

# The Marriage of Ray Rodriguez

BY MARTIN J. PRITCHARD

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Hon. William Scarsdale was a pleasing offshoot of the English aristocracy. He was large and good, had been up to his ears in debt since his Eton days, made a boast of never having entered a lady's drawing room or gone to bed sober for the last ten years, was on the free list of half the theaters and a member of all the night clubs, claimed friendship with every demirep in town and was cut by his father in the street about twice a week.

"Back up, old chap! You look as though you'd been to your own blooming funeral."

"Perhaps Mr. Symons has been to Monte Carlo," sneered Algie Thurston, who hated Lionel and was quite aware of the gay Lalage's defections.

"Or paid an unsatisfactory morning call on old Solomons. Won't he spring another thou?"

"He ought, if it's only to let you settle your Grand National account with your pals."

"Can't you leave the man alone?" cried good natured, sweet Billy. "If he's got the lump about something, give him a drink and don't bother him. Fancy throwing Solomons and crocks that come in last at a man who could buy all his up tomorrow if he liked!"

In his more fuddled moments Billy Scarsdale always persisted that his friend had only to say the word to have command of both Mr. Rodriguez's fortune and daughter.

"Dear me!" drawled in his high pitched voice Mr. Algernon Thurston. "Since when has Mr. Lionel Symons achieved wealth?"

"Achieved fiddlesticks!" snorted Billy over his fifth brandy and soda. "Why the doose can't you talk like any one else? Dear old Lil here can touch for any number of thousands next week, if he likes, and get a jolly pretty girl for a wife thrown in too."

"Indeed! I'm glad to hear it. Always pleased to congratulate a man. May one ask who is the lady?"

There was quite a breathless pause in the room, and the Bats gathered with considerable interest round a man who might so soon be within measurable distance of respectable solvency.

Lionel Symons did not answer. He only reeled a little, for the smoke and drink were getting into his head. He also was conscious in a vague way that it was "not the thing" to mention a lady's name in a club. But Billy Scarsdale was troubled with no scruples, and he flung Rachel Rodriguez's name to the grinning crowd as a fox is thrown to hounds.

Through the chorus of "Lucky dog" and "By Jove!" Mr. Thurston's thin voice cut like a knife.

"I think you're wrong, Billy. Tonight's Pall Mall is authorized to announce Miss Rachel Rodriguez's engagement and immediate marriage to Lord Tregrethick."

Lionel Symons was never quite sure how he got away from the Bats and back to his own rooms. He found when he arrived there that he had bought a copy of The Pall Mall and that the announcement of Ray's approaching marriage was certainly in it. Only when he read the lines did he realize how completely he had during all the past trouble weeks been depending on "something turning up" which would secure to him his cousin's fortune. And now luck had failed him, for even in the midst of his crushing disappointment he was fain to confess to himself that he had placed small faith in Ray's own yielding and gentle spirit.

During the weary round of thought that lasted all through that night he found himself unconsciously dwelling on that same weakness in Ray's character. At first everything beat heavily in his brain together, but as the hours went by one idea was formulated out of chaos—Ray had loved him, but in her weakness had denied her love. He had influenced her for months, now he was her father's turn. But why—why should it not be his again? With the light of day his determination grew, and what spur his own courage failed to give was administered by his dire necessities and the more than usually unpleasant morning's post. The marriage must be stopped, and Ray must be his somehow. That was all he knew as after a cold but he started for a ride, and this time he determined that wit and not lack should pull the coach out of the mire.

Within a fortnight of the announcement of Ray Rodriguez's marriage the invitations to the wedding were in the hands of her friends, who duly flocked to Park lane to grace the nuptials of an heiress to millions and a "live lord." The town voted the whole entertainment charming, and if the bridegroom was verging on middle age and the bride looked rather pale what did it matter when there were five different suits of jewels, acres of gold plate, a mansion in Grosvenor square, half a dozen carriages and a truly imperial trossouage to discuss? Besides, pallor became Ray's blond beauty, though she certainly overdid it a little when she took leave of her father and looked as though she were going to faint.

It must have been her anxiety to get into the open air that made her on reaching the hall door slip her hand from her husband's arm and run so quickly through the crowd down the steps to the carriage door. Like a slight gray shadow she passed and then, like a shadow, was gone, for scarcely had she set foot on the brougham step than the door was shut to with a crash.

