



# Lady Whistledown's SOCIETY PAPERS

1817

EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY NEWS

## 30 April 1817

It has now been three years since any of the Bridgerton siblings have wed, and Lady Bridgerton has been heard to declare on several occasions that she is nearing her wit's end. Benedict has not taken a bride (and it is the opinion of This Author that as he has attained the age of thirty, he is far past due), and neither has Colin, although he may be forgiven his tardiness, since he is, after all, merely six-and-twenty.

The dowager viscountess also has two girls about which she must worry. Eloise is nearly one-and-twenty and although she has received several proposals, she has shown no inclination to marry. Francesca is nearly twenty (the girls quite coincidentally share a birthday), and she, too, seems more interested in the season than she does in marriage.

This Author feels that Lady Bridgerton does not need to worry. It is inconceivable that any of the Bridgertons might not eventually make an acceptable match, and besides, her two married children have already given her a total of five

suspects was working in the Bridgerton household, used to work for Lady Penwood. Lady Penwood alleges that the unidentified woman stole from her two years ago and immediately had the poor thing carted off to jail.

This Author is not certain what the punishment is these days for theft, but one has to suspect that if one has the audacity to steal from a countess, the punishment is quite strict. The poor girl in question is likely to be hanged, or at the very least, find herself transported.

The previous housemaid wans (reported last month in This Column) seem rather trivial now.

## 16 June 1817

Such a scurry on Bruton Street. The dowager Viscountess Bridgerton and her son, Benedict Bridgerton, were seen dashing out of her house Friday morning. Mr. Bridgerton practically threw his mother into a carriage, and they took off at breakneck speed. Francesca and Hyacinth Bridgerton were seen standing in the doorway, and This Author has it on the best authority that Francesca was heard to utter a very unladylike word.

But the Bridgerton household was not the only one to see such excitement. The Penwoods also experienced a great deal of activity, culminating in a public row right on the front steps between the countess and her daughter, Miss Posy Reeling.

As This Author has never liked Lady Penwood, she can only say, "Huzzah for Posy!"

## 18 June 1817

Lady Penwood appears to have left town. So does Lady Bridgerton. Interesting...

one could not help but notice that she was acting very strangely at her mother's musicale on Tuesday eve. She insisted upon sitting by the window, and she spent most of the performance staring at the streetscape, as if looking for something...or perhaps someone?

While we are on the topic, Miss Reiling's mother, the Countess of Penwood, has also been acting very strange of late. According to servants' gossip (which we all know is always the most reliable sort), the countess threw quite the tantrum last night, hurling no fewer than seventeen shoes at her servants.

One footman sports a bruised eye, but other than that, all remain in good health.

## 13 June 1817

La, but such excitement yesterday on the front steps of Lady Bridgerton's residence on Bruton Street!

First, Penelope Featherington was seen in the company of not one, not two, but THREE Bridgerton brothers, surely a heretofore impossible feat for the poor girl, who is rather infamous for her wallflower ways. Sadly (but perhaps predictably) for Miss Featherington, when she finally departed, it was on the arm of the viscount, the only married man in the bunch.

If Miss Featherington were to somehow manage to drag a Bridgerton brother to the altar, it would surely mean the end of the world as we know it, and This Author, who freely admits she would not know heads from tails in such a world, would be forced to resign her post on the spot.

If Miss Featherington's gatherings weren't enough gossip, not three hours later, a woman was accosted right in front of the town house by the Countess of Penwood, who lives three doors down. It seems the woman, who This Author

Inspired by the show Bridgerton. Created by Macarons for Breakfast

grandchildren, and surely that is her heart's desire.

It was clear to all of the guests at the Mottram ball Thursday last that Miss Rosamund Reiling has set her cap for Mr. Phillip Cavender.

It is the opinion of This Author that the two are well matched indeed.

## 2 May 1817

It seems one cannot take two steps at a London ball these days without stumbling across a society matron lamenting the difficulties of finding good help. Indeed, This Author thought that Mrs. Featherington and Lady Penwood were going to come to blows at last week's Smythe-Smith musicale. It seems that Lady Penwood stole Mrs. Featherington's lady's maid right out from under her nose one month ago, promising higher wages and free cast-off clothing. (It should be noted that Mrs. Featherington also gave the poor girl cast-off clothing, but anyone who has ever observed the attire of the Featherington girls would understand why the lady's maid would not view this as a benefit.)

The plot thickened, however, when the lady's maid in question fled back to Mrs. Featherington, begging to be rehired. It seemed that Lady Penwood's idea of a lady's maid included duties more accurately ascribed to the scullery maid, upstairs maid, and cook. Someone ought to tell the woman that one girl cannot do the work of three.

It has oft been said that physicians make the worst patients, but it is the opinion of This Author that any man makes a terrible patient. One might say it takes patience to be a patient, and heaven knows, the males of our species lack an abundance of patience.

