

A Clean Bill

In the drawing room of a house in Mayfair Violet Raymond, a pretty, thoughtful looking girl of some 22 years, was sitting anxiously awaiting the arrival of an expected visitor. Presently there was a tap at the door, and a servant entered.

"Captain Walter Grenville, miss." The girl rose as a tall, bronzed man of about 35 came into the room.

"I hope you will forgive me for asking you to call, Captain Grenville," she said with a grave smile. "I heard you were back in London, and I felt that under the circumstances you would not think it a liberty. My aunt, Lady Shenley, has retired with a bad headache, else she would also be here to receive you."

"I am only too glad to be of any service," he responded as he sat down. "In fact, if you had not written, I should have ventured to call."

She sat down opposite him. The only previous occasion on which they had met had been at Liverpool three years ago, when he had set sail to take up his command in West Africa. With him had been her brother, young Dick Raymond, then starting his military career as a subaltern, and she and her aunt had journeyed down to see the last of him.

He remembered every detail of the short time he had spent in her company; now as he met her again, after the terrible thing that had happened, his heart went out to her in pity.

"You know what I want to know," she said, quickly. "I only saw your official despatch published in the papers."

"God knows it was hard enough to write," he broke out. "It was kind of you to say what you did—a gallant and promising officer," she exclaimed. "But tell me all, please," she finished pleadingly.

"We were in Sierra Leone when the rising in the Badakata district broke out," he began, speaking in a low, disjointed voice. "I was immediately despatched with an expedition to quell it; your brother came along with me, the only other white officer who could be spared. We got up near to Acandro and encamped over night on the south bank of the river. In the morning we prepared to cross; the natives, we understood, were ambushed about two miles away on the other side." He paused. "Suddenly, as we began to cross, we were attacked by them in the rear. They were in full force; we were surprised, and the fighting was desperate. Numbers of our men fell, and it looked as if we were in a tight corner, when Sherston and his relief party came up on the opposite bank, just in time. We dropped flat on our faces and they fired over our heads—the situation was saved."

"And Dick?" she inquired tremulously.

"The last time I saw him was some minutes before Sherston came up," he said, speaking with difficulty. "He threw up his arms suddenly and staggered backward on the bank."

"Into the river?" she whispered. He nodded.

There was a moment's silence, then the girl rose to her feet. The tears were glistening in her eyes, but she was smiling.

"If it had to be, thank God he died as he did—fighting at his post," she cried. "It's something for me to be proud of."

He looked at her steadily. "Yes, it's good to think that," he said slowly.

She stood before him with shining eyes, for the moment full of enthusiasm. Then it died away and she sank down and covered her face with her hands.

A little later he left with a promise to come to luncheon one day with Lady Shenley. He went straight to the rooms which his man had engaged for him in Duke street, Piccadilly. Sinking into an armchair, he buried himself in thought.

"Yes, I did right," he said at last, with a sigh. About a week afterward he received an invitation to luncheon at the house in Mayfair, and he went with a curious feeling of eager anticipation. Violet Raymond treated him in the light of an old friend, and he found the couple of hours spent in her society more enjoyable than anything he had yet experienced. Presently, when he rose to depart Lady Shenley, who was then about to take her afternoon drive, offered to put him down in Piccadilly, and he accepted gratefully.

He sat opposite Violet and Lady Shenley in the open victoria, replying politely to the latter's gay and irresponsible chatter. He formed the impression that, while Lady Shenley was kind in her way to Violet, the two had not much in common, and in this he was correct. The girl was built of far more reliable stuff than her light-hearted, pleasure-loving aunt.

The carriage turned into Bond street and rolled down toward Piccadilly at a good pace. As it swept round the corner there was a sharp cry of warning from the pavement. Walter Grenville sprang up and saw a child running across the road a

few yards ahead. She lost her footing on the greasy wood pavement and fell sprawling in the roadway right in front of the horses. The coachman pulled frantically at his reins, but they were going at full speed. There was another yell from the bystanders, then a sudden silence. The carriage swayed to and fro; another second and the horses would have trampled on the child had not a figure darting madly from the curb, pulled her from under the horses' hoofs and throw her out of harm's way. The next moment his foot slipped on the slimy surface and falling the pole of the carriage struck him and he was trampled on.

