The Art of Kissing

Clement Wood
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THE ART OF KISSING

I

THE ORIGIN OF KISSING

Defining a Kiss.—The most helpful dictionary, before attempting the tough task of defining a word, gives us the names of its father and mother, and often of its grandparents, as well as something of the history of its wanderings. We shall take our cue from the dictionary, and see what kiss and its synonyms came from. Kiss, that enchanter's magical wand conjuring up the entrance to the temple of the highest physical pleasure, comes from the Anglo-Saxon coss, a kiss; and is, by general gossip, descended from the Gothic kustus, a proof or test, which in turn is a close relative of the Latin gustus, a taste. It is also kin to the Anglo-Saxon coesan, to choose. We have so far, then, a test, a taste, and a choice, all involved in the pleasant idea of a kiss.

There are only a few other words in English with the same meaning. The antiquated buss is of uncertain origin, a byblow of unknown race; although it is clearly close to the Bavarian bussen, to kiss, and may be related to the Spanish and Portuguese buz, a kiss of reverence, which seems to have come from the Turkish bus, Persian busa, and Hindu bosa, a kiss. Some words, you see, roam further than the distance from Lake Kissimmee, Florida,
that Paradise of osculation, to distant Lapland, the only spot in Europe where kissing is not known. Osculation, the more highbrow word, has a prettier parentage, coming from the Latin osculari, to kiss, which developed from Latin osculum, a little mouth, the pretty mouth, this being the diminutive of os, mouth. Smack, defined as "a kiss, especially in a coarse or noisy manner," is akin to the German schmatzen and schmacken, to knock, or to smack the lips. Salute, the courtly word for kiss, comes from the Latin salus, safety, which grew out of salvus, from which we get salvation, and also a salvo of guns. Here we must quarrel with the word’s parents: a kiss does not, as a rule, spell safety—it should rather be a glorious peril; the salvation it brings is at least not of the religious kind; and, if it sounds like a salvo of guns, we should ask the lady to put on a Maxim silencer thereafter, in order to avoid waking the neighbors.

So much for the family tree of kissing. As to its meaning, the dictionary says that a kiss is "a salute or caress, given with the lips." What an incredible understatement! Imagine a drowning man describing a life-buoy as a floating contrivance stuffed with cork! We much prefer Sam Slick’s definition or description, that a kiss is like creation, because it is made out of nothing, and is very good. An old poet came closer than the dictionary, when he wrote:

What is a kiss? alacke! at worst,
A single drop to quench a thirst,
Tho’ oft it proves in happier hour
The first sweet drop of one long shower.
Roots of Kissing.—Havelock Ellis, in Appendix A to volume IV of his Studies in the Psychology of Sex, has done most toward establishing the origins of kissing. The kiss as we know it, the tactile or touch kiss (as distinguished from the more widespread olfactory or smell kiss) is a specialized development of the sense of touch. The same is largely true, as Ellis points out, of the whole expression of physical love: the sexual embrace itself may be spoken of as a method of obtaining, through a specialized organization of the skin, the most exquisite and intense sensations of touch. The tactile kiss is confined to man, and largely to the civilized European man; but its roots go far below him, in the long upward climb of life.

Even as low as the insects, as Ellis points out, manifestations resembling the kiss are found. Thus snails and other insects, during their active mating, caress each other with their antennæ. Among birds, the bills are used for touches and caresses which partake of the nature of the kiss. Many mammals have touches and lickings, during the love episode, which are of kindred nature. Dogs, especially, smell, lick, and gently bite their mates. Yet too much significance must not be seen in these phenomena, since all our senses are merely extensions and specializations of the primitive sense of touch.

To travel closer to the immediate ancestors of our kiss, consider the baby. He regards his most reliable witness, in every case, as his tongue. Anything that his tongue can reach, or
that can be carried up to his tongue, is promptly tasted and, if found agreeable, licked. Animals far below the mammals share this trait with the human infant. Especially among the mammals, including man, the trait is prominent: and it traces back to the infant’s pleasure in sucking the maternal nipple. The lowest mammal, it may be remembered, which is the intermediate stage to the forms of life below the mammalian, has no breasts: the young lick the mother’s entire body, which exudes milk at many places. Among mammals, the overpowering instinct to touch with the lips and tongue, that food may be found and life preserved, is specialized into the inner command to touch and suck the nipple for the same purpose. Out of this grows the trait among children of kissing and licking everything and everyone that they like, including people and pet animals.

On the mother’s side, there is an impulse almost as strong to lick her young. The mother cat will commence licking her young almost at the moment of birth; other mammals share the trait. The world’s leading scientists are inclined to find the immediate origin of the kiss as we know it in the kiss bestowed by the mother upon her child. Negative evidence is of value here. The maternal kiss is not universal throughout the human world; but it is much more widely distributed than the love kiss, as we know it. Furthermore, there is no locality in which the love kiss is found, where the maternal kiss is missing.

Freud, the psychoanalyst, has laid great em-
phasis on the close love tie uniting mother and child—a tie frequently too close for the good of either. We have pointed out what the great Viennese overlooked: that the first separate male among animals, appearing at about the stage of the barnacles, was produced as a pocket-husband by the much larger female; and that the first separate male thus mated with his own mother. The roots of this mother-and-son complex, horrendously named the Oedipus complex, are found in this fact. Now we learn that the love kiss originated in the maternal kiss, as we might have expected to find.

An old poser is, Which kissed first, the man or the woman? The answer is simple: the woman. The mother’s kiss, in the history of the race, preceded the kiss of love, as it does in the case of each one of us.

Another element enters into the kiss as we know it—the impulse to bite, increased during active loving. The teeth are used widely among animals, to grasp the female mate more firmly during the love episode. Of course, with the spread of the feminist movement during the last century, women have taken over much of man’s activity, in all lines. Thus when we read references to a “biting blonde” we do not understand a blond Nordic sheik, but one of the sex long libeled as gentler.

The Two Kinds of Kisses.—Throughout the world there are two main varieties of kisses: the touch, tactile, or lip kiss, osculus Europaeus, and the nose or olfactory kiss, osculus Asiaticus. Most of this study will be devoted to the lip kiss; but the first lesson in the art
of kissing should be devoted to the exotic method called the nose kiss. This method may be stored for future reference by those essaying the kiss for the first time; but hardened veterans in love’s sweet practice may at once proceed to try it out, along the lines indicated below.

So far, we have assumed the necessity for a manual of osculation. This is as good a place as any to indicate the two essential reasons for this book.

First, kissing is an art, and not a gift. Indeed, the whole practice of love is one of the most charming of the applied arts. No man or woman is born a perfect kisser, or a perfect lover. The teacher may be experience—there is no more competent instructor. But unless you wish your Cupid’s Boulevard to be full of unnecessary ups and downs, of countless incidents where a little more knowledge on your part would have caused the love incident to become immeasurably more pleasurable both to the kisser and the kissed, you will not suffer from a few lessons given by an OO.D.—doctor of osculations. Society, as now constituted, is sadly lacking in proper facilities for learning the technique of love and kissing. A hundred years from now, every well-equipped school will contain departments of Erotology, teaching theory as well as laboratory experimentation. If I live that long, I expect to become at one leap a full-fledged professor in kissing. I may even rise higher.

Second, American men and women are woefully ignorant on the proper technique of love,
and of the kiss. There is a Puritan tradition behind many of us, which forbids kissing any woman but one's wife (or, by grudging extension, one's fiancée): and which even forbids kissing one's wife on Sundays and holy days. The latter prohibition, some husbands hold, might well be broadened; but the very spice of love lies in kissing one who is not one's wife or husband, if popular belief is at all right. This Puritan tradition has had its weight; it has made women offer lips no more attractive than damp salt mackerel, and men try to kiss a human being as if she were the man's mother-in-law. Then there is the recoil from this tradition, which makes a man's first kiss like a vacuum cleaner, often alarming the girl for life; and a girl's first kiss so marvelous, that all proper sense of climax is lost. There is ample room for a little common science on the heavenly art of kissing.

Leaping away, then, from the European or lip kiss, we find that much more widely distributed throughout the world of men is the nose or olfactory kiss. As performed by the Japanese, this kiss involves three distinct stages:

1. The man lays his nose gently upon the beloved girl's cheek.
2. He draws in a long nasal inspiration, lowering his eyelids as if in the extremity of bliss.
3. The lips give a slight smack, without touching the girl's cheek.

