

ABOUT KISSES.



LIVER WENDELL HOLMES calls a kiss 'the twenty seventh letter of the alphabet—the love-label, which it takes two to speak plainly.' And there can be no better authority, either in a literary sense or scientifically, than the witty autocrat. But Sam Slick, the humorist, offers a definition scarcely less apt. He says: 'Kisses are like creation, because they are made out of nothing, and are very good.'

It has long been known that a good many things are said by kisses; and what a world of things, too, have been said about them. From the time of Jacob and Rachel to our generation, the kiss had been the one unchangeable fashion. It might almost be said to be the badge of humanity and civilisation, except that it is not quite universal. Some barbarous nations know nothing of it. The Chinese and Japanese were not acquainted with it originally, and so far as they practise kissing at all, have rather borrowed it casually than adopted it.

A story is told of a Chinese girl who was kissed by a Caucasian youth, and ran away, thinking he might be a cannibal. When she was told that the osculation was a habit in his and in other countries, she came back and begged for instruction in it with illustrations. There have even been books written upon kisses; some of which in the seventeenth century were notable. The witicism of saying that so little has been written about kissing, didactically, because the knowledge of it 'usually passes from mouth to mouth' has more than one authority behind it. But in poetry, fiction, and humour the kiss is omnipresent. Mathematically speaking, the kiss is said to have a subsistence, as its shape is always a lip (elliptical).

Although John Bunyan frowned upon kisses, England, in recent centuries, has accepted the kissing custom, and gave it a profuse liberty. Erasmus was not the only foreigner visiting that country who was astonished by it, though he is, perhaps, the oftenest quoted. In one of his epistles, he says:—

'There is, besides, a practice never to be sufficient commended. It is to go to any place you are received with a kiss by all; if you depart on your journey, you are dismissed with a kiss; if you return, the kisses are exchanged. Do they come to visit you, a kiss is the first thing; do they leave you, you kiss them all around. Do they meet you anywhere, kisses in abundance. In short, wherever you turn there is nothing but kisses.'

It is said that this excess of the business was brought to an end in the reign of Charles II., by the adoption of French manners. A writer in the *Spectator* complains that it was made unfashionable, very much to his sorrow, by the arrival of a French gallant in his neighbourhood, who, instead of kissing the ladies, when introduced to them, in the English way, merely stood off and made so low and graceful a bow that that fashion afterwards prevailed.

In Iceland, if a young lady shows you the way, or across a stream, a kiss is expected; and in Paraguay kisses are a familiar salutation. It is in poetry, however, that the kiss receives the most delectable mention, though what could the novelists or humorists do without it? A very neat sample of the poet's enamourment is seen in the following lines, sent with a white rose by a Yorkist lover to his Lancastrian sweetheart:—

'If this fair rose offend thy sight,
Placed in thy bosom bare,
'Twill blush to find itself less white,
And turn Lancastrian there.

'But if thy ruby lips it spy,
And kiss it thou mayest deign,
With envy pale 'twill lose its dye,
And Yorkist turn again.

In Tennyson's poem of *Fatima* there is a record made of a truly oriental kiss:

'Last night, when someone spoke his name,
From my swift blood there went and came,
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shivered in my narrow frame.
'Oh, love! oh, fire! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul through
My lips—as though he dranketh dew.'

With equal exuberance Alexander Smith describes a kiss he once received in the glowing stanza copied below:

'My soul leaped up beneath thy timid kiss,
What then to me were groans,
Or pain, or death? Earth was a round of bliss,
I seemed to walk on thrones.'

Leigh Hunt's similar experience is thus playfully told:

'Jonny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in!
Time, you thief! who loves to get
Sweets into your list, put that in.
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me.
Say I'm growing old, but add—
Jenny kissed me!'

Ben Jonson says of a kiss:

'O, that a joy so soon should waste!
Or so sweet a bliss
As a kiss
Might not for ever last!

A Spanish poet, speaking of his innamorata, declares:

'I will pay her interest me,
When her lips shall breathe on me,
And for every kiss so sweet
Give her many more than three.'

Winthrop M. Praed puts the pretty tableau thus:

'With eyes all love, and lips apart,
And fluttering cheeks, and beating heart,
She came and joined her cheek to his
In one prolonged and rapturous kiss.'

The kiss in verse is, in fact, so voluminous that one more sample must suffice—the two quatrains of Wolcott on 'The Inventor of Kissing':—

'When we dwell on the lips of the girl we adore,
What pleasure in Nature is missing?
May his soul be in heaven, the glory of it, I'm sure—
Who was first the inventor of kissing?
Master Adam I only think was the man,
Whose discovery can ne'er be surpassed;
Then since the sweet game with creation began,
To the end of the world may it last.'

