



QUEEN MARY'S BOWER, CHATSWORTH, DERBYSHIRE.

Original Tale.

CLARENCE NUGENT.

CHAPTER I.

A young, handsome and rich stranger appearing in any quiet country village, is the talk of gossips, the admiration of young ladies, the wonder of stiff-backed chaperones, and a lion amongst the gouty grand-fathers, who by chance may have on hand two or three grand-daughters to dispose of on reasonable terms with immediate possession.

The hero of our tale was sufficiently good-looking, and well to do in purse, to excite the curiosity of most persons residing within an easy distance of the pretty little village of Baslow. His manners and appearance were those of a gentleman, and he was instantaneously dubbed a lord by all eager gossipmongers. His father, a Mr. Nugent, was a wealthy tobacco merchant, whose house of business was in the vicinity of London Bridge, in the City of London. Our hero was his only son, and indulged in every caprice that his father could afford to meet with his well filled purse, and not unfrequent were the occasions upon which it was called to empty itself into the pockets of Mr. Clarence Nugent.

It was after one of those satisfactory encroachments on the father's generosity, that Clarence found himself on his way to spend some weeks in Baslow. Having travelled the same road myself, I can well imagine the train of thoughts that passed through our hero's mind. Arrived at Chesterfield,

and having overcome the bustle and annoyance of collecting one's baggage at the Railway Station, a tolerably comfortable seat is found outside an old stage coach, upon which conveyance we will fancy our hero to be seated, backed by a carpet bag, valise and sporting dog. All right! shouts a voice in the rear; all right! responds the coachman; crack! crack! goes the whip, the reins are tightened, the horses start and plunge, and with a swerve and a jolt, the cumbrous old coach leaves Chesterfield for Baslow.

"What a curious trap!" scoffquized Clarence, "very like a bumble bee without wings, drawn by main force by two almost exhausted skeletons in the shape of horses. I should fancy the coachman had to feel them out of his wages, and support a family of six or seven children. The poor animals seem to get more thrashing than corn."

"This is a very murky, unwholesome kind of atmosphere!"

"Yes, sir, half smoke, half dirt, and tother aint to be got at without vings." And with a fresh crack of the whip he revived the drooping spirits of his horses.

"How many miles have we run?"

"Habout six, sir, and four left; I 'spose you're on a visit, sir, to some o' the grand folk?"

"No, pleasure; London becomes dull after a certain season, and I then kill time in the country."

"Vell, sir, I can't help a thinking that hevery man should have a summut to do; anything's better than being a drone in the hive of the world's hindustry."

"But some men are born with sufficient means to enable them to live without labour, what then?"

"Then I'd have 'em travel about the hearth, hobserve heverything from a gnat hupwards to a helephant, and purdoose a book as would henlighten them as can't travel. Make use of their money, sir, for their hown enjoyment, and the pleasure and profit of hothers. Hall men is brothers, let 'em hact as such, and go and in and. Them's my principles sir, and I tries to hact up to 'em."

"But suppose a man born to inherit wealth has no taste beyond gratifying himself."

"I'd have sich a feller—for he could'nt be no gentleman—I'd have such a feller, as I said afore, deprived of his money, and put on the road to break stones."

"You are severe upon that class of persons."

"Not at all, sir, a man hon the roads, or like me, perched on this hero box from sunrise to sundown, has little time for hob-serving the vorks of nature, and other like things, therefore he ought to get hinstruction from them as can give time, without much trouble, to all as is going hon, he ought to try and convince the lower horders, (and between me and you, it would'nt hurt some above 'em,) that heverythink is at work for some great hend. No, sir, let no man sleep on his gold. Wo, wo, Betsy, wo, lass." And the stage pulled up at a wayside inn. "Hero you are, sir."

"Thank you, my friend, for the information; I am here, and what then?"

"Vy, this hero is the village of Baslow, and this hero's the Peacock Inn."