

THEIR ANONYMOUS LETTERS.

By C. B. LEWIS.

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Everybody, including themselves, said it was a love match between Kitty Rayne and Harry Smedley and that such love, trust and confidence were seldom to be found. It did not all end with the honeymoon, as a certain crusty old bachelor predicted, but when they had been married a whole year the doves were still cooling.

Then one evening Mrs. Smedley had a lawn party, and as half a dozen people sat together it was announced that the writer of an anonymous letter had succeeded in separating a certain man and his wife. All expressed their sorrow and indignation, but host and hostess felt called upon to go further.

"The husband who will pay the slightest attention to an anonymous letter should be tabooed from association with all sensible people," was the observation of the husband as he placed his arm around his wife's waist. "No one but a coward writes those letters, and no one but a coward would act upon them."

"If I should get a hundred anonymous letters concerning Harry I should only laugh at them," added the wife as she kissed him before them all.

Three mornings later at his office Mr. Smedley received a letter. As it was addressed in the handwriting of a

man to it. No, she would not. She said keep it, and they would have a good laugh over it at noon.

She held to this last resolve for half an hour, and then the missive was hidden away, and she was going about the house with pale cheeks and compressed lips. At 11 o'clock the door-bell rang, and a traveling clock tinker asked if she had anything in his line to do. He set an obstinate clock going and collected a quarter for his skill.

He was the man whom the husband saw glide furtively away. You will always read furtiveness in a clock tinker's movements if the sun happens to shine on him just right.

So it happened that neither letter was produced to be laughed over. There was constraint, and both husband and wife felt it. They were no longer natural in their behavior, and that very fact aroused suspicions.

"She is deceiving me" and "He is deceiving me" were what they were saying to themselves, and the seed planted by the anonymous letter writer had taken fair root. At any moment during the next month had both letters been produced all would have been made plain and the situation would have been cleared up in ten minutes. But they were not produced. They were treasured.

The strained relations became painful, but what could either do? They could not accuse each other on an anonymous letter. They did a great deal of thinking, however.

It so happened that both had been engaged previous to their own engagement. What did "Watch your wife and you will discover" mean except that Kitty's old lover was writing to her, seeing her secretly, persuading her that he could never, never love another and suggesting an elopement to a faraway isle?

The letter carrier was questioned as to what letters he delivered at the house. A private detective was paid \$5 a day to search the town for the old lover. The boy that mowed the lawn was instructed to keep watch on all life insurance and sewing machine agents calling at the house, and the husband began to feel himself a Sherlock Holmes.

Something was also done on the other hand. Night after night as the husband lay sleeping—for even jealous husbands do sleep—a form clad in white might have been seen going through his pockets in search of damaging evidence.

His weekly visits to his Masonic lodge had to be verified. If he went out in the evening to order soap at the grocery he was followed. Of course he must in some way be in communication with his old love and have abandonment or divorce in view. "Just let him try it! If he ran away he should be brought back in chains. If he applied for a divorce she would fight the case to the last court in the land."

Naturally their set noticed that something was wrong, strive as the couple might before company, but no one knew just what was the trouble, and for once the mutual friend did not interfere and make matters worse.

A more miserable couple did not exist, but no explanations were asked for or volunteered. Anything of the sort would have been taken for falsehoods.

"Watch your wife" and "Watch your husband" were watchwords ever before them. Separation, at least, must have been the ultimate result had not the jokers finally decided to show their hands. One morning as the young husband reached his desk another letter in a certain chirography awaited him. His heart gave a jump. In this he would be told something specific. He dreaded to open it, and yet he thirsted for the solution.

After a hesitation lasting five minutes the envelope was torn away. The next moment a bareheaded man, holding a sheet of note paper in his hand, was running down the street. A block from home he encountered a woman, also on the run and also holding an open letter in her hand.

"Kitty, my darling!"
"Oh, my dear Harry!"
"I just got this by mail."
"And I just got this."

And when they recalled that every woman in the block was watching them they compared notes. He read:
—"that she is using Allen's hair tonic on her hair!"
And hers:
—"that your Harry is getting a bald spot on top of his head!"

And then the doves came back and cooed and never flew the coop any more.

An Expert.

In one of the interior towns there lives a farmer who brings butter, eggs and produce to market, and, being illiterate, also brings with him his son to do the "figuring."

The other day the son was ill and the old man had to venture alone. For awhile he got along pretty well by letting his customers do the figuring, but presently he sold two rolls of butter to a woman who could not figure any better than he.

The farmer was much puzzled, but, being resolved that she should not know that his early education had been neglected, he took a scrap of paper from his pocket and began. He put down a lot of marks on the paper and then said:

"Let's see; dot's a dot, figure's a figure, two from one and none remains, with three to carry—\$1.50, madam, please."

She paid over the \$1.50, took the butter home, had it weighed and "figured up" by her daughter, who discovered that the price should have been \$2.10 instead of \$1.50.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Little dogs start the hare, but great ones catch it.—Italian Proverb.



SOMETHING OCCURRED TO CHANGE HIS PLAN.

woman he felt quite a bit of curiosity about it. He opened the envelope to find it contained an anonymous letter—no date, no signature, just the words:

"Watch your wife and you will discover!"

The young husband laughed and started to tear up the missive. Then he restrained his hand, and his laugh faded to a grin. It was a good joke to send him such a missive. He would carry it home at noon and laugh over it with his little wife.

When the coward picked him out to receive such a warning he took the wrong man. He whistled and put the letter in his pocket and began his work. It was funny. It would raise a laugh. They would show it to their circle, and others would laugh with them. Five minutes later he was saying to himself:

"Watch your wife and you will discover!"

Discover what? he mentally kicked himself for asking, and yet the query kept bobbing up. A contemptible coward of a woman wrote that unfinished sentence and wrote it to make trouble. If he could find her out she should suffer for it. Discover anything wrong on the part of his pure hearted little wife! The idea was villainous.

He put it aside again and again and felt himself almost as mean as the writer when it bobbed up again. The forenoon was so long that he left the office half an hour before 12 and started for home. He wanted to show the letter to his wife and have a laugh over it, but something occurred to change his plan.

He was within a block of the house when a man came out, gave a look up and down the street and hurried away. Then, too, as he entered the door his wife exclaimed in surprise and almost demanded to know why he was half an hour ahead of his time. He kissed her, but it was a perfunctory kiss. She nestled up to him, but he thought he could feel her trembling.

At 9 o'clock that same morning the carrier had left a letter for her in a man's handwriting. She opened it, thinking that it might be a bill from the grocer, and the next moment her merry laugh rang out.

"Watch your husband and you will discover!"—were its sole contents.

Watch Harry? For what? Suspect him of what? It was an anonymous letter, but it was too funny. She felt like running out and showing it to the girl in the kitchen. She would go and show it to a couple of her friends and let them enjoy the laugh with her.

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