

# THE VALET'S STORY

By J. HAMILTON GRAHAM

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I had been in hard lines when Mr. Wellington took me into his service. The failure of my employers, a large woolen firm, had thrown me out of employment, and, go where I would, there were no clerical openings. It seemed as if London fairly swarmed with clerks looking for positions. I was rapidly becoming desperate.

Our meeting was peculiar. A loafer in a small park where I was lounging kicked a fine looking dog that came bounding and barking joyously to the bench we occupied together. The dog howled with pain. I gave the loafer a sounding cuff for his brutality, and the next moment Arthur Wellington stood before me, thanking me for avenging the injury to his pet.

We chatted for a minute or two after the loafer slunk off, and the first thing I knew Mr. Wellington was drawing



HE HAD BEEN DEAD FOR THREE-QUARTERS OF AN HOUR.

out my hard luck story. Next he sat down on the bench with me, and ten minutes later I was engaged as his valet, a position I had never held in my life and with whose duties I was utterly unfamiliar. But I was wide awake and smart, as young Englishmen go, about twenty-two, fairly well educated and of good face and figure. I think he was actuated by more than a desire to do me a good turn. In personal appearance I would do him credit. He had the written testimony of business men that I was faithful and honest, and I think he sized me up as one whose prudence and discretion could be relied on. The pay was better than a head clerk's and the duties neither humiliating nor onerous. My gentleman had fine apartments in a fashionable street. Once a week a charwoman came in to wash windows and wax floors, but at all other times I had the care of the rooms. He had the value of £5,000 in his apartments, and everything was in my keeping. Money was placed in my hands to pay many of the bills, and I was not treated with a tenth part of the degradation that falls to the lot of the average clerk or salesman.

Arthur Moreton Wellington was a man of thirty-five when I took service with him. He had liberal means, and his only thought was of society and pleasure, but he was neither dissipated nor did he have an unsavory reputation. So far as I could judge he was not a marrying man, but at the same time he was a man who fell head over heels in love with every new and pretty face. There would be flowers and presents, billets doux and suppers, the opera and grand dinners, and then the affair would be off. Now and then one of the women who had been dropped when the glamour was gone would call at the rooms and either weep or threaten, but nothing ever came of it. He had to trust me with these little affairs, but he never did me the wrong to hint that I must keep a close mouth.

I had been with him three years when he fell in love with an American actress who was filling an engagement in London. She had a hundred admirers, a thousand perhaps, but inside of a month my gentleman had the field to himself. It was amazing the amount of money he squandered on that woman. It was flowers three times a day, expensive dinners every evening and presents of diamonds, pearls and rubies. I heard some of his friends argue with him, but it did no good. He was in love, as he had been twenty times before, but with no thought of marriage. Had not other gentlemen of means and leisure entered the lists against him he would not have been driven so far, but he was bent on out-doing them all. On three different occasions the lady came to the rooms with other guests. She seemed to me only fair looking and to be an adventuress, at least in spirit; but, of course, I was rather prejudiced.

At the end of about a month, true to his capricious nature, my gentleman wanted to have done with the affair. In that time he had squandered about £5,000 for her benefit. I don't think she cared a rap for him, but as there had been a great deal of public gossip she naturally felt plucked and indignant at his cooling down. I knew

when the break came. I was told that she might call and was ordered not to admit her. Had my gentleman taken a run over to Paris for a few weeks all might have been well, but he refused to stir out of London. The actress called, as expected, and was told that he was out. Her words were fair and her smiles pleasant, but I caught a flash of her eyes and a tightening of her lips to prove that her visit was not a friendly one.

A week after that, when the actress had consoled herself by elevating an M. P. over the heads of her still numerous train of admirers, my gentleman had a headache and remained at home for the evening. It had come to 10 o'clock when a young man called. I had never seen him before, but there were many callers who were strangers to me.

"No cards, my man. If Arthur is home, I'll just walk right in on him and give him a surprise. Been in China and Japan for three years, you know, but used to be his best chum. Egad, but I'll have him out of this in ten minutes."