Kisses similar to this are the staple product in China, India, Ceylon, much of Africa. The connoisseur in kisses might try this variety: but, compared to many of the Occidental varie-
ties, it will seem as tepid and insipid as warmed-over buckwheat cakes, or campaign pledges a week after election. Yet, throughout most of the world, our kiss is regarded as inelegant to the highest degree; and the nose kiss as the height of human ecstasy. Similarly a man who had never eaten anything but hardtack might regard it as the height of culinary art.
II

THE HISTORY OF LIP KISSING

In Antiquity.—The antiquity of lip kissing may be traced, in no very pronounced form, to the Aryan and Semitic peoples. Among the ancient Arabs, and their Semitic relatives, the Hebrews, the kiss had many uses, most of these being related to religion. The kiss was used as a direct method of worship of some gods: "Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves" (Hosea xiii 2). Similarly the Lord said to Elijah: "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (I Kings xix 18). A stranger religious rite is referred to by Job (xxx i 27) when he refers to kissing his hand to the moon or sun, as a symbol of worship.

The kiss of salutation, especially among men, was common. Thus Jacob kissed his father Isaac; Joseph kissed all his brethren, his sons, and his father; Aaron kissed Moses, and Moses in turn kissed his father-in-law Jethro; Samuel, when he anointed Saul as king, kissed him; David kissed Jonathan, and later his son Absalom; and Absalom kissed all who came to see him, in order to win their allegiance by this grant of near-royal favor. Later all the Macedonian Christians kissed Paul, as he was leaving them. This kiss was extended, among the early Christians, to in-
clude women as well: the perfect Christian greeted both man and women with a “holy kiss,” or a “kiss of charity.” There are some Christians whom it would indeed be charity to kiss—but the custom had its advantages. David’s kiss to Absalom betokened reconciliation with the rebel; and the king’s command, in the Psalms, was that all should kiss the king, the Lord’s Son, or be genially wiped out for omitting the kiss of subjection.

The kiss among relatives was not unknown: Laban eldered Jacob for not permitting Laban to kiss his sons and daughters, and Elisha asked permission of Elijah to kiss his father and mother. The kiss betokened approbation also: “Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer” (Prov. xxiv 26). This is a custom we are glad has passed. Indiscriminate kissing from many men in public life, for instance, we would regard as a punishment beyond any that savage ingenuity could devise. The woman who had sinned kissed the feet of Jesus, in token of her reformed adoration. And there was the kiss of treachery, given by an enemy, warned against in Proverbs, and used by Joab in murdering Amasa, and by Judas in delivering Jesus to the posse that sought him.

So far, we have not had the kiss of love, between man and woman. Naomi’s kisses to her daughters-in-law were not quite the love that we mean, but we find it, too, sparsely scattered through the Bible. Thus, upon their first meeting, we read: “And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept” (Gen. xxix 11). The kiss is understandable, for
Rachel is said to have been a young and attractive damsel; but why the weeping? Something must be left out of the story: perhaps she would let him kiss her but once. And, in the great love song of the Old Testament, we find what we are seeking: “Then let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth” (Song of Solomon i 2). We can overlook countless kissings of the dust, to show humble subjection, for one real description of the kiss of love like this. The Old Testament worthies were on the right track, after all. The other kisses made us feel like the British soldier in Kipling’s Mandalay:

An’ I seed her first a-smokin’ of a whackin’ white cheroot,
An’ a-wastin’ Christian kisses on an ‘eathen idol’s foot:
Bloomin’ idol made o’ mud,
Wot they called the Great Gawd Budd—
Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed ‘er where she stud!

But we have arrived at last at a real kiss, and with this we can pass onward.

We learn that Arabian women and children kiss the beards of their husbands and fathers, which must be about as thrilling as kissing a shredded wheat biscuit or a clothes brush. The Mohammedans, on their pious pilgrimage to Mecca, kiss the sacred black stone, which was worshipped long before Mohammed was born. In Egypt, the inferior kisses the hand of a superior, generally on the back, but sometimes on the palm; the son kisses the hand of his father, the wife that of her husband, the slave and servant that of their master. Here the kiss spells subjection. We know that, among
the Greeks, Homer scarcely knew the kiss, and later poets mentioned it only rarely.

When we come to Rome, the kiss has a more varied practice. There was the religious kiss, similar to Job’s: persons were treated as atheists who would not kiss their hands when they entered a temple. In early Roman ages, the kiss was given by inferiors to superiors; in the pre-Caesarean republic, this fell into disrepute. The emperors restored the practice of kissing hands, which gradually was etherealized until the crowd had to kiss their hands to the emperors, as one would to a god. Solomon spoke of the same custom among the Hebrews, and Cortez found it among the Mexicans whom he pillaged. A strange custom in Rome was to give the dying a last kiss, in order, as they thought, to catch the dying breath. As for kissing among men, let Martial, the old satirist, speak for Rome:

Every neighbor, every hairy-faced farmer presses on you with a strongly scented kiss. Here the weaver assails you, there the fuller and the cobbler, who has just been kissing leather; here the owner of a filthy beard, and the one-eyed gentleman; there one with bleared eyes, and fellows whose mouths are defiled with all manner of abominations.

He gives the other side of the picture, when he describes the kisses of his favorite:

The fragrance of balsam extracted from aromatic trees; the ripe odor yielded by the teeming saffron; the perfume of fruits mellowing in their winter repository; the flowery meadows of spring; amber warmed by the hand of a maiden; a garden that attracts the bees.
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That Roman love-kisses were not frigid is indicated by many lines in the poets. Thus Catullus wrote:

Whom wilt thou for thy lover choose?
Whose will they call thee, false one, whose?
Who will thy darted kisses sip,
While thy keen love-bites scar his lip?

Horace, in one of his odes, refers to the same nibbling propensity of Roman women and men:

Or on thy lips the fierce, fond boy
Marks with his teeth the furious joy.

The Spread of Kissing.—With this good start, the admirable custom of kissing spread over the world: but its progress was slow. It did not conquer the Orient: Japan, China, India, still have small use for it. Among nearly all the black races of Africa, not only is the kiss between lovers unknown, but the mother’s kiss is usually unknown. Among the American Indians, the lip kiss was not found, although the mouth might be used in the love episode. The Fuegians, in South America, have the custom of lovers rubbing their cheeks together. The present limited kissing among Australian natives may be due to white lessons.

Today, the kiss is known through Europe, and among Europeans everywhere, with the single exception of Lapland. Yet, even in Europe, it is a comparatively modern discovery, spreading first to the higher classes, and then down. One medieval ballad has the lady of the castle discover that a varlet has substituted himself for the absent lord during the night, by remembering that the varlet embraced with-
out kissing. The Celtic tongue, as Rhys found out, has no word for kiss, but uses the Latin pax, which means literally "peace," because it occurs in the religious phrase osculum pacis, kiss of peace. Yet the Welsh Cymri early learned kissing. Its religious use is widespread. Among European pagans, house gods were greeted, on entering and leaving, with a kiss. The Eastern and Western churches have derived from this such customs as kissing the relics of saints, the foot of the pope, and the hands of bishops. The surviving custom of kissing the Testament, on administering an oath in many of our courts, is a vestige of the dying religious usage.

Yet the kiss made its way slightly into the East. The Arabic Perfumed Garden recommends the kiss, especially on the inside of the mouth. In feudal times in Europe, the vassal kissed the hand of his superior, or some symbol of the lord. Pliny may have been facetious when he said that the custom of kissing women originated in Rome, as a method of the husband's to test whether his wife had been drinking liquor or not. The custom, when extended to other women, justified itself. In France, the good girl is supposed to save her lips for her husband. This is so true, that Mme. Adam wrote that, when she first let a man kiss her as a girl, she thought she had parted with her virtue, and was sure that a child would follow the kiss. A similar misconception prevails among writers for and censors of American movies, if we are to judge by their product.
But in France the custom was once far more liberal. When the gallant cardinal, John of Lorraine, was presented to the Duchess of Savoy, she gave him her hand to kiss. The indignant churchman exclaimed, "How, madam? Am I to be treated in this manner? I kiss the queen, my mistress, who is the greatest queen in the world; and shall I not kiss you, a dirty little duchess?" Without more words, he caught hold of the princess and kissed her three times on the lips. France, alas, retains the custom of kissing among men. During the World War, every decoration given by a French general was accompanied by a hearty smack upon both cheeks. In an army of Amazons no one might object to this; but deliver me from formal masculine osculation!

