

KISSES OF INTEREST TO LEXICOGRAPHER

Even the Dictionary Compiler Finds Study of Their Vari- eties Valuable.

HE TRACES THEIR LINEAGE

Era of England's Merry Monarch Was Known as Golden Age of Kissing.

"What can be done to stop promiscuous osculation?" writes a correspondent of that eminent lexicographer, Dr. Frank H. Vizetelly.

"I observe the most wasteful and conspicuous use of this token of affection in public places," continues the correspondent. "In taxis, street cars, subway trains, restaurants, night clubs, the theatre and the Public Library steps. It seems to me that such a purely personal ceremony should be restricted to the seclusion of privacy. Every one seems to be publicly illustrating the aphorism, 'The acme of human happiness is that we may kiss whom he please, and please whom we kiss.'"

And Dr. Vizetelly comments:
"Needless to say the lady is correct, for it is a well-known fact that petting and necking are now pursued openly and without shame by the swains of this generation of independence. Nevertheless, what has that to do with editing the New Standard Dictionary, and why should the protestant seek a remedy from a lexicographer who has nothing to do with kisses except to define and properly list their antecedents under the correct classification?"

"I might, however, suggest to my correspondent that she take up her residence in the habitations of that tribe of South American Indians among whom, according to an explorer, kissing is unknown.

"But the letter has to do with an interesting subject, and one not uninteresting to the compiler of words, far from such things as he may seem to the lay mind. For there are so many kinds of kisses, with so many different meanings.

Some Kisses Required in Public.

"The kiss has many significations. It is regarded as the seal of faith, loyalty, truth, reverence and love. Public kisses are required by law, court and religion; in private practice kisses until recent years were restricted to salutation, love and passion. Aupletus, in his poetic fantasy. 'The Golden Asse,' tells us that from the worthy citizens of Cos we derived the custom of kissing the hand; for, says he, they came upon the beautiful Psyche one day, as she slept in her bower of roses, and, making obeisance before her, kissed her hand.

"In Holy Writ kisses are classified. The first kiss of Bible record is that of affection, and was given to Isaac by Esau. The others are the kisses of adoration, love, brotherhood, friendship, salutation, homage and obedience, lowliness and solicitude, subjection, reconciliation, treachery, farewell and death.

"Among the ancient Hebrews kissing the beard was a sign of great homage. In the pagan world those who failed to throw kisses to the statues of the gods on their feast days, or to the sun and moon, were considered unbelievers. The rites prescribed the kissing of some part of the statues themselves. Among the Mohammedans, when the muezzin calls the devout to prayer, they kiss the ground that lies in the direction of Mecca, and the pilgrims to the Kaaba, or Mohammedan shrine at Mecca, all kiss the sacred black stone which they believe was brought from heaven.

Regulated by Romans.

"Under the rulers of the Roman Empire, kissing the hand was a mark of respect and subjection jealously guarded, and by the Emperors reserved as a sign of condescension to be permitted when a signal honor was conferred on a subject. But the Emperors wisely reserved to themselves the right of kissing either the mouth or the brow of such subjects as they wished to favor.

"Under Diocletian the correct form of salutation, showing subjection to an Emperor, was to kiss the feet of the sovereign, a practice that ultimately led to the kissing of the ground over which the august Caesars had passed. Then the sturdy Roman fathers, 'the best of men,' were so bashful that when in their own homes they never kissed their wives in the presence of their daughters.

"In Roman families kissing before marriage was not customary, nor is it so in the polite society of France today. In Rome only the closest relatives were permitted to salute their kindred of the gentler sex on the mouth, and when a lover kissed his betrothed she became heir to half of his worldly goods. If he died before the marriage ceremony, and in the event of her death, her heritage descended to her next of kin—a custom which, if it prevailed now, would put effective check on actions for breaches of promise.

"The kiss which the law demands in court is the seal of truth imprinted on the Bible by the witness when put under oath. The courtier's kiss, or that of the holder of high office in the State where monarchs rule, is a respectful salutation of their liege lord's hand. Certain official appointments are not considered ratified until the official has 'kissed hands' as the seal of loyalty.

Part of Early Religious Rites.

"The holy kiss and the kiss of adoration were part of the religious rites of the early Christian Church. The disciples kissed each other during their feasts of love, but the later clerics so abused the custom that the Council of Carthage prohibited all forms of osculation at these feasts. Among the congregations the kiss of peace was exchanged, but this fell into degradation and was superseded by a metal disk called the 'Pax,' which was passed from lip to lip. Kissing in homage was introduced by the Pontiffs, and the chief feature of an audience was, at one time, the kissing of the Pope's foot. In some Eastern lands to kiss the feet of the ruler is still the customary feature of submission or homage.