Frequently callers entered thus without formality. It was not until days later that I remembered that his figure didn't look manlike, his voice was too light and his mustache didn't look the real thing. He was inside a full hour. When he came out, I was cleaning a pair of shoes and gave him no attention, and he went off whistling. It was still another hour before I entered my gentleman's rooms for his breakfast order. He was sitting in his favorite chair, but he had been dead for three-quarters of an hour. I examined him carefully before giving the alarm, but found no wound.

There was great excitement when the police took hold of the case. The doctors decided that he had been poisoned by the prick of a pin. For a week or so the detectives searched high and low for the "old chum" who had just returned from the east, but then they came to the conclusion that he was a myth. None of my gentleman's friends had ever heard of such a man. I could describe him to a dot, but the detectives insisted that it was some one in disguise. I readily agreed with them in the new theory. I even suggested to them that it was a woman and whispered the name of the American actress.

Then all of a sudden the men on the case began to grow lukewarm, but not before they had made many discoveries. The woman was off the stage that night. She had bought a suit of men's clothing two or three days before. She had made her boasts of getting even, and the news of the tragedy caused her to betray puffy signs of guilt. No case was worked up against her because she had among her admirers half a dozen of the most influential men in England and one bearing almost the highest title in the empire. Had she been arrested they must have used every exertion to defeat justice and save themselves. Then came a time when I acted under direct orders. The poisoned pin had been left behind. Under instructions I swore that it was one sent to my gentleman from India and that he must have accidentally inflicted the wound with his own hand. And so my gentleman sleeps his last sleep unavenged, and a fair woman still dances and slings and smiles, while half a dozen great men carry her secret.

**Man Should Live a Century.**  
There is no reason why, with proper food taken according to season, at proper intervals and in proper quantity, men should not live invariably, accidents excepted, to a hundred years. In fact, taking the length of life of animals as a criterion, this should be the length of life in men. The length of life of an animal should be four times the years it takes for it to arrive at maturity, and, as a man may be said to arrive at perfect maturity at the age of twenty-five years, so he should on this hypothesis live to a hundred.—Gentleman's Magazine.

**A Picturesque Mountain.**  
In Surrey county, N. C., there is a mountain whose outline displays a striking likeness to the sphinx of Egypt. It is in the northwestern part of the state, just east of the Blue Ridge range, and lies prone upon the Piedmont plains. At a distance of ten miles the figure is the exact counterpart of that of a gigantic lion, its body at right angles to the precipitous ridge and with head reared aloft as if in the act of rising.

**Hedgehogs and Eggs.**  
Some years ago, not being able to account for the disappearance of eggs, a wire cage trap was set in a fowl run. After a little time this was occupied—not by a rat, but a fine hedgehog filled to its utmost capacity the trap. It was reset, to be filled in a few days by Mrs. Hedgehog! No more eggs were missed.—London Times.

**Rebuked.**  
Higgins—How is it you are always idling about? I never see you when you have anything to do.

Wiggins—The fact is, it takes so much of my time looking after other folks' business I have none left for looking after my own. Don't you find something like the same trouble yourself?—Boston Transcript.

**Poor Closets.**  
"And, you see, there are plenty of closets," said the flat owner, showing a lady through the apartments.  
"Do you call those closets?" replied the lady. "Why, gracious me, they're not big enough to even keep our family skeleton in!"—Yonkers Statesman.

**Remembers the Kindnesses.**  
"He says his proudest boast is that he never forgets a kindness."  
"That's right. He never does forget one that he does you, and he won't let you forget it either."—Philadelphia Press.

## IMPROVING SCHOOLYARDS.

Women Beautifying Unpleasant Places in Many Towns.

Many branches of the women's auxiliary of the American Park and Outdoor Art association are giving primary attention to school surroundings. The yards, front and rear, where opportunity for improvement is open are no longer left in their grassless and unadorned condition, says the New York Tribune. Trees are set along the curb strips, climbing shrubs planted along the walls, and flower beds laid out in artistic arrangement are scattered in the open spaces. The result is that many of the most unsightly schoolyards in various towns have become blooming and attractive areas, contributing alike to the comfort of the pupils and their artistic culture.

