

become accepted truth. In all this work of investigation one should constantly keep in mind that truth must lead the way; the little scraps of evidence which are picked up from time to time will all fit together and we shall have a complete history of these interesting aborigines in course of time.

If every citizen of this state will keep his eyes open for evidences and report his finds, however insignificant he may think them to be, we shall know very much more about these people in course of time. One or two people, working alone, can accomplish but little comparatively speaking but as the farmer plows his fallow fields and turns to light some relic of this by-gone race, he may add his item of discovery to the whole volume of truth already accumulated; when every acre of this magnificent state has yielded its treasure, the sum total of knowledge thus acquired will place Nebraska in the fore-rank in the annals of archaeology. Let us take only truth and carefully weigh every point, retaining only such points as are proven true and let it be the pleasure of every reader of these lines to assist in solving this mystery.

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AGAINST KISSING.

With the kisses of lovers, whether wedded or unwedded, this protest has nothing to do. In such cases the process is usually performed in private and it is a *tete-a-tete* which should not be disturbed; moreover, it occurs by mutual consent of the parties concerned, and therefore it is not the business of outsiders to interfere.

But it is high time to begin a war against kisses bestowed solely at the will of the giver; since it is a manifest violation of the sacredness of individuality, and the majority of those upon whom it is inflicted are unwilling victims. Babies squirm and do their best to get away from the smothering caresses so lavishly bestowed upon them; children have to be coaxed or bribed to give the "sweet kiss" demanded by importunate visitors; sensible women shrink from the undue familiarity, and abhor the heartless lip service which "society" prescribes for the meetings and partings of the fair sex. What does it all mean? Why do mature matrons and elderly maids rush into each other's arms whenever they meet, knowing as they do how little true friendship there is in this world and how the truest is the most modest and the least presuming? Why do young girls nip and peck at each other's cheeks and lips, when they know that the mind of each is occupied in taking note of the other's dress and criticising her claims to beauty from the standpoint of a rival?

The society kiss was in full vogue in France before the French revolution, and it was doubtless originally a phase of Parisian coquetry; like many other

fashions which have gradually spread over the world, losing all their piquancy and retaining only their absurdity, in the process of transfer. Nowadays women kiss each other through their veils, and embrace when their hearts are full of envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness. "May I kiss you?" said one lady, at separating from another, after a conversation of a few moments in a railway station, previous to which casual encounter neither knew of the other's existence. Another lady, in a room full of company, when passing a woman with whom she was only very slightly acquainted, stooped and kissed her cheek, without permission or apology.

The evil appears to be on the increase, especially among "English-speaking" people, and it is fostered by the maudlin tone of the light literature of the period. Any one who examines the modern novel with reference to the subject will be astonished at the amount of feminine "gush" displayed in this intrusive and impertinent form.

A recent popular story, published in England and considered worthy of reproduction in "Tanchwitz," records *fifty-two* kisses, not including one which a certain character wished to give but did not, and not counting many embraces which presumably ended in osculation. And almost all of these embraces were between women, women not connected by blood-relationship nor long intimacy, nor special sympathy. This feature is new in English literature, as the custom also is comparatively new among English-speaking people. Jane Austen's heroines did not kiss, nor receive kisses—not Emma, in her unwise intimacy with Harriet Smith, not Catharine Moreland, in her girlish friendship with Eleanor Tilney, not peerless Anne Elliott, admired and beloved by her own sex wherever she went. Our grandmothers, even our mothers, did not greet their cronies with tender embraces. Kisses were exchanged between friends and relations only when a long separation was in prospect, and those of us who have reached or passed middle age can probably recall the time when this ceremony began to take on the proportions of a "fad." Let us hope that it is only another of the "*fin de siecle*" maladies which will disappear in the fresh life and hope of a new century.

I remember when the kissing mania began to infect the boarding-school which I attended, and how the reverend principal, a shrewd maiden lady, used to put a stop to all such demonstration by the withering sarcasm: "*It looks exactly as if you wished it were a man.*" This healthy view of the nature and mission of a kiss is upheld by the old German proverb: "*Ein kuss ohne Bart ist ein ei ohne Salz.*" "A kiss without a beard is an egg without salt," and still more suggestively in the exquisite verses of the old English poet, Robert Herrick.

This form of the kissing cult finds its

most enthusiastic exponent at present in Marion Crawford whose recent historical novel, "In the Palace of the King," fairly gushes over with elaborate descriptions of tender osculation. The author's latest invention in this direction is to make the kisser kiss the *kissee* so hard that "it hurt her;" though pity for the victim of that fond violence is lessened by the assurance in one instance that "it was good to be hurt," and in another that the kisses "would have hurt her, if she had not loved them so and given back every one." All of which sounds very flat to the gentle reader, who is called upon to listen and look on. It makes one inclined to rebel even against the commands of Scripture in regard to the "holy kiss" and the "kiss of charity," and to feel respectful admiration for certain tribes and peoples who have never developed the kiss in any form.

There could not be a more essentially vulgar fashion than that of indiscriminate kissing, and yet, curiously enough, it is most affected by the classes and the individuals who make the greatest pretensions to refinement and culture. It is the exclusive woman of society who violates a fine reserve in bestowing her kisses upon feminine compeers, right and left; it is the stickler for etiquette who commits an impertinence in taking this unwarrantable liberty merely because it is fashionable.

And the poor babies! There is now and then a mother wise enough to refrain from tormenting her tender infant with caresses in season and out of season; but such instances are rare; we must go to Japan for instruction and example upon this point: Japanese mothers, though remarkably gentle and affectionate, never kiss their young children.

A favorite situation with novel writers (even Howells condescends to use it) is that of a bereaved mother "hungry" to get hold of somebody else's baby, and the unctuous description of the kissing and "mumbling" of the little body are suggestive of a reversion to the cannibal propensities of our remote ancestors and very humiliating to any woman desirous of the worthy development of her sex.

Fortunately for the future of good manners and good health, the German physicians have lately begun a crusade against the kiss as a fruitful disseminator of contagious diseases, and already, in Germany, Satire has aimed an effective blow at an evil which no other weapon seemed likely to reach.

"May I kiss you?" asks the lover of his beloved, and she replies: "Are you aware that science has declared kissing to be the surest way of communicating the microbes of disease?"

Make a thing ridiculous, and, if possible, disgusting, and its doom is sealed.

One might suppose that Hobson's osculatory progress would have made indiscriminate kissing both ridiculous and disgusting in America; but the press has just recorded a confirmation of the scientific view in giving notice of "eight cases of smallpox and one death traceable to kissing indulged in at a church sociable" in a western town. At such meetings for pious pleasure kissing plays are permitted and encouraged, although it is considered wicked to dance.

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