

**THE AMERICAN
GENTLEMAN;
PP. 1-285**

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The American Gentleman; pp. 1-285 by Charles Butler

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CHARLES BUTLER

**THE AMERICAN
GENTLEMAN;
PP. 1-285**



THE SCENE IN THE PLAY 'THE SCOTTISH BROTHERS' AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, EDINBURGH, ON THE 10TH OF APRIL 1850.



THE
AMERICAN GENTLEMAN.

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THE

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BY CHARLES BUTLER, ESQ.

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HOGAN & THOMPSON.

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PREFACE.

PERHAPS there is no word in our language to which so many different meanings are attached as the word GENTLEMAN. Some persons limit its application to that class of men whose pecuniary circumstances raise them above the necessity of attending to any business in order to procure the means of subsistence. Others restrict the term to the members of certain particular families, whose fathers or grandfathers were, or were supposed to be, gentlemen—how these last mentioned persons became gentlemen, being, meanwhile, a matter of uncertainty. Others call those, and those only, gentlemen, who are profuse in the expenditure of money, and practise all manner of gentlemanly vices. Others, again—but there would be no end to the task of enumerating the different meanings of this every-day word. They are as various as the caprices of fashion, and as changeable as the politics of a modern patriot.

Still, amidst all this variety and uncertainty,

there is an idea which the common sense of the people of this nation has attached to the word—an assemblage of traits which all will unite in ascribing to the genuine character—so that there is something distinctive and definite in the term which we have adopted for the title of this volume—**THE AMERICAN GENTLEMAN.**

The term cannot be defined in a few words, or the characters described in a few sentences. It comprises many and various merits; much that is noble after the fashion of nature's nobility; much that is manly, in the masculine sense of the word; much that is worthy, even according to the highest standard of worth. To develop fully the beau ideal of an American gentleman, one should write whole volumes of sound morality, and whole treatises of that genuine politeness which has its foundation in kindness of heart and purpose. To present a model for our countrymen, we have only to refer to our own Washington, who united the dignity and the polish with the genuine excellence and elevation of soul which mark the true gentleman. He needed no patent from the hand of royalty. He was knighted by a nobler hand than Bayard's. He was stamped by the touch