The carriage came to a standstill with a jerk and Grenville leaped out. Already a little crowd had gathered round the prostrate figure; he was carried to the pavement. Grenville pushed his way through and leaned over the man. He was apparently a tramp; his clothes were in rags, his face was thin and gaunt, with some weeks' growth of straggling black beard on his chin. From a wound in his forehead the blood was streaming and he was moaning. As Grenville dropped on one knee beside him he slowly opened his eyes. The officer gave a sudden start, then peered eagerly into the man's face. He rose to his feet quickly.

"My rooms are just opposite—No. 33B Duke street," he said thickly to the policeman who had just appeared. "Take him there, and I will get a doctor at once."

He hurried back to the carriage where Violet was waiting pale and trembling.

"It's rather a bad accident," he said swiftly. "I'm having him taken to my rooms. You go back now; I will let you know later how things are."

"A terrible misfortune!" exclaimed Lady Shenley, piteously. "Every one is looking at us. Tell John to go home at once, Violet."

"Can't I help?" said the latter anxiously to Grenville. He shook his head.

"I will let you know," he repeated, then gave directions to the coachman; the carriage turned and moved swiftly away.

He approached the knot of people again. Already a shutter had been obtained and the wounded man laid upon it. They raised him carefully and carried him across the road, the crowd of bystanders following curiously. Grenville led the way to the house and opened the door with a latchkey.

"Scrivener," he called to his servant, who appeared in the hall, "there has been an accident; fetch the nearest doctor—quick!"

Scrivener ran off without his hat. The man, now unconscious, was brought in, carried slowly upstairs and deposited on a bed. A few seconds afterward a doctor arrived, and Grenville was busily employed in giving him assistance. Then retiring to a corner of the room, he waited until the doctor had finished his examination. At last he rose from his task. He turned and walked over to Grenville.

"Nothing can save him," he said in a low voice. "He has received internal injuries which make it impossible for him to live more than a day at the most. He will regain consciousness again, but if we were to attempt to move him to a hospital he would die on the way."

"No, no; he must stop here," said Grenville between his teeth.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "You will not be troubled long," he said, picking up his hat and gloves. "You can do absolutely nothing beyond following the directions I have given you; they will but make the few hours he has to live more comfortable. Good-bye; I will look in again in the evening."

Grenville accompanied the doctor to the door, then went back to the room. At the entrance he was met by Scrivener, who had been in, was just coming out. There was a scared look on his face.

"Good God, sir, it's ———!" he whispered. "I know," he said with clenched teeth. "Mind, not a word of this to any one."

He went into the room again and sat by the bedside gazing at the white, pinched face. Suddenly the eyes of the man opened, and centered themselves on his face.

"Grenville!" he murmured feverishly. "Of course—who should it be? It's 'Forward' in a few minutes now! Oh, my head!" he finished with a moan. Scrivener brought in the medicine which the doctor had sent. They gave him a dose, and presently he dropped off into a heavy sleep. Grenville watched by his bedside. Later the doctor came in again.

"He may last through the night, but not much longer," he said, after another examination. "I have ordered a nurse to come around."

The next morning found the patient still alive, but the doctor gave him but a few hours. About 11 o'clock he had a spell of consciousness, and Grenville sat beside him talking to him. Then he grew half-delirious again.

The door opened and Scrivener appeared; he beckoned Grenville aside.

"Lady Shenley and Miss Raymond have called, sir," he whispered. "Lady Shenley is in her carriage, but the young lady insisted on seeing you, so I have shown her into your sitting room."

"Stop here," said Grenville, with a white face, then strode to the door, and opened it. He stepped out and shut it quickly, for the

man in his delirium was talking loudly.

He crossed to the other side of the landing and opened the door of his sitting room. As he did so the man's voice suddenly raised itself to a shout. "Grenville!" he cried.