In Russia, the Easter salutation is a kiss. Everybody kissed everybody, under the old regime, on this occasion. The Czar, who must have been a glutton for punishment, had to kiss his family, retinue, court, attendants, officers on parade, the palace sentinels, and a select party of private soldiers. In any part of Russia the poorest serf, meeting a high-born dame on the street, had only to say "Christ is risen!" to receive "Christ is truly risen" in reply, accompanied by a resounding kiss. Today it is probable that one of the old serfs is not above kissing a duchess who salutes him with the old sesame. It was the great Catherine of Russia who instituted assemblies of men and women, to aid the cultivation of manners. One of her rules for maintaining decency was: "No gentleman should force a kiss from, or
strike a woman, in the assembly, under pain of execution.” If manners were, as this rule indicates, a trifle crude under Catherine, under her husband, Peter the Great, who preceded her, they were a wee mite rougher. In the charming *Peter the Czar*, by Klabund, Peter’s love technique is described:

The Grand Elector of Brandenburg led the Polonaise. The Czar led the Duchess of Mecklenburg, a delicate blonde. When the Polonaise had come to its end in the Hall of Mirrors the Czar and his partner were nowhere to be found.

He had drawn her into a side apartment and had violated her behind a portiere. And he was so powerful that she neither could nor would defend herself.

And then he left her.

She drowns herself in the river outside the palace.

But the Czar had already forgotten her . . . .

Then he fell asleep and dreamed of a mouse of the steppes. She had a face like the Duchess of Mecklenburg and squeaked softly.

He bit off her head and flung the tiny carcass upon the fields.

Peter’s technique was a bit too crude. Perhaps, if he had read this handbook of love and kissing, he might have loved the duchess with more diplomacy and more general enjoyment.

In Norway, one perplexing and, at times, delightful salute is furnished by one’s hostess. The good woman always tucks her guest into bed for the night, and then gives him a resounding kiss upon the lips. As a rule, however, there is no second kiss. The kiss is known
in Finland, but it is frowned upon as something tending upon the immoral. Iceland—thus does a frigid climate affect current standards of morality!—has elaborate penalties for most forms of kissing, including exclusion from the country for kissing another's man's wife, and a heavy fine for even a permitted kiss from an unmarried woman. Far to the south, in Paraguay, the custom requires you to kiss every lady you are introduced to. Since, at one time, all the females above thirteen chewed tobacco, this is a mixed blessing, even with maidens as attractive as South America produces.

In England, the story is that the kiss was introduced by Rowena, the beautiful daughter of Hengist the Saxon marauder. At a banquet given by King Vortigern to his Saxon allies, the princess is said to have kissed the delighted monarch upon the lips. By the time of Edward IV, a guest was expected, upon arrival and departure, to kiss his hostess and all the ladies of the household. In 1497, when Erasmus was in England, the practice was at its height; the good reformer approved:

If you go to any place, you are received with a kiss by all; if you depart on a journey you are dismissed with a kiss; you return, kisses are exchanged; people come to visit you—a kiss the first thing; they leave you—you kiss them all around. Do they meet you anywhere?—kisses in abundance. Lastly, wherever you move, there is nothing but kisses—and if you had once tasted them! how soft they are! how fragrant! on my honor you would not wish to reside here for ten years only, but for life!

John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim’s Progress,
writing over a hundred years later, viewed the spectacle more sourly: he abhorred "the common salutation of women," and punctured the arguments of those who called these "holy kisses" thus:

But then, I have asked them why they make balks? why they did salute the most handsome, and let the ill-favored ones go?

The kiss at the point of death is not unknown in English chronicles. When Nelson was dying on board his flagship, he turned to his faithful friend at his side: "Kiss me, Hardy!" These were the last words he uttered. Sir Walter Scott, when dying, took leave of his friend Lockhart in the same fashion. The kiss among men, once popular in England, came over when England aped French notions of chivalry. Germany has the same custom: in 1888, when the Emperor William met the Czar at St. Petersburg, the two rulers embraced and kissed several times. As the kiss among men entered England, the general kissing of women declined—all due to the innovations of the "old goat," Charles II, at the time of the Restoration. Even canny Scotland has widespread kissing chronicled in several periods.

The state of kissing in the United States today is generally well known: it is a far cry from our liberality to the old Blue Laws of Connecticut, with a heavy penalty for kissing one's wife on Sundays or fast days, and, for all we know, boiling in oil for kissing the wife of another. It is still unlawful to kiss a girl
against her will: the courts awarding damages to the girl varying from $750 in Pennsylvania and $2,500 in New York, to $1.15 in New Jersey. And while there are Anti-Osculation Leagues, with stern medical warnings of the danger of kissing, the custom shows no evidence of diminution. The kissing of children on the mouth, even by parents, is liable to be harmful; if the medicos are to be believed, diphtheria, malaria, scarlet fever, colds and pulmonary taints, blood poison, and at times death, lurk in the kiss. Let the children, then, remain unkissed, except for the cheek: but, with the proper girl, we would brave ten million germs for one taste of what the old Georgia farmer described as "sucking sugar."
The First Kiss.—The desire of a man to kiss a girl, and of a girl to be kissed by a man, and to kiss him in return, assumes a heightened form when adolescence is reached by each. Kissing, from the standpoint of its biological function, is a prelude to the ultimate love mating. From the standpoint of inexperienced kissers, it is a temporary substitute for the love hunger,—a substitute which may be all that the man or girl demands for weeks or months or years. From the standpoint of experienced kissers, it is a prelude to the mating; and, where the kissers have not previously mated, is a sort of preliminary test, to see if they are suited.

The immediate object of kissing is mutual pleasure. If you who read this, whether man or woman, ask me whom you are to kiss, I can only answer that you alone can give the answer. No general rules can be laid down. Many men prefer a girl shorter than themselves: yet the ideal mating might conceivably mean equal height, and there are men who prefer a girl taller. As to whether you wish the girl younger or older than yourself, that too depends upon your inclination at the moment. As a rule, the young man often desires an older woman, who is more experienced and —and, in brief, comes closer to his ideal woman,
based largely upon his mother. As the man grows older, in proportion as his head remains hollow he desires a younger and younger girl. This is partly because he finds an experienced woman superior to himself: and the average "lordly" male, in all sadness I must confess, prefers an inferior woman to one the man's equal or superior. The choice of age for youth has another meaning as well: the older person, consciously or not, wants to restore his own lost youth in the kisses and caresses of a younger person. This, from the standpoint of the older person, is admirable. Some dark men prefer blonde girls, some prefer girls of their own coloring; and in every case generalities cannot be stated with certainty. If you want to kiss a girl or woman, set about doing it, or, at least, finding out if it will be well received.

The immediate object of kissing, mutual pleasure, as distinguished from the ultimate object, the love embrace, requires that both man and girl be willing. There is no pleasure, except in a man slightly perverted, in kissing a girl entirely against her will. So the man's first task is to find out whether the girl wishes, or is ready, for him to kiss her. How can he find out? The one safe rule is, not by asking directly. The girl rightly assumes that the man who asks for a kiss lacks the experience that will make the act worthwhile to her. The indirect methods vary enormously. It's all right to talk about kissing, and get the girl to agree that a kiss isn't any harm, when people really like each other. She will see through
the subterfuge, of course, but, unless she despises its obviousness too much, she will not resent it. Another way is to progress by tentative caresses—touching her hand as if by accident, holding it, sitting close and closer to her, kissing (as if shyly) her shoulder, and the like. If the man's caress is clearly distasteful to the girl, the world is tremendously full of other girls. One or more of the others will bring you more happiness in love, be sure of that. Give the displeased miss up as a bad job, and move on.