#### 5 May 1817

Although he responded in the affirmative (or so says Lady Covington) Benedict Bridgerton did not make an appearance at the annual Covington Ball.

Complaints were heard from young women (and their mamas) across the ballroom.

According to Lady Bridgerton (his mother, not his sister-in-law), Mr. Bridgerton left for the country last week and has not been heard from since. Those who might fear for Mr. Bridgerton's health and well-being should not fret; Lady Bridgerton sounded more annoyed than worried. Last year no less than four couples met their future spouses at the Covington Ball: the previous year, three. Much to Lady Bridgerton's dismay, if any matches are made at this year's Covington Ball, her son Benedict will not be among the grooms.

#### 7 May 1817

The housemaid wars rage on in London. Lady Penwood called Mrs. Featherington a committing, ill-bred thief in front of no less than three society matrons, including the very popular dowager Viscountess Bridgerton! Mrs. Featherington

responded by calling Lady Penwood's home no better than a workhouse, citing the ill treatment of her lady's maid (whose name, This Author has learned, is not Estelle as was originally claimed, and furthermore, she is not remotely French. The girl's name is Bess, and she hails from Liverpool.)

Lady Penwood stalked away from the altercation in quite a huff, followed by her daughter, Miss Rosamund Reeling. Lady Penwood's other daughter, Posy (who was wearing an unfortunate green gown) remained behind with a somewhat apologetic look in her eyes until her mother returned, grabbed her by the sleeve, and dragged her off.

This Author certainly does not make up the guest lists at society parties, but it is difficult to imagine that the Penwoods will be invited to Mrs. Featherington's next soiree.

#### 9 May 1817

Speculation continues to abound concerning the disappearance of Benedict Bridgerton. According to Eloise Bridgerton, who as his sister ought to know, he was due back in town several days ago. But as Eloise must be the first to admit, a man of Mr. Bridgerton's age and stature need hardly report his whereabouts to his younger sister.

#### 12 May 1817

Rosamund Reeling swears that she saw Benedict Bridgerton back in London. This Author is inclined to believe the veracity of the account. Miss Reeling can spot an unmarried bachelor at fifty paces.

Unfortunately for Miss Reeling, she can't seem to land one.

#### 14 May 1817

This Author is quite certain that the male half of the population will be uninterested in the following portion of the column,

so you are all give leave to skip to the next section. However, for the ladies, let This Author be the first to inform you that the Bridgerton family was recently sucked into the battle of the maids that has been raging all season between Lady Penwood and Mrs. Featherington. It seems that the maid attending to the daughters Bridgerton has defected to the Penwoods, replacing the maid who fled back to the Featherington household after Lady Penwood forced her to polish three hundred pairs of shoes.

And in other Bridgerton news, Benedict Bridgerton is most definitely back in London. It seems he took ill while in the country and extended his stay. One wishes that there were a more interesting explanation (especially when one is, like This Author, dependent upon interesting stories to earn one's living), but sadly, that is all there is to it.

#### 19 May 1817

The Featheringtons hosted a small dinner party yesterday eve, and, although This Author was not privileged enough to attend, it has been said that the evening was deemed quite a success. Three Bridgertons attended, but sadly for the Featherington girls, none of the Bridgertons were of the male variety. The always amiable Nigel Berbrooke was there, paying great attention to Miss Philippa Featherington. This Author is told that both Benedict and Colin Bridgerton were invited, but had to send their regrets.

#### 21 May 1817

This Author has it on the finest authority that two days ago, whilst taking tea at Gunter's, Lady Penwood was hit on the side of her head with a flying biscuit. This Author is unable to

determine who threw the biscuit, but all suspicions point to the establishment's youngest patrons, Miss Felicity Featherington and Miss Hyacinth Bridgerton.

#### 9 June 1817

Pickings have been slim this past fortnight for marriage-minded misses and their mamas. The crop of bachelors is low to begin with this season, as two of 1816's most eligible, the Duke of Ashbourne and the Earl of Macesfield, got themselves leg-shackled last year.

To make matters worse, the two unmarried Bridgerton brothers (discounting Gregory, who is only sixteen and hardly in a position to aid any poor, young misses on the marriage mart) have made themselves very scarce. Colin, This Author is told, is out of town, possibly in Wales or Scotland (although no one seems to know why he would go to Wales or Scotland in the middle of the season). Benedict's story is more puzzling. He is apparently in London, but he eschews all polite social gatherings in favor of less genteel milieus.

Although if truth be told, This Author should not give the impression that the aforementioned Mr. Bridgerton has been spending his every waking hour in debauched abandon. If accounts are correct, he has spent most of the past fortnight in his lodgings on Bruton Street.

As there have been no rumors that he is ill. This Author can only assume that he has finally come to the conclusion that the London season is utterly dull and not worth his time.

Smart man, indeed.

#### 11 June 1817

Miss Posy Reeling (younger stepdaughter to the late Earl of Penwood) isn't a frequent subject of this column (nor, This Author is sad to say, a frequent subject of attention at social functions) but