

## POINTS.

BY ACUS.

To point a moral and adorn a tale!  
—Johnson: *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

It has been well observed that there are at least three periods in the biography of everyone when he may be accounted of some importance: when he is born, when he is married (though this is sometimes skipped), and when he dies. Three times one may attain the distinction of getting into the papers; although, outside of happy parents in the first case, gushing bridesmaids in the second case, and mourning friends in the last, few may be interested. Certainly public interest in the second instance, when one is married, seems as a rule to be rather over-estimated. Of course one cuts a figure in the papers; newspaper "taffy" may be regarded as part of the wedding confectionery. But the usual round of superlatives relative to the bride and bridesmaids, and the customary catalogue of presents must be acknowledged to be of interest rather to the guests and parties immediately concerned than to the general public. As to the list of presents, any gift omitted is certain to give offense, and the list, however long, should therefore be published in full or not at all; on the whole it seems wiser not to publish it at all. Invidious distinctions as to what should and what should not be published, it would no doubt be difficult for the newspapers to make; but the parties interested, from whom, as a rule, such descriptions emanate, should realize that all this is a display of so much vanity. Then why should so much space in our public press be taken up with matters of purely private concern. To youth and beauty these remarks may seem callous; but the world in general is simply intent, as it has a right to be, on minding *its own business*, in a literal sense. Ostentatious funereal pomp is gradually becoming "bad form," as the flaunting of bridal finery in the eyes of the public will in time also become.

There seems to be some conflict of opinion as to what ought properly to constitute a popular lecture. The question is whether a lecture should be both interesting and instructive; or interesting without being instructive; or instructive without being interesting. In this, as in all other things, standards vary. An eminent divine recently excused the delivery of a very trashy lecture by remarking that a more thoughtful and finished lecture would probably put an audience to sleep. A certain facetiousness about the remark raised a smile but was it complimentary to the audience? This lecturer, like many another, seems to have under-estimated his audiences. A congregation will listen with intense interest to a profound and well prepared sermon; they would, indeed, be disappointed were it otherwise. Greater latitude, certainly, in thought and expression is allowable in a lecture; but why should the standard of general literary excellence be lowered? We set our face against trashy literature; let us be consistent regarding trashy lectures. One man says he never got any mental pabulum worth having out of a lecture; another says he has found attending lectures to be a most potent factor in the cultivation of the intellect. The difference we may assume to be not so much in the men, as in the class of lectures attended. The lecture is of itself a high type of entertainment; and the average audience is sufficiently intelligent to relieve the lecturer of any fear that he may be casting his pearls before swine.

A correspondent informs me that a colony on the Edward Bellamy plan is being established on No-mans-land, an island not far from Boston. That our race is destined for something better than the present order of things, we may safely assume; and any attempt to anticipate this new heavens and new earth, while it may be premature cannot fail to be interesting. Formerly experiments in this line have from time to time been made in the New England States. The philosophic and transcendental atmosphere of Boston is congenial to such experiments. Brook Farm, in which it will be remembered that Hawthorne was interested, was a step in the right direction. The success which has so far attended such attempts is certainly far from encouraging. As to the little colony of enthusiasts on No-mans-land, whatever its ultimate achievements may be, it must, at least in its inception, strangely violate the rules of Bellamy. Take, for example, the question of money. It is a fundamental principle underlying Bellamy's idea of a vast

mechanism of exchange, that not only should there be no money but no use for it. Well, the colony in question will obviously require money to found it, and money to maintain it. The surrounding communities being run on a different, a monetary basis, (contrary to Bellamy's idea), will necessitate the employment of money as a means of inter-communication. Outside of this, however, there remain in *Looking Backward* other hints which may well form the subject of experiment. Moore and others have from time to time attempted to realize in some degree that happy land, that Utopia, dear to the eyes of Faith and Hope; but never were the distant outlines of its promontories more clearly discerned and laid down than by Edward Bellamy in his marvellous and, in some degree, prophetic work.



I am glad to note that the Windsor and Annapolis Railway authorities are beginning to awaken to a sense of their responsibilities to that unfortunate class of people known as "the travelling public;" the season is approaching when hundreds of tourists from all parts of the continent swarm to this cool though sunny country, and of all the roads travelled none is so beautiful or popular as that which runs through the garden of the province, and provides a panoramic view of the scene of a great poet's loveliest creation. But the long run of 130 miles on a hot summer's day in the dusty, stuffy, stiff ordinary first-class carriage is the reverse of enjoyable to people who have already perhaps been on the road for several days, and it has long been a matter of complaint that the summer express trains of the W. & A. R. were not equipped with a parlor car service, so that travellers might enjoy the beauty of the trip at their ease. I understand, however, that this obvious want is about to be filled (or rather, partly filled, for it seems that only one parlor car is to be put on this summer), and the run through the land of Evangeline, instead of being the fulfilment of a tiresome duty, will be a source of abundant gratification. Other improvements in the rolling-stock and time tables of the road are promised, and it is hoped that before long matters will be arranged so that the trains may be run at a rate of speed a little more lively than a dog-trot. This company has always enjoyed a reputation for "nearness;" the stock is almost all owned in London, and the stockholders are always crying for more and more dividend, they care not how earned; lately the road has paid fairly well, and the public as well as the leech-like proprietors are reaping the benefit.