The programme of the auxiliary branches is to take the worst school areas first, and a most gratifying fact is the interest which the children have in the most squalid home conditions have developed in promoting the improvement of their schoolyards. The juvenile tendency to destroy things of beauty has been easily checked, so that no efforts of the branches relative to schools have been wasted.

In some instances prizes for the best looking yards have introduced a profitable rivalry on the part of the schools. Among the various experiments tried is the successful one of encouraging the pupils to secure shrubs and plants and flowers for themselves and setting them out under older guidance. This plan has fostered a sense of ownership which inspires boys and girls to more attention and care of the improved yards.

One instance was cited in which the boys, with small carts and wheelbarrows, cleared a rough space of debris and with hoes and rakes leveled the area, while the girls lent their aid in setting the vegetation for growth and adornment. This case was read as a text for the topic of teaching the school children to take a prominent part in the beautifying and protection of school territory.

The auxiliary branches are not confining their attention to schools. They are devoting time to the adornment of nooks by the side of the railways, unseemly areas near factories and, in fact, bringing the aid of green nature to cover up and to screen places that offend the eye and detract from the general beauty of the town. Further, the auxiliaries have taken interest not only in matters of adornment, but in things sanitary, counseling with boards of health and inspiring the removal of whatever menaces the public health.

## THE TOWN'S ROADS.

There Is No Better Advertisement Than Good Highways.

The matter of improved highway construction and maintenance can now be said to be before the people as never before in the history of the country, says Good Roads Magazine. The value of good roads to all industries is becoming so well understood and appreciated, especially by those who have given the subject study, that further facts seem scarcely necessary. The saving on the wear and tear of horses and vehicles, the heavier loads that can be hauled, the fewer number of horses required on a good road as compared with a poor one, the economy in time to business men, are points that appeal to every one.

There is no better advertisement for the country, the city or the town, nor is there anything that helps to increase the popularity of a section and the value of its property more than good roads do. The impressions of the stranger always depend upon the character of the roads and streets, and if he is seeking a location he will be governed by his impressions.

Many sections of the country, especially the south, have been practically depopulated by the isolation resulting from bad roads. The remedy is clear. Give the people the means of readily reaching their neighbors, the towns and schools, and a change is wrought at once. Education becomes general and resources are developed. The youth is contented to remain at home instead of seeking the already overcrowded city.

## Tree Planting Along Highways.

If the earth of the roadway is heavy and difficult to drain, shade trees should not be planted too closely together, and they should be trimmed of all heavy foliage to a considerable height from the ground so as to let in the sun and air and thus hasten the drying of the road after a storm, says Country Roads. If the ground is well drained, nothing will add more to the beauty of the road or to the pleasure of the traveler than a line of sturdy trees on either side of the road. Elms, rock maples, horse chestnuts, oaks, beeches and pines are among the favorites in different parts of the country. The soil and climate will determine what tree can be set out to the best advantage, and the judgment of the reader will guide him as to what distance apart the trees should be planted. Thirty feet for elms and a shorter distance for less spreading varieties will serve as an approximate rule. Trees should not be planted too near a line of underdrains, as the drain is likely to become clogged by the fibrous roots.

## Should Have a Board of Health.

Every town should have a well organized board of health. An epidemic will often do as much material damage to a town's business welfare as a serious fire, to say nothing of the other features of such a calamity. Well informed, energetic health officers can do much to ward off such evils.

## Choosing a Minister.

The parish clerk of Driehton had been rather unfortunate in his ministrations, two of them having gone off in decline within a twelvemonth of their appointment, and now, after hearing a number of candidates for the vacancy, the members were looking forward with keen interest to the meeting at which the election of the new minister was to take place.

"Weel, Margot," asked one female parishioner of another as they foregathered on the road one day, "wha are you gann to vote for?"

"I'm just thinkin' I'll vote for none o' them. I'm no' muckle o' a judge, an' it'll be the safest plan," was Margot's sagacious reply.

"Toots, woman, if that's the way o't, vote 'il' me."

"An' 'ho are you gann to vote?"

"I'm gann to vote for the man that I think has the soundest lungs an' 'il' no' bother us w' deen' again in a hurry."—Scottish American.

