

First Impressions.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CLANCY," "COMETH DOWN LIKE A SNOW," "BRIGHT AS A BEET IS SHE."

VOL. I.

The obsolete proverb "Two heads are better than one," was being superseded in the Squire's drawing-room by the newer saying adapted to the festive occasion, "One leg is better than two." Twelve magnificent Queen-Anne's-pattern chairs marked out the space all round the room. "If you hop past them all," said Jane to the Dean of Oratorio, "you will be lucky all the twelve months of the year which begins at midnight." "And if perchance at any time I should break down at one of them," said the pale young Ritualistic priest from Oxford,—"Why, of course," laughed Lillian, "you'll have a bad flirtation during this year for every chair you can't hop past." "What a shame for LILLIAN to speak in that light way to one of the COWLEY great-grandfathers!" whispered SOPHIA LIVINGSTON to her sister ANNIE. They were the daughters of the old General who sat scowling at his wife at the other end of the room. They were a wealthy family, and lived like fighting-cocks, in all respects.

"Now, then," said the Squire, "one, two, three, and away!" The solemn race began. First the Squire, the Dean close beside him, his shapely leg steady as a pillar of the church. LILLIAN lost her balance at the first two chairs, which symbolized January and February, as she stopped to reach over a cough-lozenge to one of the younger girls who had sneezed. JANE hopped all round, secure and deliberate as a kangaroo. All had hopped their best, the last arrivals being the Ritualistic priest and ANNIE LIVINGSTON. The COWLEY great-grandfather was a pale young man, with long limbs not unlike a large frog, accustomed to genuflections. He hopped nimbly along, when, on a sudden, his gaze fell on ANNIE's gorgeously illuminated stockings, on a ground of dead gold, with rings of azure and gules, her monogram in renaissance letters were embroidered as clocks. The COWLEY great-grandfather had never beheld the like. With a sudden cry he brought down both feet to the ground. All laughed. "Your month of trial will be March," said ANNIE; "Lent, you know; and, as I seem to have frightened you, I suppose my penance of flirtation will be with you, dear sister," he replied in monotone. Being tired, all present then retired to the drawing-room, where they sat down and amused themselves spinning teetotum. It is a private practice with the *élite* of society to spin teetotums.

This refined and intellectual amusement was interrupted by a servant who entered with a silver-salver, on which was a card. "D. LAMBERT, dealer in patent medicines," he read, in solemn tones. "A visitor for Miss LILLIAN LATIMER," he added. "Do try and get rid of him, dear," said the Squire to LILLIAN. "Yes, love," was her affectionate reply, "don't you remember the insurance agent I took off your hands yesterday?" "Yes, yes, LILLIAN; there are few girls as clever as you, dear," said her uncle, gleefully, "not to mention the lightning-rod man I induced to quit the premises last week."

But the patent-medicine man was one of iron nerve. "Your pa's real bad," he growled. "He wants—well, not exactly to kiss you—you've got to git." "I won't," she murmured. "Yes, you will—at 8, too," he sternly replied. She yielded. Neither spoke till the train arrived at London (Ont.) They drove to the Tecumseh House.

VOLUME II.

"A nice affectionate daughter you seem to be!" said a wizened old gentleman, with a Satanic leer and a complexion yellow as a bandanna handkerchief. "Playing teetotum while your papa would have been expiring but for this

gentleman, armed with a peristaltic lozenge and a dose of Pop Bitters! But, since you are here, what can you do to amuse me? What are your accomplishments?" "I got first prize in trigonometry; I got the medal for algebra; I understand physiology as far as the bones." "Anything else?" (this in a tone of concentrated bitterness). "I can paint landscapes in sepia, and uncle got me taught how to model wax-flowers." "Malediction!" exclaimed her parent. "But go and get your breakfast; one comfort is, your coffee will be cold and your beefsteaks gutta-percha." "Is ever thus at the early six o'clock breakfast at the Tecumseh. LILLIAN went to the breakfast-room, where she found her papa's description of the viands most accurate. She could hear his voice above stairs loudly but vainly endeavoring to induce Dr. BURNETT to give him a horn of rye. Presently that person appeared. "When you're ready go up to him," he said, curtly. LILLIAN went. "Can you read French?" said he. "Yes, pa, only I was taught by a Dutchman," she replied, dutifully. "Then get that pile of objectionable novels and read me to sleep." So she got a lot of trashy French books, and read to her pa, who soon went asleep. She left the room. "Her pronunciation is pretty nearly as nauseous as one of BURNETT's pills—but a thought strikes me! I will make him marry her!" And he did. At least when the will was read she exclaimed: "So he left me all this money on condition that you marry me!" "Yes," said the pill-vendor, "but I'm euehred if I marry you!"

VOLUME III.

