



Flashing the Light on Boston's Society Kissing Parties

No Wonder the Fashionable Back Bay Colonists Gaped and Fled When Wealthy Young Mr. Morrill Began to Mention Places, Then Dates and Even Names



Lieut.-Col. Seth K. Chase, Identified as "the Man with the Hot Water Bottle," After a Detective Had Smashed His Way Into Mrs. Morrill's Boudoir.

HOMES in Boston's aristocratic Back Bay section were suddenly closed for the summer. Residents of the fashionable Brookline colony booked European reservations on the earliest steamers. Telephones buzzed madly along blue-blooded Beacon street. Husbands were wrathful. Wives were trembly. Several daughters wept salty tears. All because Leon Gilbert Morrill, millionaire ink manufacturer, told "tales out of school" in his divorce suit against his beautiful young wife, Mrs. Florence R. Morrill.

Chaste and cultured Boston gasped when Mr. Morrill first took the stand and casually testified, "Why, kissing is just as common as golf or bridge in our set!" When he followed this with detail after detail of the kissing bees he had attended with other rich men and their wives, Boston wavered between shock and curiosity.

It sounded incredible—petting parties, cocktail celebrations and joy rides! They were the follies of flapperdom, not of Brookline, oldest and most conservative social capital in the United States. Yet there was the evidence, confessed by one of the leaders of the Back Bay's upper tandom. He gave names and places—names which appeared in big type in the social register; places always associated with the elite. Moreover, he was going to tell more!

Boston thought it was exciting enough when Mr. Morrill named as co-respondents in his suit Lieutenant Colonel Seth K. Chase and Douglas S. Carter, both prominent members of the haut monde. It was more exciting when Mr. Carter in turn sued Mrs. Carter. The public was getting a delicious peek behind the social scenery. But, when the Morrill trial began, excitement reached fever pitch.

A detective employed by Mr. Morrill told his story. He crashed in the door of Mrs. Morrill's mother's apartment, he swore, and discovered Mrs. Morrill in bed, while Colonel Chase trotted into the room with a hot water bottle. The defense countered this charge with the plea that Mrs. Morrill had been taken ill at a function, that Colonel Chase had driven her home, and that he was merely doing what he could to assist her.

Douglas S. Carter, Who Was First Named as One of the Co-respondents in Leon Morrill's Divorce Suit, and Who Now Has Brought Suit Against His Own Wife.

Charges involving the other co-respondent, Mr. Carter, were made by Mrs. Anna Glynn Connolly, a maid employed by the Morrills. She said she had seen Mrs. Morrill, in negligee, and Mr. Carter with her in the Morrill home, and they were kissing. This was Sunday morning, while Mr. Morrill was golfing at the country club. The governess, Margaret Dickson, was called to confirm this testimony.

Mr. Morrill took the stand. He repeated the detective's charges against

Colonel Chase. He was there when the door was "crashed." Questioned concerning Mr. Carter, he said he told Mrs. Morrill she was seeing too much of "this man." They were always "pairing off" for golf, tennis, teas, bridge. He protested to Carter. He warned him to stay away from the Morrill home.

Right there was where Mrs. Morrill's attorney took up the cross-examination along a line of inquiry that startled the spectators.

"Did your attorney warn you to be careful of your own conduct during this time?" he began.

"Yes," replied the witness.

"Did you tell him that kissing was more or less common in your set?"

"No, sir."

"But you admit that this was a common practice?"

"Yes."

A quiver of excitement thrilled across the crowded court room. Fashionably gowned women made up nine-tenths of the audience. Every eye was on the witness as the attorney for Mrs. Morrill cleared his throat.

"Mr. Morrill, it is a fact that you have kissed Mrs. Carter, is it not?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Morrill, squirming slightly.

"How many other women in your set have you kissed?"

Mr. Morrill hesitated. Women were



Miss Margaret Dickson, the Morrill Family Governess, Who Was Called to Testify Concerning What Happened When Mr. Morrill Was Away Playing Golf.



Mrs. Florence G. Morrill, of Boston's Very Fashionable Back Bay Set.

leaning forward attentively. Some of them blushed. Others paled. In the rear of the room a handsome brunette slid unobtrusively from her seat and made for the door.

"Hard to remember?" joggled the attorney.

"Yes," agreed Mr. Morrill, while the audience snickered.

"Was Mrs. Stanley one of the many women you kissed on these parties?"

In the tense silence Mr. Morrill's "yes" was hardly audible.

"You kissed indiscriminately?"

He nodded.

"Were you drunk or sober when you kissed in this manner?"

"I was sober."

"But you felt happy?"

"Yes."

Mr. Morrill was asked about parties at which he was host at his suite in the smart Hotel Coolidge. Many of the guests, he admitted, were Boston society girls. They belonged to a bridge club. The bridge club met at his rooms. When one list of girls couldn't attend, Mr. Morrill and his cronies had a substitute list. No, Mrs. Morrill didn't belong to the club. She didn't attend the parties.

For every man there was a girl, continued Mr. Morrill. Sometimes they did not play cards. Sometimes, admitted the witness, they just kissed. Once they motored to the Southbridge Arms Inn, a fashionable road house, where a dinner party was preceded by cocktails and followed by kisses.

"Didn't you escort Mrs. Frothingham to that party?" demanded the attorney for Mrs. Morrill.

"Mrs. Frothingham rode in the front seat of my car," admitted Mr. Morrill.

Leon G. Morrill, Who Testified That in His Set "Kissing is just as common as golf or bridge."

He named, at the lawyer's insistence, other young ladies, who, he said, attended the bridge-kiss parties—Miss Sutton, Mrs. Stanley, Mrs. Maude Hanley, a Miss Morrill, who was no relation to him.

As each name fell from Mr. Morrill's lips, an electric current seemed to galvanize the listeners, for it sounded as though the witness were going over the social index.

"Come down, Mr. Morrill," stated the attorney.

That night, as the rumor sifted through the Back Bay that Mrs. Morrill's attorney planned to get the names and addresses of every woman Mr. Morrill said he kissed, that in all likelihood they would be called as witnesses, the express companies did a rushing business carting hastily packed trunks to the railroad station.

And when the Morrill trial resumed again about a week later, not a few familiar faces were missing among the spectators. Not one of the ladies named by Mr. Morrill had stayed to see whether those subpoena-servers rang the front-door bell or not.