But a pretended resistance is another thing. There are many girls who say "No!" to every approach, and yet thereby intend to invite further and further pursuit on the man's part. How can you tell the real from the sham? Rather than miss a good kiss, if there is any doubt in your mind, proceed on the assumption that the girl really wants a kiss. The very feminine girl frequently pretends this resistance: perhaps to entice you on, perhaps because she has been taught that such things are wrong, and does not yet know that they are right; and perhaps because her temperament requires her to be forced every step of the way. If you can stand the shouldering of the temporary responsibility, in other words, if you enjoy the chase of the victim who pretends unwillingness, stick to her until you have kissed her thoroughly. Surprisingly enough, the girl who seems very masculine often has the same trait. Her pretended masculinity may be a sham; and she may long all the time for your kisses and caresses. The only way to find out
is to go ahead: never believe the spoken word in such cases, and believe her actions of rejection only when repeated the Biblical seventy times seven times.

Let us assume that the man has ascertained that the girl is willing to be kissed. If she is to keep up her pretense of opposition, any legitimate surprise kiss is permissible. For my own part, I prefer to leave the protesters to others; the world has enough girls who do not fake this opposition. There is no reason why the protesters should not be left kissless, except for men who enjoy overcoming a struggling faked opposition.

For the girl who is willing to be kissed, the technique of the first kiss requires unusual care and artistry. Don’t hurry, as if you had a train to catch. Don’t stumble over yourself, and find yourself kissing her ear or hair instead of her mouth—which she will regret as much as you. Take it slowly, in somewhat the following fashion:

If the girl is really being kissed for the first time, or is unused to kissing from men, or shams feeble resistance, it is well to hold her so that she cannot avoid the meeting of lips, when it is finally offered. If you and she are standing, either press her body firmly against your own, or hold one arm so that it can catch and hold her at a moment’s indication of squirming away on her part. This with one arm: have the other placed around her shoulder, at the back of her head, so that, if need arises, it can grasp her head and hold it in place for the bestowal of the kiss. If you
are seated, the same rule applies for the two arms; unless you are so sure of your ground that you can place the two hands respectfully on her two cheeks, thereby tilting her face to the proper angle. Then without hurrying, bring your lips up until they meet hers. Keep your lips closed: make the kiss chaste, respectful, and not too long. Its purpose, in other words, is not to frighten the timid un kissed darling.

Even if you are bored with these slow preliminaries, remember what is in store for you, and let your face register intense pleasure. Let your expression say, either that this is the first kiss you have ever had, and that you already feel transported to Paradise; or that, if you ever kissed before, you have forgotten everything in the universe except this particular girl and her particular kiss. Actually act, at the moment that the kiss is completed, as if that is all you expected from the girl. For the moment that is what she will actually feel. Quickly enough, she will feel differently.

Only in the rarest cases is it wise to stop with one kiss. Better let both of you miss a trip to Europe, than stop at this point. Normally, you will still continue to let your arms and hands touch her as intimately as possible. A reassuring pressure of your fingers upon her arms, a head bowed, and, in cases, a murmured "I'm sorry, darling! I didn't really mean to—" ... anything to restore her confidence in you, all these come in handy. Then artistically begin to lose control of yourself. Her cheeks next—they must be kissed—oh, so respectfully! A little kiss-nibble at the corner of her mouth tastes
inexpressibly sweet, and continues to restore her confidence in you. It lulls her suspicions, and makes her think that all you wished was the one small kiss.

An important next step comes in well here, and may indeed be used as a prelude, in cases where the girl seems absolutely unwilling. Gently bend down her head, and kiss her on the eyelids. If this is the beginning of the whole matter, you may even explain reassuringly what you are about to do. While you are feasting on this kiss, by accident, as it were, you can so tilt her face that the lips are yours. Stray to the ears, for a kiss and a little nip; and then come down to the neck. This is a warm comfy kiss, and, if the girl wears a dress even moderately low-cut, is especially thrilling to her. Now, for the first time, you can begin to put some soul, some unconstraint, in the caress. Holding her body tightly to yours, kiss her passionately on the neck. The touch is intimate and at the same time not calculated to rouse suspicion. It will rouse her insensibly. Keep this up, until you feel her body relaxing in your arms. Now is the time to return triumphantly to the lips; if she tries to get away, use a reassuring “Just one, darling! Just one tiny little one—” What you say makes no difference; the thing to do is to get there. Once you have arrived at the lips, you may kiss her as passionately as she is able to stand.

Kissing passionately means kissing with more than the closed lips, in general. The Persian Perfumed Garden recommends kissing with the whole inside of the mouth. Let your
lips now surround hers, as if they were going to engulf them. The electric tingling sensation is hers as well as yours. Sooner or later, she will follow your example, and open her lips slightly. Now is the time to let your tongue speak wordlessly for you. After a long and intense kiss, accompanied by a definite hug or squeeze, you can sit back for a moment's breathing-space. Your girl is no longer unkissed: she has reached the class of the kissed girl, the experienced girl.

*The Sophisticated Kiss.*—The kissing of an experienced girl is a different matter. Again, it is the man's task to decide, from all the evidence furnished by the girl's reception of his tentative approaches, just how experienced she is, and just how she expects to be kissed. A girl only slightly experienced must be kissed, at the beginning, as slowly and only a bit less respectfully than the sweet unkissed; a girl fully experienced in love will regard such tardiness as a proof that the man is, to use the elegant slang, as slow as a train on the Erie. The general rule is to give as much as you are expected to give: and, if you are not too much of a blunderer, it is better to err on the side of giving too much, than too little. Women may forgive an excess of passion in the kiss: for, after all, they too unconsciously desire to be roused into passion. A woman rarely forgives the man who underkisses her, who gives her less than she desires.

A girl's kiss is self-revealing to a man. If the lips are kept closed and the kiss is deco-
rous, this is a warning to go comparatively slow. If the girl’s lips are opened, this says that the track is clear. If the mouth is fully opened, and the girl kisses as actively as the man, it might not be a bad idea to cancel all your engagements for the next week or so, and give the girl all the kissing she wants!

With a girl who is experienced, the hug, or body embrace, is very important. This should be more determined now. The first variety is where the man’s arm, around the girl’s back, presses her bosom against his: and a pressure that temporarily stops the breathing of both of them, at times, is relished by both. A later technique is for the arm to fall at least as low as her waist, and thus lock the two bodies together, while the lips complete the communion. The poet describes it:

Then will people passing
By the lit place
See our shadows marry
In a gray embrace.

The lip kiss now lasts longer than with the inexperienced girl, of course: and tends gradually to become what is called the soul kiss. It need only stop short of the astonishing kiss Mrs. Browning describes in *Aurora Leigh*, a kiss—

As long and silent as the ecstatic night.

We are not amphibious enough to endure such a kiss. We would have to come up to breathe from time to time. But, to those who are able, this sort of sheik buss is recommended. Toward the North Pole, where the night is six
months long, the kiss described has distinct possibilities.

Yet the soul kiss, as the exclusive method, would grow wearisome. The bird peck variety of kiss, which flits tantalizingly all over the girl's face, and strays down to the neck and its environs, is a pleasant intermission between longer osculatory sessions. The three varieties of the soul kiss might be described as (1) that in which the two tongues involved perform a sort of hand wrestle with each other; (2) that in which the girl's tongue is withdrawn inward as far as possible, giving the man the maximum of territory to explore, and (3) that in which the girl does the exploring. Fancier variations of this will suggest themselves. And, of course, in all varieties of the kiss, the thrill is immediately communicated throughout the entire body.

A Girl's Kiss.—Although, as we have seen, the female kissed first in the shape of the maternal lick followed by the maternal kiss—in the ordinary intercourse between man and woman, the man kisses first. The reverse is true, when the girl is more experienced, and is perhaps a woman with a younger man. Then she may with propriety assume the role of the man, gently initiate the unkissed youth, as in our description of the initiation of the unkissed girl; and thereafter lead him up the long path to osculatory sheikdom.

In any kissing, where the man has started first, the one wrong thing is for the girl to remain passive, unless this be merely as an intermission. She should lag, in ideal kissing,
a little behind the man; but only a little behind him. As the fire of the kissing tingles throughout the veins of both, it is her cue to respond almost as ardently, and never be merely negative throughout the experience. Few men like the continuing sensation of kissing the stone image on top of a sarcophagus. Nor does the girl secure her greatest pleasure by utter passivity. "It is better to give than to receive" applies to both parties in a kissing episode.

