

MODERN CRUSADERS TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST KISSING

THE World's Health Organization, with headquarters at Cincinnati, Ohio, ignoring the heartbroken appeals of a million sweethearts, has coldly decreed, "Thou shalt not kiss!" A little child shall lead them, says the organization, and is endeavoring to procure the indorsement of the various Boards of Education, as school children are said to be the most persistent and reckless kissers of them all, the girls particularly kissing each other in greeting and parting, kissing the smaller children and chance babies, and sometimes their teachers. The proposition is for the school children to become members of the organization—which costs them nothing—and to pledge themselves to an agreement not to kiss any one or to be kissed, and to wear buttons bearing the motto "Kiss Not."

A successful carrying out of this campaign would undoubtedly result in much good in the promotion of sanitation and the prevention of disease, so far as the children are concerned. The average lover will never need to say:

"Teach not thy lips such scorn: for they were made
For kissing, lady, not for such contempt."

But kissing generally, except among lovers and children, is passing rapidly into the limbo of customs past. Even the French no longer kiss in the charmingly casual manner of a generation ago, when, according to a French writer, "elderly ladies, upon returning to favorite hotels, would be welcomed by Monsieur le Patron with a chaste salute." It was not uncommon for an elderly chatelaine, on her name day or other special occasion, to kiss all her humble neighbors—laborers and peasant farmers.

During the reign of Louis XIII. every

gentleman was expected to kiss every high-born dame to whom he was introduced—the kiss, in fact, simply taking the place of the more prosaic English handshake.

We will dismiss with deserved contempt those horrible persons called Original Researchers, who contend that the kiss was first used among the Saxons, not on account of its qualities as an act of endearment, but as a means of determining whether the good wives had been indulging in strong waters. No. We will assume that the first British kiss was

"A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth and love."

In those ancient chronicles, half legend and half history, it is asserted that the first kiss given in Britain was bestowed by the fair Princess Rowena, daughter of King Hengius of Friesland, upon the astonished and presumably delighted Vortigern. Once introduced, the practice sprang 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

electors for Charles James Fox with a kiss is well known, as is the incident of the raising of the Gordon Highlanders, when each recruit was given a kiss by the fair Duchess of Gordon.

America 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 barber's shop 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 smack.

"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 compliment that had been paid her, for, seizing the Prince by the shoulders, he assisted him to a quick and undignified exit, remarking:

"There! Now you can go and tell your countrywomen that a Yankee barber has given a republican kick 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 1855. 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 though much confusion 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."