The London Reporter

April 30th 1815 Edition 1

D.L. Rickert

Introduction

Gentleman, you say you don't want to marry. This edition of the London Reporter offers you some observations that may change your mind.

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Widows and Their Daughters

We would like to draw your attention to an item of interest that provides information of a most valuable nature. Miss. Anne De Bourgh, daughter of Lady Catherine De Bourgh, is most recently known to be out in public. A local woman, Miss Jane Austen, explained that since birth, Miss Anne had been promised to the very wealthy Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy through an agreement made by their parents. However, it appears that since Mr. Darcy had never agreed to this match, he has no intention of honoring it. He has taken or is soon to take Miss. Elizabeth Bennett as his wife. This means those of you who are not already married might consider this an opportunity to call upon Miss. Anne. Even if your estate is not of great value now, this might be the time to polish up your finest clothing and manners in order to win the hand and inevitable fortune of this young lady. I understand that while she is not a great beauty, she is also not unsightly and as she is not all together very strong, her mother is certain to be looking toward procuring a husband to care for Miss Anne.

It may interest you to know that Lady Catherine De Bourgh became financially fortunate following the demise of her husband, Sir Lewis De Bourgh. Jackie Mihares, a scholarly professor discusses the downfalls that can, at times, befall a widow. This too is information that can be put to great use by those who wish to protect their fortunes from… well….fortune hunters.

You will find more valuable tidbits of this nature throughout this edition of the London Reporter. Please, do read on. *

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Who Benefits From a Law?

Most of this publication's readers are likely too young remember the passing of the Clandestine Marriage Bill of 1753. Professor E. Tavor Bannet labels the Clandestine Marriage Bill of 1753 "A Most Cruel Law for the Fair Sex." Bannet questions whether there was any truth in Government's claim that the Bill was designed to protect the heirs and heiresses of good families from

being seduced into [ruinous] marriages "(Tavor 233).

Before this law was passed, men and women were considered married simply by declaring themselves to be so. Miss Jo Baker, another local woman, tell us that in the town of *Longbourn*, there was such a relationship between a Maid named Sarah, and a Footman named James. These people were of a lower class, none the less, their marriage was "based on …[the] FAITH by which the [Men] and [Women] bind themselves to each other to live as man and Wife" (Tavor 234). This is all very romantic; however, there was and always is the seedier element that disregards such "faith". In many cases, men would take advantage of women. Then, once the woman found herself in a motherly way, these scoundrels simply disappeared, never to be heard of again.

You might assume that women are protected under the law because the laws calls for the signing of documents at the time of marriage. These documents were legal proof of said marriage. This is not necessarily true. Before the law, forsaken women were protected by Church Courts and Justices of the Peace (Tavor 234). Under the new law, a reprobate may still manage to make trouble for a woman.

We've heard of one man, George Wickham, who was serving in the Militia when he lured the young an innocent Lydia Bennet of Longbourn away from the safety of her family. Once he'd been alone with her, he made no attempt to right his wrong. It was only by way of money that he was induced to marry Lydia Bennet. (Austen 121). While the Militia does not look kindly on an act of this nature, Wickham's immoral behavior earned him an undeserved commission. But, had Wickham simply left with no word of his whereabouts, society's judgement would have been laid upon the head of Lydia Bennet. She, I'm afraid would not have been gifted with anything like what Wickham earned for himself.

In some instances, a woman would find that the man who seduced her was already married. In this case, she might be left with children who, under the new law were now considered illegitimate by society (Tavor 237). Not only would she lose her reputation, her children would as well.

Ultimately, you might think that the new law has been an inspiration for those men who would take advantage of women without any design toward marriage. But consider this, there are ethical benefits to men as well. While we don't like to believe it, the fact is women are not always scrupulous either. Before the new law, if a woman declared that a man had vowed marriage, there was little a man could do to prove otherwise. Under the new law, a legal contract is required as proof of marriage. Therefore, without the contract, a man may be protected from a deceptive woman.

The London Reporter would like to state here and now that we are not suggesting that men ill use this information in order to make financially advantageous matches. No! Not at all! Our noble purpose is only to protect the fair and weaker sex and what better way than to guide a suitable mate in her direction. If, however, a match results in a beneficial situation for all interested parties (financial or otherwise), well as Marie Antoinette so infamously suggested, perhaps one can have their cake and eat it too.*

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In Need of an Heir

If your family is land wealthy, you are most certainly aware of Entailment and the need for a male heir. That said, it seems only natural that you would find marriage to be of great importance as there is simply no other respectable way to bring forth a male heir.