The appointment of Edward Hodgson, Esq., Q.C., to the vacant seat on the bench of the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island has given, I am safe in saying, universal satisfaction; those who are competent to judge will bear me out in saying that the Supreme Judiciary of the Island has always been graced by men of the highest legal ability, dignified carriage and unimpeachable rectitude; in the new judge, all of these qualities, as well as a marvellous oratorical endowment, are eminently present and the traditions of the court will be ably maintained. The Prince Edward Island judges do not get half the credit they are entitled to; I doubt if anywhere in the Dominion there is a body of men who are so hard-worked. Litigation there is carried on to an extent which would appall any community but one of Scotchmen and Irishmen such as compose nine tenths of the Island's population, but among these people *fight* of some kind is a condiment necessary to the enjoyment of their food, and courts petit and courts supreme are kept busy all the year round. There are only three Supreme Court judges, and it is a rare thing indeed for them to have a real holiday; but withal there is never a complaint, never a murmuring, but on they plod year in and year out, patiently listening to the dreary round of John Doe's complaints about the behaviour of Richard Roe, and there is nothing to intimate the hearty aspirations that these two belligerent scoundrels who have kept the world by the ears ever since the time of Sir Ed. Coke, might depart to the regions of the bottomless pit.

Do you know I think it is rather hard, when one has worked his way up from the bottom of his profession to the place next to the top, which one is only prevented from fill-

ing because there is some one else there, to have one's employers, when the top place becomes vacant, bring a new man and place him in it right over one's head; this does not sound like the usual way of doing business now-a-days, does it? Few employers are so regardless of the fitness of things as to pay so little heed to the moral rights of an employee; it is only a government who does that sort of thing now; the Dominion Government did it in Nova Scotia in 1881 and they did it again a few months ago in Prince Edward Island in appointing the last Chief Justice of these two provinces respectively; there were in both places judges who had served for years on the bench most honourably and creditably, and yet they were thrust aside, and a man who used to plead before them was promoted over their heads. In Governmental ethics this may be quite as it should be, but to a layman it sounds harsh and inequitable.

The last Prince Edward Island mail has crossed by the Capes, and the Islanders feel once more as though they were part of the world. Ice is still floating about the Strait, but will not again interfere with navigation; the regular summer steamers are running between Charlottetown and Pictou, and drummers and lobster-factory men are swarming to the Island.

Now that the *Critic* and I understand one another, I trust he will shake hands and be friends; barring myself, there are few people I admire and esteem as highly as its editor, who, he may be surprised to hear, is one of my warmest personal friends. I never "talk back" at anybody but friends; talking back at enemies is rather risky; so whenever I fall to making critical remarks about anyone you will know he is a particular friend. I dare say the *Critic* was quite correct in his remarks; I told my informant so the other day in terms of a temperature which I thought the occasion demanded, and the poor thing says she really does not see how it will ever be possible for her to speak to me again.

A few years ago on the 24th of May we always used to look for a grand military and naval review; those were the days when we had one of the old-time soldiers as Commander-in-Chief of the forces, who did not believe it was extravagance or childishness to make a little noise or a little display in order to create a feeling of popular enthusiasm over the significance of the day. People used to flock to Halifax for the review from all parts of the province, and went home impressed with the grandeur of monarchical traditions, and the excellence of the British arms. The militia, too, came in for a share of the fun and glory, and were all the better for a parade with the regulars, and everyone thought that having a Queen was a splendid thing, and the Queen's birthday was the one day in the year to look forward to and to remember. But since the days of Old Sir Patrick there have arisen commanders-in-chief who knew not Joseph, neither the traditions of the city; moreover, they have been offish, and parsimonious; it doesn't do, they think, to make a parade of the soldiers just to please civilians, and the blank ammunition costs too much. So lately Halifax and the province at large have been cheated out of their ancient right until they have almost forgotten about it. I don't know how it will be this year; there was and is talk of a grand combined military and naval display, but it will probably fall through at the last minute. Your correspondent is one who heartily deplores the desuetude of such a healthy, inexpensive and enjoyable demonstration.

The theatrical tendency of the services in some of our churches now-a-days quite renders the following, which I saw in *Life* the other day, a reasonable possibility:—

"AT A FIFTH AVENUE SANCTUARY."

The contralto had contraltoed, the soprano had shrieked for Providence to have mercy upon the choir for its miserable singing, the basso profundo had come up from "out of the depths," and Christian quiet pervaded the stillness.

"And now," said the simple-minded provincial minister, who had "exchanged" for the day, "now we will begin the religious exercises."

MR. SEALOVE (at his seaside cottage): "My dear, please tell our daughter to sing something less doleful."

Mrs. Sealove: "That is not our daughter, my love. That is the foghorn."

FATHER (to his son's chum, who is just entering the drawing-room).—I'm afraid you're leading my son into bad company.

SON'S CHUM.—I daresay your right, sir; he's just behind me.