



The Ladder
January 1962 50 cents



purpose of the

Daughters of **BILITIS**

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING
THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

- ① Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications--this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.
- ② Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.
- ③ Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.
- ④ Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

the Ladder

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization.

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COVER BY KATHY ROGERS

EDITORIAL

The Homosexual Vote

IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTS TO DETERMINE THE STRENGTH OF THE HOMOSEXUAL VOTE IN SAN FRANCISCO. THERE WAS THE "PULL LEVER 37-A" CAMPAIGN WHICH DEVELOPED IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION IN 1960. AND IN THE NOVEMBER, 1961 ELECTION THE SAME GROUP SPONSORED A CANDIDATE FOR SUPERVISOR - THE LATTER POLLING ABOUT 5600 VOTES.

CERTAINLY NEITHER ATTEMPT CAN BE CONSIDERED AT ALL CONCLUSIVE. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS IN BOTH CASES WAS A LOCAL GAY BAR WHICH DEPENDED UPON THE "GRAPEVINE". FOR THERE WAS LITTLE DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE AND NO ORGANIZED "CAMPAIGN".

WE BELIEVE THAT THOSE WHO WOULD ATTEMPT TO "SAMPLE" THE HOMOSEXUAL VOTE IN THIS MANNER ARE HIGHLY MISLED. THE HOMOSEXUAL MINORITY IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER MINORITY GROUP. HOMOSEXUALS CANNOT BE BOUND TOGETHER BY TRADITION AS IN THE CASE OF JEWS. THEY CANNOT BE READILY IDENTIFIED AS CAN THE NEGROES. HOMOSEXUALS DO NOT HAVE A COMMON GROUND IN THE AREAS OF RELIGION, POLITICS OR ECONOMICS. HOMOSEXUALS ARE FROM ALL ETHNIC GROUPS, OF ALL RELIGIONS, FROM EVERY ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL. THEY ARE CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS, JEWS, AGNOSTICS, ATHEISTS, METAPHYSICIANS. THEY ARE REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS AND SOCIALISTS; THEY ARE LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES. THEY ARE UNION WORKERS AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT; THEY ARE PROFESSIONAL AND UNSKILLED. AND THESE VARIOUS INFLUENCES WILL HAVE MORE TO DO WITH HOW THEY VOTE THAN THEIR SEXUALITY.

IT IS AGREED BY MANY THAT THE ONLY ISSUE THAT MAY DRAW HOMOSEXUALS TOGETHER IN A COMMON VOTE MIGHT BE IN THE AREA OF CIVIL LIBERTIES AND REPEAL OF OUR OUTMODED SEX LAWS. EVEN IN THE 1959 MAYORALTY ELECTION WHEN ASSESSOR RUSSELL WOLDEN ACCUSED INCUMBENT GEORGE CHRISTOPHER OF "HARBORING ORGANIZED HOMOSEXUALS" IN SAN FRANCISCO - WHEN HOMOSEXUALITY ITSELF WAS AN ISSUE IN THE CAMPAIGN - HOW COULD THE HOMOSEXUAL VOTE WISELY? TO VOTE FOR WOLDEN WAS TO VOTE FOR A SCANDALMONGER WHO, HAVING MADE CAPITAL

OF A GROUP, WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH SOME TRUMPED-UP PROSECUTION. TO VOTE FOR CHRISTOPHER, WHO WOULDN'T EVEN UTTER THAT NASTY WORD, WAS TO VOTE FOR A MAN SMARTING FROM THE ACCUSATIONS, WHO, IN ASPIRING FOR FUTURE POLITICAL OFFICE, WOULD BE OUT TO PROSECUTE THE HOMOSEXUAL IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE TO CLEAR HIS SO-CALLED RECORD. EITHER WAY THE HOMOSEXUAL COULD NOT POSSIBLY WIN - AND HASN'T. IT WAS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT SOME 9000 CITIZENS WENT TO THE POLLS IN THIS PARTICULAR ELECTION AND VOTED, BUT ABSTAINED AS FAR AS THE POST FOR MAYOR WAS CONCERNED.

