

ANTHONY HAMILTON

THE MEMOIRS OF
COUNT GRAMMONT –
VOLUME 07

Anthony Hamilton
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Count Anthony Hamilton

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CHAPTER ELEVENTH

RETURN OF THE CHEVALIER GRAMMONT TO FRANCE – HE IS SENT BACK TO ENGLAND – VARIOUS LOVE INTRIGUES AT THIS COURT, AND MARRIAGE OF MOST OF THE HEROES OF THESE MEMOIRS

The nearer the Chevalier de Grammont approached the court of France, the more did he regret his absence from that of England.

A thousand different thoughts occupied his mind upon the journey: Sometimes he reflected upon the joy and satisfaction his friends and relations would experience upon his return; sometimes upon the congratulations and embraces of those who, being neither the one nor the other, would, nevertheless, overwhelm him with impertinent compliments: All these ideas

passed quickly through his head; for a man deeply in love makes it a scruple of conscience not to suffer any other thoughts to dwell upon his mind than those of the object beloved. It was then the tender, endearing remembrance of what he had left in London that diverted his thoughts from Paris; and it was the torments of absence that prevented his feeling those of the bad roads and the bad horses. His heart protested to Miss Hamilton, between Montreuil and Abbeville that he only tore himself from her with such haste, to return the sooner; after which, by a short reflection, comparing the regret he had formerly felt upon the same road, in quitting France for England, with that which he now experienced, in quitting England for France, he found the last much more insupportable than the former.

It is thus that a man in love entertains himself upon the road; or rather, it is thus that a trifling writer abuses the patience of his reader, either to display his own sentiments, or to lengthen out a tedious story; but God forbid that this character should apply to ourselves, since we profess to insert nothing in these memoirs, but what we have heard from the mouth of him whose actions and sayings we transmit to posterity.

Who, except Squire Feraulas, has ever been able to keep a register of all the thoughts, sighs, and exclamations, of his illustrious master? For my own part, I should never have thought that the attention of the Count de Grammont, which is at present so sensible to inconveniences and dangers, would have ever permitted him to entertain amorous thoughts upon the road, if

he did not himself dictate to me what I am now writing.

But let us speak of him at Abbeville. The postmaster was his old acquaintance: His hotel was the best provided of any between Calais and Paris; and the Chevalier de Grammont, alighting, told Termes he would drink a glass of wine during the time they were changing horses. It was about noon; and, since the preceding night, when they had landed at Calais, until this instant, they had not eat a single mouthful. Termes, praising the Lord, that natural feelings had for once prevailed over the inhumanity of his usual impatience, confirmed him as much as possible in such reasonable sentiments.

Upon their entering the kitchen, where the Chevalier generally paid his first visit, they were surprised to see half a dozen spits loaded with game at the fire, and every other preparation for a magnificent entertainment. The heart of Termes leaped for joy: he gave private orders to the hostler to pull the shoes off some of the horses, that he might not be forced away from this place before he had satisfied his craving appetite.

Soon after, a number of violins and hautboys, attended by all the mob of the town, entered the court. The landlord, being asked the reason of these great preparations, acquainted the Chevalier de Grammont that they were for the wedding of one of the most wealthy gentlemen in the neighbourhood with one of the handsomest girls in the whole province; that the entertainment was to be at his house; and that, if his lordship chose to stop, in a very short time he would see the new-married couple arrive from

the church, since the music was already come. He was right in his conjectures; for these words were scarce out of his mouth, when three uncommonly large coaches, loaded with lackeys, as tall as Swiss, with most gaudy liveries, all covered with lace, appeared in the court, and disembarked the whole wedding company. Never was country magnificence more naturally displayed: Rusty tinsel, tarnished lace, striped silks, little eyes, and full swelling breasts, appeared on every side.

If the first sight of the procession surprised the Chevalier de Grammont, faithful Termes was no less astonished at the second. The little that was to be seen of the bride's face appeared not without beauty; but no judgment could be formed of the remainder: Four dozen of patches, at least, and ten ringlets of hair, on each side, most completely concealed her from all human eyes; but it was the bridegroom who most particularly attracted the Chevalier de Grammont's attention.

