently deserted scenes through which I was passing, opened upon a large field, where I saw assembled from five hundred to a thousand people, who broke in upon the stillness of the rural scene, by occasional fits of loud laughter, &other boisterous demonstrations of mirth and amusement. It mattered but little to me, so that I arrived before nightfall at the place of my destination, how the intermediate time should be occupied, and, influenced by youthful curiosity, and the novelty of this circumstance, I proceeded at once towards what appeared to be the main point of attraction, where I beheld all the athletes of the country, for miles around, engaged in their various sports. It seemed that there had been a horse race in the neighborhood, which had terminated, as usual, by elating most of the winners, and depressing the losers, was succeeded by all sorts of wagers and games by which the spoils of the former might be enhanced, or the mortification of former disappointments or losses repaired or diminished. Some were wrestling—others running, and others pitching quoits. But the greater portion of the crowd were surrounding, in the most intense anxiety, about a dozen men of the largest and most muscular frame apparently Jerseymen, all of whom seemed to be engaged in what is called throwing the bar, an athletic sport too well known to require any explanation. This, upon drawing near, I perceived to be no children's play—the bar, I should suppose, weighed from twenty to thirty pounds, at least; scarcely a competitor among them was less than six feet high and most of them strongly knit, and fitted at all points for their herculean task.—There was one among them, however, "in form and bearing proudly eminent," the decided favorite of the ring, who, with but little apparent exertion, though with vast skill, easily bore off the prize, and was proclaimed victor by loud and repeated acclamations. It was readily perceived that the conquerer was a Jerseyman, from the unreserved delight expressed by all around him, and from the general huzza for New Jersey, that made the welkin ring. I confess I have always belonged to the weakest party, and though half a Jerseyman myself, I felt mortified that the victors should glory so immoderately in their success. The favorite and successful competitor was hoisted upon their shoulders, and paraded through the field, and wagers to any amount within the limited means of the bettors, were offered upon him, against any one that could be produced; but so decided had been his superiority, that no one could be, for some time, found willing or hardy enough to incur the disgrace of what was considered an assured defeat. At length, a rough greasy-looking individual, apparently a butcher, made his way in among them, actuated, probably, more by mortification than desire to gain, and inquired whether they would bet against any man on the ground? "Yes! yes!" was the unanimous answer, and every man's hand sympathetically and eagerly drew from his pocket the voucher for his sincerity. The butcher, and some few of his friends, obviously from the sister state of Pennsylvania, covered the bets, and nothing remained but to produce their champion. This was soon done, as he had no doubt been previously selected. Passing to the skirts of the crowd, while all eyes anxiously pursued them, they brought forward a young man, who appeared to have been an unconcerned spectator of the struggle, but who, nevertheless, instantly acquiesced in the proposition made to him. From his looks, he might have been about twenty years of age, tall, and magnificently proportioned, & with short, thick, black, curley hair, and features altogether Roman. He advanced with a step neither "rash nor diffident," and took his stand beside his powerful antagonist. It was so arranged that they were alternately to throw the bar thrice and it fell to the lot of the stranger to commence. As I have already said, or intimated, the general outline of his figure indicated great strength, and the fine proportions of his limbs were perceptible to the slightest glance, notwithstanding he was indifferently, if not coarsely clad. Upon rolling up his sleeve, preparatory to his effort, he displayed an arm which struck all present with mute amazement. It was a perfect model of strength and symmetry. No artist in his warmest fancy, ever chiselled or delineated such an arm as *that*. He seized the immense bar, and comparatively without effort, whirled it a single time around his head, and threw it further than most men could carry it, but still not beyond the mark which gave victory to his competitor in the previous struggle. It now became the turn of the Jerseyman to throw. He threw and far excelled himself. The air was rent with the applause of his friends. Bets were doubled and redoubled upon him, yet still the stranger smiled as though utterly indifferent to the result. Even his adherents, as though they knew their man although evidently anxious, betrayed no symptoms of dismay. They threw again and again the Jerseyman was successful. The last and decisive trial of strength and skill now arrived. The smile of the stranger gave place to an expression of the most determined resolution; the recklessness of his air was gone, and "every petty artery in his body, swelled with a giant's strength." He grasped the bar as if all past were sport, and passing it with the quickness of lightning, around his head, hurled it many, many feet beyond the furthest mark. His antagonist stood appalled; in a moment the whole aspect of things was altered. Merriment and grief changed sides. The Jerseyman, however, accustomed to triumph still made his last effort, and a prodigious effort it was; but the charm was destroyed for he was of that number with whom effort depends as much upon success, as success depends upon effort; he threw—he threw despairingly—and he lost.