In short and for the convenience of the reader, entailment is the passing of land in a manner that ensures said land will remain within the previously defined family. Therefore, the estate moves to the first blood male heir of the current holder of said estate. For a family not fortunate enough to birth a male heir, this transfer becomes problematic – especially for the female offspring of the current owner. Such is the case with one Mr. Bennet current holder of the estate at Longbourn.

Mr. Bennet has five lovely daughters but alas no sons. As such, upon his death, the estate of Longbourn must pass to the next blood successor which is Mr. Bennet's cousin, Mr. Collins (Pride and Prejudice 37). As a result, unless Mr. Bennet finds suitable matches for his daughters, they and his widow will be left with a paltry sum which one can hardly rely upon to remain in any good society (Pride and Prejudice 181).

Now, Rumor has it Mr. Bennet may indeed have a secret male heir born out of wedlock. However, to admit to this would create quite a scandal and he, Mr. Bennet, would be ruined *and* his daughters would certainly never have the opportunity to marry well (Longbourn 223). In conclusion Gentlemen, if you marry and have at least one son, your legacy is secure. If not, you will be burdened by having to find rich husbands for your daughters (Mijares 6). But first you must marry.*

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MATRIMONY.—A Middle-aged Gentleman, of a respectable rank in life, who enjoys an income of Two Hundred Pounds a Year, with fair expectations, and who might otherwise offer a favourable account of himself, wishes to MARRY. The intimations of any Lady, of unblemishable character, of an age not less than thirty, nor more than thirty-seven, and of an income at least equal to his own (as his rank requires such), having a similar wish, and condescending to favour him, will be received with due respect, and attended to with strict honour and inviolable secresy. Letters to be addressed, post paid, S. H., No. 8, Park-place, Kennington.

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The Bachelorhood Predicament

In case you need more convincing about the value of marriage, I give you, N. Eustace, a professor of history at New York University who has written an article titled, "The Cornerstone of A Copious Work: Love and Power in the Eighteenth-Century Courtship". In this very article, the professor indicates that one of the reasons men marry is to transcend from boyhood to manhood giving them the privilege of managing their own home. Eustace declares, "To take a wife then [is] to announce a new social standing" (Eustace 5th page).

There are, however, men who do not marry at all, we call them "Bachelors". While at some time in the future, the title of bachelor may be revered, in this, the eighteenth century, these men are not well respected. Their opinion is not valued and, their married friends often make fun of them. In some ways they are treated much like the unmarried women whom we call "spinster" or sometimes "old maid".

According to the Bennet's housekeeper, when Mr. Bennet's cousin, Mr. Collins, proposed marriage to, Elizabeth Bennet, she refused him. Mr. Collins, a bit put out by rejection, told Elizabeth, "…it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made [her]" (Austen 65). This is really very much the same for men. Professor Eustace tells us, men too had to be conscious of their options and not waste opportunities.

Thus young men, be mindful of your contemporaries who understand the benefits of marriage, they are your rivals for the hands of the most eligible ladies be they lovely or wealthy. *

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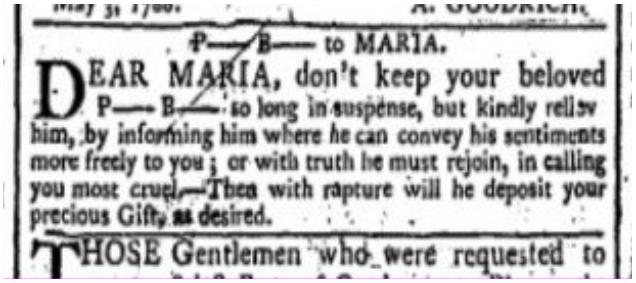
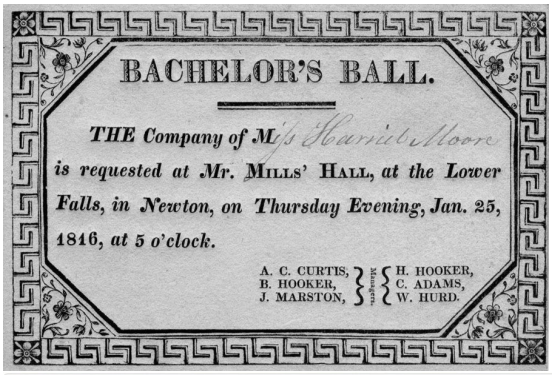


P—B— to MARIA.

DEAR MARIA, don't keep your beloved P—B— so long in suspense, but kindly relieve him, by informing him where he can convey his sentiments more freely to you; or with truth he must rejoin, in calling you most cruel.—Then with rapture will he deposit your precious Gift, as desired.

THOSE Gentlemen who were requested to



BACHELOR'S BALL.

THE Company of Miss Harriet Moore is requested at Mr. MILLS' HALL, at the Lower Falls, in Newton, on Thursday Evening, Jan. 25, 1816, at 5 o'clock.