He stepped hastily into the room and shut the door. The girl had risen from her seat and stood before him, her face white and terror-stricken.

"That voice!" she cried. "It was Dick's!"

She was gazing into his eyes fearfully. Grenville clenched his hands; the veins stood out on his forehead.

"It was Dick's!" she repeated. "Oh, for the love of heaven, tell me!"

"Yes—Dick's," he said hoarsely. "If you are strong enough, come with me. But it's almost death," he added, looking at her in anguish. She moved herself with an effort.

"I am strong enough," she said between her shut lips. Without a word he led her across the landing and opened the door. Scrivener started when he saw her, and then slipped out of the room noiselessly. The girl approached, and gazed at the bandaged head. Then she dropped on her knees beside the bed and took his hand between hers. She pressed it to her lips.

"Dick! Dick!" she said with a sigh.

The wild, delirious look seemed to pass from his eyes. With a painful effort he raised his head.

"My Vii!" he groaned, the tears starting to his eyes. "Oh, my God! that I should have brought this on you!" He paused to recover his strength.

"Yes, it's a lie that Grenville told in his despatch. I didn't die like a man at my post; I bolted like a coward!" He paused again. "I was in charge of the right wing when the surprise came. Instead of holding their ground, my men—West Indians, curse 'em—broke and ran for their lives. To this day I don't know the reason. I simply seemed to grow gray with fear. I lost my nerve, lost my manhood. God knows how I did it—I fled with them! Grenville saw me do it!" he finished, panting for breath.

"Don't Dick, dear; that's enough!" implored the girl.

"You must hear me through," he went on weakly. "Half a mile further I drew up. For the first time I realized what I had done. If I had had my revolver I should have shot myself, but I had dropped that. I could have died with shame. I knew I could not go back—never look a brave man in the face again!" He paused and drew in a tortuous breath. "Somahow or other I managed to get down to coast to Waru—I had a little money with me. I got a passage in a trading brig to Liverpool and landed there with a few shillings in my pocket—dead to the world—for I found out what Grenville had done for me—bless him! Since then it has been a living hell—tramping, now and then a job, starving! But I deserved it all! A man without honor has no right to live and now, now!" His head fell back on the pillow and a deathly gray pallor came to his face. He closed his eyes. They stood watching him, not daring to move. He opened his eyes once again and wetted his lips.

"But the child—I've given my life; it wasn't much, but it's better than nothing!" he gasped.

"Yes, yes, Dick, your bill's clean!" broke in Grenville. "Your sister knows it; I know it." With a tremendous effort young Raymond raised himself on his elbow.

"Ah, it's good to have a clean!"—The last word choked in his throat as he fell back. With a cry the girl bent forward and peered into his face, then she rose, and her tear-laden eyes met Grenville's gaze.

"You need not be ashamed of him," he said gently. One evening some months later, the two were together again. He had been telling her something which had brought a delicate flush to her cheek. Then she asked him a question.

"Why did I do it?" He paused. "Do you remember that night at Liverpool when I first met you, I saw what your brother was to you—that he was everything in your life. I fell in love with you that night! Then when, months later, that terrible thing happened, I realized in a flash what it would mean to you if I let the truth get known, so I thought for hours, then wrote the despatch as you read it." There was a long pause. Then she raised her eyes to his.

"You did it because you loved me?" she whispered. He bent down, and taking her in his arms, kissed her on the lips.

"Because I loved you; because somehow I felt it was not his real self that had prompted him to act as he did—a mad impulse, but not his nature. And you and I know that this was right, that he wiped the stain out," he said.

"Yes, we know," she answered, with a soft sigh of content.

HER PREFERENCE.

"Shall I administer gas before extracting your tooth?" asked the dentist.

"Well," answered the fair patient from a back township, "if it doesn't cost any more I'd rather you'd give me electric light."

Friend—"I suppose your wife still thinks you are a treasure?" Benedict—"No—a treasure."

THE CENSUS OF ENGLAND

THE CURIOUS INFORMATION IT REVEALS.

Husbands at Fifteen—Very Young Children at Arduous Work.

