MODERN CRUSADERS TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST KISSING

In those ancient chronicles, half legend and half history, it is asserted that the kiss was introduced in Britain was bestowed by the fair Princess Rowena, daughter of King Hengis of Friesland, upon the astonished and presumably delighted Vortigern. Once introduced, the practice spread into instant popularity. In the eighteenth century it was expected that a gentleman, on entering a room, would kiss every woman present.

In those days, too, the kiss was sometimes put to very practical uses. The story of the beautiful Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, who in 1784 bribed the electors for Charles James Fox with a kiss, is well known, as is the incident of the raking of the Gordon Highlanders, when each recruit was given a kiss by the fair Duchess of Gordon.

The American did not take kindly to the casual kiss, and William IV., when Duke of Clarence, once found this out. While on a visit to Canada, he strolled over into Vermont and called at a barbershop to be shaved. The pretty wife of the barber happened into the shop just as the Prince was rising from the chair, and she was astonished to receive a hearty smooch.

"There!" remarked the Prince. "Now tell your countrywomen that the son of the King of England has given a royal kiss to a Yankee barber's wife."

However the lady may have felt, her husband evidently did not fully appreciate the incident. It has been said that, in the absence of any protest, he immediately published an official proclamation, which reads:

"There! Now you can go and tell your countrywomen that a Yankee barber has given a republican kiss to the son of the King of England!"

Kissing the ladies, not in any cold and indifferent manner, but with a soft and sweet eclipse, is still a part of the ceremonial at the Dublin Viceregal Court, and the Lord Lieutenant has the duty and privilege of so greeting the fair ones at the New Year levees.

An amusing incident illustrative of the different attitude of French and English women when confronted with the danger of being kissed was witnessed at Boulogne during a visit of Queen Victoria in 1846. A number of Englishwomen, in their anxiety to get a good view of their young sovereign, pressed so hard against the French soldiers who were keeping the line, that at some points the latter were compelled to give way, and it appeared as if the whole crowd would result.

The officer in command, with rare presence of mind and insight, shouted:

"One roll on the drum, and then kiss all of them who do not fall back!"

At the roll of the drum there was a hurried feminine retreat.

"Ah!" commented the officer, "had they been French, they would have stood firm!"