He was as ridiculously dressed as the rest of the company, except a coat of the greatest magnificence, and of the most exquisite taste. The Chevalier de Grammont, walking up to him to examine his dress, began to commend the embroidery of his coat. The bridegroom thought himself much honoured by this examination, and told him he bought it for one hundred and fifty louis, at the time he was paying his addresses to his wife. "Then you did not get it made here?" said the Chevalier de Grammont. "No," replied the other; "I bought it of a London merchant, who had ordered it for an English lord." The Chevalier de Grammont,

who now began to perceive in what manner the adventure would end, asked him if he should recollect the merchant if he saw him again? "Recollect him!" replied the other, "I surely ought; for I was obliged to sit up drinking with him all night at Calais, as I was endeavouring to beat down the price." Termes had vanished out of sight as soon as ever this coat appeared, though he little supposed that the cursed bridegroom would have any conversation concerning it with his master.

The Chevalier's thoughts were some time wavering between his inclination to laugh, and a desire of hanging Master Termes; but the long habit of suffering himself to be robbed by his domestics, together with the vigilance of the criminal, whom his master could not reproach with having slept in his service, inclined him to clemency; and yielding to the importunities of the country gentleman, in order to confound his faithful servant, he sat down to table, to make the thirty-seventh of the company.

A short time after, he desired one of the waiters to call for a gentleman whose name was Termes. He immediately appeared; and as soon as the master of the feast saw him, he rose from table, and offering him his hand; "Welcome, my friend," said he; "you see that I have taken good care of the coat which you sold me with so much reluctance, and that I have kept it for a good purpose."

Termes, having put on a face of brass, pretended not to know him, and pushed him back with some degree of rudeness. "No, no!" said the other; "since I was obliged to sit up with you the

whole night, in order to strike the bargain, you shall pledge me in the bride's health." The Chevalier de Grammont, who saw that Termes was disconcerted, notwithstanding his impudence, said to him with a smile: "Come, come, my good London merchant, sit down, as you are so civilly invited: we are not so crowded at table but that there will be room enough for such an honest gentleman as yourself." At these words five-and-thirty of the guests were in motion to receive this new visitor: the bride alone, out of an idea of decorum, remained seated; and the audacious Termes, having swallowed the first shame of this adventure, began to lay about him at such a rate, as if it had been his intention to swallow all the wine provided for the wedding, if his master had not risen from the table as they were taking off four-and-twenty soups, to serve up as many other dishes in their stead.

The company were not so unreasonable as to desire a man who was in such haste to remain to the end of a wedding dinner; but they all got up when he arose from table, and all that he could obtain from the bridegroom was that the company should not attend him to the gate of the inn. As for Termes, he wished they had not quitted him till the end of their journey, so much did he dread being left alone with his master.

They had advanced some distance from Abbeville, and were proceeding on in the most profound silence, when Termes, who expected an end to it in a short time, was only solicitous in what manner it might happen, whether his master would attack him with a torrent of invectives, and certain epithets which were most

justly his due, or whether, in an insulting, ironical manner, he might make use of such commendations as were most likely to confound him; but finding, instead of either, that he remained in sullen silence, he thought it prudent rather to prevent the speech the Chevalier was meditating than to suffer him to think longer about it; and, accordingly, arming himself with all his effrontery: "You seem to be very angry, Sir," said he, "and I suppose you think you have reason for being so; but the devil take me, if you are not mistaken in reality."

"How! traitor! in reality?" said the Chevalier de Grammont. "It is then because I have not had thee well thrashed, as thou hast for a long time merited." "Look ye, Sir," replied Termes, "you always run into a passion, instead of listening to reason! Yes, Sir, I maintain that what I did was for your benefit." "And was not the quicksand likewise for my service?" said the Chevalier de Grammont. "Have patience, if you please," pursued the other: "I know not how that simpleton of a bridegroom happened to be at the custom-house when my portmanteau was examined at Calais: but these silly cuckolds thrust in their noses everywhere. As soon as ever he saw your coat, he fell in love with it. I immediately perceived he was a fool; for he fell down upon his knees, beseeching me to sell it him. Besides being greatly rumpled in the portmanteau, it was all stained in front by the sweat of the horses. I wonder how the devil he has managed to get it cleaned; but, faith, I am the greatest scoundrel in the world, if you would ever have put it on. In a word, it cost you one hundred