HOMOSEXUALS WERE ONCE AGAIN THE POLITICAL PAWN. BUT DESPITE THE AGE-OLD TACTICS AT ELECTION TIME OF UNENLIGHTENED CANDIDATES - "LET'S CLEAN UP THE GAY BARS" AND "LET'S GET RID OF THE QUEERS" - THERE HAS BEEN A GROWING CONCERN BY THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL, EVIDENCED BY PUBLISHED LETTERS IN THE DAILY NEWSPAPERS, THAT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT COULD BETTER SERVE THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST THAN IN ENTRAPMENT OF HOMOSEXUALS.

AT A RECENT DOB GAB 'N JAVA IT WAS AGREED BY THOSE PRESENT THAT THEY WOULD NOT VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WAS A HOMOSEXUAL, OR WAS SYMPATHETIC TOWARD THE PROBLEM; THEIR VOTE WOULD BE CAST STRICTLY ON HIS QUALIFICATIONS AS A CANDIDATE. THEY WOULD HAVE A TENDENCY, THEY ADMITTED, TO EXPECT MORE OF SUCH A CANDIDATE - THAT IS, AN EVEN HIGHER STANDARD - BECAUSE HE WOULD BE REPRESENTING THEM AS A MINORITY GROUP. IT WAS FURTHER STATED THAT FACETIOUS CAMPAIGNS TO DETERMINE WHAT THEY FELT TO BE A NON-EXISTENT HOMOSEXUAL VOTING BLOC WERE HARMFUL TO THE GROUP IN GENERAL, SINCE THEY IMPLY THAT THE HOMOSEXUAL IS AN IRRESPONSIBLE CITIZEN WHO FINDS SPORT IN PLAGUING THE POLITICOS.

THERE ARE ISSUES WHICH COME UP IN ELECTIONS FROM TIME TO TIME WHICH DO AFFECT THE HOMOSEXUAL. AND THESE ISSUES SHOULD BE DEALT WITH KNOWLEDGEABLY AND WITH RESPONSIBILITY BY THE LEADERS OF THE HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT. BUT TO STIR UP CRIES FOR A HOMOSEXUAL VOTE WITHOUT AN ISSUE TO VOTE ON IS TO MAKE MOCKERY OF A VERY PRECIOUS FRANCHISE.

- DEL MARTIN

THE BLANCHE M. BAKER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND HAS BEEN SET UP BY DOB TO AID IN THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN OVER 21 YEARS OF AGE WHO NEED FINANCIAL HELP. DONATIONS ARE WELCOME.

In Opposition to Drs. Walker & Bergler On Homosexuality

By Ralph H. Gundlach, Ph. D.

I

Thane Walker was reported as asserting in THE LADDER for October, 1961 that "all mankind is ambisexual in nature, whether they know it or not" and "all are born male and female whether he accepts this truth or not."

It is a fact that each of us likes to assert that his own propositions are THE TRUTH, and some persons go so far as to refer the origins of their opinions to divine revelation. I do not know what esoteric insight makes Dr. Walker's view THE truth for him, but his assertion leaves me unimpressed.

Examine the evidence offered for Dr. Walker's opinion: the argument is based upon an analogy, namely, that electric plugs are either male or female, but back of all of them is electricity. Now what this analogy means to me is that the sex drive - like electricity - is not male or female and that in addition to the basic sex drive there is a standard arrangement of male and female plugs to get the electricity to flow where you want it. This helps to convince me, not that all persons are both male and female, but that it is essential to distinguish between the sexual drive and the object or person sought as the partner for gratification.

