# EASTON GAZETTE.

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## THE BRIDAL CHAMBER.

September in the fall of —— was signalized by being far the pleasantest month of that name, within the recollection of the oldest chroniclers in the ancient town of ——— beautifully situated on a noble river, on whose broad expanse, there might, particularly in this month, be seen numerous sails of vessels, the sight of which always tends to enliven the monotony of a water view. It generally too, imparts to the observer, that an active commerce is carried on in the town or port of destination, of all these sail.

My residence in the town had been but a short time; I was engaged too, in my vocation pretty constantly and must confess, my acquaintances were but few. *I* would gladly inform my reader about all the pretty faces and well turned forms, but not being able to designate by name any one my mind might rest on, I fear to confuse: and when half the picture of that beautiful sylph *I* see skipping along the paved walk is finished, another might present herself to my imagination: immediately, my whole faculties would be engrossed in the contemplation of her perfections, and she would be the idol of my heart until the other should happen to cross my path; to her beguiling graces my heart would bow and own no other mistress:—confessing my weakness thus candidly, the reader will not be surprised to learn, I could do justice to no lady's portrait.

I said my acquaintances were but few—among this number I recall with pleasure, aye! with many pleasing recollections, good and faithful Jacob Tallman; poor old man, thy sorrows are hapily cut off!—peace rest with thy once afflicted soul. O! if ever a prayer was uttered from the deep and bottom recesses of the heart, where temptations cannot reach, for a fellow being, I hope & trust that good old man is at peace with his God!

I boarded with this honest old man. I must be pardoned if I omit his wife's name here. She's gone too, and God bless her! I wish I could say I boarded with *her!* I'll not however root up unpleasant recollections. There happened to board at the same house, a gentleman, whose name also, I am obliged to keep from the reader, though I am proud to add, not from the same cause, as actuated me in withholding that of the spouse of my honest friend Tallman. Names however, now-a-days, import but little, what's in a name? We'll coin one for him, and it shall be Hugo.

We roomed together for twelve months in uninterrupted harmony. *I* liked him, and I suppose he liked me. Persons, who are continually thrown in each other's company, are dependent more or less upon their resources for entertainment: a few weeks determine the opinions of each, with regard to the other; and a mortal, though secreted dislike enters the soul, or it is wholly the reverse. I here refer to characters of resolved minds; to men who have opinions of their own and have feeling as well as courage to support any they may advance. By degrees a mutual confidence was established. But it would be tedious and exceedingly irksome, to trace the gradual descent, from the most frigid coldness of manner, to the warmest friendship ever entertained in the human heart. Hugo was of that warm temperament of soul, which knew no bounds when excited; which dared every thing for nothing; which led him to acts of violence, in cooler moments he would have known nothing of: or merely passed them by, as the common place transactions of life. For his friend he would risk more, than for paltry self. He was impetuous in all his undertakings—ardent, bold & adventurous: nothing daunted him; whilst the common herd were content with the flights of the chirping sparrow, his mind towered like the Eaglet, when first he dares oppose the scorching rays of the sun; at first the glare dazzles and blinds his fierce gaze; he faulters for an instant and poises himself in the buoyant air; then his native fire rouses all his ambitious blood, he cuts the surrounding element and gambols aloft in the midst of the most aspiring of his race. His face was a type of his mind—a countenance at once, calculated to arrest the attention.

We strolled out on an afternoon, in the same delightful month, I before had occasion to notify the reader, was charming the word, and trod the banks of—— river.

After having walked up the river about two miles, we returned and seated ourselves under a weeping willow, whose bending limbs quite touched the ground. There is something very sad in the appearance of these remarkable trees. I never look upon one without immediately being visited with thoughts too pathetic to be transcribed.

"Huntingdon, said Hugo, seating himself, "I promised to tell you all about a circumstance I was engaged in, in my native town. I dont care if *I* fulfil my word this evening—you are aware I leave to-morrow."

"Most happy, my dear Hugo, I shall be to hear what you have to say, but dont say any thing more about your going away, I entreat you."

