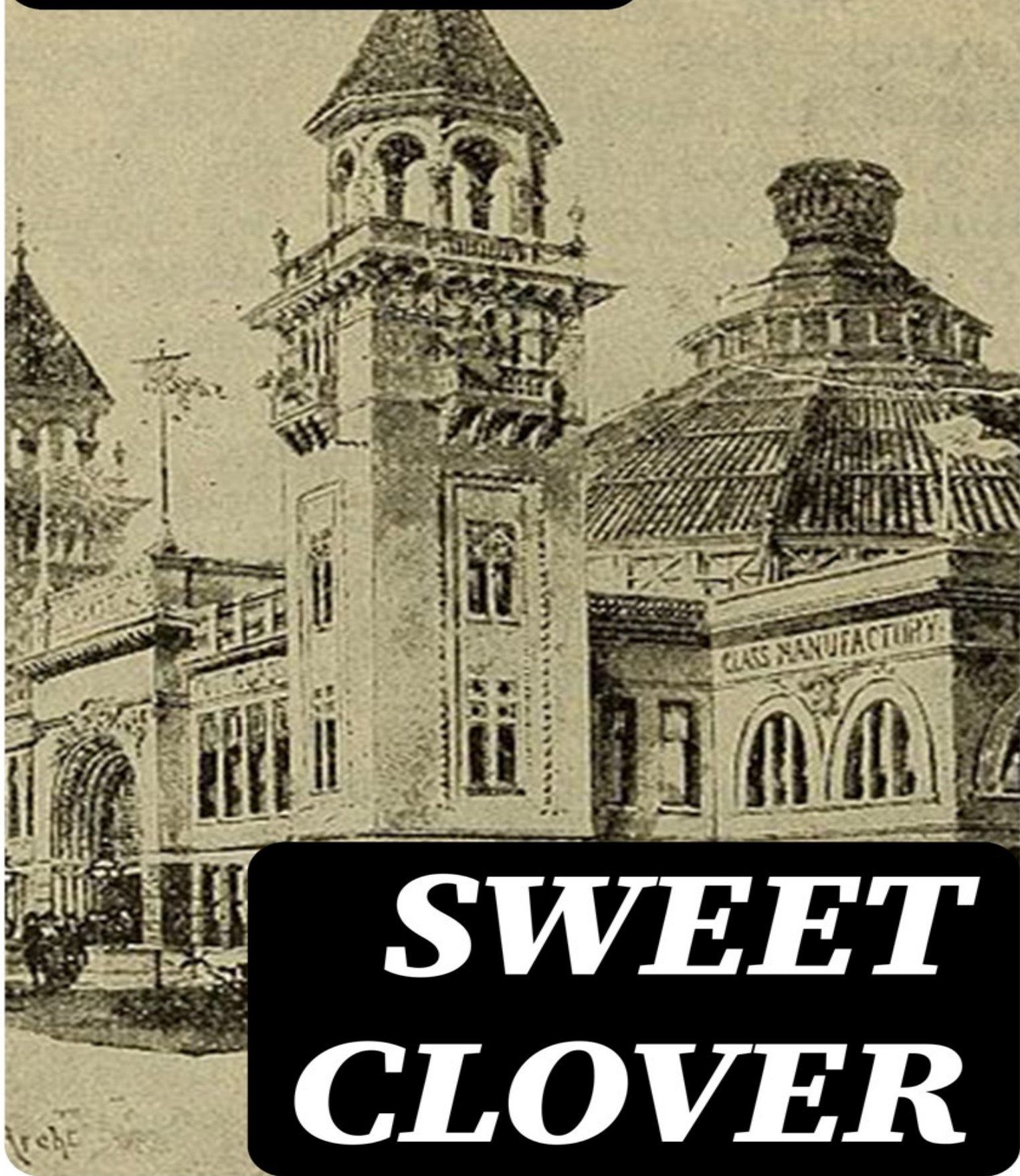
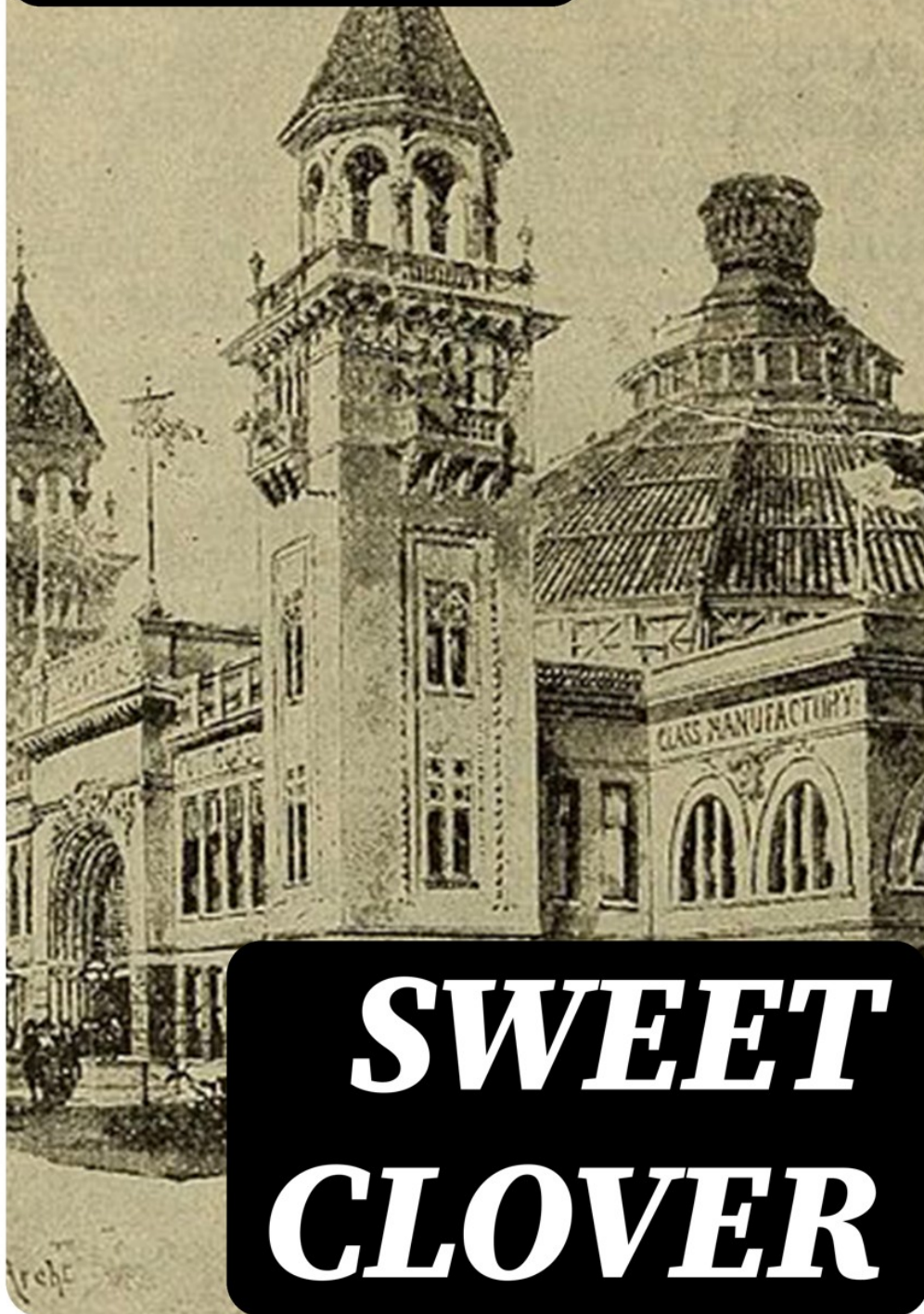