A more sophisticated form of the same argument as Dr. Walker's takes the fact that the cells of our body have both "male" and "female" genes as the ground for the conclusion that we are both male and female. This is not a good argument. Consider that the color of your eyes is brown, but that you also have (recessive) genes for the color blue. You have both "blue" and "brown" genes for

eye-color, but surely your eyes are not both blue and brown! Rather, you have the capacity to have children with either blue or brown eyes. So with the sex genes: you have the capacity to have sons and/or daughters, both being human.

II

Dr. Walker is credited with another phrase which I find misleading: "Unless we follow natural impulses, the drives turn to neuroses." There is something awfully mixed up about the conception of "a drive turning into a neurosis," but let that stand aside, now. If by natural, he means that it occurs in nature, then every impulse is natural. If he means "instinctual," then the term has little meaning for humans.

In a loose way one might say that the sexual drive in most non-primates is initiated in the females by some endocrine factors at the appropriate point in the oestrus cycle, also characterized by susceptibility to impregnation. The female's biological state of readiness is signalled chemically, olfactorily picked up by the males who are thereby aroused sexually. The power of the aroused sexual drive goes with the simultaneous suppression (within limits) of most other drives, and both males and females tend to give up their usual bread-and-butter, and self-protective activities for a time - whether "they" are ants, moths, reindeer, cats - and focus on finding the way of expressing their sexual drive with the appropriate "object." In this context we might use Dr. Walker's phrase and say they are acting "naturally."

Humans, however, are social animals and develop any of a great variety of habits and folk-ways which seem unique to each social order. In each society the members tend to believe their ways are "natural." Well-integrated skills, habits, intuitive thoughts do seem natural, but that does not make them instinctual! Dr. Walker's argument does little more than express his in-group bias.

III

Dr. Bergler's notions in the same issue of THE LADDER are well dealt with by Miss Conrad. Dr. Bergler asserts that

a homosexual is a case of psychic masochism. This seems little more than offering a name as an explanation. Such a "magic formula" is at best an hypothesis about the motives operating in various homosexuals. But where he goes on to say that these motives are also unconscious, he may be saying that you cannot dispute with him about his fixed ideal! But this is not convincing proof.

An explanation may be genetic or historical; it would show the development and establishment of the pattern of behavior.

IV

What kind of factors, then, enter into the background of a person who becomes a homosexual? Of course in our society most un verbalized social pressures, most taboos, are found in the sexual area. There have been and are strong prohibitions against a child touching his genitals; against masturbation as reducing one's strength, weakening one's mind, making one crazy, indicating moral degeneracy. Sex talk is often prohibited in polite society and at home even for purposes of education, so it is often associated only with the "gutter." Parents often present themselves as asexual, leaving the child with the impression that the thought of parents ever engaging in intercourse is a terrifying thought. "Mother, Father do THAT!?" "THAT would never occur in our house!" are not uncommon expressions.

So we find people in our society brought up in all kinds of circumstances and arrangements, with different attitudes toward their own sexual expression and relationships. Some persons develop a general inhibition all around and are unable to be sexually expressive with anyone. They are handicapped, injured psychically, and are more or less impotent or frigid as a consequence of negative learning. Many such persons can and do live constructive lives, and some may have families; but there is still a considerable constriction.

Such considerations raise a number of questions of importance about homosexuals. Some writers in THE LADDER refer to homophiles; does this imply, also, that they are often heterophobes? What factors are responsible for the negative, often phobic reaction to heterosexual relationships,

even though they welcome friendly, social relations? What specific factors, in each parent's background, helped shape that person's self-esteem, his feelings of adequacy and acceptability, his needs for being dependent or independent, for compliance or rebellion? What was the basis for his selection of traits and of persons as objects of envy, or as models to be like? In what ways do the sexual behavior patterns involve actual or symbolic gratification of other than genital needs? How has he solved the problem of being an adult in this society?

These are difficult, but should be fruitful, research questions.