"Without further preliminary, listen—You have had a very fair opportunity, my friend, to discover the traits of character that distinguish me from other men. I speak conscientiously, when *I* aver, *I* believe you know more of me, than any man living. Convinced of this, I feel no hesitancy in letting you know more than even you, yourself do: no interruptions, Huntingdon, no interruptions. I shall speak and remember more clearly—Remember?—great God! could we pluck out the nauseous weeds that grow here; could we force from the mind the memory of scenes, wrought indelibly there, this, this would be a Paradise indeed! but it cannot, must not be, the fatal truth is here, here, here.

My mother died many years ago. I do but feintly remember her hallowed countenance as she lived, but there's a semblance of what she was once"—thrusting a miniature in my hand; a more lovely aspect *I* never beheld, 'twas sweet, serene, calm; a holy light shone from her eye.

"My father has often taken that relic and discoursed most eloquently upon those lovely features, I have hung upon his ravishing words, with ecstatic delight. I have leaned upon his shoulder and seen him point to this lineament and that; to beguile whole hours thus, every day, was my universal custom—those were delightful, happy times—farewell, innocent joys—farewell, untinged purity of thought—thou'rt gone, and when I think of ye, my soul shall rest, in idea, upon the bosom of what was once, my only ambition; and were these holy happy feelings, shared by no congenial spirit, you might inquire? O yes, they were—a fair maid, recalled my mother with peculiar pleasure—the ever gentle Mariette knew no other theme, to know of my mother was enough for her; in that was combined all the knowledge of the world.

My mother, when young, had a friend. This was Mariette's mother. She died when her daughter was very young, and near about the same time, though some days previous, her father was taken off by the same mortality, which was sweeping friends and foes. My mother attended Mariette's, in her latest moments. These were employed, partly in bestowing the care of her daughter upon her early friend. My mother was not fated to perform the duties assigned her, very long. The same fell disease carried her off. She transferred to her husband (whom else could she think of,) the important charge. One word from him was sufficient to lull her to rest, he promised every thing and ere his lips were done pronouncing the sentence, her spirit had flown to the celestial throne!

Mariette became a great favorite of my father's: teachers of all kinds were introduced into the family, and no scheme left untried to elicit all the genius she was mistress of: it is not essential to my story to fatigue you, with speaking of her earlier years, they passed, and she knew of no one particular act or scene which to lay her finger on, and distinguish from the rest, all was an uninterrupted sea of bliss, undisturbed by the howling winds which often rush more wildly after a long repose: they seem to burst from their fetters, with furious indignation, at their protracted quietude—desolation follows their track, Heaven alone, seems to stand undismayed!

We were often together and alone. Though withering blight, though torture were to agonize me, until human misery could be no greater, memory would still recur to one scene of my life, and in the midst of death, it should be my sweetest joy: it would, like the magnet, attract my soul, leaving all meaner things behind. It was when the flowers sweetly grow, when all nature is robed in her gayest attire, and the pale-faced moon shone from the vaulted roof above, upon the bosom of the earth, but on none of her daughters more beautiful, than my own dear Mariette!

Her person was delicate, but of the truest symmetry; she was neither too tall nor too low. Her hair which was a rich auburn, flowed in luxuriant curls around a brow high and well turned. She concealed its height, by wearing it very low, and though this might seem objectionable, yet it was so skillfully done, you forgot the hair in contemplation of its resting place. Her eye-brows were delicately arched and even. Her black eyes had a blandness only enriched by a mellowed lustre that lighted her whole countenance. Her nose was of the Grecian mould—her smile discovered an ivory whiteness of teeth, and her lips did look so red and sweet, one would suppose some bee had stung them and left his honied sweetness there. Her chin assisted to complete the beautiful formation of her face. Her rich cheeks, and indeed her whole face, partook of the oval order. She did not at all times wear a colour, but was greatly increased by exercise, or when agitated, which was not unfrequently the case; when she smiled, it looked so benignant, so richly soft, cast so lovely, an expression over her face, your attention to its sweetness was only attracted away, by a dimple in her left cheek, where were concentrated all that is bland and eloquent. At the first glance you could not help discovering a something in her countenance, which seemed to speak entire confidence in mankind, that is, she did not appear to know what treachery and dissimulation were, they were entire strangers to her, both on her own heart, and in the hearts of all around her; she judged every one by the purity of her own bosom: innocence and an angelic helplessness, shone conspicuously forth, they formed an impenetrable barrier to the wiles and stratagems of the wicked. Have you never observed this adamantine shield daunt the bold seducer? he cowers when he approaches, faulters when he addresses, is relieved when he retires from her presence. Pardon this digression. I will lead you back to the evening of our meeting. You may have judged by this time, that I was deeply in love with Mariette; my affections were placed upon her indeed, but to this moment *I* had never mentioned or even hinted the subject to her: now was come the time for which my heart had panted now had arrived the hour, in which I was to know my fate, my vanity whispered, all is well.