***CLARA LOUISE  
BURNHAM***



***SWEET  
CLOVER***

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CLOVER***

**Clara Louise Burnham**

# **Sweet Clover**

**A Romance of the White City**

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## **CHAPTER I.**

### **FAIR HARVARD.**

"Well, Jack," said Mr. Van Tassel, entering his son's room at Cambridge, "the deed is done. Behold you a full-fledged alumnus of glorious old Harvard!" The speaker grasped the young fellow's hand, his face expressing his pride and gratification.

"Yes, sir," answered the graduate, springing to his feet as he cordially returned his father's greeting, "full-fledged, but rather reluctant to try my wings, I must confess. It is hard to fly away from all this."

As he spoke, he glanced around the room, one of the most luxurious in historic Holworthy. Each familiar object seemed newly invested with pleasurable association. His eyes lingered upon a silver chafing-dish, resting amid a lot of congenial litter on a mantelpiece. Jack was accustomed to admit modestly that when it came to manoeuvring with a chafing-dish, he could not deny his own genius.

"You know it has been home to me for four years," he added half-apologetically, as he pushed forward the easiest chair for his father, who dropped into it.

"I know, I know," returned the latter, nodding. "I am glad college life has been such a satisfactory experience to you. I have felt the lack of it myself often. Well, yesterday was a glorious day," he continued, with a reminiscent smile. "Fine weather, fine people. As good a climax as you could have

desired. Those exercises around the tree are very amusing," the smile broadening. "I give you my word I didn't know you in that scramble. I didn't know my own boy. You were the worst-looking tramp of them all to begin with, Jack, and at the end you were the most demoralized bundle of rags of the lot."

The speaker's hearty laugh rang out. It was a matter of course that Jack should have been superlative in any college undertaking; but now a pensive smile was the young man's only response to his father's mirth. To-day's reaction found him in a rather thoughtful and sentimental mood.