Gratified, I scarcely know why, by the result, *I* resumed my journey, musing upon the past events, and comparing these village heroes, in their limited sphere of action, with those thunderbolts of war, who, not more influenced by ambition, though acting upon a wider field wield the power of mightiest monarchies and subjugate the world.

Ten years rolled on—with what various incidents and changes, it is partly the design of these hasty pages to show when, one morning in the latter part of the autumn of 182–, after I had become sufficiently known to induce some persons, at least, to suppose my professional services might be desirable—when, I say, two persons were ushered into my study and in the person of one of them I almost immediately recognised, though I had never seen him since, the victor of the bar. He was not materially altered, except that his person was somewhat fuller and broader; he had the same air of composure, and the same pleasant smile that he was wont to have; and yet the business upon which he came was dark and terrible. He revealed it all—but in a manner, as he had not the least concern in it, and without alleging his innocence, still with all the dauntlessness of virtue.—He had been charged, together with the individual who accompanied him, with passing counterfeit notes of the bank of the United States, and bail of five thousand dollars had been exacted and given for his standing his trial at the approaching term of the Circuit Court, for his heinous and hazardous offence.

The day of trial came. He was arraigned, and as he uttered the words not guilty, my eye fell upon him for a moment, and I observed the same fixed, firm, and resolved expression of countenance, that years before he had displayed when summoning, as it were, his whole body and soul for the last physical effort which I have already described. The Jury was empannelled; his trial—and it was an awful one—proceeded, and still he remained the same. Day after day, during which the protracted investigation continued, had no effect upon him—He told me it is true, he would rather they had sent a bullet through his heart, but he said this with the same placidity and in the same tone and composure that would characterize most men in expressing their preference of one dish to the exclusion of another, at a festive or social repast. To say, therefore, that I attached but little importance to his declaration, is to say what will readily be conceived.

An entire week was occupied by the evidence and the discussion of his case, during all of which he was the same wonderful and unchanged being. It avails nothing to say what labour and what exertion were bestowed on his defence; it is his history, not mine that I am writing. The current of the evidence was unquestionably against him; and even the law, that was relied upon mainly in his behalf, was considered by the distinguished Judges, before whom he was tried, as incapable of affording him any relief—in a word he was CONVICTED. Several of the Jury, in pronouncing the awful verdict of guilty, sunk into their seats, overcome by their sympathies. They were husbands and fathers; and he, as it appeared, though never breathed by himself, had a wife and five helpless children. I ventured to look at him once more, and I saw him again as I had last seen him—unmoved and immovable.—"What a piece of work is man!"

The marshal approached to take him into custody, and convey him to the prison, and I then advanced to take my leave of him, and to inquire whether there was any further service I could render him. He said he desired to see his wife. It was the first time that tender and endearing name had escaped his lips! Application was accordingly made to the marshal to grant him the indulgence, and to accompany him to his dwelling; but whether it was from fear of his escape, or to avoid the painfulness of the scene certain it is, that officer mildly but firmly refused. "Never mind," said I to his prisoner, who evinced a momentary air of peevishness upon the refusal, "never mind, it would be but a sad parting, and can answer no possible purpose, but to sharpen your mutual afflictions. We will endeavour to obtain a new trial and you can then, it is hoped, meet in more favorable circumstances." "But," says he, "if I don't see her, it will kill her." And his voice seemed a little broken as he spoke; yet his face was calm, and gave not the slightest denotement of the horrible tempest that must have been raging in his tortured and heaving breast. "Well," said he, "very well—I have no more to say—but I would rather they would put a bullet through me;" and again his sinews swelled, but the same determined smile rested upon his brow, like a sunbeam gilding a terrific and approaching storm. I left him—having passed him through all the vicissitudes of grief and calamity—I left him still the same.

On the ensuing morning—for there is something attractive in this firmness of soul—I visited him at his prison. He received me with his accustomed manner without any complaint—any murmuring He took from his pocket some papers, upon which he desired me to bring a suit and to account to his wife for the proceeds. "I hope I shall be able to account to you," I replied, actuated by a disposition to encourage and sustain him. "Very well," said he, "account to me," and handed me the documents. I begged him to be composed, and I would see him again in the course of the morning. "A'n't I composed?" he said smilingly; "do you see any want of composure in me?" I said nothing, but shook his hand and withdrew. In one hour he was a dead man!