A book of summary tables relating to the 1901 census of England and Wales has just been published. It is full, from the first page to the last, of interesting and curious information. Who, for instance, imagined that there were more than 100 centenarians in England and Wales? There are 146. Or, rather, as centenarians are perishable beings, it would be more correct to say that there were 146 in April, 1901—93 being women.

Again, who would think that the centenarian thrived best in a big city? Apparently he does, for of the total number 102 lived in towns and 44 in the country.

HUSBANDS AT FIFTEEN.

Two boys are husbands at the age of 15, and two girls were widows at 16. A boy of 20 had a wife of 65; a girl of 15 had a husband of 60. There were 5,611,381 husbands, 5,717,537 wives, 550,330 widowers, and 1,246,407 widows. The explanation of the disparity between the number of husbands and wives is, of course, the fact that there are wives in England whose husbands are abroad, and husbands whose wives are also absent. There were 91 widows under the age of 20, and 25,112 over the age of 80; and 3,625 very old maids had passed the age of 85.

One of the most curious tables is that which records the callings of women.

CALLINGS OF WOMEN.

They have asserted their rights in some very masculine fields, as the following abstract shows:—

Women—Doctors, 212; dentists, 140; veterinary surgeons, 3; law clerks, 367; authors and journalists, 1,249; actresses, 6,443; school teachers, 17,670; artists, 3,789; blacksmiths' strikers, 316; brassfounders, 440; shepherds, 12; slaughterers, 3; knackers, 136; crossing sweepers, 110; barmaids, 27,707; cellar women, 1,316; anchorers, 86; sword-makers, 6; bill discounters, 56; boiler-makers, 4; bricklayers, 4; clerks, 55,784; carters and waggons, 660; commercial travellers, 382; gardeners, 36; pavior, 1; level crossing keepers, 265; omnibus conductors, 8; chimney sweeps, 54; slaters, 3; undertakers, 279.

Judging from the above, the only occupations still confined to men are those of the soldier, groom, cabman, coal heaver, engine driver, navy policeman, motor car driver, and Roman Catholic priest.

The table of the afflicted in England and Wales is as follows—Blind, 25,317; deaf and dumb, 15,245; deaf, 18,807; lunatics, 83,772; imbeciles, 48,852.

In another afflicted class—those who languish in gaol—are thirty-five "barristers and solicitors," sixteen doctors, and twenty "authors, editors, journalists, reporters and shorthand writers." Of the two million people in Wales, 280,905 speak Welsh only.

During the century the population multiplied four fold—from 6,260,852 to 32,527,843. On the night of the census 1,645 persons were found sleeping in barns or sheds, 12,547 in caravans, tents, or the open air. In the latter category Hampshire topped the list with 895.

Of the 4,536,541 persons enumerated in London, 3,016,530 were London-born. Other persons, born in London and enumerated in other places numbered 1,115,178. On the balance, therefore, as between people born in the metropolis who left it, and people born elsewhere who came to it, London gained about 400,000 souls.

CHILDREN IN BUSINESS.

But perhaps one of the most remarkable features of the tables is the early age at which children set out on the battle of life.

Between the ages of ten and fourteen there are in England and Wales 2,673,967 children the sexes being pretty evenly divided—1,334,688 boys and 1,339,279 girls. Of these children 138,130 boys and 70,262 girls are all at work—not at their lessons, but at every conceivable industry or occupation dealt with in the return.

As a rule, the girls seem to take more seriously to the business of life than the boys. There are, for instance, 142 ten-year-old "charwomen," 505 employed in laundries, 681 engaged in the tobacco trade, 450 in the jewelry and watchmaking industry, 674 in the earthenware trades, and 30,367 in various textile occupations.

There is one girl insurance clerk at this tender age, as well as one railway clerk and one "engaged in fishing." There are three girl "bargemen" of ten years, seven "warehousemen," four gunsmiths, seven brassfounders and two ironfounders—though a girl ironfounder of ten years is a thing "the imagination boggles at."

WHY SNAR?