The Van Tassels had always been well-looking as a family. Richard Van Tassel was a handsome man of a florid thick-set type, and he admired this sole remaining child the more that his physique was so dissimilar to his own. Tall, slender, athletic, Jack stood unconscious of his father's scrutiny, which took in every detail of his appearance, from the wavy black hair scrupulously parted in the middle, to the feet planted apart on the thick rug. It was a delicate-featured, refined face that the young fellow had, a transparent face that betrayed feeling; that flushed with annoyance or radiated pleasure from brilliant brown eyes and perfect teeth. But now the eyes were shadowed; and when they caught the father's gaze after a half-minute's abstraction, Jack smiled with the gentle, winning expression which was his birthright, and had uncalculatingly won for him every favor he had ever asked.

"Pardon me. Did you speak? My wits are wool-gathering to-day."

Mr. Van Tassel ceased his silent satisfied survey, and picked up a book from a neighboring table. "I was about to ask you, what next?" he said.

"What next?"

"Yes; or perhaps I should say where next? I have business in Washington, regarding the World's Fair, which may detain me there some time. Are you with me?"

"No—a"— Jack appeared to rouse himself with an effort from his mental pictures. "The fact is, I've a lot of invitations that I should like to accept before I go back to Chicago."

"Very well. We will postpone talking plans, then, until that time comes. You are to go abroad for a year if you like, you know."

"Yes, thank you. I've a fancy that I would rather put off that trip awhile."

"Why so? A wedding journey in view later, perhaps?"

Jack did not appear to think this raillery required a specific answer. He smiled again, in the thoughtful mood so foreign to him.

Mr. Van Tassel, however, had been glad of an opening for the question. He listened with veiled eagerness for his son's reply, and was disappointed that none came.

When he spoke again, it was with new seriousness and a shade of embarrassment.

"You must have met many charming women, during the past four years, who are strangers to me," he said.

"Yes, I've met a lot of women," returned Jack with a patient sigh at this irrelevance. What were charming women to a man who was saying good-by to his crew!

"But old friends are best still?" persisted his father.

"Yes, no doubt," responded the other, vaguely courteous.

"You haven't forgotten the girls at home?" said Mr. Van Tassel.

"No,—no indeed," replied his son, shaking himself together with the realization that he was playing poorly the part of host to this kindest of fathers, for whom it was impossible in the nature of things to enter into the subjects which were uppermost in Jack's interest just now. "How"—with spasmodic eagerness—"how are they all?"

"Who? Anybody in particular?"

The young man stirred restlessly. This was persecution. "Oh no, my Hyde Park friends generally."

"There is no especial news, I believe. Mrs. Bryant fails very slowly, I think; but of course I do not dare hint such a thing to her devoted daughter."

"H'm. Aren't they all devoted?" asked Jack with waning vigor.

"Oh, Clover is the chief one. She is son and daughter both, in that family. All responsibility falls on her. A fine girl," said Mr. Van Tassel emphatically.

"A pretty one, too," returned his son, stifling a yawn. "Mildred is coming along, though. I thought she was after Clover pretty sharp, the last time I was at home. Growing to her hands and feet, you know, and all that."

"You will be glad to see Clover again," said Mr. Van Tassel tentatively.

"Yes, very glad to see them all," was the reply, delivered with conscientious heartiness.

"Not especially glad to see Clover?" continued Mr. Van Tassel; and now it was impossible even for the preoccupied



graduate not to see that his father was, in his own words "driving at something."

He looked in surprise at the strong face thrown out against the dark blue cushions of the chair, and straight into the steady gaze of the gray eyes that had never looked unkindly on him. Before he could speak, the older man continued:—

"I had an idea that there was a boy and girl attachment between yourself and Clover Bryant,—a preference on your part, perhaps on hers"—

Mr. Van Tassel's face had never looked more attractive to his son than now. Its expression was so loving, so earnest, that Jack forebore to laugh, as he at first felt inclined to do.

His father did not appear to think this a laughing matter. Moreover his attitude gave promise of consent and sanction in case such compliance was called for.

"No, sir. You were mistaken," answered the young man respectfully. "There was never any sentiment there."

It was further mystifying to him that a shade of relief certainly passed over his father's face at this reply, and yet it might be explicable on the ground that although Mr. Van Tassel would not refuse his son's wishes, he was glad to find that there was no question of a union between his own family and one so poor and obscure as the Bryants.

"There might well have been a preference," was the grave answer. "Clover, young as she is, is a pearl among women. The Breckinridges have just gone abroad for a year, and Mrs. Breckinridge, before she left, told me that she had invited Clover to accompany them; but the girl refused to

leave her mother and the children. Think of the way the Breckinridges will travel, and what it cost her to refuse!"

"Whew, that was rough! Clover is a brick," declared Jack, his eyes bright enough now with their accustomed interest in life. "It ought not to be allowed. Can't we do something? Get a trained nurse for Mrs. Bryant, and invite her and the children to our house for the year?"

Mr. Van Tassel smiled at this outburst. "We not only can't do anything," he returned, "but we mustn't say anything. Clover bound Mrs. Breckinridge to secrecy, because it would be such a grief to Mrs. Bryant to discover what her daughter had renounced for her."

"She's strong, Clover is," said Jack, with an admiring shake of the head. "I shall be glad to see her again."