Upon going into Court, immediately after leaving the jail, for the purpose of moving for a new trial, I met a friend of his, who had faithfully watched the course of the trial, and with horror in his face, told me that B. had, to use his language, ripped himself open with a knife directly after I had left him. Supposing that this was either an error, or that perhaps B. had inflicted some partial injury upon his person, under the idea of exciting the commiseration of the Court in his behalf, I bestowed no great attention upon it, until shortly afterwards, I heard it repeated from other quarters, accompanied by details, which rendered it a subject of much more serious consideration. Accompanied by the gentleman who assisted me in his defence, I again betook myself to the prison—inquired the fate of the prisoner from the keeper—and found he was no more!

After I had left him, as has been described, he descended into the yard which is attached to the jail, when he borrowed what is generally called a clasp-knife, from some of the many felons there confined, and instantly turning around an angle of the building to avoid observation he plunged it into his body just below the breast bone, cutting himself in the direction of two sides of a triangle, and when first discovered, he had inserted the knife handle and all into the gaping wound, exclaiming, at the same time, "I cannot reach my heart!" Before the person who saw him could give the alarm, he drew out his intestines and deliberately cut them off, then throwing them in one direction, and the bloody knife in another he walked firmly towards the steps by which he fell. He was borne to the apartment of the doctor; all assistance was in vain; he uttered not a groan to guess at, but declaring his innocence and requesting that his remains might be left to the disposition of his friends—expired.

For the last of these details I am, of course, indebted to those who were present and witnesses of this mournful scene; what is still to be told is related from my personal knowledge. Upon expressing an inclination to see the body, the keeper led the way for me and my companion to the chamber of death. Upon entering, a truly frightful spectacle was exhibited. We passed through a long range of gloomy apartments, lined on each side with felons and malefactors of every possible description, embodying the idea of hell and the fallen angels. All was silent, and black and fearful as night—not a syllable was uttered, not a smile was to be seen—every human being seemed awe-struck and confounded. Upon entering the chamber, as I have said, by the dim light which was afforded from the heavily-barred and grated windows, I saw the body stretched upon a coarse pallet or matrass in the centre of the room, nearly surrounded by a host of criminals, equipped in their prison garb. They fell back to allow us to advance; their eyes were all fixed—they stood like so many shocking statues—not a tear was shed nor breath drawn. They looked as if the sources of their grief were exhausted with those of virtue. Their eyes glared while they rested on the remains of the deceased. One of them then approached the covering of the corpse, with a motionless and solemn step, withdrew it from the body, and we saw all that remained of one of the most powerful and extraordinary men that lived in the tide of time—a man who might have stood by the side of Cæsar!

I shall never forget the effect of that moment; it was a scene that was fitted for the pencil of Angelo. The body was entirely exposed; the arms folded across the ample breast; the frame and limbs huge, but of the most exact symmetry; and the face exhibiting the same fixed smile which had been displayed in life & which particularly became the marble features of death. The partial rays of light admitted into the room, centered all upon him; and there was so much beauty—so much serenity—so great a contrast between him and all about him, that instead of inspiring horror, it overcame me with admiration. They may talk as they will of their Socrates, and their Catos who, in the decline of life, antedated their doom, in all human probability but a few months—men in whom the vital principle was nearly extinct, and whose feelings were enfeebled and obtused.—Here was a man with all the vigour and energy of youth about him; with no fame, no immortality to spur him on—who never dreamt of commemoration on the historic page—and he knew nothing of the precepts of philosophy; and yet who, nevertheless, showed that the love of glory is not a more powerful incentive to human courage, than a sense or fear of shame.

Thus ends the cause of poor B——; I omitted, however, to mention that the crime of passing counterfeit notes, with which he was charged, was alleged to have been committed at a horse race, in Delaware county, and that a portion of his defence consisted in his allegation, that the money was received by him as stakes, and put down without knowledge of its spurious character. At a horse race! It was there I first beheld this unfortunate man. It was there, in all human probability, his career of vice commenced—and it was there, alas! it terminated. Such is the frailty of mankind, that our very accomplishments are frequently our lures to destruction.—To excel in any thing becomes a subject of admiration and intoxicated with applause we pass step by step into the flowery ambush, nor dream of our danger until, like the covert serpent, it uncoils itself to sting our joys to death. B.