"Did you ever notice the peculiar habit some men have of snapping their fingers while trying to recall something which has escaped their minds for the moment?" asked a man who keeps a keen lookout for the curious in human nature. "Now, here is a curious study, and one

which, if pursued, may throw much light on a very interesting subject. Why should a man snap his fingers when he temporarily forgets a thing? Does this physical movement aid the mental processes? Does the fact prove the material basis of the mind? It must show a very intimate connection between the two. Curiously enough, this same condition will manifest itself in many ways under similar circumstances. All men do not snap their fingers when there is a mental lapse which they are seeking to overcome. They will find other ways of bridging the gap. One man will pat his foot when he forgets temporarily. Another will bite his lip, or place his finger against his temple, or rub one hand across the forehead, or resort to some other effort to stimulate his lagging memory. Why is this? Is one's memory really aided by these physical movements? It must be, else humanity would have dropped them long ago. Almost every man, when he forgets something—name, for instance, which is right on the end of his tongue—will make some kind of physical effort to conjure the proper image from its hiding-place in the brain cells. Why it is I do not know. I know merely that it happens, and I suppose it answers some good purpose."

NIGHT IN A PELICAN'S NEST.

Adventure of a Sportsman at a Famous Resort for Birds.

With what satisfaction I recall my visit to Bird Rock, that famous resort for birds just within the passage between Newfoundland and Cap Breton. Audubon, in a wave-tossed schooner, lay off the rock for hours in the vain hope that he might effect a landing; and one could there fore appreciate weather which permitted one safely to run a boat onto the hand's breadth of beach beneath the bird-inhabited walls towering more than a hundred feet above. The top was reached by means of a crate a rake, and a windlass—apparatus subsequently found most useful in reaching points of vantage whence to photograph birds nesting on the face of the cliff, says a writer in the World's Work.

I have not always been so fortunate, however, and a trip to study a small colony of white pelicans was attended by far from satisfactory results. Size and color combine to make these birds exceedingly conspicuous, and an opportunity to test a rifle upon them is rarely lost. Where man and gun are found, there fore, the birds nest in only the most isolated places. This particular group of about forty birds had selected an islet or, locally a "reef," so far out in Shoal lake, Manitoba that it was wholly invisible from the shore. But reach them we must and the trip of four or five miles was made in a twelve-foot punt, the bottom of which could be waded on only with great caution. The reef was reached and the splendid white birds were found sitting on their nests of sand and gravel. A our approach they arose and, with characteristic dignity of flight, disappeared far down the lake. In awaiting their return, concealed in a small patch of reeds, a sudden change occurred in the weather and soon we found ourselves prisoners in pelican-land. Fortunately we had a tent-fly, which with a push-pole, a pair of crossed oars, and a camera tripod, would have made a passable shelter under ordinary circumstances. But in the end the circumstances proved to be extraordinary. The storm became one to date from. Not only were we forced to ballast our tent with boulders, but, sitting in a pelican's nest, the only available unroofed position, I passed a good portion of the night with my hands clasped around the ridge pole of our improvised shelter to prevent the whole affair from blowing into the lake. Eventually we reached the mainland, none the worse for the experience, but the pelicans, alas! refused to share their home with us, and in their absence their eggs were devoured by the western gulls that nested near them.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

The most truthful men are dead and dumb.

Jealousy at best is but a chronic case of self-love.

A man of genius often makes a fortune for a man of talent.

During the courtship love shows up best in the dark.

Many a man mistakes his dyspeptic ideas for moral convictions.

The lawyer seldom works with a will until the doctor clears the way.

Singers who pursue the even tenor of their way never get off their bass.

If a man trusts to luck for his dinner he will never be troubled with the gout.

All the respect and veneration due to old age is ladled out to the wealthy grandparent.

It sometimes happens that the man who is afraid to take a chance is beaten at his own game.

So long as the rural water uses patent insides he ought to be proof against cholera germs.

The man who puts his trust in Providence and simultaneously hustles for a job is reasonably sure to land.

Don't spend all your time in making promises. If you would retain your friends it is up to you to give an occasional performance.