Then he asked his father a question regarding business, and the subject of the Bryants was dropped.

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **UNCLE ADOLPH'S LETTER.**

Several weeks later, in the long, narrow back yard of one of a block of wooden houses in Chicago, a girl was hanging out clothes on a line. An occasional hot breeze blew the soft brown hair in stray locks across her forehead, and the sun beat down from the glowing sky on her unprotected head.

"Clover, Clover darling," called a weak voice from an open window, "you've been out there so long! Aren't you almost through? You will get a sunstroke. Do, at least, put on a hat."

The girl brushed her flying hair back with one hand. "I'm all right, mother," she called, her cheery tones contrasting pleasantly with the sad voice.

"She is doing too much. I know she is," murmured the feeble watcher within, keeping her yearning gaze on the lithe young figure. "Bless her brave heart!" The dim eyes filled.

The front door slamming broke in upon the mother's meditations, and another girl entered the shabby room where she sat. She was a tall, broad-shouldered young creature of seventeen, the face under her heavy, half-falling brown hair flushed with heat, health, and happiness. She seemed to fill the room as she skipped up to the white-haired figure and pressed the infantile curve of her peachy cheek against the pale face.

"Oh, I wish for the thousandth time that we could live nearer the lake," she said in hearty young tones. "Every block one comes inland, one feels the difference in heat. Where is Clover?"

"In the back yard, hanging out clothes," was the anxious response. "I'm afraid for her, Mildred. I wish you would take her a shade hat."

"Hanging out clothes!" repeated Mildred, amazed. "What in the world"—She did not wait to finish her sentence, but hastening into the hall seized a broad-rimmed hat hanging there and hurried to the back of the house. Running down

the steps, the dancing light quite gone from her clear eyes, she approached her sister.

"What does this mean, Clover?" she exclaimed accusingly.

The elder, already highly colored, now looked uneasy. "You know Mrs. O'Rourke couldn't come to-day to do the washing," she answered.

"No, but she can come Wednesday," retorted the younger, placing the hat upon the sunny roughened hair of the head which was decidedly below her own in height.

"Don't stick the hat-pin into me," cried Clover, smiling up into the displeased eyes.

"I don't know but I will. Just look at your fingers, all white and parboiled!"

Clover clasped the offending hands behind her.

"What did you do it for?" asked the young girl severely. "Here I've been having the most elegant jouncy sail,—it is deliciously rough,—sitting at my ease on a cushion, while you've been working like this. It isn't a bit fair."

"All right. Help me to hang up the rest of these clothes, and I'll tell you why I did it."

Mildred snatched up a small blouse waist and a couple of clothespins. What was the use of cooling off on Lake Michigan if one must return to this? How the sun did broil down!

"Was Elsie with you?" asked Clover, as she pinioned the side of an apron to the line.

"Yes, and Frank too. Harry Billings took us all out."

"I'm afraid that the children will become something of a nuisance down at the boat-house. Of course with you it is

different; but the others hang around and look wishful, and of course the young men are too good-natured not to ask them. As for Frankie, he is such an amphibious little animal, we can't help his living down there."

"I only wish we all did live on the shore," grumbled Mildred. "I never shall be resigned to being so far from the lake."

"Oh, it is something to live in the country," rejoined Clover comfortingly, "and Hyde Park is pretty all through."

"Country! Hyde Park!" said Mildred scornfully. "You know it is all Chicago now."

"To be sure; but the annexation is a novelty yet, so no wonder I had forgotten. However, what's in a name?"

"Not much, perhaps," said Mildred, tired of reaching up in the hot sun, and inclined to be pessimistic, "but since we have moved into the middle of this dingy old block, we had better stop talking about living in the country. You haven't told me yet why you took this last caprice. We can't afford to go away and have a change in summer, I understand that; but surely there is a difference between stark and staring mad. There are more sensible forms of recreation than to do a family washing on an August day."

"I haven't done the biggest, hardest pieces, you see," said Clover gently. "There, this is the last. Now let us go over under our tree and talk a bit while we cool off." She turned toward the house and sent a reassuring kiss toward the figure seated in the window, and made a dumb show of applauding her own performance, smiling gayly as she clapped her hands.

"Sit down, Milly," she said, when they had reached the shade of the one tree their yard boasted; but as soon as they were seated, the elder girl fell silent, and clasping her hands behind her head looked up through the foliage of the ragged oak, slowly dying as all its brothers and sisters do in this region, pining for the old prairie isolation.

Mildred fanned herself with her hat, and regarded her sister half crossly, half curiously.

"I hate to talk over bothers with you, Milly," said the latter at last; "but I do have a lot of bothers lately."

Mildred wondered if it were imagination that she saw tears, gather in the other's eyes. If they were tears, they were well trained to obedience. Clover sank still farther back and lay upon the grass, and any moisture that had crept forth retreated to its source.

"Is mother any worse?" Mildred asked in a hushed voice.