and forty louis d'ors, and seeing he offered me one hundred and fifty for it; 'My master,' said I, 'has no occasion for this tinselled bauble to distinguish him at the ball; and, although he was pretty full of cash when I left him, how know I in what situation he may be upon my return? there is no certainty at play.' To be brief, Sir, I got ten louis d'ors for it more than it cost you: this you see is all clear profit: I will be accountable to you for it, and you know that I am sufficiently substantial to make good such a sum. Confess now, do you think you would have appeared to greater advantage at the ball, if you had been dressed out in that damned coat, which would have made you look just like the village bridegroom to whom we sold it? and yet how you stormed at London when you thought it lost; what fine stories you told the king about the quicksand; and how churlish you looked, when you first began to suppose that this country booby wore it at his wedding!"

What could the Chevalier reply to such uncommon impudence? If he indulged his resentment, he must either have most severely bastinadoed him, or he must have discarded him, as the easiest escape the rogue could expect; but he had occasion for him during the remainder of his journey; and, as soon as he was at Paris, he had occasion for him for his return.

The Marechal de Grammont had no sooner notice of his arrival than he went to him at the hotel; and, the first embraces being over on both sides, "Chevalier," said the Marechal, "how many days have you been in coming from London hither? for God knows at what a rate you travel on such occasions." The

Chevalier told him he had been three days upon the road; and, to excuse himself for making no more haste, he related to him his Abbeville adventure. "It is a very entertaining one," said his brother; "but what is yet more entertaining is, that it will be your fault if you do not find your coat still at table; for the country gentry are not accustomed to rise very soon from a wedding dinner." And then, in a very serious tone, told him, "he knew not who had advised him to this unexpected return, which might probably ruin all his affairs; but he had orders from the king to bid him go back again without appearing at court. He told him afterwards that he was very much astonished at his impatience, as, till this time, he had conducted himself uncommonly well, and was sufficiently acquainted with the king's temper to know that the only way to merit his pardon was to wait until it freely came from his clemency."

The Chevalier, in justification of his conduct, produced Madame de Saint Chaumont's letter, and told the Marechal that he would very willingly have spared her the trouble of writing him such kind of news, to occasion him so useless a journey. "Still more indiscretion," replied his brother; "for pray how long has our sister being either secretary of state or minister, that she should be employed by the king to make known his majesty's order? Do you wish to know the real state of the case? Some time ago the king told Madame – [Henrietta] – how you had refused the pension the King of England offered you.

["Henrietta, youngest daughter of Charles the First, –

born at Exeter 16th June, 1644, from whence she was removed to London in 1646, and, with her governess, Lady Dalkeith, soon afterwards conveyed to France. On the restoration, she came over to England with her mother, but returned to France in about six months, and was married to Philip, Duke of Orleans, only brother of Louis XIV. In May, 1670, she came again to Dover, on a mission of a political nature, it is supposed, from the French king to her brother, in which she was successful. She died, soon after her return to France, suddenly, not without suspicion of having been poisoned by her husband. King James, in his Diary, says, 'On the 22d of June, the news of the Duchess of Orleans' death arrived. It was suspected that counter-poisons were given her; but when she was opened, in the presence of the English ambassador, the Earl of Ailesbury, an English physician and surgeon, there appeared no grounds of suspicion of any foul play. Yet Bucks tallied openly that she was poisoned; and was so violent as to propose to foreign ministers to make war on France.' – Macpherson's Original Papers, vol i. At the end of Lord Arlington's Letters are five very remarkable ones from a person of quality, who is said to have been actually on the spot, giving a particular relation of her death.]

"He appeared pleased with the manner in which Comminges had related to him the circumstances attending it, and said he was pleased with you for it: Madame interpreted this as an order for your recall; and Madame de Saint Chaumont being very far from possessing that wonderful discretion she imagines herself

mistress of, she hastened to despatch to you this consequential order in her own hand. To conclude, Madame said yesterday, when the king was at dinner, that you would very soon be here; and the king, as soon as dinner was over, commanded me to send you back as soon as you arrived. Here you are; set off again immediately."