A kiss is said to be like a sermon, because it requires at least two heads and an application. Among the parts of speech it is defined as a 'conjunction.' 'Stolen kisses,' says the proverb, 'are sweetest;' and some humorous confirms this by saying they are sweetest 'when sprung-titiously

obtained.' Of course, 'kissing goes by favour.' Some one calls kisses 'interrogation points in the literature of love.' It is probably slanderous to say that women kiss each other for the following reason:

'Because they are doing to each other as they would men should do unto them.'

Sidney Smith speaks of a kiss that he received which he had remembered for forty years, and should continue to remember while he lived. George D. Prentice said once, editorially:

'We feel in duty bound to say that kissing is a thing that, at every proper opportunity, we set our face against.'

On another occasion he said:

'We are never satisfied that a lady understands a kiss unless we have it directly from her own mouth.'

AN AFRICAN BANQUET.

The following letter dated at Cape Coast Castle has been forwarded to the *Full Malt Gazette*—

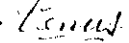
'I have just got down to the coast after an unusually long trip inland. The region I have travelled over I will call Barbary, for short, because it is due south—through a long way south—of the strip of coast that used to frighten our forefathers. All this is now French polished, and there is nothing to be seen there except the reflection of ourselves. Inland there is still some interest. The tribes are independent and keep their own customs. They are prosperous too, many of them, and have acquired ideas of luxurious living that one would not expect to find in the heart of Africa. Just before making my way down to the Gold Coast I was present at a most interesting function that would have given your pressmen "copy" for a week. It was a gigantic banquet, given by the ancient chief of the tribe among whom I was staying to a young warrior, the ruler of a neighbouring tribe. All the swells of the tribe were there, of course, the chief's sons and daughters and other kin-men, and the principal counsellors and fighting men. Some of them had their wives, too, and they were all very much got up.

'Not being a professional reporter I cannot describe the costumes, except to say that there was a barbaric profusion of gold. But the gold worn by the guests was a mere speck of dust compared to the gold displayed by the old chief. There must have been enough gold in that African hall to buy up the Bank of England. Where it all came from I have no notion, but our pioneers in South Africa, now that they have been ousted from the Transvaal, had better make a trek to my Barbary.

'To begin with, all the vessels out of which the guests ate and drank were of solid gold. The table, too, was thickly covered with the quaint ornaments that savages delight in. Some of them were cleverly wrought, so far as the art of the people goes, but for the most part their only merit, if it be one, was their solidity. It was the style of thing that would have delighted a flash pawbroker from Whitechapel.

'The most gorgeous object of all was a golden bird. The body of the bird was solid gold, and its feathers were built up with precious stones. I am not good at guessing values, and will not try, but I could guess nearly enough to know that if I could be carried off that bird, or even a bit of one of its wings, my fortune would have been made for life. Apparently the old chief had a notion that such calculations might pass through the minds of his guests, for he took care that the bird was not brought out till he was there to watch it, and had it shut up again in a strong chest directly his back was turned. The golden bird, I was told, had been originally taken in war from a distant tribe, and another trophy, taken from a tribe in the same region, was produced to show the guests what a mighty sovereign they were dining with. This was a lion's head, also of solid gold, with diamonds for the teeth and eyes. But it is no good continuing this list. I think you would have felt as I did, more disgust than pleasure. And as I came away after a really good dinner, but with my pockets empty—I hadn't lifted even a salt spoon—my principal feeling was one of gratification that in Europe we had got beyond this savage ostentation.'

LOVE'S EVENING STAR.



Oh, welcome to the sunny time
When opening buds reveal the flowers,
And all around melodiously
Sweet matins fill the vernal bowers;
It brings again that blissful hour,
The brightest ray of life to me,
When, fondly pressing heart to heart,
We felt love's thrilling ecstasy.

The dew of love was on thy cheek;
Its gems of pearl were in thine eyes,
As from thy ruby-tinted lips
Came forth the sweet, consenting sighs.
'Twas new-born joy that made thee weep,
And every tear was sanctified;
Two hearts were melted into one,
When Heaven gave thee to be my bride.

Ah, when I fondly called thee mine,
And fervently thy vows were given,
The words were caught from off thy lips
And echoed to the ead of Heaven;
And He who ever deigns to bless
When guileless love implores his aid,
Made record of the holy bonds,
And bless'd the union He had made.

Through all the days till frosty age,
Thy love has grown more sweet and dear,
And it has brightened all the way,
A charm and solace ever near;
And now, when near life's evening close,
How beautiful the day declines!
As earthly scenes are growing dark,
Love's evening star more brightly shines!
S. DYER.

WHY INDIANS TAKE SCALPS.



WHEN Indians began to scalp, is not known, but it is likely they have pursued this barbarous practice in America ever since it was discovered by Christopher Columbus, in 1492, if not long before that time. The commonly received opinion among white men is that the Indians scalp their enemies to prevent them from making a respectable appearance in the Happy Hunting-Grounds.