The proper interruption for a spell of kisses given by the man to the girl is for her to reciprocate, and return the kisses. This advice is almost unnecessary, for women are disposed to return with interest the kisses given them.

Love, to man, is leaping fire,
Dying with its fed desire.

But, in woman, it will glow
Most, when man would have it go.

Hope no more of man than this,
Maiden, when you take his kiss:

That his loving will be done
When its victory is won.

Do not scold her drowsy ardor,
Lover; she will cling the harder,

Taught that your love, even at ending,
Lights a life for her long tending.

This is as good a place as any to say a word about the actual significance of the kiss. Pleasant as it is, its indiscriminate use is an abuse. Its proper function is as a prelude, not as a goal achieved. Men and women who play,
at kissing, intending to stop there, are playing with a fire that easily becomes uncontrollable. Iwan Bloch, in *The Sexual Life of Our Time*, says that there is a quantitative difference only, and not a qualitative difference, between the chaste stroking of the hair and the first timid kiss, on the one hand, and the ultimate love rapture. Someone has said that the first intentional touching of the skin of the beloved one is a mating half achieved. *The Perfumed Garden* ends its description of loving:

And the most intimate embrace  
Leaves the heart cold and unsatisfied  
If the rapture of the kiss is wanting.

**Goethe describes the ultimate kiss thus:**

Eagerly she sucks the flames out of his mouth;  
Each is conscious only of the other.

His final word is that it is a true saying that the woman who permits a man to kiss her will ultimately grant him complete possession. Indeed, a sensitive woman values her kiss as highly as the last favor. Unless a kiss be exchanged merely as a test of mutual attraction, it is well to recall that chastity was accurately described by Lester Ward as selection, and not abstinence: and to select with great care those whom you admit to the gate of kissing, which is almost invariably, with men and women of any maturity, the last locked gate upon the way to the earthly Eden.
SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Size of Mouth.—In any kiss, the attitude must be of complete abandonment to the particular kiss involved. It is almost suicidal to go to a kiss with any distaste in the mind—suicidal, that is, to the full pleasure of the kiss. You must make yourself believe that the girl you are kissing, or the man you are kissing, is the most desirable person in the world. For the moment she or he must be: otherwise, it is better to postpone or abandon the kiss. Kiss with your whole heart, or not at all.

When approached in this mood, the problem of the particular geography of the girl’s mouth (or the man’s, on the part of the girl) becomes, not a matter of taste or distaste, but a matter of engineering. The excessively small mouth is easily kissed, and at times is far less satisfying than a good mouth-filling pair of lips. The medium-sized mouth, in normal cases, gives the greatest pleasure. When the man is confronted with a mouth whose general stretch, if laid on the ground, would apparently reach from Ft. Desbrosses, Alaska, to the corner of Main Street and Zenith Avenue, Skaneateles, New York, the matter is purely one of measurement in applied physics. The safest way is to start at one corner, and gradually progress toward the center, covering ground as effectively as possible in the process. The foolhardy at times make a dive for the very center at the beginning, and may encounter
the emotion of having stepped off of a neck-
high stretch in the river into a pool of im-
measurable depth. If this is definitely the
case, the only thing to do is to paddle toward
one side or the other, in the hope of reaching
firm ground once more.

Something as to the kissability of a girl is
taught, ordinarily, by the external appearance
of her teeth. We are indebted to Freud for
the discovery that protruding teeth, while they
may be esthetically a blemish, are at the same
time an advertisement of a passionate nature.
Such teeth usually derive from the girl's habit,
while an infant and a small child, of continuing
to suck at pacifiers, fingers or any object
handy, until she has pulled her teeth out of
normal alignment. This continuing at sucking
indicates a strong sexual nature: and the lack
of flawless beauty in such girls is more than
made up for by their ample passion. The girl
with prominent teeth is usually made love to
and mated far before her sister, who is built
more on the lines of a Grecian baby grand
Venus.

Kissing Relatives.—The matter of selectiv-
ness determines what kind of kiss you give to
your relatives. In the South, the custom of
discovering that you and any pretty girl you
meet are "kissing cousins" is an enjoyable
one; and, needless to say, having selected such
cousin with proper discrimination, you treat
the kiss as the means to enjoyment as great
as that with any girl who measures up to
your particular standard of female attractiv-
ness. With relatives in general, especially with
homely aunts, mothers-in-law, and esteemed grandmothers, the cheek is always handy, and is recommended, unless you are fond of the taste of vinegar or peppermint-drops, if the old lady is partial to that Victorian comfit.

The girl, in letting male relatives kiss her, had best be guided in similar fashion. Let her prize her lips, as a medium of osculation, so highly that she does not let them be sampled by any whom accidents of blood give a partial right to. If the young man is attractive, or the old man either, and you want the sensation of the kiss, this is your privilege; but a deft movement will always suffice to substitute a cheek for the more intimate lip smack.

Kissing Your Own Sex.—Physical love between women and women, or between men and men, is looked upon with repugnance by the normally developed among civilized people. Far from being the highest form of love, as Socrates and Sappho respectively described it, we know today that this is an innately sterile type of embrace, and is hence to be avoided by the normally matured.

The custom of men kissing each other, still found in certain countries among our civilized brothers, originated in a time when Socratic love was not essentially uncommon. It has largely passed out as a social custom among us. If a man feels much pleasure in it, it is a matter for self-investigation and understanding, and points toward the perverse. It may be largely disregarded in this study.

The custom of women kissing each other is far more common. It is undeniable that the
The kiss is, at times, a disease-spreader; lovers willingly run the risk of this contagion. Indeed, modern wisdom holds that germs of many diseases are constantly present in the organisms of all of us; and, if we continue in normal health, with normal care of the body and plenty of fresh air and as much outdoor life as is possible, the body protects itself from yielding to these diseases. Thus lovers, otherwise healthy, may kiss with hardly any fear of contagion. Kissing among women, where there is no such overpowering love interest, is on a different footing. If the woman receives excessive pleasure from it, this is a matter for self-investigation and understanding, and points toward a perversion. If it be taken and given merely as a formal courtesy, this is a matter to be determined by individual preference, and by the customs of the social group in which you move.

The Kiss Complete.—When the love relationship has moved a stage beyond mere lip kissing, it is on the road toward that ultimate enjoyment, in which the whole body of each lover is a viand for the other's delectation. Shakespeare hints such a kiss for us, in Venus and Adonis, where he describes the experienced goddess with the callow youth:

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,
Tired with her beak on feathers, flesh, and bone,
Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,
Till either gorge be stuffed or prey be gone,
   Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin,
And where she ends she doth anew begin.

"Fondling," she saith, "since I have hemm'd thee here
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer;
Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale;
Graze on my lips; and if those hills be dry
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

A thousand kisses buys my heart from me;
And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.
What is ten hundred touches unto thee?
Are they not quickly told and quickly gone?
Say, for non-payment that the debt should
double,
Is twenty thousand kisses such a trouble?"

Alas, Adonis was not a soul-kiss sheik: and
preferred to be slain by a boar, rather than
be loved by a goddess. Something was wrong
with that boy.

The caresses and kisses that mark the height
of love's ecstasy, in many cases, have no lim-
itation of time or place. The most intimate
kisses, as Freud points out, are not pervers-
sions, if used as proper preludes to the ulti-
mate mating: they are perversions only when
they substitute for the mating. The kiss itself,
as he shows, may be a perversion—the lip
kiss, that is. So great is its thrill, that there
are men and women who use it instead of the
mating, to secure love's thrill: and this is not
normal. The stern biological compulsion to
normal men and women, that they mate fully
and reproduce their kind, worded in the old
book of Genesis:

And God blessed them, and God said to them,
Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,
still stirs within us: and there is a price to
pay, if it be ignored. Those who flee from
kissing and love for a lifetime, through some
delusion that they have chosen a higher way,
are afflicted with all the morbidities of ingrowing love, which is quite as unnatural and painful as an ingrowing toenail. If man or woman is so unfortunate as never to be approached in love, or as not to find a woman or man who will reciprocate to his or her approaches, why, that is as unfortunate as the lot of the eagle, caged matelessly away from the sky. But such cases are so rare as to be almost negligible. If you want to love, you can, and you can find somewhere your adequate mate. And when the mate is found, and the love rapture grows like the crescent moon toward its full, you will discover the complete kiss, and the ineffable delight that it brings. This is the time to forget all false reticences, all teachings that thus and so is not done by nice people, and all the rest of the shoddy that masquerades as truth. It is love's hour, and your share in it is to yield yourself wholly to the golden spell whose physical rapture is the crest of man's physical existence. In one of the Eagle Sonnets, the lover sings:

You called me, a fantastic architect,
To build you airy and enduring towers
Above a dream-world rudely torn and wrecked,
In the sweet gossip of unhurried hours.

