

IV

THEY reached the Central station just as the train was moving out.

Maud dug her small hands into the pockets of her fur coat and glanced at Mac from out of the collar which she wore standing up so as almost to cover her face. "There goes our train, Mac!" she cried, laughing and taking no pains to conceal her glee.

Behind them stood their manservant Leon, an old Chinaman known generally as "Lion." Lion was carrying the hand-baggage and was gazing at the vanishing train with a look of blank stupidity on his lined and shrivelled countenance.

Allan looked at his watch and nodded. "Too bad," he said good-humouredly. "Lion, we must go back to the hotel."

In the motor he explained to Maud that he minded the delay less on his own account than on hers, for she would have such a lot of packing to get through.

Maud laughed softly. "How do you know I am coming with you, Mac?" she asked.

Allan looked at her in astonishment. "But surely you are coming with me, Maud?" he exclaimed.

"I really don't know whether it be the right thing to go travelling in winter with Edith, and I shall certainly not go without her."

Allan looked straight before him meditatively.

"I confess I hadn't thought of that," he confessed. "But I can't help thinking that it will be all right."

Maud made no reply. She was biding her time. Allan should not be let off so easily on this occasion. After a pause he went on, "The steamer is like a hotel, Maud. I shall take a suite, so as to have everything comfortable."