A. C. CURTIS, B. HOOKER, J. MARSTON, } Managers { H. HOOKER, C. ADAMS, W. HURD.

Gentlemen, now that we have shown you some of the important motives for matrimony: increase of fortune, procurement of an heir in order to protect your fortune, maintaining a good social standing and generally, to avoid becoming the dreaded bachelor. You might now ask; how does a man go about attracting a mate?

Be of a Charitable Nature

A periodical called, "Eighteenth Life", interviewed one Professor M.M. Roberts about "…the Tradition of Masculine Benevolence". The professor suggests that to attract a mate, a man must be "… must be more than a devoted suitor or an accomplished member of his profession; he must be a dedicated citizen who cares about the needs of people from all classes" (Roberts 76); he must be a hero. Benevolence is more than just giving money to the poor; you must also show goodwill to everyone whether they are your servant or your superior (Roberts 76).

Some believe that benevolence is something you are born with while others believe it can be learned (Roberts 77). Miss Jane Austen, a local woman we mentioned earlier, tells us that Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy was not always the benevolent chap he is now. He was not kindly to those whom he thought were beneath him. He even behaved poorly to the woman who ultimately became his wife, Elizabeth Bennet. We are to understand from onlookers at a certain ball that Mr. Darcy told Mr. Charles Bingley that he thought Miss Elizabeth Bennet only, "…tolerable; [and] not handsome enough to tempt [him]" (Austen 7) very prideful on Mr. Darcy's part.

Mr. Bingley, on the other hand, was describe by Austen as being, "good looking and gentleman-like; [with] a pleasant countenance and easy, unaffected manners" (6). So, you see here we have two men with similar upbringing and while one shows little benevolence, the other has it in abundance. Since, Mr. Darcy seems to undergo such a change in personality that Miss Elizabeth ultimately accepts his proposal, we must conclude that benevolence can be learned. This is good news for our readers. Therefore, seek to become benevolent and thereby become a hero and you too may attract a quality wife. *

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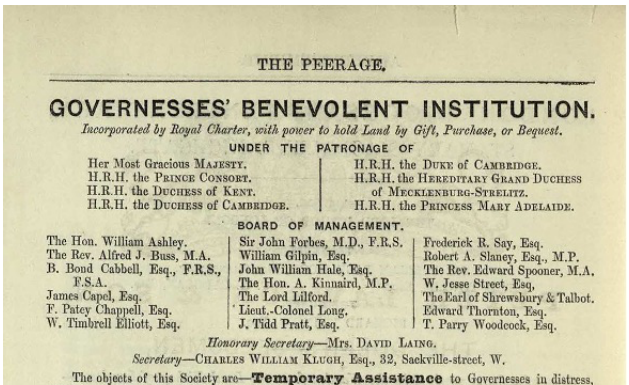

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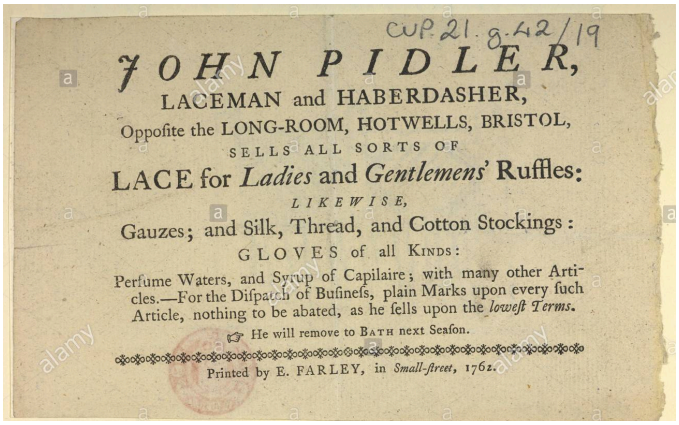
The London Reporter has it on good advice that tending to one's toilet is important in. order not to offend the ladies. As such, we are providing the following:

If you look a bit too youthful and are as yet unable to grow a proper beard ……

Or, if you have difficulty controlling your hair growth…

And remember, clothes make the man…



And don't forget that bad teeth lead to foul smelling breath…..

We at the London Reporter hope that we have inspired you single gentlemen and that we have provided you with valuable information with which to move forward in your endeavors to make a good match. Remember, as a bachelor you have no chance of procuring a male heir for your family's estate. As a bachelor, you could be the reason your family loses the comfort of their current lifestyle.

While you may feel overwhelmed with the idea of marriage, remember certain positions demand respect. In becoming a husband, you also become a man. As a man, you are the lord and master of your estate. As such, yours is the final word in your household.

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