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## TALES OF THE TOWN.

I AM in receipt of the first number of "The Humanitarian," a paper which has recently appeared in New York city, with Mrs. Victoria Woodhall Martin as editor, aided by Miss Zulu Maud Woodhall. The most notable article in the publication is the "Aristocracy of Blood." This is not to be understood as bracing the backbone of the almost effete aristocracy of Europe, but as maintaining that every family can establish an hereditary pedigree of pure blood and so become the progenitors of a beautiful and intellectual and long-lived offspring. Whatever men have thought of some of the doctrines of Mrs. Martin in her earlier days, there is a vast deal of good sense in this plea for a healthy population of the United States and Great Britain. What is heredity? We all see its curious freaks and awful ravages. As death is simply the absence of life and life the only mystery, so diseased heredity may be called the absence of complete normality owing to improper marriages or bad habits. Is it a sign of physical and soul health that families resemble each other? It may not be. Is it not a better sign of health if there shall be no resemblance, but infinite variety?

Because a child resembles its father is it proof that it is positively legitimate? By no means. Impressible and transmitting females meet a stranger, and that stranger plants his features on that of the offspring. Is that any proof of the illegitimacy of the child? Surely not any more than any other birth-mark. A wife is full of the likeness of her husband and reproduces that person faithfully as a camera does the features and form of a sitter. Legitimacy is inferred just as human law is an inference from facts.

Heredity! Oh, the mystery of it! There are individual traits of character that are constantly transmitted through its agency. A constitutional liar, hypocrite, drunkard, will send down to his

posterity his most prominent sin. Nearly all, say all, of the thieves, burglars and other criminals are transmitted scoundrels. Their personal traits are due to marriages that should never have taken place. There was a screw loose in their ancestry long years ago. Good traits of character are of slow evolution, bad of rapid growth.

It consumes years to mould a human face or form, but cancer with its rapid growth and ravages destroy them in less than half of the time. Everything abnormal has no respect for law which ordains that slow growth is evidence of longevity. Obesity is disregard of healthy natural law. So are weeds which choke and kill beautiful vegetation. Laws of nature may be said to be liable to disorganization because perfection exists nowhere. Pure blood, our female philosopher thinks, would establish a real hereditary aristocracy and cure all the evils of "the world, the flesh and the devil!"

In answer to a correspondent, I might say it is my belief that kissing is an English custom. I read in ancient history of a knight who visited the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and who on being invited to a local castle was addressed by the kynde layce of the establishment who remarked:

"Forasmuch as in England ye have such a custome as that a man may kysse a woman, therefore, I will that ye shall kysse me, and ye shall also kysse these my maidens."

"Which thing," adds the old historian, "ye knyghte straightway did, and rejoiced greatly thereat."

What people did before kissing was discovered, it is really difficult to say, nor have I any notion of how the engaged couples of the middle ages amused themselves when kissing was hardly known.

There is no doubt, however; that Jack and Jill of the thirteenth century did pretty much as their descendants in these days, and that the solitary walk, the squeezing of the hand, the kicking of the little boot under the

table, the prolonged and cold-inducing good nights, etc., etc., were general then, as now.

I am in receipt of several letters this week from women, thanking me for my few remarks in the last issue of this paper concerning the heartlessness exhibited by some men in going around enjoying themselves while their wives remain at home. One woman goes so far as to say that she will remember me in her prayers. I have not very much faith in some prayers, but there can be no harm in the good woman remembering me during the hour of devotion. Another lady takes up the moral side of the question, and really she makes a strong case against the men.

Morality, she says, is that which a man is accused of when he is not found out in doing whatever he pleases to gratify his desires, or in any way to cater to his baser self. At first I thought she was somewhat cynical; but after all there is some method in the definition. She means to say that a man is considered moral when only the glossy exterior of his coat is visible, and no unkind wind blows it open to show the seamy side; that a man is judged to be a high priest of morality when he parades his virtues on the street with a brass band, and keeps his vices locked up in a box stall in a basement stable.

I know scores of men who prate about morality, and who are accounted moral men; but I am also aware of the fact that their lives are lies, and their morality but an inflated sham which would collapse at the puncture of the smallest needle of investigation. I know one man, now a resident of this city, who was a deacon of a church only a few years ago and a partner in one of the largest commercial houses in the east. He was a moral man, and he ruined himself and nearly wrecked his business by gambling and losing thousands of the firm's money. There is no use in naming all the cases I know of, and in truth it would keep me talking