THE BASHFUL MAN.

For the satisfaction of those persons who may not have read the beginning of "the bashful man," in our last year's Almanac, and who may happen to lay their hands on this, it may not be amiss to observe, that the Bashful Man was the son of illiterate parents, who determined to give him a polite education; and accordingly sent him to the University—after his return from thence he was frequently ashamed at the awkwardness of his father. However, by the death of an uncle, he became suddenly possessed of a very large fortune. And now, says he behold me at the age of twenty one, master of what might render me fit for any company; but for want of an acquaintance with the ways of the polite world, I am called the wealthy learned clown. I, however, accepted of an invitation to dine with a neighbour of mine, a rich baronet, who has five daughters all grown up. At my first interview, (as ill luck would have it) in making my new learnt bow, I trod on the gouty toe of the Baronet, which occasioned such feelings in me that cannot be felt by any but one in the same situation.

The baronet's politeness by degrees dissipated my concern, and I was astonished to see how far good breeding could enable him to suppress his feelings, and to appear with perfect ease, after so painful an accident.

The cheerfulness of her ladyship, and the familiar chat of the young ladies, insensibly led me to throw off my reserve and sheepishness, till at length I ventured to join in conversation, and even to start fresh subjects. The library being richly furnished with books in elegant bindings I conceived Sir Thomas to be a man of literature, and ventured to give my opinions concerning the several editions of the Greek classicks in which the baronet's opinion exactly coincided with my own. To this subject I was led by observing an edition of Xenophon in sixteen volumes which (as I had never before heard of such a thing) greatly excited my curiosity, and I rose up to examine what it could be. Sir Thomas saw what I was at, and (as I supposed) willing to save me the trouble, rose to take down the books, a board which by leather and gilding, had been made to look like sixteen volumes, came tumbling down, and unluckily pitched upon a wedgwood inkstand on the table under it. In vain did Sir Thomas assure me there was no harm, I saw the ink streaming from an inlaid table on the turkey carpet, and scarce knowing what I did attempted to stop its progress with my cambric handkerchief. In the height of this confusion, we were informed that dinner was served up, and I with joy perceived that the bell, which at first had so alarmed my fears, was only the half hour dinner bell.

In walking through the hall, and suite of apartments to the dining room, I had time to collect my scattered senses, and was desired to take my seat betwixt Lady Friendly and her eldest daughter at the table. Since the fall of the wooden Xenophon, my face had been continually burning like a firebrand and I was just beginning to recover myself, and to feel comfortably cool, when an unlooked for accident, rekindled all my heat and blushes. Having set my plate of soup too near the edge of the table in bowing to Miss Dinah, who politely complimented the pattern of my waistcoat, I tumbled the whole scalding contents into my lap. In spite of an immediate supply of napkins to wipe the surface of my clothes my black silk breeches were not enough to save me from the painful effects of this sudden fomentation, and for some minutes my legs and thighs seemed stewing in a boiling chaldron; but recollecting how Sir Thomas had disguised his torture, when I trod upon his toe, I firmly bore my pain in silence, and sat with my lower extremities parboiled, amidst the stifled gigling of the ladies and the servants.

I will not relate the several blunders which I made during the first course, or the distress occasioned by my being desired to carve a fowl, or help to various dishes that stood near me, spilling a sauce boat and knocking down a salt-seller; rather let me hasten to the second course, "where fresh disasters overwhelmed me quite."

I had a piece of rich sweet pudding on my fork, when Miss Louisa Friendly begged to trouble me for a pigeon that stood near me, in my haste, scarce knowing what I did, I whipped the pudding into my mouth, hot as burning coal; it was impossible to conceal my agony, my eyes were starting from their sockets. At last in spite of shame and resolution, I was obliged to drop the cause of torment on my plate. Sir Thomas and the ladies all compassioned my misfortune, & each advised a different application; one recommended oil, another water, but all agreed that wine was the best for drawing out the fire which I snatched up with eagerness: but oh! how shall I tell the sequel! whether the butler by accident mistook, or purposely designed to drive me mad, he gave me the strongest Brandy, with which I filled my mouth, already stayed and blistered; totally unused to every kind of ardent spirits with my tongue, throat, and palate, as raw as beef, what could I do? I could not swallow, and clapping my hands upon my mouth, the cursed liquor squirted through my nose and fingers like a fountain, over all the dishes; and I was crushed by bursts of laughter from all quarters. In vain did Sir Thomas reprimand the servants, and Lady Friendly chide her daughters, for the measure of my shame and their diversion was not yet complete. To relieve me from the intolerable perspiration, which this accident had caused, without considering what I did, I wiped my face with the ill fated handkerchief, which was still wet from the cause of the fall of Xenophon and covered all my features with streaks of ink in every direction. The Baronet himself could not support this shock, but joined his lady in general laugh while I sprung from the table in despair, rushed out of the house and ran home in an agony of confusion and disgrace, which the most poignant sense of guilt could not have excited.