And then the transition:

And now you have another word for me,
A singing cry out of your hungering
That ends the tease of golden fantasy. . . .
And I am altered to a simpler thing,
Only quick lips to summon rapture near,
And a young body like a lifted spear.

In this high mood of utter giving and receiving, love at its finest comes, and stays, if the lovers have chosen well.
The Religious Kiss.—We have already referred to the religious usages concerning kissing, as revealed by the Bible and the records of classical nations. One of the apocryphal books of the New Testament supplements this account, by stating that John the Baptist was conceived in a chaste kiss of his parents. The kissing of holy relics, of the pope's foot and the bishop's hand, are all relics of heathen customs. Charles Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth* gives the ancestry of some Christian kisses:

Kissing of images and the Pope's toe is eastern paganism. The Egyptians had it of the Assyrians, the Greeks of the Egyptians, and we of the Romans, whose Pontifex Maximus (high priest) had his toe kissed during the Empire. The Druid's kissed their High Priest's toe a thousand years before Christ.

A variant of this crept into England. Anciently the kings and queens of England ceremoniously washed the feet of beggars, and kissed them, thereby imitating Jesus, who washed the feet of his disciples. Moreover, the monarch had to kiss as many feet as the years in his or her age; presenting a gift to each, called a maunday; the day of the ceremony being called Maundy-Thursday. When she was thirty-nine, Queen Elizabeth performed this rite: that is, she smacked the feet of
thirty-nine commoners. James II, in 1731, his forty-eighth year, was the last English sovereign to pretend the humility of this public osculation. In 1530, Cardinal Wolsey, then fifty-nine, kissed the feet of as many poor men, and presented to each twelve pence in money, three ells of canvas to make shirts, a pair of new shoes, a cask of red herrings, and three white herrings. Thus do the pagan rites blossom in advanced religions.

The betrothal and nuptial kiss have origins partly religious. The nuptial kiss in church, at the end of the marriage service, is strictly by the York Missal and the Sarum Manual. Evidently it took a church law, even in those days, to require a man to kiss his own wife.

On Special Occasions.—Among the most popular of fairy tales is that of the Sleeping Beauty, who was aroused out of her years of slumber by the kiss of the handsome prince. Passing by the obvious symbolism in the story, it is interesting that a custom developed throughout Europe, perhaps as a result of the story, which permitted a man who found a woman asleep to kiss her awake. The same right, even in those days, was given to a woman who found a man asleep. In both cases, the wakened must also pay, as forfeit, to the awakener, a pair of gloves.

St. Valentine’s Day is another occasion when the kiss is highly in order. Sir Walter Scott’s Fair Maid of Perth has a full account of the osculatory practices on this holiday.

New Year’s Day, however, is the heyday of
the promiscuous kissers. The antiquity of this custom is vouched for by Washington Irving, in his entertaining *Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York*. In the broad old days the good burghers of New Amsterdam, with their wives and daughters, dressed themselves in all their finery, and repaired to the governor's house, where the chief official went through the rite of kissing all the women a happy new year. The head usher would follow suit:

Embracing all the young vrouws, and giving every one of them that had good teeth and rosy lips a dozen hearty smacks, he departed, loaded with their kind wishes.

The same usher later was the first to require a kiss from all women who passed Kissing Bridge, on the old highway that led to the troubled water of Hellgate. The custom of New Year kissing in New York has survived with undiminished fervor to today. At proper Watch Parties, gathered to watch the old year out and the new year in, at the stroke of midnight it is expected of every man present that he shall offer the proper osculatory salute to every woman present. When the watch party takes place in one of the prominent restaurants of the Tenderloin district, the results are piquantly surprising. You may go away with the memory of the most entrancing kiss you have ever encountered, given you by an anonymous pair of lips whom you may never meet again. The custom is a good one, and is spreading to other parts of the country.

And Christmas brings in the mistletoe. The
old belief was that, unless a maiden was kissed under the mistletoe at Christmas, she would not be married during the ensuing year. Since married ladies may be kissed as well, it is not quite clear what will happen to them if they are kissed. The old Scandinavian tradition concerning the mistletoe dealt with the death of Balder, fairest of the gods. To assure his life, every tree had given its word that it would not kill him. Then Loki, the mischief-maker of the gods, made an arrow of mistletoe, which had given no oath, and gave it to blind Hoder to shoot, the fatal shot slaying the god. Balder was restored to life, and the mistletoe was given into the care of the goddess Friga, and was never to be an instrument of evil until it again touched the earth. Hence it is always suspended in air, growing as a parasite high in oak and other trees. Its use as a license to kiss dates to the Druids: a branch of the plant is suspended from the ceiling, and any one of the fair sex who, by accident or intention, passes beneath the plant, incurs the penalty of a hearty kiss from any man quick enough or audacious enough to take advantage of the opportunity. When natural mistletoe disappears—it is growing rarer now—you can rest assured that inventive man will popularize an artificial mistletoe, so that the lips of all maidens may be warmed by the kiss of Yuletide cheer.

Kissing Games and Sports.—If we had headed this section "kissing sports," it might have been misunderstood, somewhat like the alibi of the awkward dancer, to his fair partner
THE ART OF KISSING

with the aggrieved toes: “You know, I’m a little stiff from polo.”—“Is that so?” she replied icily. “I have several friends from there.”

Kissing games are popular chiefly among children of the former generation, or those living in more backward sections of the country. The modern youngsters scorn them as childish, so engrossed are they in more mature kissing and petting parties. Yet such games as “Postoffice,” “Drop the Handkerchief,” “Pillow,” and “In a Well” were tremendous favorites in my youth—among the girls, that is, who had already reached their adolescence; and were endured, and in precocious cases liked, by the boys who participated. “Postoffice,” in essence, consisted simply in girls and boys calling each other out, one at a time, for a kiss in the hall. “Drop the Handkerchief” had the wild thrill of the chase added—a chase in which the girls pretended very hard to try to get away, in order to yield more completely.

Many of the English folksongs, such as “The Farmer in the Dell,” “King William Was King James’s Son,” and “The Needle’s Eye” are used as ring-games for children, with kissing as an integral part. Certain “nice” children are forbidden to play these games, and thus get started in life with a false Victorian point of view. The games are pleasant enough for the very young; the more serious game of love will come in due time.

At old-fashioned country dances, in backwoods sections of America, the fiddlers who furnished the music used to break the monot-
by a well-recognized squeaking of their fiddles, which was a signal for the couples to smack each other soundly. There have been outright "kissing bees" held in some of the western states; and even New England has been accused of holding "electric kissing parties," in which men and women rubbed their feet on the rugs until they were charged with electricity, and then kissed in the dark, to the amusement of bystanders who watched the sparks leap from lip to lip—if the accounts are to be believed. In any case, the good old husking bees are well authenticated, where the finding of a red ear of corn gave a young man the right to kiss every girl present; and gave a girl the right to call out her beau and kiss him before the crowd. So society blundered along toward giving its youth some practical knowledge of the opposite sex, to aid in right choice.

In modern England, bank holidays are the signal, in certain localities, for kissing sports quite as general and indiscriminate. The young men and women gathered there would form a rude ring, and then a girl—any girl—would suddenly go up to a young man, and slip a chip into his hand. She would at once run across the green as fast as she was able, or willing; the man thereupon would give chase, run her down, bring her back with his arm around her waist, and kiss her half a dozen times before the onlookers. At times the man gave the chip, and the girl did the chasing.

In Ireland there are occasional kissing festivals. On an Easter Monday not long ago
several hundred young people of the town and neighborhood of Potsferry, County Down, put on their best attire and gathered at a pleasant walk nearby. The sport consisted in the men’s kissing the women, married or single, as often as they cared to. Hardly a single woman returned from the festival without having had at least a dozen good hearty smacks.

