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Kitty's Delusion

I could not spend my life as a farm slave! I have made up my mind as to that, Phil, and you might just as well stop teasing this way. I am sure if I intended to stay on the farm I would very much rather marry you than any one else I know. I think I am old enough to know my own mind however, and it is my irrevocable intention to go to the city as soon as I can secure a place. I do not intend to be a burden to any one, as I can earn my own living, neither do I intend to be a household slave for any farmer. It is just cook and patch the whole time with a little change in the berry season or at house cleaning. No, thanks! I believe I will put off marrying for a time at least, until I try the city. I say I can never be a farmer's wife and that settles it. But if you come to see me whenever you are in the city I will never be too busy to have a good time with you and show you around, for I have always looked on you as my dearest friend and it is very hard to give you up, as I said before, it can never be."

"Well," said Phil, "I'm sorry that you look at things in that light but I am sure you will soon get enough of the city for you are too sensible a girl to be satisfied with mere appearances, and it is hard to rise above the real surface in such a whirlpool of humanity as there exists, where each is trying to down the other. Of course, I know that you are as capable as any one of them, but it is well to remember that a person can be

the farm, but as no argument would avail, she spoke to a friend who conducted a large millinery store and was promised that she should have the first vacant position.

At last the word came, and a speedy good-bye was said, and Kitty was soon in the position she had long coveted. It might have only been fancy, or possibly it might have really been that her friends or even members of her own family did not seem as cordial in their farewells as she had a right to anticipate. She also thought that her aunt was a little cool in her reception, but the city people do not have the time to be demonstrative. Many a time she was reminded of this fact. The people at church hurried out with simply a nod or stately bow. The streets seemed to be crowded all the time, but none of the people had a thought for her. She did not get acquainted with many young people of her own age and station in life, who were what she would call suitable associates. All too soon she found she was adapting her actions and thoughts to the daily routine of her existence, a mere machine, as it were. Her employer hardly knew her by name and took no more interest in her than in the models on which the latest fashions were displayed. She longed for a hearty handshake, the cordial greetings and the interested inquiries after her welfare that were accorded her in former days in the old home in the country. She would have given much to have been back in that merry crowd of young people again, but she had left it all to make her fortune in the city and especially to enjoy



Summering at Minaki

as lonely in company or a crowd, as in the forest or in the most lonesome home on the prairie. I know that I have no great prospect to offer you, and yet my father has given me a good start. I have a quarter section of land with full equipment in machinery, and a nice start in stock. I know that I can make you a comfortable home, and you know my mother has never been a slave, neither do I propose that my wife shall become one nor do more work than is necessary. I am sure that method is the great secret in management, and if you cared to try it, I would do everything in my power to help you out. But as your decision is final, I have nothing more to say, and will wish you good-night, Kitty. May you be happier in your city home than I shall be without you here."

This was the parting between these two young people who had been each other's ideal for years past. Phil had taken Kitty to dances and picnics ever since she had been sixteen years old and even before that he had always been her protector at school. Now, that he was 22, and she was 19, he had proposed that she should come to his new home as his bride. His father, who was a prosperous farmer, had started him out well, and the whole community were surprised, quite as much as Phil had been when the decision of Kitty had been made known.

Her old friends tried to persuade her to stay but this only made her the more determined to go. An aunt in the city had been apprised of her intentions and she too, strongly advised her to stay on

its pleasures. To go back now would be to acknowledge defeat, and this was the last thing she was willing to do. Some of her friends had written her now and then and she had heard that Phil had prospered well. He had built a new house and a new barn, and some had even hinted that she had thrown away a pretty nice thing when she refused his offer. Worst of all, her health was failing; nothing seemed to be the matter with her in particular, but simply a gradual waning of energy. One day she was painfully made apparent of this by the manageress pausing at the side of her stand long enough to ask if she were not well. She well knew by the experience of other girls that a too prolonged period of listless appearance would unfit her for work. They only wanted people of life and energy in that store. Much against her taste and early training she began to add cheap finery and jewelry to her wardrobe, in order to improve her appearance, so that she might maintain her position in the store.

Four years had gone by when one day she was sitting at her stand feeling a little more disconsolate than usual, when a crowd of merry young people were seen approaching across the large store accompanied by the floor walker. They came directly to her stand, and she almost sank to the floor, for there were all her associates from the country. Phil included. They were all well dressed full of vitality that she well knew she had not, pleasure written on every beaming countenance.