We were sitting in the drawing room after tea, upon the sofa: the moon shone so brightly through the curtained windows into the room, that a light was rendered unnecessary. Our conversation was of a general nature, confining ourselves to no particular theme.

The coming week *I* was to return to college and leave my beautiful Mariette

"Ah! Hugo," pronounced her sweet lips, "do not think of departing so soon, just as you are becoming so agreeable you should not leave us."

"Four days hence Mariette I must go."

"Must go?" responded Mariette in a tone of deep felt inquiry. "You will not stay long Hugo, will you?"—as she said this, she turned her face towards me, a mellowed light shone from her dark eyes and a refulgent glow o'er cast her countenance. I thought *I* saw slight traces of unmingled sorrow; if 'twas there, her heart felt it I know—moving myself closer to her side, *I* said with a deep sad tone—"If Mariette says so—I will not stay away from her, even so long as I purposed."

A smile sat upon her lips and unconsciously she said, prompted alone by that purity and innocence of thought so peculiarly her own. "Then Mariette says, you must not"—scarcely had the words melodiously flown from her lips, ere a blush dyed in crimson, mantled her cheeks and her pure eloquent blood mounted to her forehead.

My pulse beat quicker and more intensely than I had ever felt it before—my heart throbbed violently. I made an effort to speak, in vain, in vain I tried: in this extremity scarcely conscious of any thing I was to do, *I* caught her soft gentle hand eagerly in mine; the touch was sufficient to restore my speech.—"Dear, dear, Mariette, this moment either perfects my happiness, or proves destructible to every fond wish. I love you Mariette: and oh! how truely and immeasurably deep, let this agitation impress you."

She uttered not a word; her lips appeared to move at intervals as if laboring to say something which stuck in her throat. I took advantage of her confusion, I pressed still more warmly her hand; I folded my arm around her waist and as I held her firmly to my bosom, she turned her face to me; she gave me a look of such sweet ineffable delight, I felt a thrill of new pleasure creep through every vein—my blood rose higher and coursed with a warmth unknown before.

Oh! God! shall memory look back to this painfully happy period of my existence and not yield one joy? yes—yes—it were worth ages of racking torture to have the full belief here, (smiting his heart fervently) to feel satisfied, you once possessed the love of an angel. Mariette met my full gaze, but for a moment. She seemed endeavoring to read my heart in my countenance: intense agony was legibly written there. She gently withdrew those precious eyes; a slight pressure, a very slight pressure, *I* thought my hand received from hers, and in another moment she was leaning her head on my shoulder! rapturous thought—O! who can know the joys of a pure unadulterated passion? Who can thus behold a being in every way superior to himself, relying with perfect confidence upon his honor, justice and integrity and not feel the weight of the awful responsibility he assumes? he must be a beast indeed whose heart is not touched with a holy delight, to witness and have the full consciousness within, that he is beloved.

I leaned my burning cheek upon hers: wrapt in the enjoyment of such perfect bliss, my heart forgot the world and all that in there was, but my lovely Mariette.