"In feudal times the barons sealed their compacts with their vassals with a kiss which they administered in token of acceptance of servitude. The kiss was also an important feature of knighthood. When the oath of investiture was administered to an apprentice, after he had kept his vigil, he took his sword by the blade and, kissing the hilt at its guard, which in those days was emblematic of the Cross, solemnly pronounced the words, 'By my good sword I swear it.' Later, at tournaments, balm for the wounds of the victors was found in kissing the hand of the Queen of Love and Beauty who presided.

"According to Winsemius, historiographer of the States of Friesland, kiss-

ing was not known in Britain until Berenice's Rowena, the beautiful daughter of Hengist of Friesland, 'pressed the beaker to her lips and saluted the amorous Vortigern with a kusjen.'

As Described by Erasmus.

"Erasmus when sojourning in England, wrote to his friend Faustus:

"Hasten hither with wings to your feet. For to touch of one thing out of many here, there is a practice never to be sufficiently commended. 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. They 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, Faustus, had but once tasted them—how soft they are, how fragrant!—on my honor, you would wish not to reside here for ten years only, but for life!"

"When Lord Cavendish, who, as Ambassador to France for Henry VIII, was entrusted with a special mission to the Court of Francis I, and called on the French King's Minister, he was received by the Minister's wife and her ladies-in-waiting. Approaching the august dame with all the courtly manners he could command, Cavendish was somewhat surprised, but not abashed, to hear his hostess, who addressed him in his native tongue, say: 'Forasmuch as ye be an Englishman, whose custom it is to kiss all ladies and gentlewomen without offense, and although it be not so in this realm, yet will I be so bold as to kiss you, and so shall all my maidens,' and the ladies kept the promise.

The Golden Age of Kissing.

"The ill-fated Marie Stuart, when caught by her ladies-in-waiting, bending over the sleeping Alain Chartier, one of the great poets of France, said in explanation. 'I kiss not the man; I kiss the soul that sings.' As the Elizabethan Era has become known in the annals of England as the Golden Age of Literature, so the happy times of the Merry Monarch became known as the Golden Age of Kissing.

"There are few records of the attitude of the Puritans toward kissing, but Cromwell's Ambassador to the Court of Sweden was invited to instruct the Swedish ladies in the art.

"In the days of the Pilgrim Fathers kissing was the special privilege of husband and wife, brother and sister, lover and betrothed. Etiquette was better regulated in Colonial times. Then a lady reserved the privilege of kissing her hand for her most intimate friends. A young girl, then, gave 'her hand to a friend, her cheek to a relative, but kept her lips for her sweet-heart.'

"It is not often that we see men kiss each other in this country, though the custom is more common in Europe, especially in France, but once I saw it done here. Two buddies, who had served in the Argonne, met in the street. One had carried the other, badly wounded, to the rear. The wounded man survived. They met again four years later. As they recognized, they rushed into each other's arms and kissed."

DRIVING LICENSES EXPIRE.

Bureau Will Be Open Nights for Motorists Until Thursday.

Only three days remain for automobile owners to obtain driving licenses for the coming year, provided they wish to operate their cars on July 1. On that date the new year begins for operators' and chauffeurs' licenses. Charles A. Harnett, Motor Vehicle Commissioner, has announced that the police authorities throughout the State have been notified to recognize no old licenses after next Thursday.

The offices of the main bureau in New York City at 220 West Fortieth Street will be open until 9 o'clock at night until Thursday. The following offices also will remain open until 9 o'clock:

- Automobile Club of The Bronx, 2,432 Grand Concourse.
- Long Island Automobile Club, Hillside Avenue and Queens Boulevard, Jamaica.
- Brooklyn Automobile Club, 931 Flatbush Avenue.

STUDY DELINQUENT CHILD.

Jewish Social Workers Seek to Check Trend to Criminality.

The problem of how to prevent the delinquent child from growing into an adult criminal is being studied by the Board of Directors of the Jewish Social Service Bureau of 9 Court Square, Brooklyn, the organization announced yesterday. The board, which is headed by Federal Judge Grover M. Moscowwitz, believes that it is possible in 80 per cent. of the cases to remove the cause of delinquency.

A psychiatric clinic has been added to the equipment of the bureau to assist social workers in the diagnosis and treatment of children. Dr. William V. Silverberg, who is connected with the psychiatric department of Mount Sinai Hospital, is in charge of the clinic.