DOB CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

THE SECOND NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS WILL BE HELD AT THE HOLLYWOOD INN - RIGHT IN THE HEART OF HOLLYWOOD - THE WEEK END OF JUNE 23-24, 1962.

PLANS ARE SHAPING UP FOR A TREMENDOUS PROGRAM INCLUDING JESS STEARNS, AUTHOR OF THE SIXTH MAN, WHO WILL PARTICIPATE ON A PANEL FROM THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY; DR. THANE WALKER, DEAN OF THE PROSPEROS ACADEMY IN HONOLULU; AND SUE PROSIN WHO WILL PRESENT A PAPER ON SOCIOLOGICAL PAIRINGS, A STUDY OF 30 LESBIAN COUPLES WHO HAVE BEEN TOGETHER MORE THAN A YEAR.

SAVE THE DATE! AND MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW! REGISTRATION FOR THE FULL PROGRAM ON SATURDAY, JUNE 23, INCLUDING LUNCHEON AND THE BANQUET WILL BE \$12.50. SEND THE FULL AMOUNT OR USE OUR EASY-PAY PLAN (\$5.00 NOW AND BALANCE BY JUNE 23) TO DOB NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, 1232 MARKET ST., SUITE 108, SAN FRANCISCO 2, CALIFORNIA.

THE HOLLYWOOD INN IS AN IDEAL SPOT FOR THE CONVENTION. HOTEL ROOMS MAY BE OBTAINED FOR AS LITTLE AS \$8.00 FOR A DOUBLE AND \$6.50 FOR A SINGLE. THERE IS A SWIMMING POOL AND FREE PARKING FOR GUESTS. THE INN IS LOCATED AT 6724 HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD, HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

Make Your Reservations Now

SMOKE RINGS

A Story by Gabrielle Ganelle

It was early yet; the bartender gave his new help their last minute instructions, and turned up his sleeves so that they came just below the elbow. Pat watched him, intrigued at his outer nonchalance - as a good general might appear at the first break of a formidable dawn. Only now it was the nightfall that was formidable. It was New Year's Eve.

Pat ordered a bourbon on the rocks. The jukebox, crammed with sounds, spilled out over everything; its gayly colored juices in the ornamental tubes on its facade bubbled continually. Pat watched it through the huge shining mirror that faced her. The waitress buzzed incessantly around it in an effort to satisfy the early crowd. Pat watched her inattentively. But when she glanced up Pat had noticed the eyes. Recognition was instantaneous and mutual, and she thought of Suzanne. They had argued. She couldn't remember how what the argument had been about. Pat tipped the glass at her mouth. "I guess if I were smart," she thought, "I'd be back at the apartment putting up my hair and rinsing out my things for tomorrow. Tomorrow." She reached out and went past the syllables of the word to the idea, the whole new untouched place. Tomorrow. Next year: a brand-new year. "I must call Suze; find out what had started the whole damn thing. No. It's her place to get in touch with me."

Pat tried to take another sip of her drink but her glass was upset and the drink spilled a little, putting a wet shadow to her trench coat. "Happy New Year!" somebody yelled and laughed. She screwed her cigarette into a blistered piece of pottery that served as a tray and watched the little bugs of tobacco pile onto each other among the other broken cigarettes. Pushing parallel streamers of smoke from her nose, her eyes touched on the young waitress again. The girl serving the tables was obviously extra help for

the expected capacity. Not infrequently she turned complete circles before finding what she was looking for. And she washed the glasses a little too carefully to be one of the old hands. Pat toyed with her glass, tracing it around the green glass-mat.

"Another?" the waitress said. The bartender was too busy to notice that she'd penetrated his province.

"Please," Pat said.

Presently the woman slipped her apron off and slid into dressier shoes back of the counter. The clientele had been moving on and off stools like a group playing musical chairs, and it was no surprise to Pat when the young freshman waitress came from around the bar and slipped onto the briefly deserted stool beside her. She rubbed her fingers together as though standing before a fire on a cold day. "Scotch and soda, Mickey," she said, addressing the short, wizened man behind the counter. "And hurry it, please. It's almost midnight." Mickey hesitated. "Don't fret, friend," the young waitress smiled. "I told you, didn't I? No spilling over with the Scotch tonight."