"What a foolish footman!" cried some gaping onlookers, and "Heavens, the horses have taken fright!" screamed others. With a dash and flash the small coupe was off, cleaving like lightning the long ranks of waiting carriages, when, on starting in pursuit of the runaway steeds, became so inextricably blocked, owing, it was said afterward, to the singularly bad driving of some half dozen cabmen, who got themselves and their cabs all across the road, that for quite ten min-

utes the thoroughfare was wholly impassable.

But the sensation of those ten minutes was as nothing as that which grew as the afternoon stole by and the lost bride neither returned nor was found. Within an hour every hospital and police station was being searched for her maimed body. Then, as no news was forthcoming from those sources, a murmur thrilled through the town:

"Was it really an accident, after all?"

At midnight it got about among the clubs that the lost coupe had been found overturned in a ditch on the road to Harrow, with the two horses quietly grazing alongside. The Bats had extra drinks on the strength of it, and there was much nudging and winking among Billy Scarsdale's set, so long as they were in a condition to do one or the other. Only Mr. Algie Thurston drawled out:

"What an ass Symons is to think that he'll get the better of old Rodriguez!"

No amount of contradiction sufficed to lull up the scandal attaching to Miss Ray Rodriguez's marriage, for with the marvelous power of deduction that is vouchsafed to all men and women, it was speedily ascertained that it was none other than Lionel Symons who had abducted Lord Tregrethick's wife. The dessert, however, was given to the choice feast of gossip by Mr. Rodriguez.

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the closely shuttered lower windows and the broken panes of those above. From one of these a sudden wisp of muslin curtain fluttered forlornly. The old man watched it as though it had been the wavel hand of his daughter and without words strode on through the undergrowth and ooze. Cut in an angle of the house was a glass door, which yielded at his first touch and gave admittance to a stone paved entry, where already the damp autumn had raised between the flags a tracery of green moss.

"Rodriguez, it's impossible that can be here. Let's get out of this ghastly!"

The words died on Adrian Tregrethick's lips, lost in the low croon of a woman's sweet voice which floated like dream music across the foul air of the house.

Yes, it was she, Ray, who was coming through the nearly dark rooms, where the damp trickled in oozy tears down the walls. She wore a white gown, a cheap flimsy thing. She must have walked through the garden in it, for even in the fast growing dusk they could see the green stains and slime of the pools upon the hem. She stepped very slowly, and the pallor of her small white face and the glint of her yellow ruffled hair gleamed uncanonically through the gloom. She did not see them, for she was occupied with her little song and in the smoothing out of the jagged end of her faded sash ribbon, which to Lord Tregrethick's eyes looked queerly crumpled and worn.

Light as a spirit and almost as unearthly, she wandered on till she came to within a pace of where the two men stood watching her with eyes of pity and alarm.

She looked a little blankly at them, but neither fear nor joy, shame nor relief, disturbed the low music of her voice as she said very quietly:

"Who are you? Do you want Lionel?" She shifted her head and glanced over her shoulder as if frightened child might do. "Hush! she whispered. 'You must be very quiet; he must not be disturbed; he—he's asleep—since yesterday.'"

Her broken words trailed into silence, but that half fearful, half vacant glance toward a distant door betrayed her to her husband.

With a muttered "Keep her here" and a thrill of horror pulsing through his heart Lord Tregrethick slipped past Ray and went through the squalid rooms. As he laid his hands upon the farthest door Ray wailed: "Don't wake him! Please don't! He sleeps so well. I've knocked so often, and he will not hear."

One push forced the frail bolt, and as Tregrethick set foot within the pitch dark room a huge gray rat scudded out and pattered away over the dusty floor. Even as he dragged open the creaking shutters he knew what he should see when he faced the room again.

Yes; it was there—an ungainly, huddled heap, with a rusty barred revolver lying beside it and the frayed rags of a faded silk ribbon clutched in one hand.

After one glance at the dreadful thing he left, pulling the door to behind him and crying out to Rodriguez: "Take her away, anywhere from this!"

Poor Ray! She went very quietly with them; only, as they pushed their way through the wet tangle of the garden, she turned and, waving one hand toward the house, said: "Goodbye, my love! Goodbye, my heart!"

Neither Rodriguez nor Tregrethick ever found out if Lionel Symons had tried to take Ray with him into the great unknown. They are not even sure that she realizes he is dead, for God has been very merciful to her, and the veil that enshrouds her memory is impenetrable.

**HISTORIC STAGECOACH.**

Preserved in the Postal Museum at the National Capital.

One of the most interesting relics of obsolete postal service to be seen at the museum in Washington, says the Washington Post, is an old time Rocky Mountain combination passenger and mail coach, built in 1808. This was among the first of its kind to carry the mails in Montana, the route of this particular coach being from Helena to Bozeman, the trip consuming a week.

