



Lady Whistledown's SOCIETY PAPERS

1814

EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY NEWS

20 April 1814
The topic of rakes has, of course, been previously discussed in this column, and This Author has come to the conclusion that there are rakes, and there are Rakes. Anthony Bridgerton is a Rake.

A rake (lower-case) is youthful and immature. He flaunts his exploits, behaves with utmost idioy, and thinks himself dangerous to women. A Rake (upper-case) knows he is dangerous to women. He does not flaunt his exploits because he doesn't need to. He knows he will be whispered about by men and women alike, and in fact, he'd rather they didn't whisper about him at all.

He knows who he is and what he has done; further recounting are, to him, redundant. He doesn't behave like an idiot for the simple reason that he isn't an idiot (any mressor than must be expected among all members of the male gender). He has little patience for the foibles of society, and quite frankly, most of the time This Author cannot say she blames him. And if that doesn't describe Viscount Bridgerton – surely this

season's most eligible bachelor – to perfection. This Author shall retire Her quill immediately. The only question is: Will 1814 be the season he finally succumbs to the exquisite bliss of matrimony?

This Author. Thinks...Not.

22 April 1814
At the Harstide ball Wednesday night, Viscount Bridgerton was seen dancing with more than one eligible young lady. This behavior can only be termed “startling” as Bridgerton normally avoids proper young misses with a perseverance that would be impressive were it not so utterly frustrating to all marriage-minded Mamas.

Can it be that the viscount read This Author's most recent column and, in that perverse manner all males of the species seem to endorse, decided to prove This Author wrong?

It may seem that This Author is ascribing to herself far more importance than She actually wields, but men have certainly made decisions based on far, far less. Viscount Bridgerton was

lady's propensity for gossip. This Author can only assume that the viscount (never known for lacking a spine) threatened bodily injury upon Mrs. F should she even breathe a syllable.

13 May 1814

It has come to This Author's attention that the wedding of Lord Bridgerton and Miss Sheffield is to be a small, intimate, and private affair.

In other words, This Author is not invited.

But have no fear, dear reader, This Author is at her most resourceful at times such as these, and promises to uncover the details of the ceremony, both the interesting and the banal.

The wedding of London's most eligible bachelor is surely something which must be reported in This Author's humble column, don't you agree?

16 May 1814

The deed is done! Miss Sheffield is now Katharine, Viscountess Bridgerton.

This Author extends the very best of wishes to the happy couple. Sensible and honorable people are surely scare among the ton, and it's certainly gratifying to see two of this rare breed joined in marriage.

10 June 1814

Although gossip still surrounds the hasty marriage of Lord and Lady Bridgerton (formerly Miss Katharine Sheffield, for those of you who have been in hibernation for these past few weeks), This Author is of the firm opinion that theirs was a love match. Viscount Bridgerton does not escort his wife to every society function (but then again, what husband does?), but when he is present, This Author cannot fail to note that he always seems to be murmuring something in his lady's ear, and that something always seems to make her smile

and blush.

Furthermore, he always dances with her one more time than is considered de rigner.

Considering house many husbands don't like to dance with their wives at all, this is romantic stuff, indeed.

13 June 1814

Lady Mottram's annual ball was a crush, as always, but society watchers could not fail to note that Lord and Lady Bridgerton did not make an appearance.

Lady Mottram insists that they had promised to attend, and This Author can only speculate as to what kept the newlyweds at home...

15 June 1814

Contrary to popular opinion, This Author is aware that she is viewed as something of a cynic.

But that, Dear Reader, could not be further from the truth.

This Author likes nothing better than a happy ending. And if that makes her a romantic fool, so be it.

17 September 1823

Lord Bridgerton celebrated his birthday – This Author believes that it was his thirty-ninth – at home with his family.

This Author was not invited. Nonetheless, details of the fête have reached This Author's always attentive ears, and it sounds to have been a most amusing party. The day began with a short concert: Lord Bridgerton on the trumpet and Lady Bridgerton on the flute.

Mrs. Bagwell (Lady Bridgerton's sister) apparently offered to mediate on the pianoforte, but her offer was refused. According to the dowager viscountess, a more discordant concert has never been performed, and we are told that eventually young Miles Bridgerton stood atop his chair and begged his parents to cease.

Inspired by the show Bridgerton. Created by Macarons for Breakfast

also seen dancing with Miss Katharine Sheffield, elder sister to the fair Edwina. This can only mean one thing, as it has not escaped the notice of This Author that the elder Miss Sheffield has been in much demand on the dance floor ever since the younger Miss Sheffield made her bizarre and unprecedented announcement at the Smythe-Smith musicale last week.

Whoever heard of a girl needing her sister's permission to choose a husband?

And perhaps more

importantly, whoever decided that the words "Smythe-Smith" and "musicale" might be used in the same sentence? This Author has attended one of these gatherings in the past, and heard nothing that might ethically be termed "music."