A sweet, an unusually sweet smile played upon her coral lips, I could not resist though her favour were the forfeit. I involuntarily pressed them with a kiss for the first time in my life—Oh! Heaven if there is a sweeter joy to be found on earth, than the ecstatic thrill, which shot through my bosom and almost whirled my brain, keep it—keep it! I had now attained a dizzy height but my bliss was not confirmed, not completed. Mariette's lips had not pronounced the words—she had not said she loved me "Dear, beautiful Mariette confirm my happiness—do you love me?" "Love you?" she cried in a wild terrific tone—"Oh! God have I been dreaming? Hugo! Hugo! what have you been doing? merciful powers protect me!" and a wild imploring glare shot from those lovely eyes, as she knelt before Omnipotence. My glance had not been so quick. But as she fell down I heard a noise in the direction of the door and there just entered stood my father! he fixed his steady unflinching eye firmly on her. Mariette was pale as ashes; her lips forgot their office, they fell apart and an excrutiating terror paralyzed those lovely features; her eyes refused to meet the light. My father after protracting our unpleasant situation longer than necessary, left the room by requesting my presence in his study, "when I was at leisure"—the latter spoken emphatically. And as he generally spoke slow and very deliberative it was the more remarkable: finding ourselves once more alone, my attention was turned to the fair suppliant before me.

"Mariette?"—I had no sooner uttered her name, than she started up wildly and without stopping a moment, glided swiftly out of the room by another door. "Mariette," I still iterated but she was gone. "What would you with Mariette Sir"—Sternly demanded my father, reentering by the same door he had retreated through. He was become more grave and reserved of late, than formerly—he now never adverted to my sainted mother. I attributed his taciturnity upon this subject, however to the fact of my having arrived at an age, when reflection will at least sometimes visit the heart, even those of the most trivially disposed. But I had noticed an unusual gravity of demeanor, not at all natural—whenever he spoke to me, he measured his words—said sir—and bowed. *I* fancied too I saw no little of that hauteur, some men can assume so happily, and some so apishly. My conduct however was unchanged, *I* did not resent his indifference, I strove to be more humble, more conciliating. I yielded to him in every thing—and to his question "what would you with Mariette," *I* replied, "My dear Father, I fear she is suddenly taken ill."—"Sick Hugo? say you—ho! there Arthur! dispatch him for the physician, *Hugo*, and immediately."

I was glad of any alternative to rid myself of him at this moment.

That evening found me in his study, and he was there also. After having passed an eulogy upon my talents, as displayed at college, he condescended somewhat from his habitual reserve and told me his anxiety for my future welfare & happiness concerned him most—that he had been occupied in reflecting upon the expediency of giving his sanction to a proposal of the dearest friend he had on earth—that though he knew the exceeding integrity of his friend & the uprightness of all his actions, yet there was the consent of one to be obtained, which might or might not ensure to carry it into effect. "That prerogative rests with you good Hugo," said my father. "With me dear sir?—my approbation to any measure you may propose, will be sure to follow" with this he handed me a letter which he took from his table.

I read it—it was a proposal from a father of a rich heiress, for her immediate marriage with me. I read it twice over. "You see my dear sir, I have given it an attentive perusal. I did not apprehend my assent was wanting to so personally important a subject. I know the lady well, I must beg leave to decline the honor intended for me in this document." His lips became compressed and a settled frown cast a gloomy shade over his countenance, notwithstanding he mastered the tempest that was raging within—assuming his most pleasant smile—"Hugo my dear son, reflect more at leisure upon this subject—think of the splendour that will surround you. She is rich, beautiful (at least the world says so) and accomplished—what more can the most avaricious heart desire?"

"I purpose not to suffer myself to enter into a debate, upon this subject. I have made up my mind and have so expressed it."

"Perverse and wilful boy! how dare you —— but Hugo, you are not resolved to this?"

"Else *I* had never told you so—"

A man of stern deportment of demeanor is apt to be governed by the same unflinching severity within. His manners and feelings are not unfrequently synonymous, and when resolved to a purpose all the powers on earth cannot bend his course, although to a rational mind the absurdity of the attempt is exposed—and if the feasibility is tested, so deeply conscious, so wholly persuaded was he of the success of it, a sudden failure produces no kindly feelings towards the person who causes the interruption to the complete frustration of every hope. Just so was it with my father. I had ever been so tractable, ever so complaisant that he never dreamt of my refusal to comply with, and complete his designs. Once his dark formidable features relaxed into a smile, instantly it was succeeded by an iron resolved look, he bit his lips, compressed his eye brow, from underneath of whose gathering frowns, shone forth a small twinkling eye, expressive of the furious passions which were then rooting every fond and tender hope, every kind and benevolent wish for my future prosperity, from their long abode: his chest heaved with a deep drawn sigh or perhaps respiration was difficult in his present state of excitement, he stept forward one step nearer to me; our eyes during the short interval that occurred, were unremittingly fixed on each other, as he advanced he said, "Leave me sir, and when you strip yourself of this unbecoming obstinacy, return to me —— not until then."