"No; although she is no better, and any suffering she may endure is the hardest trial we can have to bear. Other perplexities are trying in proportion as they have relation to her, and all our perplexities must, in the end, bear upon her. How to conceal them is the study."

"What have you to conceal? What?" asked Mildred quickly, her large, childlike eyes full of wonder. "Mother knows, she has to, that we barely make both ends meet, and she thinks you are a perfect wonder, the way you manage. What is it, Clover? Is it Frank's education you are worrying about again? Goodness! Don't tell me you did the washing to save up money for that?" The speaker's eyes widened with surprise and disapproval.

Clover shook her head and smiled faintly.

"I've noticed lately that you aren't half so jolly as you used to be."

Clover sat up with such suddenness as to make Mildred start. "Has mother noticed it?" she demanded.

"No, not that I know of. You needn't look so tragical. I only mean you are ever so much more thoughtful and old-womanish just lately than you used to be. I'm sure I don't see why you should let yourself be bothered if we're all willing to live right down at the bottom of everything, and I don't make any fuss about wearing the same dress to school until the girls must think I've grown into it."

"You have been good, Milly, just as good as you can be"—

"Pshaw, I'm nothing to what you are for goodness. We all have to feel the pinch of poverty together," said Mildred with some grandiloquence; "and in a place like Hyde Park it is easier to bear than it might be in some other places. All the old settlers know what father was, and that his honor wasn't lost when the money was. Everybody we really care for has been friendly to us since he died. Just think, it is nine years now, and we do manage to have some good times," finished the girl, quite heroically she thought, since there were such a number of joys that she yearned for and had to behold hopelessly in the possession of her more fortunate companions. "Come now," she added insistently, "you are still guilty of that washing and not a word said to excuse yourself."

"Milly,"—the older girl looked into her sister's eyes with an expression full of loving trouble,—"I hate to tell you, but Uncle Adolph's allowance hasn't come this month."

"It is a little late, that is all," said Mildred, but her face fell and her heart began to beat unpleasantly.

"No," very sadly, "he has written mother that it will not come any more. Fortunately I opened the letter as usual, and I have not shown it to mother. She thinks it is only delayed."

"But he owed the money to father," said Mildred vehemently. "It was not charity to us, it was a debt."

"Yes, but he simply says that on account of losses he will not be able to let us have any more money, and we cannot force him."

"Mr. Van Tassel could. Have you told him? He is so very kind to us."

"Yes, he is very kind; but there is nothing he could do about this."

"What shall we do?" asked Mildred blankly.

"That is what I have been asking myself for days past."

"That is why you did the washing!" said the younger slowly and with awe, as though this thought did indeed bring home a realizing sense of the situation. "We are awfully—miserably poor," she added in a panic.

"Hush! Not so loud," warned her sister.

"I shall have to leave school and help you do the housework, and Frank can never have any education at all," declared Mildred despairingly.

"He will have to get a position in some store as a cash boy. Mr. Van Tassel will probably help him that much," she finished dismally.

"Hush! Don't keep bringing Mr. Van Tassel into it," said Clover nervously. "I can't bear the thought of begging



anybody for anything, even influence."

"Then you have thought of something," exclaimed Mildred eagerly.

"No, I haven't, I haven't," rejoined the other hastily. "Oh, Milly, forgive me." Her tone and gesture as she put one hand to her face and quickly extended the other to her sister touched the latter with great surprise. Mildred took the hand and squeezed it between her own.

"Forgive you, you old darling," she said, tears springing to her eyes. "What for, I wonder? Because you have three children to bring up and work for when you are only twenty? or because you, the prettiest girl in Hyde Park, have wizzled up all your poor fingers washing for us? What is it? Oh, Clover dear!"

For Clover was crying in a hasty, furtive fashion, stifling her sobs, and drying her eyes with light touches, fearing to make the lids redder.

"Because I couldn't keep it from you, Milly. You see it doesn't do any good for me to bother you except to relieve me a little."

"And isn't that something?" with anxious affection. "Why, you make me as vain as a peacock. I didn't know I counted a bit. I thought you had to have somebody old, like mother or Mr. Van Tassel, to get any comfort out of them."

"Now of course you feel as I do, Mildred," said the older sister, her quick self-control regained. "Nothing is any matter but to keep this from mother."

"Well, I don't see how we're going to do it for any length of time."

Clover bit her lip. "But as long as we can, we will."

"Of course. Why, poor mother would be crushed!" Then with a change of tone, "Here she comes this minute, Clover Bryant!"

"And my eyes are so red!"

"Better not come out here, mother dear," cried Mildred, rising precipitately and advancing to meet her. "The—the clothes are so damp, you'll—you'll take cold; and the sun is so hot, you'll be—be"—

The mother, with her delicate face smiling beneath the prematurely white hair, placed her arm around the tall girl as she met her, and together they advanced, Mildred most reluctantly, to where Clover sat smiling and striving to look indifferent.

"Have you come out to hear the jays scold?" asked the latter. "There is one up there now. Let me hang the hammock for you." She sprang to her feet.

