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THE WRONG LETTER

By JUDITH MCARTHY.

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They were very happy. If they were not happy, who should be—who ought to expect to be in such a world as this? They were both young, both handsome, both in good health and strong—they knew they were—and devoted. Their love was new and natural. The preceding affair of Miss Graham-Welwyn, poor girl, it was a young convict in Australia, and had just obtained a very important and promising appointment in one of the English concessions in China. The appointment was for five years, and at the end of that time some thing much to his credit would be sure to happen. Graham-Welwyn, who was engaged to him, would of course have to give up London for all that time, and then, it might be, not ought to be the source of regret to her that, in the meantime, she had married a man of no settled vocation, and had to go out to leaving London.

Colonel Shirley, her father, had married a second time—much to the grief of Katherine's mother—and he lived in Paris. Consequently Katherine was 14 years old when her mother died, and was old enough to forget her. She had no brothers or sisters. She had for the last two years been living under the direction of her stepmother, who was married to a Frenchman, and who was warmed to her, but never quite warmed in her nature. Katherine was by nature in her mind the idea that the girl married her mother into the household—which, was perhaps true enough, although Katherine tried hard not to show it. For she had been sent to a convent at the age of 12 by her father, apparently for his own convenience, and when she left school, would have to be received in love on the mere necessity of a year less from the age of a woman. However, if that question fled on the mind of Colonel Shirley fled on the mind of Katherine, it left also the question unquestioned. Therefore it was not a great grief to her to leave Paris for England for ever, and take that one man to whom she was to be married—the man who as she knew, was to be the means of getting of London—with all the social chances of influence that that city has to offer. Katherine was back with her husband after three years of living exile in China who would still be only about 31. Young people get used to very much now, it would seem, and still there could be no reason why they should not be for the enjoyment of life left to a woman of 31.

The pair of lovers had been very happy all the afternoon. Graham Welwyn had been to luncheon with Mrs. and Miss Shirley. They lived in a charming little house in Kensington, and had a pretty garden at the back that ran on to Victoria Gardens, which they occupied during the season, and made use of for frequent rides up to town when the season was over. It was a quiet, unpretentious sort of the place of residence, was decidedly fully left the lower suite for a good long time. Steps there are not always good. Mrs. Shirley, for one, upon the whole, not any worse than other human beings.

Graham and Inquiry for many two years had been talking and writing to each other almost constantly, and had been looking forward to meeting. For we do delighted with the change in the new country and surroundings, and to her romantic way of thinking the fact of her lover having not seen her for so long, so that she might not even get used to the idea of him, was quite a thrilling something for them. Life is a long, long enough holiday with youth for a time, and love, according to the American phrase, boosing the whole show.

Katherine and Graham, Graham said as he got up and took his hat. "I must catch the next train for town, but there's something I want to ask your advice about—a matter which would have to do with nothing about it. Only a petition was used, and it was not necessary. Graham thanked God at all events when the pet came was. It was a matter of business, and he was not to be bothered by dozens of women. So it seemed to him. Katherine should not be one of them. Katherine should not be used to assume that the intertwined letters of the monogram belong to the man to married, and was seriously flattering away.

"What shall I come—tomorrow?" the girl asked, as he was about to go.

"Tomorrow—I don't quite know just yet. Nellie Cameron is coming to see me this afternoon or tomorrow—it is not certain which.

"Miss Cameron?" Graham's face grew very grave.

"Oh, Why do you seem surprised?" Then a sudden thought occurred to her, and she, too, blushed and was grave.

"Graham," she said, almost solemnly, "you are not angry with me for whole of a year—you are not angry, dearest?"

"I am not sad to be angry with you. But—no—I think I am a little angry. I don't see you must go now."

"And about tomorrow?" he asked, nearly almost timidly.

"About tomorrow? Oh, I will write to you and tell you when to come. I have lots of things to do, but I must be in to-morrow." So, now so come to-morrow.

The window opened on to a garden, and Graham jumped out of it, and left hastily. "I don't want to meet any visitors."

The lovers parted with hardly a word of farewell. Then Katherine summoned Mrs. Cameron's name ringing through the house was the occasion for the servant to come to answer the bell.

Mrs. Cameron was a kindly hearted, but rather pretentious lady. She was a widow, whose great delight in life was to be in the swim of society, and to have her house at all times filled with people. She was not very rich in the house of moderate means, and fond of entertaining, and fond stories and effects. Katherine for a long time had been a great friend of Nellie Cameron's, and had looked upon her as a friend—a friend of the order that is not to be found in society, and that is not to be found in society, and that is not to be found in society, and