"Not until then?" I involuntarily ejaculated! the separation of Father and son, prompted by uncongenial desires, is not to be thought of without a pang.

A fiendish smile curled his lip, and he stood exulting in my agonized feelings. I saw it—Oh! God forgive my thoughts at *that* moment. All delicacy vanished, all rising commotions and unsettled resolutions, now became perfected and to the top of my desires poured in their incensed wrath. I felt devilish—*I* endeavoured to follow the advice of the Ghost—only transposing the terms.—*I* tried to *look* daggers, but *speak* of mine, hurriedly & hastily *I* thundered in his eager ear—"Be it so," and left him. *I* rushed through the long entry that led to the drawing room, passed the door—and in a few minutes found myself in my own room.

"Leave my home!—sad thought—part from my dear Mariette? that carries with it a pang of deep remorse; Mariette, *I* must see thee ere I go,"—I mentally cried. I left my room—reckless of every thing, I made for her's—standing at the door, I beheld my father in mute silence. Our eyes met—I halted—The maid opened the door and not noticing me said, "her mistress was much better." I immediately returned to my room, without changing a word with him. That night I bade an eternal adieu to my father's roof! I took up my abode at a distant town, unknown by any body, and knowing no body.

I was one day seated in the drawing room of the Hotel I boarded at, and there came a man habited like a minister; it was a cold, raw, rainy day; he drew a chair close to the fire and warmed himself well; our merry host soon entered and having a particular acquaintance with him in black—he inquired the news—he told him a great deal that was about to be done throughout the country, and actually suggested what should be done; & likewise added, I have this day married a couple in "——" I listened with breathless attention, till the speaker should finish, and was on the point of inquiring the names of the fortunate pair, when the Host anticipated me—My father had that day married Mariette!—amazement shot its wild bolt through my heart. I had never once thought of this—Mariette married! gone—and to my father? Heaven! what a tumult of passion took possession of my soul. Mariette's image rose before my imagination and invested it with those indescribable charms, those we ardently love are always found to be clothed. Did she ever love me? *I* began to inquire—"Oh yes I shall never think otherwise, six months—and forgotten? I have been neglectful—my coldness has destroyed confidence, but Mariette's look—that soft languishing look, as she gazed on these features! My father! perhaps he has, forced her to marry him—if he has, by holy Paul I'll be avenged; by all the sins registered on my head in high Heaven I'll shed my blood, drop by drop, to serve Mariette—and if he has cruelly subdued her to his will, who more fit to wreak vengeance than *I* his son disgraced—his rival defeated—Heart divest thyself of all human tie—come sweet revenge, pluck from this bosom, all qualms of concience; true *I* know him to be my father, yet is he equally my destroyer, my curse! 'tis a long journey hence to ——, but it must be compassed, and *I* resolved to reach my native town that night, and when the midnight revel ceased to know all; *I* mounted a strong noble animal, he was a true beast indeed, he bore me safe and sound to the place of my destination. As *I* entered the town, slowly walking my horse, for he was weary and fatigued, I recalled the time when I left here, with far different feelings than now reigned in my bosom. I would have looked with pleasure upon the scenes that every moment were gathering thicker around me as *I* approached the heart of the town, all was dark and dreary; "not a mouse was stirring." I had nourished so closely one unchanged feeling in my bosom with so much warmth, I heedlessly rode on and hardly thought of the driving rain, which by this time had wetted me to the skin. I entered the Hotel after many fruitless attempts to awaken its inmates, the drowsy porter, would have scaned my countenance, but *I* wore my cloak so close about my face all detection was entirely out of the question, my portmanteau afforded me a change of habit and when *I* found all was quiet below I descended warily; my flushed and burning cheek once more felt the damp air, it was refreshing as the early dawn to my fevered brow, my steps were directed to the dwelling of my father; as I advanced the carriages were drawn up at the door and soon had taken away the partakers of the gay festivity.

