

philosophy even to kiss. Trifling may seem the subject, but this act, insignificant in itself, points to a universal fact in human nature. The greatest laws have their manifestation in small things. Though it required a Newton to decipher the strange hand writing—gravitation was seen in an apple's fall. If we mistake not there is a great law of humanity hid behind even so small a thing as a kiss; and it will be the aim of your essayist not so much to deal with the act as with the law—not so much with the outer manifestations as with the great principles which give it birth. It may not be uninteresting to exhume the great law of social attraction from beneath this universal phenomenon—universal yes, for who never kissed?—who never was kissed? To ask this is to ask who was never dandled on a mother's knee?—on what hapless face ne'er fell the light of a mother's loving smile? better than the brightest radiance that ever gilt this earth, for while the one is the radiance of the sun the other is the radiance of a soul which shall remain while "sun is quenched and system breaks, fixed in its own eternity." The one is only sun light—the other is soul light.

There is a centre to the universe; and this holds of the world of spirits as well as with the world of matter. System revolves around system in the heavens above us, but there is some fixed centre. Among all the living creatures in this vast universe one universal tendency is observed, viz: to associate with those of their kind. Among intelligent beings of the various orders there is a series of systems as it were each revolving around its own peculiar centre, and forming together one vast system of intelligence whose centre is Deity himself. Even among the lower animals this tendency to association shews itself. The dog has been known to die of grief when abandoned to utter solitude—or even at the loss of his master.

In fact, we find among the various individual creatures that compose the

universe of life in all its varied forms, a force analogous to gravitation among the various particles composing the material universe. The nature of this law can be ascertained and its power calculated; and though not with all the accuracy of mathematics, as is the case with gravitation, yet in a way not less obvious. Like gravitation, it acts at all distances, so to speak. No living creature is exempt from its influence. Looking to human beings we are met in examining society by a series of systems all governed by the one law. This principle is as mysterious in its *essence* as gravitation, but its *effects* are manifest to all.

As in gravitation, there are different degrees of attracting, and these, according to laws just as fixed, produce the different stations existing in human society. First, there is that least exertion of the attractive force, and that not slight, which binds men into societies. Within the wide circle are the various stronger attractive forces producing the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, with all the various relations that grow out of these.

As we believe, a kiss is the natural and rational phenomenon which gives expression to a certain degree of this attractive force; and, though in itself so trifling, yet, as with so many other little things, is great in its very littleness. A blush in itself is small, a mere change of color; and what is color? Yet its absence under certain circumstances, indicates a horrid moral chaos in the character.

Custom, though it modifies, does not determine the mode in which men express the various states of thought and feeling of which they are the subjects. There is to every feeling a natural mode of expression, and the very fact that it is natural, imprints universality upon it. Custom is only the stamp that makes it current. The philosophy of the orientals' humble prostration is easily read as that ignorant reverence which a slave pays a despot. How