## An Odd Dish.

Mix boiled hog's lard and milk with thick gruel. Stir it well together, with fresh cheese, yolks of eggs and brains. Wrap it in a fragrant fig leaf and boil in the gravy of a chicken or a kid. When taken out, remove the leaf and pour it in a potful of boiling honey. The name of this comestible is derived from the fig leaf, but the mixture consists of equal parts of each, but rather more eggs, because this gives it consistency. This appears to have been a popular dish among the Greeks. To us it seems about as nice as an oyster eaten with brown sugar.

Aristophanes mentions a thirum of salt fish and a thirum of fat. In the "Frogs" there is a dismal joke in the form of a reasonable objection made to leaping from a high tower, "I would lose two fig leaves of brain." The word occurs no less than twelve times in the fragments of the comic poets.

## The Cobweb.

A story was told the other day of a little girl who discovered a cobweb and then, seeing a spider emerge from it, called out: "See the cob run! How fast the cob runs!" As a matter of fact she builded better than she knew, for cob, or cop, is, according to the dictionaries, the name sometimes given to a spider; whence the word cobweb, which is, strictly speaking, copweb. Cop in this sense is probably an abbreviation of the Anglo-Saxon attercoppe, a spider.

## Odd Records.

Records are kept with knotted cords in Polynesia. During the early part of the nineteenth century and previously the official taxgatherers on the island of Hawaii, in the Sandwich group, did all their accounts on a rope 2,400 feet long, which was divided into lengths, each corresponding to a district. Loops, knots and feathers tied along the rope served as memoranda for the hogs, pigs and pieces of sandalwood collected from taxpayers.

## Chinese Chess.

Chinese chess must claim our admiration by the manner in which the conception of a military game has been elaborated so as to conform with the realities of warfare. The board is divided by an imaginary river, which the elephant and the king may not cross. The pieces are placed on the intersections of the lines, not on the spaces. The king, or general, with his two guards, must keep to a square of nine points in the center of his side, with diagonal lines from corner to corner, along which the guards may move, the king moving only forward or sideways or backward. The other pieces may enter this fortress and pass through it.

The most characteristic piece of Chinese chess, however, is the cannon, which cannot move without jumping over a piece, so that not only is the attack most formidable and unexpected, but it must be resisted, else it is helpless. The prettiest checkmate is with two cannons in line. Here the second cannon gives check, and the king must move, for if another piece be inserted the first cannon gives check. Now, we may allow that if the elephant is not supposed to cross the river, no more should the cannon, for the first named is really the most capable of the feat, but the genius of the piece lies in its imitation of cannon in warfare—its range, the firing over bodies of troops and its liability to capture.—London Spectator.

## A Woman Soldier.

Eleonore Prochaska, born March 11, 1785, at Potsdam, was the daughter of a sergeant. After being brought up in the military orphanage of that town, she became a cook in some citizen's house. When the great war against Napoleon broke out in 1813 she was led away by enthusiasm to quit her town secretly; by selling her poor belongings she procured male attire and weapons, and enlisted under the name of August Renz in the Lutzow corps. On account of her tall, slender figure her sex was not discovered until she was mortally wounded. This happened in the encounter in the Gohrde forest, Regierungsbezirk Lüneburg, Kreis Dannenberg, Sept. 16, 1813. The Prussians were there attempting to storm a hill occupied by the French, she acting as a drummer. In 1863 a monument in memory of her was erected in the churchyard at Dannenberg, and another in 1889 in the old churchyard of Potsdam. When a boy, I often saw cheap illustrations representing her, and my mother told me about her.—Notes and Queries.

## No Help From Her.

"Miss Frisbie—Ellen, love," said young Mr. Gallagher timidly, "I have lost my heart."  
"I'm sorry I can't help you, Mr. Gallagher," replied the maiden not unkindly. "I haven't found it."—Detroit Free Press.

## SOME WRITERS.

Bret Harte was a good deal of a recluse, in that respect resembling Hawthorne more than any other man of letters.

Baxter, it is said, kept the manuscript of the "Saint's Everlasting Rest" in his hands for thirteen years, revising and condensing.

Cooper is said to have written "The Spy" in less than six months. Most of his stories were founded on legends well known in his neighborhood.

