



Keeping Their Place: Domestic Service in the Country House, 1700-1920

Pamela Sambrook

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In 1851 there were over a million servants in Britain. This book reveals first-hand tales of put-upon servants, who often had to rise hours before dawn to lay fires, heat water and prepare meals for their employers, and then work into the small hours. Yet there are also heartwarming stories of personal devotion, and reward, and of how the servants enjoyed themselves in their time off. There are moments of great poignancy as well as hilarity: a steward's dawning realisation that the housekeeper he befriended is a thief; a young footman chasing a melon as it rolls through a castle's corridors into the moat; the smart manservant weeping at the station as he bids farewell to his mother. This was an era when footmen were paid extra for being six foot or over, and female servants had to wear black bonnets to church. Drawing on letters, diaries, and autobiographies "Keeping Their Place" provides a vivid insight into the day-by-day lives of country house servants between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

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