LILLIAN left the Tecumseh House and returned to the Squire's. There she found her usefulness gone, its goodness being caused by her cousin JANE, who had taken her place, and took charge of visitors, and insurance people, and book agents, and lightning-rod men, as well as ever did LILLIAN. They tried in vain to cheer her. The poet came down and painted her portrait. A long-necked nymph it was, with orange hair and complexion boding the last stage of dyspepsia. "Wilt thou be the blessed damozel?" he asked her, "that shall illumine the palpitating darkness of pain with the possible splendors of love? Ah, wilt thou?" But she wilted not.

At last, one wild evening, when she travelled by stage to the house of a friend of the Squire's, where a quilting-bee, on an unprecedentedly large scale, was to be held, she noticed a sombre stranger, on whose valise she dimly read the words "Pop Bitters, Ammonia, Anodyne, Celestial Oil." He with two others were engaged in a game of cards. "May I take a hand?" she asked. "Certainly, marm," said the other two young men. BURNETT—for he it was—was too much absorbed in thought to reply. They played. LILLIAN had for months carried a large assortment of "right bowers" in her left sleeve. Those she produced, one after the other, in rapid succession. The game was hers. "I'm euehred," was the exclamation of the defeated medicine-man. "I'm eu—" "Say I am yours," she corrected him, as, with a smile, she raised her veil of priceless point-lace. They all went to the quilting-bee, where the Ritualistic priest united them; also himself to JANE, and the Squire to one of the jolliest of the other girls.

[We affectionately warn the author of "Clancy," &c., that he (or she) must manage to be a little more connected and intelligible next time or else his (or her) productions will go to the waste-paper basket. A plot is not an absolute necessity, of course, in a story,—but it kind of helps the reader along. Ed. GRIP.]

LOTTA, to use the elegant language of the Cincinnati *Saturday Night*, "kicked" against Canadian hotels when on her recent tour.

HENRY IRVING is to appear in "The Corsican Brothers" at the Lyceum Theatre, London, Eng.

The Midnight Troubadours.

We were a happy party—when we started out,—but when we got back—Oh!!!—One evening last week five of us met at a certain sal—street corner, I mean, for the purpose of serenading a few of our lady friends. I say lady friends advisedly because we never did consider either their fathers or brothers to be in a state of hankering or pining after our society: The event confirmed us in that opinion. All of us are strictly temperate—that is, one of the party is, and the rest of us on that occasion did not visit the poison dispenser across the road; either out of compliment to our temperance friend or from motives of economy. I think the latter one of the crowd audibly wished for a drink—of water—several times, but as nonotice was taken of this, he proposed that we should sing a song or two *just to get into practice*. We did so; but instead of that miserable Publican (and sinner) inviting us in, he set the dog on us—it was of the bull persuasion, and we retreated rapidly, but in good order—all excepting BORRS. That dog was evidently under the impression that he stood in need of a new overcoat or something, and the pattern of BORRS' pants seemed to tickle him immensely; in fact, so much so, that he succeeded in taking a tolerably nice sample away with him. BORRS says he is thankful that the pants were not any stronger. If that dog is as successful with every new acquaintance as he was with BORRS, he will be able to set up a shoddy factory on his own account in a short time. One of the crowd said it was shameful the way the police acted in this city—there was actually a case of highway robbery committed in the most bar-legged manner—BORRS says it was more like fly-away robbery. He was immediately suppressed. The first place visited after this was the residence of two charming young ladies, who are step-sisters, but rather good-looking in spite of that. We were anxious to please them because we heard that they were going to give a party shortly. BORRS proposed something pathetic; something, he said, which would express the love, admiration, &c., &c., which filled us. Our basso basely commenced the "Golden Slippers," (much to the disgust of the sentimental BORRS,) which was sung through with an average of two and a quarter discords to the line. During the chorus I heard a window softly raised, and, expecting trouble, I discreetly retired behind a sapling, to await developments. They came as the last notes died away upon the evening breeze in the shape of an avalanche of bouquets. That is to say flowers. Well, I can tell a lie, but won't. The fact is, they had presented the remaining four with the makings of about three large loaves of bread. I internally thanked heaven and the sapling that I wasn't flat enough to stay round. After a short time the effects of the flour were removed from their *bran* new suits, and our spirits again rose as we turned (y) eastward. With one accord we raised our voices in the most abominable discord ever heard since the last Philharmonic Concert. We sang the "Enterprising Burglar," but, of course, being only amateurs, with a very, very slender knowledge of either the music or the words, the effect was scarcely up to that produced by D'OYLEY CARTER'S Company—and besides it seemed to annoy a "Guardian of the Peace," one of those fellows, you know, who are *always* on hand when *not* wanted, and never to be found when they are. He apparently got mad, and as we didn't see why we should annoy his sensitive soul, we left hurriedly, some in one direction and some in another. With the usual perversity of human nature, he followed me—and I never sung a note in my life—he followed me for nine blocks as hard as we both could go, when he abandoned the chase, and I scrambled dejectedly home to bed. I ran so hard that I haven't recovered my breath yet, but when I do I will take an affidavit never to serenade again.

JA-KASSE.

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