Pat could feel the girl turn to her and raise the glass Mickey had brought. "That's my trouble," she said to Pat's side. "I was in love once, and lost. So I got drunk to forget it. And I've been drinking to forget it ever since. Now I've lost track. I don't know whether I drink to forget my first love or my first drunk. Anyway," she poked her glass ceilingward, "my name's Teresa; from that it gets whittled down to Terry." She put her clenched fist toward the deflected light back of the bar and squinted at her wrist watch. "Why not give me your name before this year's over?"

Pat turned to her. The girl seemed too young to be drinking; let alone, to be serving the stuff. She had an angular face, as if it had been chiseled and left partly undone. But the first things Pat saw were the eyes, they were alive. One did not see her eyes so much as one watched them. Pat glanced down away from them, floating on the wavering yellow light in her drink.

"The name's Pat," she said. "When I was being a little girl, they called me Patsy. I guess I've always been one - a patsy, that is." She was feeling maudlin now.

"I was married once. It never worked," the girl said as though the disclosure righted all wrongs done to Pat.

Pat didn't know whether to feel uncomfortable or sympathetic. She felt neither, however, and she felt only a gladness that she felt neither.

"Were you ever married, Pat?" the young woman looked at her watch.

The question took Pat quick and she decided there wasn't time to think of whether it was a crazy question or not. "No," she said, "I was never married." She twisted a small cocktail napkin between her fingers.

"My guess," Terry said. "I'm from Montana, in case you care," and she laughed unnecessarily. "I'm from that sector in Montana known to Mother and me as Father's logging camp. I'm going back someday." She rubbed the tips of her fingers together as though they were helpful little mouths. "I don't like California," she said. "No seasoning. Where are you going? Don't tell me," she slapped her small fist on the bar, "you're going to get married. We'll try anything once, won't we? We humans are funny that way."

"Hardly likely," Pat said, laughing mirthlessly: long knobby laughter like the fingers of a spurious gypsy caressing the cold, empty crystal ball with a flicker of jaded bitterness flashing through. How could she say that she thought she'd already found someone she wanted to love for the rest of her life. And yet.... but what was the damned argument about?

Terry spun a coin on the bar, watched it momentarily, then stopped it with her fist. Then she broke her fist apart over the coin. Pat noticed the bones on the back of her hand, they fanned out from the knuckles like fan sticks and they converged on their way to the wrist, like Suzanne's. She had all she could do to keep from putting her own hand over the girl's.

"Look," Terry said, turning to Pat, "a couple of minutes and everything'll be before us." Once more she consulted her watch: "Eleven-fifty-nine." Suddenly, as a man who needs the address of the girl on the train pulling away from him, she said: "Artichokes! Quick! Do you like artichokes?"

"Artichokes?" Pat laughed: a laugh she hadn't felt till now. It broke out of a shell and came to life, warm and soft inside her. "I detest artichokes! Why?"

A loud clammer filled the cafe. Car horns skipped into hearing. People shouted: piling, staggering shouts. Somewhere between the dissonance Pat could hear the refrain of Auld Lang Syne.

"Twelve o'clock!" the girl called Terry had to shout above the noise. "Happy New Year to you! I despise artichokes, too! Come on." She took Pat's hand and pulled her through the crowd, then seized her coat on the rack by the door. They stood there momentarily, silently approving the other's ownership of trench coat. It was as if in this obvious likeness they shared an intimacy. Then they pushed their way through the door to the outside where they stopped abruptly; simultaneously, as if they'd been seized suddenly from a familiar prosaic world and placed haphazardly onto this more quixotic one. And they felt as though they confronted the whole, crazy scene for the first time. Turning, they looked at one another as though for recognition. "Happy New Year," Terry said again.

