



THE LAIR.

POINTS.

BY ACUS.

To point a moral and adorn a tale.

—Johnson: *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

It is during these long winter evenings that the voice of the debating society is heard in the land. Throughout the new year these societies may be expected to continue their good "resolutions," while they deliberate as usual upon Resolved This, That and The Other Thing. As a result of these deliberations, the usual round of evils will, no doubt, be abolished for the thousand and first time. What a pity it is they will not stay abolished. Abolished over and over again, the usual round of evils nevertheless continue to show remarkable signs of vitality. Bones of contention of long standing with the debaters, have been the subjects of capital punishment, and secret societies. But as to the latter, the "secret" of their abolition does not seem to have been exactly hit upon as yet; and as to the former, no doubt Radcliffe expects to fall into another job some day.

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That "tea meetings" and "church socials" should be necessary to induce people to contribute for religious purposes, says more for the appetite than it does for the conscience of the average christian. Not to enjoy such entertainments is, of course, a matter of taste; and to enjoy them is also a matter of taste, largely of the kind that is in one's mouth. Other methods of raising money are from time to time tried and abandoned, nothing seeming to draw like a liberal supply of groceries and provisions. As an abstract matter of duty, the congregation should contribute voluntarily sufficient to meet the demands; and the moral effect of such contributions would be infinitely greater than that of cash paid out gingerly for an "equi-

valent." In many cases the clergy realize this, but in many cases they are helpless. The experiment has been tried of abandoning church entertainments, and simply asking at certain times for special voluntary contributions; although it might be premature as yet to pronounce upon the success of the experiment. At all events, they who "do what they can" will verily get their reward; even though it be not in the shape of a lovely oyster, a ham sandwich or a glass of homeopathic lemonade.

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It seems that the paper flower fad, like the flowers themselves, is still in full blossom. For collars and car wheels paper does well enough, but it seems too commonplace for purposes of æsthetic decoration. Certainly the flowers that bloom in the spring are worthy of all that Mr. Gilbert may say or sing concerning them; but paper flowers, on the other hand, are the flowers that bloom *in the fall*, and they do not inspire the Muse to any great extent. They do not hold the mirror up to nature. Superstitious Brahmins tell of some sacred and mystical blue flower that blooms only in paradise. The paper flower would more resemble some sacred and mystical flower that bloomed nowhere.

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Having heard sad tales of how comparatively few of the fair sex there are out in our great North West, I have rejoiced to still find myself here in the east within the radius of the light of their pretty countenances. Perhaps if Horace Greely were alive now he would alter his advice, and say "Young woman go west." But a cause for apprehension looms upon the horizon. The enterprising Mormon may interfere in more ways than one with the poor but honest Canadian. And I think we shall have good cause to be jealous if he attempts anything of a monopoly out there.

The "nickel-in-the-slot" machine shows that (like the machine itself) the "world do move." This is certainly an age of invention. This marvellous contrivance is not confined to the chewing-gum business, but its application is becoming so extended that there is no knowing where it will end. It is said to have been used even for a charity ball, where all one had to do was to drop a nickel in the slot and draw the name of his partner for the next dance. And we can very easily see how the same thing might be utilized by the newspapers, by bearing some inscription asking one to drop a nickel in the slot and get, for example, a copy of the *Evening Worldling* or the latest "election returns." It is more than likely to be the case, however, that you drop a nickel in the slot and get—left!

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Many and curious are the devices employed or the purpose of impressing things upon the memory. Of these, no doubt the most common, as well as the simplest, is the customary string tied around one's finger; and allied to this method is changing a ring from one finger to another. Other devices are more complex. Indeed, in the Model Museum at Ottawa, there is a model of a machine to assist in memorizing, the principle depending chiefly upon the adjustment of colours and association of ideas. A gentleman who desired to remember which is the "port" side of a ship, used to arrive at in this way: he would think of port wine, which is red, this colour suggested blood, blood suggested the heart, the heart suggested the left side, and thus he arrived at the "port" side of a ship. An eccentric student, when he was studying history, used to *ring* it to some familiar air; so that he could recall the passages afterwards by running over the tune. It is said that John Bright used to memorize, in connection with his speeches, all sorts of grotesque images to suggest what he had to say.