

"Distinctly!" said Mr. Herbert with emphasis. "To preserve authority among the—ah—vulgar, a gentleman, and above all, a priest, should keep a certain aloofness—a certain dignity. How can that dignity be preserved by a clergyman who drinks—ah—beer?"—Mr. Herbert got out the vulgar monosyllable with something of an effort—"with a crowd of rustics before a common ale-house?"

"Stokes's beer is really very good, sir," said Bream, gravely.

It never entered into Mr. Herbert's head that anybody, especially his curate, could dare to chaff him, and he put aside the irrelevant remark with a wave of his hand.

"Let me ask you, Mr. Herbert," said Bream, "if you ever happened to overhear those fellows talking when they were unaware of your presence?"

"Very possibly. I—ah—don't exactly remember any particular occasion, but it has probably occurred."

"It has occurred once or twice to me since I have been here," said Bream, "and I have noticed that on such occasions their whole conversation is one tissue of dirt and profanity. Well, sir, when I am with them, I have seldom heard a word which might not be used from the pulpit. Last night, just after you had passed, one man, Ned Roberts, from the Pear Tree Farm began to swear. I told him he had no right to use that language in my presence, but—he was drunk—he went on swearing, and Stokes turned him out and sent him home. Now surely, sir, if my presence among them obliges them to talk and think decently for an hour or so a day, that is so much gained, and the fact that it does so is surely proof enough that my familiarity has not bred contempt either of me or my office."

"There is something in what you say, Bream," said Mr. Herbert. "Still," he continued, returning to his original position, "there are limits. Don't overstep them. As for that fellow Stokes, I don't like him. During the four years he has lived here he has not once entered the church door. He has given me more trouble about—ah—tithes than any three people in the place. I don't think he led a reputable life before he came here."

"He is a fairly intelligent man, sir, and he has a good deal of influence among the labourers. As to what his life has been it is hard to say. He has travelled a good deal, though in what capacity I don't know. He is willing enough to talk of what he has seen, but he never talks about himself."

"I should say," said Mr. Herbert, "that he probably has good reason for his reticence," an uncharitable remark, which Bream attributed to the tithes dispute.

It fell out, however, that this same Stokes was to be intimately associated with the development of the one romance which was going forward in that sleepy and world-forgotten village, and it so fell out in this wise. Mr. Bream, calling at the Pig and Whistle one evening, found Stokes holding forth to his ring of customers regarding a tremendous landslip in the State of Arizona, which had happened a few years back, in a district with which he had been familiar both before and after the catastrophe. His hearers listened open-mouthed, save one sour-faced veteran, who, at the conclusion of the tale, snorted with disdainful laughter, before burying his visage in a wide-mouthed earthen mug.

"What be laughin' at, George?" asked a crony. "Why all you fools swallerin' the like of that," said the ancient.

"Don't you believe it?" asked Stokes.

"Do you believe it, as has been a telling of it?" asked the ancient sourly. "You comes here and asks Chris'en men i' their sense to b'lieve a rigmarole like that."

"Well, but George, what is it as ee don't b'lieve?"

"I don't believe one word of it," said George sturdily.

"You're wrong there, then," said Mr. Bream. "Things of that sort do occur, and as for the details of this story, I remember reading some of

them in the English papers at the time."

"There," said Stokes triumphantly. "That's what comes o' telling a story to a gentlemen as knows something. And if you want any more proof than Mr. Bream's word, why ye shall have it."

So saying he left the meeting for a moment, and presently returned with a big volume in his arms, which turned out to be a collection of literary and pictorial scraps from English, Colonial and American newspapers.

"There," he said, bumping the volume down before the dissenting George, open at a large picture—"that's the place as it was after the landslip—as it is now for all I know. I've eat my meals and slep' in that hut scores o' times, when it was a quarter of a mile higher up the mountain."

"Well," said the combative George, unable to stand against the phalanx of testimony, but retreating like a valiant general, with his face to the foe, "I don't know as it is much use to talk o' places when that kind o' thing's like to happen. I'm glad as I can go to my bed i' Crouchford without bein' afraid of finding Hilton atop o' me when I wakes i' the morning. I should look on a visitation o' that sort i' th' light of a judgment."

"Ah! surely," chorused the others, with the exception of Stokes, who was surveying the ancient with a visage of humourous disdain, and Mr. Bream, who was turning the leaves of the book.

"Have you been in all these places, Stokes?" asked Mr. Bream, glancing from page to page, filled with scraps of journalism from most of the English-speaking countries and settlements on the face of the globe.

"Why, no, sir," said Stokes. "Not all, but I've been in a good many of 'em. I was always fond of reading, and I cut them things out, here and there, and kept 'em, and when I came here I pasted 'em into that book. They comes in useful, sometimes, when a set o' mouldy old yokels, as has never been a mile from the town pump, calls me a liar."

George wisely declined to accept this challenge to a renewal of hostilities. Suddenly the assembly was startled by a stifled exclamation from Mr. Bream, and saw him staring like one amazed at a page of the book.