25 April 1814

This Author was, sadly, unable to determine all the details, but there was a considerable to-do

Thursday last near The Serpentine in Hyde Park involving Viscount Bridgerton, Mr. Nigel Berbrooke, both the Misses Sheffield, and an unnamed dog of indeterminate breed.

This Author was not an eyewitness, but all accounts seem to indicate that the unnamed dog emerged the victor.

27 April 1814

It has come to This Author's attention that Miss Katharine Sheffield took offense at the labeling of her beloved pet, "an unnamed dog of indeterminate breed."

This Author is, to be sure, prostrate with shame at this grievous and egregious error and begs of you, dear reader, to accept this abject apology and pay attention to the first ever correction in the history of this column.

Miss Katharine Sheffield's dog is a corgi. It is called Newton,

although it is difficult to imagine that England's great inventor and physicist would have appreciated being immortalized in the form of a short, fat canine with poor manners.

Lady Bridgerton's musicale proved to be a decidedly musical affair (not, This Author assures you, always the norm for musicales). The guest performer was none other than Maria Rosso, the Italian soprano who made her debut in London two years ago and has returned after a brief stint on the Vienna stage.

With thick, sable hair and flashing dark eyes, Miss Rosso proved as lovely in form as she did in voice, and more than one (indeed, more than a dozen) of society's so-called gentlemen found it difficult indeed to remove their eyes from her person, even after the performance had concluded.

Also in attendance at Lady Bridgerton's musicale: Mrs. Featherington and the three elder Featherington daughters (Prudence, Philippa, and Penelope, none of whom wore colors beneficial to their complexions); Mr. Nigel Berbrooke (who, as usual, had much to say, although no one save Philippa Featherington seemed interested); and, of course, Mrs. Sheffield and Miss Katharine Sheffield.

This Author assumes that the Sheffield's invitation had also included Miss Edwina Sheffield, but she was not present. Lord Bridgerton seemed in fine spirits despite the younger Miss Sheffield's absence, but alas, his mother appeared disappointed.

But then again, Lady Bridgerton's matchmaking tendencies are legendary, and surely she must be at loose ends now that her daughter has married the Duke of Hastings.

29 April 1814

As any regular reader of this column knows, there are two sects

in London who shall forever remain in the utmost opposition: Ambitious Mamas and Determined Bachelors.

The Ambitious Mama has daughters of marriageable age. The Determined Bachelor does not want a wife. The crux of the conflict should be obvious to those with half a brain, or, in other words, approximately fifty percent of This Author's readership.

This Author has not yet seen a guest list for Lady Bridgerton's country house party, but informed sources indicate that nearly every eligible young lady of marriageable age will be gathering in Kent next week.

This surprises no one. Lady Bridgerton has never made a secret of her desire to see her sons favorably married. This sentiment has made her a favorite among the Ambitious Mama set, who disparagingly view the Bridgerton brothers as the worst sort of Determined Bachelors.

If one is to trust the betting books, then at least one of the Bridgerton brothers shall be witness to wedding bells before the year is through.

As much as it pains This Author to agree with the betting books (they are written by men, and thus inherently flawed), This Author must concur in the predictions.

Lady Bridgerton will soon have her daughter-in-law. But who she will be – and to which brother she shall find herself married – ah, Gentle Reader, that is still anyone's guess.

Men are contrary creatures. Their heads and their hearts are never in agreement. And as women know all too well, their actions are usually governed by a different aspect altogether.

2 May 1814

The country house party is a very dangerous event. Married persons often find themselves enjoying

the company of one other than one's spouse, and unmarried persons often return to town as rather hastily engaged persons.

Indeed, the most surprising betrothals are announced on the heels of these spells of rustication. A man with charm is an entertaining thing, and a man with looks is, of course, a sight to behold, but a man with honor – ah, he is the one, dear reader, to which the young ladies should flock.

4 May 1814

There is little to report in London with so many people away in Kent at the Bridgerton house party. This Author can only imagine all the gossip that will soon reach town. There will be a scandal, yes? There is always a scandal at a house party.

And indeed, if a scandal does erupt at Lady Bridgerton's party, those of us who remain in London may be assured that any and all titillating news shall reach our tender ears with all possible haste. With so many notorious gossips in attendance, we are all but guaranteed a full and detailed report.

11 May 1814

Once again, This Author has been proven correct. Country house parties do result in the most surprising of betrothals.

Yes indeed, dear reader, you are surely reading it here first: Viscount Bridgerton is to marry Miss Katharine Sheffield. Not Miss Edwina, as gossips had speculated, but Miss Katharine.

As to how the betrothal came about, details have been surprisingly difficult to obtain. This Author has it on the best authority that the new couple was caught in a compromising position, and that Mrs. Featherington was a witness, but

Mrs. F has been uncharacteristically close-lipped about the entire affair. Given that