'How,' says one writer, 'would a bald-headed Indian look in the spirit-land?'

Indians have bald heads, and it is, therefore, an error to believe Indians scalp people to keep them from going to Heaven or the Happy Hunting-Grounds, as they call their Heaven. The custom of taking scalps grew out of the many large stories Indians told after their return from their war expeditions.

'I killed three of the enemy with my own hand,' said Bauscar to King Philip.

'But, where are their heads?' sagely asked the king. 'Aethinks thou art claiming too much valour for thy part in the battle.'

So, after that, when King Philip's men slew an enemy, they cut off his head and brought it to the king that they might prove to him their valour in battle. There was no doubting the warrior's statement if he showed the heads to prove his words. For a long time the whole head was cut off, but these being inconvenient to carry, the practice of taking only the skin of the head began. At first, the head was cut off and taken to the nearest camp, where it was carefully skinned, leaving the ears and rings on it. In time, only the crown of the head or the scalp lock was taken off. Indians used to sew the scalps they had taken on the front of their lodges, and many of them placed these bloody trophies on poles in front of their wigwams. A Mandan Indian once had an entire suit made of the scalps he had taken, and when he died, they buried him in this strange winding sheet. They said he would wear it in the Happy Hunting-Grounds. A warrior wearing scalps was a brave man, a chief, every honour was paid to him by his people.

Among the Sioux Indians a woman, when she felt bad or had 'a bad heart,' as they called it, often went with a war party, and if they were successful, they brought her the head of one of their enemies, which she carefully skinned and then mashed the skull with a war-club; this always removed her bad heart and made her feel quite cheerful.

An American officer says that he once saw a man who had been scalped and had afterwards recovered. His name was Thomas Cahone, and he was a freight conductor on the Union Pacific Railroad. One day in April, 1868, as Cahone was running his train near Sidney, Nebraska, while crossing a small stream, he had to halt for some time, and he and a man named Willis Edmonston got out to fish. They were unarmed, but did not think of danger, although Indians had been coming and going through the country. The terminus of the road was then at Cheyenne. They had not been fishing long when suddenly a party of mounted Sioux Indians rushed down upon them, although they were in full sight of the town of Sidney. The Indians first attempted to run off with a band of horses near by, but in this they failed. They then turned upon the poor fishermen, and, riding up to them, began to fire arrows into their bodies. Edmonston received four arrows and died. Cahone had several arrows shot into him, the Indians riding up close alongside and firing at short range. One arrow pierced Cahone's lungs and he fell bleeding profusely. An Indian advanced, dismounted, and took Cahone's scalp proper from the top of his head. Another Indian rode up and cut a strip about four inches wide and seven inches long from the side of Cahone's head. All this time the man was either unconscious or lay still. The Indians, thinking him dead, did not mutilate his body beyond scalping him.

There was at that time a small detachment of United States troops stationed at Sidney, under command of Lieutenant now Captain Bubb, U.S. Army. Seeing the attack from the village, Lieutenant Bubb and his men, re-inforced by the citizens, rushed out to the assistance of the men. They found Cahone still living, took him in, and sent him to Omaha, where the arrows were extracted and his wounds dressed. It was not believed that he could recover, but he did, and regained excellent health. The American officer often saw him afterward on the Union Pacific Railroad, where he had been advanced to passenger conductor, and one day he showed the officer his head. It was not a pleasant sight, but he said it did not hurt him in the least. He wore a wig, and seldom took off his hat, which entirely covered up his wounds.

That scalping is not necessarily fatal is proved by the case of Mrs Jane Johns. This woman was scalped in Florida, by Indians, and survived. The physician who attended her reported:

'I measured the extent of the skull divedest of its natural covering, and found it nine and one-half inches from above one ear to the ear on the opposite side of the head. (Only a few hairs had been left above the forehead and at the back of the neck.)'

This was certainly a bad case of scalping, still the woman lived to a good old age. From this it will appear that, while being scalped by an Indian is decidedly an unpleasant operation, it is not necessarily fatal; and that, while Indians scalp their enemies, they do not do it for the sake of cruelty, but to prove to their people at home they have been true in battle by overcoming a foe. The Milky Way in the sky is the Indians' road to the Happy Hunting-Grounds, and all who die in battle go there immediately, riding on their ponies, which the Indians kill to accompany them on their journey.

COKER'S FAMILY HOTEL,

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND.
PATRONISED BY HIS EXCELLENCY LORD ONALOW.

Five minutes from Rail and Post.

The most moderate first-class Hotel in Australasia.

Inclusive tariff per day 10s 6d.
Ditto per week 23 3s 6d.

THOMAS POPHAM,

(Late Commander U.S.S.Co.) Proprietor