For the modern expression of this energy, the petting party, so popular among the flapper generation and young college circles, is the chief outlet. Only, the earlier kissing sports and games consisted only of kissing: and the petting party hardly starts with this. Every variety of kissing is indulged in by the accomplished petter: “necking” is the name given to the osculatory pyrotechnics. The petters stop somewhere short of the complete love experience: but they have usually come so close to the ultimate, that there is, to use Byron’s phrase brought up to date, not little mystery left for the nuptial night, but none.

Kissing Devices.—The kiss sent by mail is the constant way that love letters are ended. A row of crosses or x’s ordinarily represents the kisses; but the more astute miss has a better way. Lips well rouged, or rouged over cold cream, when pressed to the page of the letter, leave a perfect impression as a token to send to the lover. Kisses are easily transmitted over the telephone; and as easily over the radio.

The kiss for sweet charity’s sake is well known. At many charity bazaars there is a kissing booth. where some attractive miss may
be bussed at so much the smack, all to put panties on the little heathens of Patagonia, or to provide cream for indigent kittens in the Bid-a-wee Home. During the Boer war, Mrs. Potter, the noted actress, sold a kiss to a Hindu for twenty pounds, or about a hundred dollars; devoting the money to the South African War fund. Grace George looked at the matter reasonably, when interviewed on the subject. She reminded the reporter that actresses were paid to allow actors to kiss them, where the play called for this display; and hence she saw no reason why the kiss could not be sold for patriotic reasons.

The stage kiss itself is often a mere feint, a pretended affair in which the actor and actress go through the motions of the kiss without touching lips. But it may be the very reverse, depending upon the actor and actress involved. There are many legends of the insatiable nature of certain actresses. A dramatic critic, writing in the old New York Press, said:

During the progress of her once famous kisses, Emma Abbott exhausted many tenors. After her first season in Carmen, Olga Nethersole bowled over her Don Jose, who began as a stalwart young Englishman, and ended as a mere shadow, and has since gone into consumption. In one of the Daly farces Ada Rehan and John Drew did some ecstatic kissing, and, if he had not removed to another management, our comedian might now be in heaven. It would appear that, in the theater at least, the ladies can stand more kisses than the men.

The critic goes on to point out that, in grand opera, expert kissers can command high sal-
aries. In his musical version of *Romeo and Juliet*, Gounod makes Romeo hang on Juliet's lips for an interminable number of bars of music. The opening scene in *Tannhäuser* shows the tenor exhausted by a kissing bout, while the lovely Venus is wide awake and begging for more. Brunnhilde, in *Die Walküre*, is put to sleep by a kiss strong enough to make her sleep twenty years. Rip Van Winkle's kiss of the old bottle in the Catskills was not more efficacious in inducing slumber. And in Wagner's *Siegfried*, the hero fastens his lips to Brunnhilde's with such perpetual fervor that the orchestra, says the critic, plays enough music to stock a comic opera, before the kiss is ended.

As for the movie kiss, that is of two distinct kinds. The good girl, played by any doll-faced moron, kisses as demurely as Victoria herself. But the siren, the vampire! Here we have the ultimate in extended kissing. Certain states, like Pennsylvania, have found it necessary to limit the number of feet of film that a kiss can last—two hundred feet being the Pennsylvania maximum. I once kissed a girl continuously for seven miles, on the Twentieth Century Limited; and I am sure that the record is infinitely longer than that. When it is remembered that the purified movies permit no display of any of the play of love beyond the kiss, and that on the screen the kiss is potent enough to cause a girl to be a "ruined woman," and to appear in the next reel with twins or triplets, you can see why an osculation of the Theda Bara type is efficiently and comprehensively done.
Yet many a thrill is provided, in the darkened movie auditorium, when the handsome hero and the wily siren or lovely heroine tangle themselves up in a long embrace. You cannot help seeing yourself as one or the other of the kissers; and the experience is highly pleasurable. There is only one more delightful experience, and that is to be doing the kissing yourself.
VI

CELEBRATED KISSES

Kissing the Blarney Stone.—About 1446 Cormac McCarthy built the Castle of Blarney, in County Cork, Ireland. It is a fortification of immense strength, with walls more than eighteen feet thick. When besieged by the Lord-President, McCarthy temporized by promising to surrender the fort to an English garrison. Day after day his lordship looked for a fulfilment of the agreement; day after day the Irish chieftain temporized with honeyed promises, until at last the Englishman became the laughing-stock of the English court. From this comes the belief that "kissing the Blarney Stone" endows its kisser with a sweet, persuasive, and wheedling eloquence, which is in turn called blarney.

The real Blarney Stone, if you seek to kiss it, may be found only by allowing yourself to be lowered from the northern angle of the lofty castle for some score of feet. There you will find the stone with the Latin inscription:

CORMAC MCCARTHY FORTIS ME FIERIFEC\'T,
A. D. 1446

For those who are skeptical as to the aerial journey clinging to a rope, there is another stone on the summit, likewise called the real
Blarney Stone, bearing the date of 1703. The person who has kissed the stone is henceforth irresistible, when he pours his soft pleadings into the ears of his desired lady. Any trans-oceanic ticket will quote the price of accommodations to County Cork and return.

A different kind of blarney is evidenced in the kiss for political purposes. You may remember that when the young ensign, Richmond Pearson Hobson, almost successfully sank a boat in Santiago harbor, in the attempt to bottle up the Spanish fleet, and thereafter returned to the United States, he went upon the lecture platform, and at the first lecture was offered a kiss by first one and then all of the young ladies present. His lecture series was a great success from the osculatory standpoint, at least.

The Congressman's kissing the babies of his constituency is a silent blarney that never fails to work. As far back as 1888, McComas of Maryland reduced baby-kissing to a fine art. After pensively gazing at the infant, the Congressman, as if overcome by an overpowering burst of emotion, would seize the infant to his bosom, hold it for a moment with head bowed reverentially, then bring his supple moustaches close to the little face, and—Smack!—the deed was done. In 1912, Congressman Huddleston of Alabama went the Marylander one better, by achieving the record of kissing every child in his Birmingham constituency. Thereafter, he might oppose the corporations, denounce conscription, vote against the war, do what he pleased—he had the babies and their mothers,
and they had their husbands: and he was sure of reelection as long as he desired the position. This is political blarney reduced to maximum efficiency with the least effort.

In England, political kissing depends for its blarney effect upon gold guineas in the mouth of the candidate, which he passes to the wives of the electors as he kisses them. A Norfolk member was expelled from the House for this ingenious method of vote-getting. On one memorable occasion, the Duchess of Devonshire gave a butcher a kiss in exchange for a vote. Many American candidates omit the kissing and let their campaign platform drip with blarney. This is as effective a vote-getter as the other way.

The Poets on Kissing.—Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the American "poetess of passion," uttered this truetalk about the kiss:

The lips that have been innocent of passion's kiss frequently ooze with gossip's poison.

Never to have been kissed is never to have lived. Perhaps it is a secret consciousness of this which renders the un Kissed women of earth so bitter in their denunciation of the love-enlightened.

Shelley, who was no slouch as a lover, apostrophized the kiss thus:

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;

And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth.
If thou kiss not me?
A Western congressman, not otherwise known as a poet, delivered this tribute to his favorite kiss—and who shall say that his dithyrambs lack the true poetic flair?

Talk about kissing! Go away! I have kissed in the North, I have kissed in the South; I have repeated the soul-stirring operation East and West; I have kissed in Texas and away down in Maine; I have kissed at Long Branch and at the Golden Gate—in fact, in every State in the Union; in every language and according to the manners and customs of every nation. I have kissed on the Mississippi and all its tributaries; but, young man, for good sound kissing, give me a full-fledged Caribou girl. When you feel the pegs drawn right through the soles of your feet, from your boots, that's kissing, that is.

This tribute to the efficacy of the Indian kiss is increased, when we recall that this was a custom taught to the red by the white. There is less poetry but more piety in the discussion of a kiss by the Rev. Sidney Smith, the witty divine, who said:

We are in favor of a certain amount of shyness when a kiss is proposed, but it should not be too long, and when the fair one gives it, let it be administered with a warmth and energy; let there be soul in it. If she closes her eyes and sighs immediately after it, the effect is greater. She should be careful not to slobber a kiss, but give it as a humming-bird runs his bill into a honey-suckle, deep but delicate. There is much virtue in a kiss, when well delivered. We have the memory of one we received in our youth which lasted us forty years, and we believe it will be one of the last things we shall think of when we die.