This order might have appeared severe to the Chevalier de Grammont at any other time; but, in the present state of his heart, he soon resolved upon obeying. Nothing gave him uneasiness but the officious advice which had obliged him to leave the English court; and being entirely unconcerned that he was not allowed to see the French court before his departure, he only desired the Marechal to obtain leave for him to stay a few days to collect in some play debts which were owing him. This request was granted, on condition that he should not remain in Paris.

He chose Vaugirard for his retreat: it was there that he had several adventures which he so often related in so humorous and diverting a manner, that it would be tedious to repeat them; there it was that he administered the sacrament in so solemn a manner, that, as there did not remain a sufficient number of Swiss at Versailles to guard the chapel, Vardes was obliged to acquaint the king that they were all gone to the Chevalier de Grammont, who was administering the sacrament at Vaugirard: there likewise happened that wonderful adventure which threw the first slur upon the reputation of the great Saucourt, when, having a tete-a-tete with the gardener's daughter, the horn, which was agreed

upon as the signal to prevent surprises, was sounded so often, that the frequent alarms cooled the courage of the celebrated Saucourt, and rendered useless the assignation that was procured for him with one of the prettiest girls in the neighbourhood. It was, likewise, during his stay at Vaugirard, that he paid a visit to Mademoiselle de l'Hopital at Issy, to inquire into the truth of a report of an amour between her and a man of the long robe; and it was there that, on his arriving unexpectedly, the President de Maisons was forced to take refuge in a closet, with so much precipitation, that half of his robe remained on the outside when he shut the door; while the Chevalier de Grammont, who observed it, made his visit excessively long, in order to keep the two lovers upon the rack.

His business being settled, he set out for England on the wings of love. Termes redoubled his vigilance upon the road. The post horses were ready in an instant at every stage: the winds and tides favoured his impatience; and he reached London with the highest satisfaction. The court was both surprised and charmed at his sudden return. No person condoled with him upon his late disappointment, which had occasioned him to come back, as he testified no manner of uneasiness concerning it himself: nor was Miss Hamilton in the least displeased at his readiness in obeying the orders of the king his master.

Nothing new had happened in the English court during his short absence; but it assumed a different aspect soon after his return: I mean with respect to love and pleasure, which were the

most serious concerns of the court during the greatest part of this gay reign.

The Duke of Monmouth, natural son to Charles the Second, now made his first appearance in his father's court.

[James Duke of Monmouth, was the son of Charles the II., by one Lucy Walters. He was born at Rotterdam, April 9, 1649, and bore the name of James Crofts until the restoration. His education was chiefly at Paris, under the eye of the queen-mother, and the government of Thomas Ross, Esq., who was afterwards secretary to Mr. Coventry during his embassy in Sweden. At the restoration, he was brought to England, and received with joy by his father, who heaped honours and riches upon him, which were not sufficient to satisfy his ambitious views. To exclude his uncle, the Duke of York, from the throne, he was continually intriguing with the opposers of government, and was frequently in disgrace with his sovereign. On the accession of James II. he made an ineffectual attempt to raise a rebellion, was taken prisoner, and beheaded on Tower-hill, 15th July, 1685. Mr. Macpherson has drawn his character in the following terms: "Monmouth, highly beloved by the populace, was a fit instrument to carry forward his (i.e. Shaftesbury's) designs. To a gracefulness which prejudiced mankind in his favour as soon as seen, he joined an affability which gained their love. Constant in his friendships, and just to his word, by nature tender, and an utter enemy to severity and cruelty, active and vigorous in his constitution, he excelled in the manly exercises of the field. He was personally brave.

He loved the pomp and the very dangers of war. But with these splendid qualities, he was vain to a degree of folly, versatile in his measures, weak in his understanding. He was ambitious without dignity, busy without consequence, attempting ever to be artful, but always a fool. Thus, taking the applause of the multitude for a certain mark of merit, he was the dupe of his own vanity, and owed all his misfortunes to that weakness." – History of England, vol. i., chap. iii.]

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