Between the drum-roll of sound they walked the first length of their walk in a personal kind of silence. Pat thought of Suzanne.

"Cigarette?"

"Thanks," Pat said.

"This's crazy as all getout," Terry said.

"What is."

(Continued on page 16)

Masculine Viewpoint

His Act of Love

A Story by Eric Cashen

He was rather a bright boy, and his interest in books was not unnatural. Mallory was his favorite; he read him every day. "What is it in books," his mother wanted to know, "that so intrigues you?" "I don't know," he answered. "I guess it's the stories."

Stories, yes, and other things. The things of the mind. Such as, a wall in Scott, a lance in Mallory. A dream out of De Bergerac. He read, I suppose, because he had to. Because his eye, once on fire, stayed on fire. It is interesting, but you cannot extinguish the eye. Not the inner eye. Once it is open, it stays open. His eye, open as it was, saw a lot of things. It saw hate, lust, love, chivalry. It saw death. And it saw an idea.

The idea, I suppose, was not abnormal. It was a form of neurosis, the doctors would call it. But I don't think it's so abnormal. He began to identify, in his mind, with various symbols. The lance, for instance. The shield, burning in the sunset. It was always red. Girls, the big toe, and the one next to it, on her foot, were cloven. Ideas, running rampant in an inner eye. An inner eye, that had no way to check, to see definitely. An inner eye, brought up on Kipling, and Yeats, the above-mentioned, a few more. Modern authors didn't interest him. He didn't need them. Sex, to him, was embodied in Scott, in old tales. His eye, working like a hammer, tapped out various impresses, and made him rich, he thought. He was company with the greatest heroines in the world. Rachel, not in exception. He

could move with them, speak with them, touch them, their dresses, move his hand beneath their pelts, and be free. Freedom, he connected with hair. Skin, to him, was blistering, like the shield. Rachel, with her olive skin, was an exception. Her fire had burned out, it seemed, in her skin. The oil was rubbed on, loosely.

But it was the lances that fascinated him. The taking of walls, the siege of cities, the upthrust lance, the battlecry. The lance, moving forward, a thought, a dream, an idea, a positive, definite, determinate truth. The lance, so long, so rigid, so strong, so supple, so plain. His heart, his mind, was taken up with a lance. Inner eye, you may say, is the cause for all things. It is, for blind men.

He made fantasy out of life, his shredded wheat, was a knight's breakfast. His tuna sandwich, a Jew's dish. Frankfurters, breadsticks, cucumbers, bananas, celery became lances. That was definite. His hand, never faltering, would touch the things of his mind, and hold them close, in grasp. Like braille. Not braille, of course, but a substitute for it. A way of sensually remembering, what was a vision. His hand was a knight's hand. His foot, cloven like a girl's.

Gauntlet? He wore none. Seventh grade, and high school, the inevitable tragedy of the man, who is a boy. Long walks, picnics, hikes, into dreams. No friends. Except the Animal boy. A friend, you might call him. He wasn't very bright. A poor man's Trinculo. Or Caliban. His face, red as a beet, would stare up at the boy, in admiration. The boy who had dreams. His knuckles would clench, his teeth whiten.. But our boy, the boy who dreamt, had no use for the Animal boy. He forgot about him. He only remembered Rachel, and lances. His pipe, proverbially, was between his teeth. He dreamt.

One night, long after supper, a ghost came to him, the Animal boy in a sheet, holding a candle. A thing racked through him. His head, fuzzy, sweaty, shook. His toes spread. He woke himself up, to see nothing there, not even an image of the Animal boy, on the closet wall. The next day, he stopped by, not to escort the Animal boy to school, but to miss him. He said, "Why don't you go stick your head in a pond?"

