

THE GREAT AMERICAN KISSING EPIDEMIC.

By Edgar Saltus.

AND MINNIE SELIGMAN'S \$1,000 KISS AT AUCTION WAS ONLY STOPPED BY ROBERT CUTTING'S "NO"

How It Feels to Be Kissed by 200 Pretty Girls.

By Osborne Deignan, Merrihue Hero.

It was a trite embarrassing when 200 pretty girls at my home at Stewart, Ia., began to kiss me. But after the first half dozen kisses I began to take an interest in it, and could have kissed all the pretty girls in Iowa if necessary. I knew most of these girls. I had played pillow and keys with a good many of them when I was a boy, and it was like renewing old acquaintances to kiss them again. The girls wanted to kiss me to show their love for their country. I simply did what the occasion demanded.

MR. AND MRS. ROBERT L. CUTTING

Leave a kiss but in the cup And I'll not look for wine.

-BEN JONSON.

How I Would Give the \$1,000 Charity Kiss.

By Minnie Seligman-Cutting.

How could my husband object to my giving just one little hug and kiss to the highest bidder at the Charity Bazaar to aid the poor, when I have given him so many? It was not the kind of a kiss I give him, anyway, but just a cold, stage kiss and a make-believe hug. Just think, I might have made \$1,000 to aid the poor in that way, for I have heard that several gentlemen intended to bid that price for my kiss. And it was such a little thing for me to do. But my husband says no, and so I mustn't.

MINNIE SELIGMAN AUCTIONEER OF THE \$1000 KISS

O love! O fire! Once he drew With one long kiss my whole soul through My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

-TENNYSON.

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KISSING is rumored to be very nice. Sporadic everywhere, it has, in this part of the globe, recently and publicly assumed the proportion of an epidemic. Hobson was the first victim. Then came Schley, latterly Shafter, next Deignan, and, if report be true, Sampson as well. Here are conquering heroes every one. Among them they did up a Spanish fleet, disarmed a Peninsula army, resisted several varieties of Santiago fever, returned from the Caribbean without a scratch, only to die—when flight was possible—before hordes of osculator girls.

Hobson we know all about. For hero he is the nation's choice. The courage which he displayed in guiding the Merrihue between the fires of Morro and Socapa was superb. But the nerve with which he made for cover on the flagship of the enemy's fleet was delicious. After making Cervera a prisoner he made him a host. There is quartering on the enemy for you, and there is American humor, too. And yet the gentleman who did all that retreated before the fire of a pretty St. Louis girl.

And there was Deignan. We know all about him also. Boatswain on the Merrihue during her run to ruin, he never turned a hair. It was afterward, on dry land, that he showed the white feather, and no wonder, for no sooner had he reached Stuart, his Iowa home, than he was pounced upon and kissed by two hundred young women.

One of them, a local report recites, held him like a vise. It required main strength to remove her. That strength a hundred and ninety-nine impatient sisters exerted. They tore him from her, lined up, mowed him down with kisses, riddled him with caresses, pouted him from the field. With a single exception every young person in the place deployed for action. That exception was Deignan's betrothed. She was not allowed to fire a shot. We assume that she made up for it later. But that is mere conjecture.

Latter Shafter capitulated. Then Sampson fell. So, too, did Schley. Bullets from Evans and the rest of them are lacking. They are believed to be under treatment. The number of Rough Riders that have been assaulted our ink would blush to tell. Nor is the epidemic decreasing. Only the other day a case was reported which exhibited symptoms hitherto unknown. And thereby hangs this tale.

Miss Minnie Seligman, an actress of acknowledged charm, the wife of Mr. Robert Cutting, of this city, was recently advertised as prepared to dispose of a kiss at auction. The reserve price was a thousand dollars. The proceeds were to be devoted to charity—yet not to that variety which begins at home. The beneficiary was to be a Hebrew fair, held in the Coliseum at St. Louis last week. Mr. Cutting protesting, Miss Seligman made answer that the kiss which she intended to part with was not of the wifely kind, but of the theatrical brand. Mr. Cutting's protests continuing, however, the sale was estopped.

This we are inclined to regard as sound law. A thousand dollars for a kiss is at once too much and too little. The moment a kiss acquires a marketable value it ceases to have any. Previously desirable the desirability departs.

Dumms the Younger put the point well. In one of his works he represents a young

THE AMERICAN GIRL JUST NOW IS READY TO KISS AND HUG EVERY POPULAR HERO SHE MEETS.

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Send the following message, without repeating, subject to the terms and conditions printed on the back hereof, which are hereby agreed to.

To Mrs Minnie Seligman Cutting
Imperial Opera House, St. Louis -
I must positively kiss reported
every woman



CUPID KISSING PSYCHE FROM THE FAMOUS PAINTING BY WEISSER.

Eight Recent Examples of Promiscuous Osculation by Hysterical American Women.

1. Lieutenant Hobson, the hero of the -errime, kissed by Miss -man Arnold at Long Beach.
2. Admiral Schley, after the destruction of Cervera's fleet, embraced and kissed by two unknown women at Washington.
3. Osborne Deignan, of Hobson's Merrihue expedition, hugged and kissed by a mob of girls at Stuart, Iowa.
4. Minnie Seligman (Mrs. Robert L. Cutting) wanted to sell a real stage kiss, for charity, to the highest bidder, at St. Louis, Mo.
5. Young women of the D'Angellis Opera Company lured young Deignan behind the scenes last week and smothered him with kisses.
6. Admiral Schley kissed at Frederick, Md., by two dozen women last week.
7. Attempt made to kiss Admiral Sampson at the Pennsylvania Railroad station, Jersey City.
8. Admiral Cervera surrounded at Norfolk, Va.



