

**THE GIFT OF AN UNCLE; OR, A SHORT
DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE
PECULIARITIES OF THE
ANIMAL & VEGETABLE WORLD; WITH
AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR FIRST
INTRODUCTION INTO THIS COUNTRY**

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The Gift of an Uncle; Or, a Short Description of Some of the Peculiarities of the Animal & Vegetable World; With an Account of Their First Introduction into This Country by Anonymous

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THE GIFT OF AN UNCLE,

&c. &c.

HENRY ACTON was one of a large family, whose parents were very respectable, but of a moderate fortune; and who gave him an education much more suitable to their partiality and wishes for his advancement, than to any well-grounded hopes in his success from their interest or connexions.

Mr. Acton, senior, was a most amiable man, whose knowledge of the world was comprised in a firm conviction, that all his neighbours were at the least as good as they pretended to be; and early associations at a public school and university, had fostered his son's sanguine and independent temper into ridiculous notions of the importance of being descended from a long line of gentry; which vanity could never be entirely eradicated by maturer years and intercourse with the world, notwithstanding the many mortifications attending it.

Placed in a situation of some eclat, young Acton

soon found his straitened means force him either to play a second part in the train of the wealthy, and gain the reputation of a good fellow whom every body knew; or else, by withdrawing from a participation in expenses he could not afford, subject himself to the epithet of a stiff, unsociable individual. Here his pride of gentle blood and ideas of honour stood his friend; and he continued firm in his principles of independence, though the repeated success of the sycophant and unworthy which he witnessed, gave his naturally open disposition a shade of discontent, and even moroseness.

For many years he had struggled through life; sometimes experiencing slights and injuries where he had a right to expect friendship and kindness; and at others, meeting with the most affectionate solicitude from those whom he scarcely knew but as casual acquaintances: till at last, completely disgusted with the "ways of the world," which he could not alter, and disdained to follow, he retired with a very limited income, and the woman to whom he had long been ardently attached, to a picturesque part of the west of England.

In this seclusion, Henry Acton felt himself happier than at any former period of his existence; He knew himself poor, but his poverty was not insulted by a daily display of superior wealth among those with whom he was obliged to associate. And the fondness of his wife, joined to the affection of