The residents along the same section now receive four mails daily. The coach was donated to the museum by S. S. Huntley, general manager of the Yellowstone Park Transportation company. It was captured by Indians in 1877 and recaptured after a hot pursuit by General Howard. Many distinguished persons have traveled in it, among them being General Garfield, before he was president, President Arthur, on a visit to Montana in 1882, and General Sherman, on a tour of inspection in 1877. The latter was a passenger when the coach made the distance from Fort Ellis to Helena, 108 miles, in eight hours, six horses being the team, with frequent relays.

This antiquated affair on wheels is the simple, rugged stagecoach of the Beadle dime novel. The James brothers and the Fords may have enriched themselves by looting this identical relic of the west. There are a front and rear seat, the former, under the driver's seat, being the repository of Uncle Sam's mail bags, the rear being reserved to carry baggage. Heavy leather springs and iron ties to the wheels half an inch thick enabled the vehicle to withstand the rough usage to which it was subjected. With a capacity inside for nine people, others riding on top and beside the driver, with slots in the sides of the coach through which rifles could be aimed, it seemed evident that a knight of the road had to be of a certain manly to tackle one of these once a week "expresses."

**Realistic.**

The Landscape Painter—Don't you know, I'm quite a realist.

The Animal Painter (sarcastically)—Well, well! Who'd have thought it!

The Landscape Painter—Fact, I assure you. I always sneeze when I'm painting a lazy atmosphere.

**Painful Case.**

Mrs. Rubba—How's Mrs. Clatter this morning, doctor?

Doctor—Suffering terribly.

Mrs. Rubba—What, with only a slight throat affection?

Doctor—Yes, but she can't speak—Chicago News.

## THE SENSE OF SIGHT

HOW AN INFANT SLOWLY LEARNS TO EXERCISE IT.

At First the Newborn Babe Has the Power Only to Distinguish Between Light and Darkness—The Development of the Power of Vision.

The sense most early exercised by the newborn infant is the sense of sight, but at first it has the power only to distinguish light from darkness and is in comparison with its later development blind, while in many of the lower creatures the senses are at birth fully developed.

What a difference there is between the dull eye of the newborn infant and the sharp vision of the young chick, which is able to pick up with precision a grain of corn or even snap up a fly while the eggshell may be still sticking to its back! The eye of the infant, however, is developed very gradually, and during infancy and childhood it learns how to see. In the first few days it notices the difference between light and darkness when the light is very intense, and it may even knit its brow in sleep if a bright light be brought close to its face.

On the same principle a striking bright color will also be noticed when held close to the face.

In all these cases, however, the infant follows the object by turning its head and not by the movement of the eyes.

The eyelids open and shut from birth, but they are not always moved at the same times with the movements of the eyeballs until the infant has reached the second or third month. Under two or three months of age infants do not wink when the hand or an object is waved before the face, because they do not see the hand distinctly.

One of the remarkable points of interest in the development of the infant's power of vision is the way in which it learns to appreciate the objects seen. It has to learn to discover the distance of objects, their shape, size, character, etc., and this it does with the assistance of the sense of touch.

The face of the mother or nurse is made familiar in that it is brought so close to the infant's face.

After the infant has learned to see objects distinctly at the distance of several feet it begins to use both eyes in common. At first the eyes act independently of each other, so that it undoubtedly has double vision and sees everything double. This double vision can be produced for many at will by looking "cross eyes."

The infant having reached the point when it sees an object clearly, it must also begin to understand objects of three dimensions—that is, to find out the difference between a flat surface and a solid body. Here the sense of touch also assists. The infant grasps an object and, putting it to its lips and face, satisfies itself as to the shape, character, etc.

It is interesting in this connection to note some cases in which a person born blind recovers sight when grown up.

In one case a young man who had lost his sight in early infancy was so completely blinded that he could not distinguish even the strongest light from darkness.

After an operation on one eye he began to see objects without understanding them—not being able to judge their distances from his eye—and he felt as if everything was touching his eye, so that to touch an object he had to put one finger on the hand up before his face, pointing at the object aimed at, and reach forward until his finger came in contact with the object.

After he had recovered the use of both eyes he began to find out that everything was not flat, but that many things had a certain thickness as well as length and breadth, and in this way he began to see solid objects.

But even for a year or two after complete recovery he was unable to decide whether a certain figure was a flat surface, as in a painting, or a solid body.

He was also obliged