

"Trust me for that deception," Nyle said; then suddenly, "This is a horrible piece of deception, isn't it, Cecil?"

Cecil did not look conscience stricken at this speech. Both girls laughed, even when Nyle added, "I suppose auntie thinks it is awful. I think I will run down and talk it over with her."

"Do you know," Cecil echoed, gravely now. "I think you'd better."

"I will!" decided Nyle and so she did with the result that she came away again with her aunt's blessing on her scheme! While, wonderful to relate, Cecil shared in the kisses Miss Bronson had to bestow. "We will be good friends now," the two left in Mayville decided and Nyle in her new home was glad to hear this.

Possibly you would like a few details given of Nyle's debut in the little scheme decided on.

"I don't like that word 'scheme,'" Cecil had said once.

"Might as well call a spade a spade!" Nyle returned.

"Yes, when it *is* a spade—but when it's not—" Cecil left the objection unfinished and shook her head perplexedly. Nyle laughed merrily. What was this heroine of ours? A hypocrite—verily a brave one at all events as a week later she ran up the steps of a great house next to Flutterby Terrace and rang the bell confidently. If she was nervous she did not show it as she was ushered into the drawing-room and went forward, a tall, slender, stylish figure, clad in dress and cape of fawn with Fedora hat to match, and put out both hands with a gesture of pleasure that, if acted, was a surprise in histrionic art.

"Are you glad to see me back?" she asked in an even, musical voice.

"Glad!" exclaimed the girl who rushed forward, a volume of azure silk rustling behind her, "Glad is not the word. I am tremendously delighted. What a whim to run off to Europe and then back again in such a mysterious, secret fashion!"

"Do let me have a chance at her, Muriel," complained an older girl, also clad in a stupendous tea-gown, of the loveliest lemon hue, darkened artistically by rich black lace. "You are monopolizing her."

After the osculatory performance had ceased Nyle looked critically at the gorgeous toilets of the Misses King. "You are having a five o'clock!" she decided.

"Oh no! it's a butterfly luncheon!" Muriel told her. "You are away behind the times. Five o'clocks are old. Even a luncheon like this is a little antiquated. Next week we are giving a rose breakfast."

"Delightful girl that you are!" praised Cecilia King, giving Nyle another hug. "You have come back just in time to give us some real Parisian pointers on the decorations." Nyle flushed and disengaged herself. "Don't ask me for Parisian pointers—or any sort of pointers. I am tired of it all. Let me go up to your rooms and see you finish your toilets. For I see you are not quite ready to receive yet," touching the low collar of the girl's gown.

"Why, where have you been, that you do not know that necks unadorned are now adorned the most. Fichus and pletings and stiff collars are nowhere. A band of black velvet and a diamond stud in it under the chin are all the rage just now. But *you*—you must—or are you too tired to be present at our gaiety this afternoon?"

"I will go home and see if I have anything to wear," Nyle said, turning to go. "How much time have I?"

"Oh if you burst upon the scene in an hour, you will be in time for the ice-cream. Can you get ready in that time?"

"I'll try," Nyle promised and she ran away, to the house next the Kings, "Flutterby Terrace," as if she had lived there all her life.

The girls did not know she had not been there at all yet and she did not think it necessary to tell them. If she had, probably one, or both would have wanted to accompany her and help her unpack her trunks and this she did not want—as she had no luggage at all. Beside she must conjure up something to wear at the Butterfly luncheon. With no baggage, how was this to be done? Why, of course, the Nyle Fairgrieve of last season must have left some clothes in her wardrobe when she went away for her European trip. And Nyle, with a few diplomatic strokes, got rid of her servants, "who were all so glad to see her again" and went rummaging in this same wardrobe.

She laughed softly as she took out one after another of the now unstylish gowns but also smiled with satisfaction over the knowledge that she had been taught by Aunt Bronson the useful accomplishment of "making over" the most impossible freaks of last year's fashion into the very latest ones.

Behold, her an hour later arrayed in a tea-gown, beautiful for its coquettish puffs and drapings and yet simple and sweet as a morning-glory in the pale, pure pink and white of its combined materials. To be sure two dresses had been torn to pieces and another more or less maimed to get out the tea-gown, but what was that when one is booked for a butterfly luncheon. To be sure, the latest gowns for afternoon receptions did not have such puffings about the train and the sleeves were not so tight now as they "used to be," but Nyle went into the drawing-room of her friends' house with brave confidence in the fact that "everybody knew she had just returned from Paris and would be sure to have her gowns fashioned by Worth." There *were* remarks about those sleeves and the elaborateness of the Watteau pleat but when Nyle had openly declared she preferred the American styles any day to the Parisian and should have her dresses remodeled at once, all was serene as the surface of a mirror. And when Nyle found herself once more alone, she had reason to say, "I and my gown were a grand success."

Assuredly, she was. What a gay life she led for the next two weeks. She too gave her rose breakfasts, her Germans, her Minuets, her literary evenings, never failing once to hide the maid of Mayville life under the character of the society star.

She often stole away to see Mary Somers, who had been made a partner in the secret. And whenever she came away she said to herself, "I will begin at once to cut off my social connections. I *will not* be a mere woman of the world."

But it was hard and week after week found her in the giddy whirl of fashion. She had had an object in view in controlling the money she was supplied with. Our Nyle was an "Anti-poverty" society woman. She had not read Henry George's and Dr. McGlynn's pamphlets for idle amusement. She did not study the different theories for the elevation of the masses without intentions of profiting by them. And she only needed a little more intensity of love for the work to bring her conclusions into action, to put her depth of feeling into practical manifestation. Human nature's love of self over-ruled her mind too, and made her weak and tardy in the matter of really beginning in any way to do good with her money instead of lavishing it on herself. It is so easy to