My heart beat high as the door closed upon the last visitor, *I* crouched under a wide spread oak, and watched with eager intensity the flitting lights as they were carried from one room to another; I observed a more brilliant light in one that was called my mothers, than the rest seemed to show. The curtain was but carelessly drawn across the window and happily it was for me—Mariette's form my quick eye soon discerned, ha! that chamber is easily gained, but will you believe me Huntingdon, she drew her kerchief across her eyes and seemed wiping a tear away, Gracious God! that nerved me to a greater determination that ever; might she not be thinking of me? reproaching me too? I watched with Lynx ey'd gaze the disappearance of every labouring light but the one that shone in the chamber where Mariette lay, was suddenly brightened.—A form—a masculine form now passed the space before alluded to. O! what a biting pang rung my heart at that sight.—Jealousy? with its thousand stings, corroded my very existence, I could hardly breathe; it poisoned every thought, it rendered me callous and impervious, where before I was vulnerable. Nature did at times assert her rights; but now, the monster took instant possession of my soul, I thought of nothing but—that figure—and its—probable—victim—for she was innocent and perhaps too easily pursuaded.

A raging fire burned within my bosom; the light was extinguished and with it my senses had liked to have fled. The time had not yet arrived—*I* waited through the long dull passage of one tedious hour; existence to me then was torture indeed. At length I passed over the street and entered the gate: the small door at the western side of the house, was fastened by a dead-latch, I had a key to unlock it always in my possession, and having luckily retained it till this time, I feared not a successful and secret entrance.

Gently and quickly, *I* trod my way to it. I listened with deep attention, if any body was stirring within, all was quiet. I applied the key and the door opened, I stepped in and softly fastened it again. The cat intent upon her prey could not have proceeded along, from door to door, through long entries and up a flight of steps, more cautiously and secretly, than *I* did—to tell you the state of my feelings at this time, were impossible—I felt guided by one irresistible impulse, and my heart beat high, at the thought of perfecting and consummating it, at last. I was before the door of my mother's chamber. *I* placed my ear to the pannel, all was silent as the grave—not even a fly was buzzing—I turned the latch—'twas, as I feared, fastened, he had prudently locked it on the inside; but there is another door, *I* remembered, yet that leads into a room, and probably it may be occupied—this was the only alternative left me now, and I was compelled to attempt it, I passed through the room, placed my hand on the lock, and to my inexpressible joy, found the key in it; I remained silent a few moments; although I had proceeded with the utmost caution, yet a turning in the bed of some person, lying in the room I was then in, made me watchful and fearful of discovery; soon however, the drowsy head was again fast asleep. I unlocked the door, slowly and easily pulled it open, a creak, a very slight creak—a cricket might have made such an one, caused my father to inquire "Who's there?"—I had almost gained the object of my heart's best wish; and no personal sacrifice could have made me loose it, I barely breathed; my anxiety now was very great, indeed intense!—a considerable time passed thus without moving a finger, without once changing my position. I heard his well known and familiar snore, I took courage, and softly pulling the door open wide enough to admit my body, stepped in. What a multitude of thoughts rushed violently upon my brain. I stood in the Bridal Chamber of my own Mariette! but how differently from what my ardent hopes had pictured—*I* stood here as her avenger. I felt a moral conviction she loved me; *I* remembered her startling look, when my father entered the room where we were. I recalled to mind her abstracted sentences; above all I could not forget that memorable look, which told me more than the most silvered tongue that ever warbled, could utter! If she was an unwilling bride the Bridal Chamber would expose and betray it; and how much soever you may be inclined to think it a rash exposure of my person, without any sure grounds to found my claims upon, for interference, I can only answer by telling you, I felt a something within me here, that prompted me to this. An hour, I judge, passed, and not a breath or sign of life, did either give——he awoke however, and muttered, "that wine has made me thirsty; I sipped too much, entirely—but ho! I lay beside an angel—Mariette, dear, dear Mariette," and I fancied he caught her in his arms. A burning hell raged in my bosom—"Hugo! Hugo!" uttered divine Mariette slumbering in that fitful state, most productive of dreams, "Ah! Hugo do not leave me; once more, I tell thee

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