Thus without having deviated from the path of moral rectitude. I am suffering torments like a goblin damned. The lower half of me has been almost boiled, my tongue and mouth grilled, and I bear the marks of Cain upon my forehead; yet these are but trifling considerations to the everlasting shame which I feel, whenever this adventure shall be mentioned; perhaps by your assistance, when my neighbours know how much I feel on the occasion, they will spare a bashful man, and (as I am just informed my poultice is ready) I trust you will excuse the haste in which I subscribe myself.

Yours &c.
MONGRELL MORRELL.

On the 6th of April last, in the British House of Commons, the following Resolution was moved and negatived without division.

"That the Church of England, as by law established, is not recommended by practical utility; that its revenues have always been subject to legislative enactments; and that the greater part, if not the whole, of those revenues ought to be appropriated to the relief of the nation."

It was seconded by Cobbett, who, on the same evening, in a debate respecting the Criminal Law, held this language.

"Every gentleman had his project for altering the law—each one had his remedy for the evil—and he had his. One thing, however, greatly excited his displeasure; yes, he should almost say, his disgust. It was the constant reference to France—the constant reference to America—the constant reference to the opinion of foreign nations [cheers,] What to them were the opinion of people abroad? What then was England, was this boasted land—this cradle of liberty and justice—to be always looking to France and to America and he knew not what country, for wisdom and for knowledge [hear, hear!]? For his part, he knew nothing of the opinions of France on these matters, and he wanted to know nothing. The Lord deliver him from French Courts of Justice—that's all he should say. Then as to America—why it was one of the Articles in the Constitution of each State, that the laws should be the same as in England. And yet we must be ever referring to America for instruction. We shipped a cargo of law from Liverpool to America, but we should laugh at it when brought back again—aye, and be sure to reject it [hear! and laughter.] Every change which we made in the Common Law of England, we somehow or other managed to make for the worse."

From the National Gazette.

ORIGINAL LETTER.

GEORGETOWN, Dec. 2, 1811.

My dear Sir:

Your letter of the 22d has lain on my table several days, during which time I actually have not had as much leisure as would suffice to thank you for it: for to write in *the House* I now find impossible—often catching myself in the act of committing to paper the words that are floating around me, instead of those which should convey my meaning.

I perceive that Dr. Smith's "Essay on the variety of Complexion in the Human Species" has been treated in the American Review. I wish the Reviewer could have been acquainted with a circumstance which proves how much greater was the reverend author's anxiety for his Hypothesis (no uncommon case) than for his facts. My brother (Theodorick) and myself are "the two young gentlemen" referred to in page 19 of the "Strictures on Lord Kaims" in the first edition: Philad. 1787. Dr. S. there states, correctly enough, "there is *at present* in the College of New Jersey," &c.; we came to Princeton about the last of that year, entered college, after some months past in the grammar school, and finally left it in December of the same year. In the late edition (p. 332,) he says "there resided in the college of New Jersey, in the years seventeen hundred and eighty-*five*, *six* and seven," &c. Why this *variety* in the *complexion* of the *essay* I am at a loss to tell. But this is not all. He called us into his library and interrogated us about our Indian descent—we knew nothing more than that we derived it through our grand mother, whom it suited *him* to make the *daughter* of Pocahontas, in order that we might be in defiance of *time* and *fact* in the *fourth* descent from her. He gave us, about that time, a copy of his essay, which now lies before me, with my marginal notes. I cannot think of Princeton (where my ardor for learning was first damped) with any sort of patience.

Anno 1613—Pocahontas, *alias* "Matoahs, or Matoaha," baptised in the Christian faith by the name of "*Rebecca*, daughter of the mighty Prince Powha-

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