Mrs. Bryant, without relinquishing her hold on Mildred, put the other arm around her eldest daughter.

Clover flushed violently. There was a look in her mother's loving eyes, the hint of a smile on her lips, which the girl recognized. It was a certain exalted expression of the dear lined face which her children had seen before, and it always meant rising to an emergency. The girl's heart contracted painfully.

The wet clothing on the lines flapped spasmodically behind the trio. Unsteady board fences enclosed the narrow heated area. The poverty-stricken tree stretched its gaunt, ill-clothed arms aloft, and the blue-jay's harsh, jeering note added one more petty discomfort to the surroundings.

"My dear little girls," said the gentle voice with unusual tenderness.

The sisters only regarded their mother in an apprehensive silence.

"I went to your room for something, Clover, and I found my letter from Uncle Adolph. I have just been reading it. Don't regret it. I had to know."

### **CHAPTER III.**

#### **A MORNING DRIVE.**

In a city like Chicago, where events occur with phenomenal rapidity, two or three years make great changes in a neighborhood. Hyde Park, which long hung back like a rebellious child loath to yield its independence, had at last placed its reluctant hand in that of the mother city; but with the suburb's growing population there had already come a new state of affairs. It was no longer the case that everybody in Hyde Park knew everybody else. Those families who made homes there when but two trains ran daily to and from town, felt, on the rare and rarer occasions of meeting one another in a stranger crowd, the drawing of a tie tender as that of kinship.

Mrs. Bryant belonged to this pioneer set, and so did Mr. Van Tassel. To those residents who had danced with them "long before the fire" at the parties in the old Hyde Park

hotel, this was reason sufficient why the wealthy widower should manifest a continued interest in the friend of his young manhood and her fatherless children. Those long-finished polkas in the long-destroyed hostelry on the lake shore, where scattered neighbors once met with the unconventional jollity of family reunion, had left behind them a green memory in some hearts.

Florence Badger had been a fair little bud at those gatherings, and of course Richard Van Tassel, her gay young partner, was not likely to forget either her or his chum, Lewis Bryant, whom she afterward married. The children of the two families had gone to school together and carried the intimacy on to the next generation; and when Mr. Van Tassel's wife and daughter had been taken from him, more potent to comfort than any other soul had been the gentle invalid, the friend of his youth, whose lines for many years had fallen in hard places.

So, small wonder that the fine house on the lake shore and the shabby home on the back street had kept up an interchange of civilities. These had been chiefly carried on by the young people until Jack had gone to college. After that it was to the Bryants that Richard Van Tassel liked best to carry his boy's letters, and talk over his haps and mishaps, secure of sympathy.

Of late he had not been blind to the fact that the shabby home was growing shabbier, but it was not an easy matter to bestow gifts here. This very spring he had remarked that Clover's eyes looked too large, and that they rested with greater anxiety on her feeble mother. He had even hinted to

Mrs. Bryant a trip up into Wisconsin or across the lake; but she had parried the potential offer with gentle firmness.

Many a drive around the parks and boulevards did the invalid take with her daughters in the glistening Van Tassel equipage, greatly to the wonder of certain Hyde Parkers whose experience did not date back to "before the fire."

The owner of the horses was away, that they knew. Jack Van Tassel graduated from Harvard this June, and his father had gone East for the great occasion. Now it was early August, and he had not returned. "It was so lovely of him," many said, "to give poor people like the Bryants the use of his carriage while he was away. A real charity. Not many men would be so thoughtful."

These neighbors wondered if the freedom of the fine equipage extended to the freedom of the house; but this they could not discover, for the Bryants were not talkers unless surrounded by old friends. Hard experience had taught even the young people reserve. Nevertheless it might have been a gratification to these curious ones to know that the Bryants had never taken liberties at the Van Tassel mansion. It had even been interdicted always to the girls by their careful mother to accept a general invitation to sit on the piazzas and rest, when they came home from the sailing expeditions their souls loved.

The house was fascinatingly near the water, and the level lawns about it cool with a fine mossy greenness. The hammocks and rocking chairs on the spacious piazzas gave alluring invitations to recline and study the ever-changing coloring of the illimitable fresh-water sea; and the elm-trees—not even on the boulevards were there such respectable

elm-trees as had here been coaxed to endure the harshness of bleak lake-winds.

This being the case, it was hard, Clover and Mildred used to think, and their little sister thought so still, that unless Jack happened to be on hand to give them a specific invitation, they must pass this unused luxury by, and trudge around the corner up the sunny main street, and so on to the sandy roughness of the unpaved avenue they called home. Still they never thought of rebelling. The rule was as fixed as those of the Medes and Persians, and it must be a right one because mother made it.

On the very day that Clover, hard pressed by thoughts that ran in a discouraging circle, disfigured her pretty hands by doing the family washing, Mr. Van Tassel returned to Chicago.

