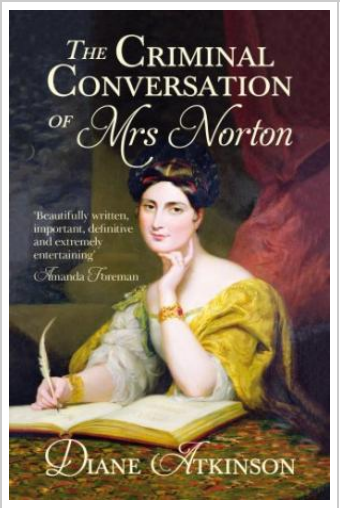

The Criminal Conversation of Mrs Norton

By Atkinson, Diane.

Arrow. 1 Paperback(s), 2012. soft. Book Condition: New. Married at 19 to bullying Tory lawyer George Norton, Caroline Sheridan had become a respected poet and a celebrated society beauty when she separated from her husband. He then accused her of adultery"criminal conversation," in Victorian Londonwith his political enemy Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister, and the scandal nearly ended Melbourne's government (and inspired Charles Dickens, who witnessed it, to fictionalize the trial in The Pickwick Papers). Even though the charges were thrown out, Norton was legally able to seize Caroline's possessions and hide her three sons from her. Here the author of Suffragettes in Pictures and Elsie and Mairi Go to War shows how this burning injustice spurred Caroline to campaign influentially for the Custody of Infants Act (1839) and the Matrimonial Causes Act (1857)."Expertly researched and finely written. Mrs Norton's journey from abused wife to passionate reformer is as moving as it is fascinating, and [Diane] Atkinson's richly detailed work does her subject the justice she deserves."BBC History Magazine 486.

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