Longfellow turned out about one volume of poems a year for many years. Nearly four years were required for his translation of "Dante."

The first volume of poems by Alfred Tennyson came out when he was twenty-four. He was forty-one when "In Memoriam" came from the press.

Thomas Moore often wrote a short poem almost impromptu. He consumed over two years in reading and preparing material for "Lalla Rookh" and two years more in writing that inimitable poem.

## One Brick Short.

Richard M. Hunt, the architect, used to relate that in his younger days, while supervising the erection of a brick building, a recent arrival from Cork applied for a job and was employed as a hodcarrier after being instructed that he must always carry up fourteen bricks in his hod. One morning the supply of bricks ran out, and, do his best, the new man could find but thirteen to put in his hod. In answer to a loud yell from the street one of the masons on the sixth story shrieked down:

"What do you want?"  
"Trow me down wan brick," said Pat, pointing to his hod, "to make me number good!"—New York Times.

## Too Cautious.

"I have the greatest confidence in Dr. Slocum as a physician," said one of the doctor's patients. "He never gives an opinion till he has waited and weighed a case and looked at it from every side."

"Um-m!" said the skeptical friend. "That's all right if you don't carry it too far. There have been times, you know, when he's been so cautious that his diagnosis has come near getting mixed up with the postmortem."—Youth's Companion.

## A Warning From the Child.

A three-year-old little girl was taught to close her evening prayer during the temporary absence of her father with "and please watch over my papa." It sounded very sweet, but the mother's amusement may be imagined when she added, "And you better keep an eye on mamma too."—Exchange.

## Birds Made a Slave.

In the mountains of Tennessee a stranger came upon a man who was shoveling coal upon a wooden sieve. Upon inquiry how on earth he got such a curious thing the old man replied:

"Stranger, I don't think you'll b'leeve me if I tell you."  
"Oh, yes, certainly," said the man; "I will believe you."

"Waal," said the mountaineer, "it war this way: About five years ago I lived down on the side of the mountain whar woodpeckers and other kind o' birds is powerful thick. That 'ar thing'—pointing to the sieve—"war my door to my cabin. It 'ud mock any bird that flies. I'd jest sit thar some summer evenin' and jest move it, and every bird came that war imitated."

"Howsumever, one day I left my cabin to go huntin' and went preamblin' down the mountain. Waal, some wind come along and made that 'ar door imitate a woodpecker. First one come and then a whole pile o' the critters. They lit in on the door, and when I come it war jest like you see it."

The man thanked him and moved on. "I declar," said the mountaineer, "I don't b'leeve he thought I war tellin' the truth." And he resumed shoveling coal.—New York Herald.

## Thoughtless, Selfish.

Thoughtlessness of others is nothing more than downright selfishness, which is the curse of humanity. The man who on leaving an elevated train pauses at the head of the stairs to light his cigar is selfish. He incommodes all who are behind him. The woman who insists on passing up or down the stairs ahead of the eager crowd, slowly, indifferent to the haste of others, must be an awful thing at home. He who pauses to tie his shoe regardless of the interruption of traffic is a brute in his family. I see all these things a dozen times a day and wonder what kind of lives such persons lead in the family circle. One of the common evidences of thoughtlessness is seen in those who stand in the middle of the sidewalk to chat while multitudes are forced to detour or make an offset in order to pass them. The more I see of men the greater is my respect for asses, dogs and mules.—New York Press.

## A Roman Dinner.

A Roman dinner at the house of a wealthy man consisted chiefly of three courses. All sorts of stimulants to the appetite were first served up, and eggs were indispensable to the first course. Among the various dishes we may instance the guinea hen, pheasant, nightingale and the thrush as birds most in repute. The Roman gourmands held peacocks in great estimation, especially their tongues. Macrobius states that they were first eaten by Hortensius, the orator, and acquired such repute that a single peacock was sold for 50 denarii, the denarius being equal to about eightpence halfpenny of our money.—Chambers' Journal.

Boys have no more business with target guns and air rifles than men with pistols.—Nashville American.