In spring, on the way home, he would take a shortcut. It led down to the river. If the river was low, you could cross over to a sandbar. There were shrubs, there. And an old canoe. He would lie there, dreaming, thinking; trying to be a man, in his mind, an old man, who had passed his prime. It was eighth grade. An old man, very old. Who had passed his prime.

* * * * *

SMOKE RINGS

(Continued from page 13)

"This's the first New Year's Eve in I-don't-know-how-many that I've had only one little old drink."

For the first time Pat thought of Suzanne with smug indifference and she thought: "And I guess this is the first one I've spent away from Suze." Paradoxically, she felt numb and triumphant.

"How old are you?" Pat said.

"Twenty-three."

"You don't look it."

Noisemakers ground and caterwauled in the distance. Stars stippled the sky, and Terry lassoed them with perfect smoke rings. The rings circled, eddied, faded; high up, in proud defiance, the stars gleamed. The girls climbed high above the city; the sparkling lights of it, far below, were like the reflection of the stars. On their way back down Terry remarked on the TV antennae. "They seem to strike the sign of the times," she said. "Ever think about it? They're the quiet tentacles of weird nuclear-age cats, offering escape on their respective screens, like the depths of purrless bellies."

"You're poetic, Terry," Pat said.

"It's one of my vices," Terry said. "You ought to hear me when I really let go sometime."

By the time they reached the bottom of the hill darkness had floated up out of sight like a huge balloon. The winter sun - barely yellow in the air - was chilled white wine. "It's invigorating," Terry said, watching the smoke her words engendered.

"What is?"

"This air is. Can you smell the trees here?" They were passing the park now. The wavering green smells of eucalypti and pine tottered evasively on the breeze like fairy's ghosts so that only at intervals could they smell it.

"Ummmm," Terry breathed. "And look," she paused at a hedge bordering the walk, "see the spiderwebs? They're like little circus nets over the bushes. Look. The dew is caught up in them as if on purpose so they won't break as they fall. It's lovely, isn't it." She took Pat's hand for an instant, but the instant was so brief it was more a thought than an action. Terry stopped and turned to Pat disarmingly: "Pat, will I see you again?"

The doors of the cafe were still open and a few people were milling around it: the gay, weary survivors of a dead past. "Yes," Pat said.

"Right here," Terry said. "We'll meet here."

"When?" Pat said, with an eagerness that couldn't conceal from herself that she wanted at this moment never to see Suze again. And the word was big and seemed to her to reverberate in some large, empty room. "When?" not yet entered on the records of times still to come.

"Saturday," Terry said. "Right here at the cafe at seven o'clock."

"Saturday," Pat echoed.

They re-entered the cafe. Lee, the vocalist, had been playing at the piano bar since midnight. The shadow of the mike was like a goiter at her throat. She played and brought her obese shoulders up slow from time to time

as though squeezing the music out of herself. The mural figure above her was doing the splits at her head. Her hair was a red bonnet and her dress was a lavender belt of silk cloth.

"She's really great," Terry said. "Come on, let's get breakfast." She put a coin into the jar on the piano and guided Pat to a table in the corner. The place settings were already on. To the bleary-eyed waiter Pat ordered for both of them. "But leave out one milk," she said to Terry's scowl at the mere mention of the word milk. And Pat's glass of milk came first along with Terry's coffee. The milk in the glass sent a shapeless white reflection of light scurrying across the ceiling. Pat had been watching it heedlessly when Terry said: "What do you think of this great big launching pad of a world, you think we'll ever leave the ground?"

Breakfast interrupted an attempt to answer. Pat wasn't really hungry but she'd felt a sleepless night didn't merit a foodless one. She watched Terry move the hash-brown potatoes on her plate, a sliver at a time, as she talked. After getting a dozen or so of the slivers across the line of pussy willow designed on the china, she said: "You'll meet me here then?" She crushed the potatoes under an urgent fork and said again: "You will? won't you?"

Pat was piqued at allowing herself to think of Suzanne again. "Yes," she said, defensively, "of course. I'll be here."