The poetry is more obvious in a poem like *Kisses Three*: 

...
Kisses three he gave to me,
Kisses three—

One was in the restless dusk,
Soft and tentative and shy,
And I did not leave him. I,
Though his kiss was but a husk
Flung to starving lips, I waited,
Waited, while love hesitated,
Fearful it would pass us by.

Then he kissed me once again,
Prisoning my doubtful lips
In a long eclipse. . . .
And the night's vast rhythms beat
Over us with urgent power,
And each whitening, tardy hour
Lingered sweet, sweet. . . .

Once again he kissed me, now
In the pale and furtive dawn.
All distraight, his soul withdraw:
And his slow lips chilled my brow.
Shall no other night be mine,
When the throbbing hours shine?

Kisses three, he gave to me,
Kisses three—

The Octopus Kiss.—There are countless passionate kisses recorded in literature; the octopus kiss in Blasco Ibanez's Mare Nostrum, when the strange Freya kisses Captain Ulysses Ferragut in the Aquarium of Naples, is worth quoting:

"Ah!" sighed Freya, throwing herself back as though she were going to faint on Ulysses' breast. He felt as though a monster of the same class as those in the tank, but much larger—a gigantic octopus from the oceanic depths—must have slipped treacherously behind him and was clutching him in one of its tentacles. He could feel the pressure of
its feelers around his waist, growing closer and more ferocious.

Freya was holding him captive with one of her arms. She had wound herself tightly around him and was clasping his waist with all her force, as though trying to break his vigorous body in two.

Then he saw the head of this woman approaching him with an aggressive swiftness as if she were going to bite him. . . . Her enlarged eyes, tearful and misty, appeared to be very far off. Perhaps she was not even looking at him. . . . Her trembling mouth, bluish with emotion, a round and protruding mouth like an absorbing duct, was seeking the sailor's mouth, taking possession of it and devouring it with her lips.

It was the kiss of a cupping-glass, long, dominating, painful. Ulysses realized that he had never before been kissed in this way. The water from that mouth, surging across her row of teeth, discharged itself in his like swift poison. A shudder unfamiliar until then ran the entire length of his back, making him close his eyes.

He felt as if all his interior had turned to liquid. He had a presentiment that his life was going to date from this kiss, that with it was going to begin a new existence, that he would never be able to free himself from these deadly and caressing lips with their faint savor of cinnamon, of incense, of Asiatic forests haunted with sensuousness and intrigue.

And he let himself be dragged down by the caress of this wild beast, with thought lost and body inert and resigned, like a castaway who descends and descends the infinite strata of the abyss without ever reaching bottom.

So far, this octopus kiss is entered for the championship vampire kiss in all literature.

The Kiss of Death.—The kisses of Joab to Amasa, and of Judas to Jesus, stand forever exemplar of kisses of treachery. There is a romantic story of the great Irish rebellion,
concerning an imprisoned patriot under sentence of death, and his faithful sweetheart. The girl secured permission from the prison authorities to kiss the condemned man goodbye. The kiss was given and received: and, at the moment of kissing, the clever girl passed to her lover, from her mouth to his, a memorandum containing full information of how to escape. Acting on the plan thus revealed, he made good his escape. May every kiss be as fortune-bringing!

There are other kisses which bring, not freedom, but death. Lucian tells the story of the death of Demosthenes. When the Greek had fallen into the hands of Antipater, he asked permission to enter a certain temple in the neighborhood, for a moment of worship. This was granted. As he entered the temple, he carried his hand to his mouth—the old gesture that Job referred to in moon and sun worship, and a common gesture in the Orient and the Mediterranean world. The guards thought that he was merely kissing his hand, as an act of religion. But in his hand he held poison, and in this kiss of death he found his release. Cleopatra, when the kisses of Pompey, Caesar and Antony had staled on her lips, when her castles of hope and aspiration lay in ruins about her, and when the coldly cynical Octavius paid no attention to her charms, placed the asp, the poisonous mud-viper of the Nile, at her breast, and let the snake's kiss give her freedom.

Then there was the tremendous climax of the Haymarket riots in Chicago. Seven an-
archists, including Louis Lingg, were arrested for the protest bomb, flung upon unarmed strikers in answer to the wild charge of the police. Lingg had his sweetheart bring the materials for a final bomb to him in the jail. Some of these materials she smuggled in orange skins, disguised as fruits; some she may have given him in the midst of a kiss. The stern young anarchist—he was only twenty at the time—made four bombs, for the four leaders to use in taking their own lives, to show to the public at large that, if they held the lives of others cheap in their fanatic devotion to an ideal, they held their own lives more cheaply yet. Three of these bombs were discovered: somehow Lingg retained the fourth. He was not willing to injure his jailer, and sent the man, by a pretended excuse, to the far corner of the jail corridor. Then, taking the bomb in his own mouth, he closed his teeth upon it, and so died.

The Kiss and Love.—The tactile, touch, or lip kiss originated from the mother's kiss of her infant, an outgrowth of maternal licking of her young. It grew slowly to express affection between the sexes. A second meaning grew up—to express subjection: somehow affection was alchemized into subjection. Usually one of the parties to a love relationship takes an attitude of subjection to the other—an attitude theoretically far from ideal, but humanly comfortable. For an expression of utter humility, to man or the god man imagined, appropriate gestures were few: bowing the head to the ground or kissing with head
bent being the chief ones: The mouth, containing the organs of taste and in part of breath, stands for the chief outer gate to the man's life and whatever of soul he has: if it kisses in humility its lord, or his hand, or his foot, there is utter symbolic subjection. Kisses of courtesy, as between men and men, grew out of formal expressions of medieval subjection.

The kiss, as a token of subjection, has declined among us. The reason is not too obscure: men and women today are increasingly growing to the point where they realize that they should not stand in subjection to any human lord or any fantasied deity, where they know that they can look the whole world in the face with level eyes. When, to the decline of servility, we add the ever-present fact of the danger of infection from promiscuous kissing of lips or hands or great toes, and when we see certain religious shrines taking no chances, but wiping the relic with some germicide between kisses, it is not hard to see why merely formal kissing is departing.

The kiss to express love is another thing. If we are to have physical love continued on the earth, this reaches its crest in a complete commingling and interweaving of the bodies of the loving ones, as well as a commingling and interweaving of their spirits. The final rapture lies elsewhere: but, after hand has touched hand, the next step is for lip to touch lip. This is the prelude to the fuller loving to follow later. When a man kisses a woman, it is an offer of his love, physically at least, in
its completeness: an offer not hard for the average male to make. When a woman accepts a man’s kiss, not passively, but actively, or when she kisses him, this is an acceptance of the man’s offer, or an offer on her part of the ultimate intimacy.

Human relationships, in practice, provide little enough opportunity to know members of the opposite sex, before some religious or civil ceremony has bound the man and woman into a relationship too often irksome and tedious, and intricate and expensive to end. Some sort of trial love is needed, to prevent wreckage of the relationship later. As long as society makes no regular provision for this, the kiss as a sort of test of compatibility, especially physical compatibility, has its value. The man or woman, especially the young man or woman, would then kiss until the intangible emotion following some especial kiss was so powerful that the people concerned felt brave enough to dare the uncertain dangers of mating: or until they felt irresistibly drawn into mating.

The ultimate result of the kiss is shown from two angles in two of Shakespeare’s sonnets. In the first, he gives the dark picture of physical desire, or lust, in action, which he says is the expenditure of spirit in a shameful waste:

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and, till action, lust
Is perjur’d, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoy’d no sooner but despised straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
Past reason hated, as a swallow’d bait
THE ART OF KISSING

On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe;
Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

The other side of the picture—and the usual truth lies somewhere between them—is far brighter:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! It is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is a star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

Your kiss may lead to the first drab ending,
to the second over-idealistic Eden, or to some pleasant place between. In any case, to remain unkissing and unkissed is to remain something less than man or woman. Your aim should rather be to blossom to your full stature in the gardens of mankind: and a mouth was made for more than words.
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