On the following morning the sun was reflected brightly from the wheels of his buggy as he drove a pair of well-groomed horses to the Bryant house. Elsie Bryant, a girl of fourteen, saw him as he drew up before the wooden walk. With a little exclamation of delight she ran down the flight of steps to greet him.

Mr. Van Tassel gathered the reins into one hand and reached the other down to the child.

"How are you all, Elsie? Mother about the same? Oh, I'm sorry for the headache. Is Clover at home? Will you tell her I have a business errand to do this morning, and very much want her company on my drive? Tell her she must indulge me. I can't let her off. I'll come in later to see Mrs. Bryant."

"Lucky Clover," thought Elsie as she ran obediently up the steps. "I just wish he had asked me."

And lucky Clover thought herself when she received the message. She was so tired of her own depressing thoughts! The fresh air and the sight of the kind familiar face would do her good.

When Mr. Van Tassel saw her run down the steps in her blue gown a few minutes later, he descended from the buggy with middle-aged deliberation.

"Welcome back," said Clover, trying to speak cheerily. It seemed to her that misfortune must have set an ugly visible mark upon her.

"Thank you for that. Thank you for coming," said Mr. Van Tassel, looking at her as their hands met as though he saw nothing unlovely. He assisted her into the buggy, and following, started the horses.

"Did Jack come with you?"

"No. I thought that I might find him here. He expected to arrive about now."

"Proud, happy Jack, I suppose," said the girl smiling.

"Rather a homesick Jack I fear he will be for a little while, unless he has recovered already. You know the young man has a way of recovering from depression."

"Jack and depression! What an impossible connection of ideas," laughed Clover. It seemed wonderful to herself that she could laugh. It was so long since she had. Three days is an interminable term of misery when one is twenty. They were bowling swiftly along Drexel Boulevard, beside the rich foliage and flower-beds of the landscape gardener; the air was clear and cool, and driving was quite a different thing when Mr. Van Tassel held the reins in this light vehicle, from the same exercise by favor of his solemn coachman, in the

heavy and gorgeous carriage driven at a rate suited to Mrs. Bryant's sensitive condition.

Up Oakwood to Michigan Boulevard they sped, and soon the buggy stopped before one of the splendid stone mansions on that avenue.

"I shall be but one minute," said Mr. Van Tassel as he dismounted, and he kept his word. When Clover saw the brevity of the message given to the servant who answered his ring at the door, a faint wonder passed through her mind that Mr. Van Tassel had thought fit to bring it in person.

She was not inclined to quarrel with the fact, however, and when her escort returned and the heads of the spirited horses were turned back to the south, she inhaled a long breath of satisfaction.

"You have not found pleasanter weather than this where you have been, I am sure," she said.

"No," he answered, "nor pleasanter circumstances. I have thought of you a good many times though, Clover, and wished you might be with me."

He turned and looked into her eyes as he spoke, the innocent blue eyes that returned his gaze fully. Her pretty lips parted in her interest. "That was very good of you," she said sincerely. "I would like to go to every interesting place, so I am sure I should have echoed your wish. Where was it? At the seashore?"

"A part of the time,—yes."

"I wonder if I shall ever go East," exclaimed the girl with a sigh. "New York, Boston, Philadelphia, I should like them to be something beside names to me,—but what an idea!" She broke off with a short laugh. Her thoughts had indeed, like



unruly steeds, kicked over the traces by which they had been harnessed to carry her by a safe road out of a perplexing labyrinth.

"Not an absurd idea at all," said her companion quietly.

"Our lake looks very like the ocean, I suppose," she continued, after an involuntary sigh.

"Not very much. I don't say it is not as beautiful," replied Mr. Van Tassel loyally, "but the electric blues and translucent greens of Lake Michigan have little in common with the deep, strong indigo, or bottle-green, of old Ocean. There is as much variance in their complexions as in their voices; as much difference between the sweep of the fresh-water surf and the boom of the ocean's tide, as between the tones of a tenor and a bass voice."

"But, Mr. Van Tassel, think of the lake storms!" returned Clover, her Chicago spirit piqued. "I've stood on the lake shore many a time when I could lean my full weight against the wind and be supported; and how does the boom of the breakers, hammering the piers on those nights, sound at your house?"

Mr. Van Tassel smiled. "Well," he answered, "we will say like a *tenore robusto* in full force. But there again comes in the difference in disposition. When Lake Michigan becomes angry, it flies into a white rage in a few minutes, and as soon as the spell is over calms down into comparative placidity; while the ocean, slow to wrath, relaxes but gradually, storming on with splendid fury under a dazzling sun."

"A difference greatly in favor of the lake, I should say," returned Clover.

"Ah, but think of the terrors of Michigan's caprices. Smiling, even seeming to dream in a happy reverie one minute, rocking its little sailboats softly on its breast like a gentle mother, all at once with appalling suddenness it flies into a passion, and while the fit is on works havoc that inflicts long years of misery, though the very next hour may find it dimpling again in gay carelessness of calamity. Not so with the ocean. The sailor relies on its steady winds, and the honest signs it hangs in the heavens for all to read, giving fair warning of approaching danger."