MISS GLADYS MADDEN, LEADER OF THE 200 GIRLS WHO KISSED DEIGNAN.



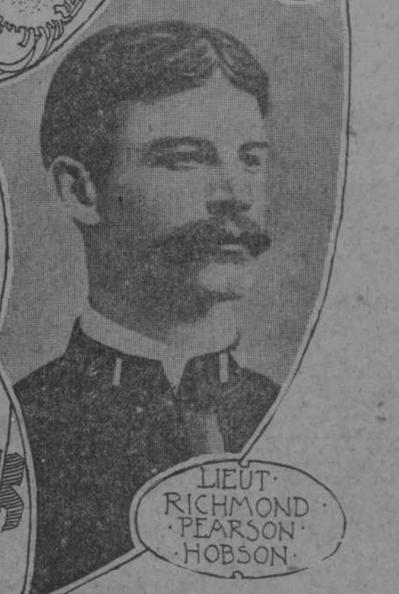
MISS EMMA ARNOLD, "THE GIRL WHO KISSED HOBSON"



WHAT HAPPENED TO ADMIRAL SCHLEY.



HOBSON'S BOSN'S MATE, DEIGNAN, KISSED BY 200 GIRLS



LIEUT. RICHMOND PEARSON HOBSON.

Miss Seligman. It should not be proloined as it was in the case of that Western felon. Above all, it should be practised in private. Public osculation is distinctly subversive.

To be properly enjoyed a kiss should, in the first place, be invited and, in the second, returned. According to the authorities, reciprocity should be full, frequent and abundant. There should be no Dingley business about it, no schedule attachments, nothing but the open door—free trade, entire and complete. In such circumstances, particularly on a rainy day, football isn't in it. Experts begin right after luncheon, and it is time to dress for dinner before they have had enough. But it is said to be curious how it falls upon one. The next afternoon it does not seem to be the same thing at all. It is found to need diversifying. It is found that the conditions have to be changed, or, better still, the partner.

There is where the ingratitude steps in. For true it is said has been and will be that in a diversity of this character the enjoyment which one takes depends wholly on the other party. There are people who, through natural aptitude, perhaps, know how to make it so entertaining that repetition only heightens the fun. They are rare, however. To the many, kissing, when an art, is a lost one. Whence an adage, sound, if French: To kiss and get sick of it, that is love.

Though the adage is sound, kissing, simple kissing, is not love by any means. We may commiserate with Deignan for having been embraced by 200 young women, but were they all in love with him we should consider him better off at Devil's Island in Dreyfus's cast of shoes. But that is beside the issue. In this case, as in that of the others, the kissing bestowed or bestowed, while presumably platonic, constitutes an example that is deleterious to the youth of the land.

Should it be followed, there will be new pestilences at once. There will be the grand game of Hobson at Long Beach, the Deignan contest at Stuart, the raffling of the Seligman kiss. Now, athletics are excellent, open-air exercise is always up-to-top. The danger lies in overdoing it. No one yet has been able to decide at what moment platonic excess and inflammation sets in. The views of pathologists differ. Some regard it as a question of exposure, others of temperament. Even so, and even otherwise, sports of this character are not suited to modern life.

In Aradia matters were different. Throughout her mellow morns and languid dusks much might be attempted which is not permissible now. The dower of her men and maidens was beauty. Some of their fare was ambrosia. Most of their laughter was inextinguishable. Religion was more æsthetic than moral and still more gracious than austere. In that lovely land in those lovely days kisses could be publicly exchanged. The reason is dual. In the first place there was no privacy; in the second there was nothing else to do.

Tip epoch, like the hard, if delightful, is legendary. Both belonged to the youth of a world which has since grown old and grave. Other things, other customs. Though each have changed, kissing has endured. The savor has not altered; it is but the manner that has. To-day the best authorities declare that it must be performed in private. The best girls declare that it should not be practised at all. But girls heart always mean what they say. Their hearts are loosely wrapped in riddles. A fool stays to solve. A wise man nibbles away. He does so, though, when nobody is looking, and so, perhaps, should we all.

EDGAR SALTUS.

man entranced by the spectacle of a girl's fair beauty. To a friend he states that he would balk the grave for a touch of her lips. The friend who happens to be acquainted with the lady assures him that a little coin of the realm will be superfluous. At the mention of commerce an illusion is looted. The spectacle and the allurements of it fade. The young man who was willing to risk his life for a kiss, declares there and then that he would not accept one as a present.

This is quite in the order of things. Were a kiss, which we might be willing to hulk there is really nothing else. A kiss is a serious thing. Last year a resident of the West was indicted for stealing

ing one. What was done to him we never learned, but we greatly hope that he swung for it. A kiss is not merely a serious thing; it is the beginning sometimes of betrothal, sometimes of wedlock, sometimes of divorce, occasionally of all three, but always of ingratitude.

A maiden who does not wish to see her lover's love turn cold should not permit him to kiss her. At least she should not permit him to kiss her all the time. The statement has the air of a platitude. It is drawn from the depths of psychology, from the philosophy of history, from the sublimate of action, from the essence of woman's tears.

Kissing originated in the adoration of gods that have gone. It was not intended that kissing goes by favor. It should not be forced down the throat, as occurred in the case of Hobson, Deignan, et al. It lover caress her only semi-occasionally, so should not be the subject of barter and sale as was contemplated in the case of