## The Number "Three" in the Bible.

When the world was created, we find it and its surroundings composed of three elements—air, water and land—the whole lighted by the sun, moon and stars. Adam had three sons mentioned by name, and so did Noah, the patriarch. Daniel was thrown into a den with three lions for the crime of praying three times. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were rescued from the fiery furnace. Job had three special friends. There were three patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Samuel was called three times; Elijah prostrated himself three times on the dead body of the child; Samson deceived Delilah three times before she discovered the secret of his great power, and the Ten Commandments were delivered on the third day.

Jonah was three days and nights in the whale's belly. "Simon, lovest thou me?" was repeated three times. Paul makes mention of the three graces—faith, hope and charity. The famous allegorical dreams of the baker and butler were to come to pass in three days. Then we have the holy trinity—Father, Son and Holy Ghost; the sacred letters on the cross were three in number, they being I, H. S.; so also the famous Roman motto was composed of three words—viz. In hoc signo.

## Sleight of Hand Poisoning.

A very curious item in toxicological lore I chanced to light upon, wrote George Augustus Sala in one of his letters, may be called the feat of poisoning by sleight of hand. You were jealous of a lady, and you wished to kill her. Well, you asked her to lunch, and you caused a very nice peach to be served at dessert. You cut the fruit with a golden knife, one side of the blade of which was endowed with a deadly poison. You presented the poisoned half of the peach to the lady, who ate it with much relish and then dropped down dead.

The wholesome half you ate yourself and laughed in your sleeve and went on slicing more peaches for the ladies of whom you were jealous till you were found out and broken on the wheel. Aye, there's the rub! What high old times we might have, to be sure, but for that plaguy contingency of being found out!

## Austrian Bulls.

Here are a few "bulls" that have been perpetrated from time to time in the Austro-Hungarian parliament: "One most important point of the agricultural question is the maintenance of the breed of horses to which I have the honor to belong."  
"We are here for the weal and woe of our constituents."  
"Gentlemen, consider this question in the light of a dark future."  
"The eye of the law weighs heavily on our press legislation."  
"There, gentlemen, is the ever changing point of which the opposition has made a hobbyhorse."  
"This taunt is the same old sea serpent which for years and years has been gnawing in this assembly."

## Incidents in American History.

A traveler who has just returned from a visit to Matanzas says that he visited El Cumbre, a short distance from the city, and there was reminded of an incident in American history with which he was entirely unfamiliar and which he is willing to bet not one American in a hundred knows anything about. He refers to the fact that a vice president of the United States took the oath of office there, being authorized to do so by special act of congress. El Cumbre means "the summit," and it was here that William Rufus King, vice president with Franklin Pierce, dying of consumption, was sworn into office March 24, 1853.

## Loading and Working.

Ever notice at the end of a day when you have fooled along with your work and slouched through everything in a slipshod manner that you are tired as if you had worked steadily and done your work well? And how much better satisfied you feel with yourself when you have done your work as you should. Your employer also notices these things. Don't belong to the slipshod class. Do your work well. You will feel better and stand higher in the estimation of the man you work for.—Acheson Globe.

## Tricks of the Trade.

If you find maple twigs and fragments of leaves in your "maple" sirup, you may feel pretty sure that it is an imitation or has been adulterated. People who make the pure article sent it to market clean. The best butter does not have hair in it to prove that it was made from cows' milk. Strained honey with bits of comb in it is subject to the same suspicion. Tomato figs with a fig leaf on top of the box is another instance.

## Suggestive.

"No," said the Widow Rakeleigh, "I didn't altogether like the minister's sermon over poor John."  
"Why, I thought it quite sympathetic," said her friend.  
"Well, I didn't like his pronunciation when he said John had gone 'to that undiscovered country from whose 'burn' no traveler returns."—Philadelphia Press.

## Proof Presumptive.

A Mohawk valley justice of the peace invariably gave judgment for the plaintiff in civil suits before him without hearing the defendant, silencing that unfortunate litigant with, "Vell, vot I tinks be sue yer for if you don't owe him?"—Rochester Democrat.

## Her Mother's Visit.

Mrs. Benham—You don't seem to be very glad that mother is here.  
Benham—What did you expect me to do—die of joy?—New York Herald.