"Why, Mr. Van Tassel! As if you didn't know that our sky hangs out signs too, only, as Jack says, one must be brought up right on the lake to understand them. I had no idea you were such a poet, and so disloyal."

As the girl made her warm protest, her companion threw back his head and gave the hearty laugh that his friends liked to hear.

They had sped down Grand Boulevard, through Washington Park, and now entered the Midway Plaisance.

What that name suggested to Chicagoans up to a short time ago was the loneliest, most rural drive of their park system. It even wound through the woods at one point, making the refreshing variety of a curve in the city of straight lines.

On this morning of the summer of '89, when Mr. Van Tassel's horses turned into the broad avenue, their hoofs rang out in unbroken stillness. Not another vehicle or human being was in sight. Birds glided noiselessly among the trees that lined each side of the driveway. Grassy fields stretched away in level, tranquil monotony in all directions. It was the

Midway Plaisance: but with no dull rhythmic beat of drum to be the first greeting of each new arrival, no shadowing forth of the scenes in the near future, when this unknown plot of ground should become the rendezvous and rallying place of the civilized, half-civilized, and savage nations of the earth.

It was the Midway Plaisance. What's in a name? The words now signify to millions a babel of tongues, a baffling concatenation of noises and odors, a dizzying throng of sensations and emotions, a wondrous collection of novel sights. Yet, a little while ago it was the Midway Plaisance, and Richard Van Tassel chose to drive through it with this young girl because he wished for solitude, and he could find no more secluded and unfrequented spot.

"You must be introduced to the charms of the sea before you decide on the question of my loyalty," he said.

"That will never be, I fear," she answered soberly.

"Never is a long time. Hope for the best," said her companion cheerily.

"I do try to, but I haven't Jack's cork-like disposition." A sadness had crept into the girl's tone in spite of herself.

"She is thinking of Mrs. Breckinridge's invitation," decided Van Tassel.

"Your day will come. Every man and woman has his opportunity," he suggested.

"I hope you are right," answered Clover rather dispiritedly.

Her companion looked around at her tenderly, but her large eyes were gazing between the horses' heads. "My poor little girl," he said, and at his tone Clover glanced at

him in surprise. "Is the mother not so well?" he asked. "Something depresses you."

"I do not think she is worse," answered the girl slowly, but her eyes moistened, and she looked away.

"I understand. It is hard for you to be the head of the family. You will grow old before your time."

Clover became afraid that she should cry. She looked resolutely at the antics of a gopher on the fence.

"I have been growing young ever since we started," she answered lightly at last. "I did feel haggard with age early this morning."

She might have added, and at every hour of the night; for her novel problems would not let her sleep.

"I hope you mean to tell me your troubles always," said Mr. Van Tassel.

"That is very good of you," returned the girl, turning her head and giving her companion a faint April smile, "and very tempting too. Even though I am nearly certain that you cannot help me, I am weak enough to wish to talk to you of what I must repress at home."

"I am glad to hear that," returned the other gravely, "gladder than I can express."

So Clover told him of her uncle's debt to Mr. Bryant, of the small allowance he had consequently made her mother, and of the fact of its cessation; and while she still talked, their swift horses left the Midway Plaisance and entered Jackson Park, quiet and refreshing at this hour of the morning. The broad green field in its centre was studded with haystacks whose perfume filled the air. Robins, thrushes, and catbirds lurked in the quiet groves, and swans

sailed majestically on the lakelets where soon the Eskimo canoes would be equally at home.

Adjoining the field of new-mown hay, ducks paddled along the still green banks of another sheet of water, as contentedly as later in the same spot their brothers would swim in the shadow of the white columns of a treasure-house of painting and sculpture.

Mr. Van Tassel drove his horses through the site of future State buildings, down past the pavilion which afterward the people of Iowa beautified with their ingenious decorations. Here, close to its gray stones, he drew rein, and watched with his companion the gentle waves break upon the sea wall.

Clover's recital had drawn to a close, and now that it was over she became for the first time embarrassed in the silence that followed, and doubtful of her own wisdom in having accepted the relief of speech. Her companion was her mother's best and oldest friend. He had urged her to confide in him. His present silence was doubtless owing to a deep consideration as to how he might be helpful to her; but he was a rich man. Clover had not thought of that till now. Her only hope, so far as her vague thoughts were formulated, had been that he might communicate with Uncle Adolph more effectively than she herself. Her cheeks grew slowly, richly crimson. He turned, and she dreaded what he might be going to say. When her timid eyes found his kind gaze, he extended his hand to her.

"Do you trust me entirely, Clover?" he asked.

She was mystified, but as he evidently wished for her hand she placed it in his.

"Yes, I—I"—she began incoherently, possessed by the suspicion that she had been indelicate, and torn between the keen feeling of her mother's needs and her repugnance to receiving a gift she might seem to have requested.

"Don't be afraid, dear," he continued very kindly and quietly. "If we are both honest, we shall not hurt each other. You have been frank. Now it is my turn."