"Stokes?" he said, "rising with the volume in his hand, and speaking in a quick, uneven voice, "give me a word in private, will you? There is something here which interests me."

Stokes limped his way into the deserted parlour, and Mr. Bream followed, bearing the book, which he laid open on the table. The inn-keeper offered him a chair, he took no notice of the act, but after looking round to see that they were really alone, and the door closed, laid his finger on a cutting.

"Read that," he said, "and tell me if it's true." Stokes, after staring at him, read the paragraph, it was to this effect:

"News comes from Yuam, New Mexico, that Bluffer Hawkins, the well-known desperado of that district, has at last handed in his checks. Our readers will remember that it is a little over a month since Hawkins, accompanied by a solitary confederate, stopped the mail coach just outside Yuam and executed a daring and successful robbery on the passengers. On Tuesday night, one of the victims of the raid gave information to Police Lieutenant McCormick that Hawkins and his companion had entered the town, and were drinking in the Magnolia saloon. That officer, with his usual energetic promptness, betook himself to the place, accompanied by three of his subordinates. Immediately on his entrance, Hawkins and his companion drew their revolvers. In the first exchange of shots McCormick and one of his followers fell, fatally wounded, and there is little doubt but that Hawkins and his companion would have escaped but for the public-spirited conduct of Mr. Uriah Cleary, the proprietor of the saloon, who materially aided the officers of law by firing at Hawkins from behind. His bullet passed through the desperado's neck, and a lucky shot from one of McCormick's party settled his companion. The identity of the latter was established at the police station, where, life being discovered to be extinct, an examination of his body resulted in the discovery of several old letters, addressed

to Philip O'Mara, at an address in London. McCormick's gallant conduct has excited universal admiration, and a subscription has been liberally started on behalf of his widow and children."

(To be continued.)

POINTS.

BY ACUS.

To point a moral and adorn a tale.

—Johnson: *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

The newspapers have recently contained accounts of the strange case of a young lady whose eyes have been shedding, not tears, but pieces of glass. One can hardly fail to be struck with some odd features of the case, although he may sympathise none the less with the unfortunate young lady whose trouble is "all in her eye." Of the proverbial "glassy stare" we have all heard, but I doubt if ever before was encountered such a literal example of it. The particles of glass might not inappropriately be termed eye-glasses, for in one sense that is what they are. Now an eye that will furnish its own glasses is something new and startling,—it is itself a spectacle. If all eyes should take to furnishing their own glasses, what a terror it would be to the opticians! Like the "captain with the eye-glass," the young lady in question, it is to be hoped, will not be prevented from casting "sly glances;" in other words, that notwithstanding her curious trouble, her eyes (presumably pretty) may retain their normal health and lustre.

Geographic nomenclature should reveal to some extent the character of a country. In Europe, especially in England, the names, as a rule, are as beautiful as the places with which they are associated. As a rule the names are characteristic and interesting. The same is hardly true of America. Attention has, from time to time, been called to the nomenclature of the United States, with its Briggs-villes and Higginsvilles and more pompous Troys and Syracuses. Insignificant individuals and a classic dictionary seem to have done very good (or bad) service in the adjacent republic. And how about ourselves? Happily the name Pile-o-bones has given place to Regina. Medicine Hat remains unchanged, but it is a hat which I think might be knocked off. Moose Jaw is another name which grates, if I may so express it, upon the average jaw. Kicking Horse Pass is a striking (in a literal sense) but not unsuitable name for a mountain pass. Biscotasing, Pogamasing, Passamaquoddy and such names are good enough, but are rather trying to the average tongue. Canadian names on the whole are good. Insignificant individuals and classic dictionaries have not troubled us much as yet. New places will be springing up constantly and care should be taken to select graceful and suitable names, and to avoid such names as Brownsville, Jonesville and Robinsonville.

However well he may be prepared, there is nothing the average student faces with greater misgivings than he does his examinations. And in spite of preparation, his misgivings are often well founded; for I have heard of instances where the student has become so nervous and dizzy that he actually could not see the questions that were placed before him. Overstudy prior to an examination no doubt conduces largely to such nervousness; but it often places the student at a manifest disadvantage. Certain universities, Harvard I believe among the number, are making the experiment of advancing the student with regard rather to his daily class-work than to his examinations. This system has to recommend it, first, that it induces uniform application during the whole term instead of "cramming" at the end of it; and, second, that it does away with whatever disadvantages may be attendant upon an examination. By an examination it is only possible to gain a rough, approximate knowledge of the student's attainments, and it often partakes of the nature of a lottery. I know a student who had neglected to read his classics, but made an attempt at the eleventh hour upon the first five odes of Horace. Sure enough one of those odes was down for examination, and he went through with flying colours ahead of more conscientious students; his five odes proved a drawing coupon in the lottery of that examination. In Japan they shut the student up in a room, give him plenty of paper, and tell him to write what he knows of a subject; a thesis as we would call it. I am afraid that under such a system our student with his five odes would fare badly.