* * * * *

Saturday at seven o'clock, the cafe seemed transformed. Two old men shared the bar and an obviously married couple occupied the corner table. The piano bar stood off to the side - cold. There was the brief clink of silver at the table. A veteran waitress came from the kitchen, pushing the door forcefully with her body so that the door bounced back into the kitchen again, permitting the clangor of pots and pans into the dining room; then the door swung to a closed standstill once more.

"Not much doing tonight, eh barkeep?" one of the old men asked Mickey, the bartender.

"Nah." Mickey dipped a wine glass into tepid, soapy water where a red toothpick drifted, and he dipped the glass again into soapless grey water. "Never much doing after New Years," he said resignedly. Placing the glass upside down on a wet towel, he said: "People make too damned many resolutions."

N.Y. Mattachine Convention

Rev. William P. Zion, a Protestant Episcopal clergyman, addressed the luncheon guests of the New York Mattachine 1961 Convention. His remarks regarding "Recent Approaches to Homosexuality in Moral Theology" were offered with the acknowledgement that although moral theology is concerned with what is right and what is wrong, the ministry of the Church is, in his understanding, redemptive rather than judgmentive.

Rev. Zion observed that during the past ten years somewhat of a revolution has taken place in the attitude of the Christian Church toward homosexuality. Formerly a taboo subject, treated as a technicality and dealt with in Latin, the subject is now increasingly openly discussed with somewhat more understanding and somewhat more sympathy.

Psychiatry and psychoanalysis brought some change in attitude in regard to homosexuality. The moralist may not condemn acts which are unwilling, accidental or even unconscious. Psychiatry raised the question as to the degree of man's responsibility for his sexual conduct.

REVIEW OF ROMAN CATHOLIC OPINION

Here are a few excerpts from Rev. Zion's review of Roman Catholic opinion on this question:

Pope Pius XII stated that only in cases of insanity could a man be held free of obligation to adhere to the full natural and moral law.

In Morality and the Homosexual, Rev. Buckley, a Catholic, amplifies this attitude. The homosexual is a moral deviant primarily; he has the ability and duty to change his way of life to conform to God's natural law. However, the Jesuit Journal, Theological Studies, suggested that Father Buckley did not give sufficient attention to unconscious compulsions present in homosexuality which greatly diminish the ability of a man either to reform or to restrain his sexual activities.

Hagmeyer and Gleason in Counseling for the Catholic suggest that adherence to the Moral Law requires an inner sensitivity and perception of values not available to the homosexual.

ANGLICAN POSITION

Reviewing the position of the Anglican Church, Rev. Zion reminded the listeners that acceptance of the Wolfenden Report had been made by the Church although Parliament had subsequently refused to adopt the recommendations. However, on the question as to what degree the Anglican Church regards homosexuality as morally right, wrong, or neutral, there would seem to be no official position.

Rev. Zion then offered for consideration the principles he had adopted on a tentative personal basis. The moralist should be concerned with persons primarily, rather than with abstractions or Laws. A society must have laws, but morality need not be built on law. The traditional understanding of the morality of sexual activity has been predominantly concerned with Natural Law. It is understood the end of man's sexuality is exclusively monogamous, with the offering up of that sexuality in the monastic state. The Law is an ideal. Homosexuality is an anomaly, and as such, something less than the fullest good for man. As such, it falls short of the ideal. Few of us live on the level of the ideal most of the time. Human existence does not conform itself to the fulfillment of absolute laws; the very existence of homosexuality refutes that. The roots of homosexuality lie in a somewhat distorted or non-evolved psycho-sexual development, a state not easily altered.

"The Will of God, as I understand it, is the good of the individual man—not the adherence of the individual to an absolute structure," said Rev. Zion. "Theologically this does not mean that man can automatically choose what is best for man by simply wanting to do it."

THE CELIBATE LIFE

"At least psychology has taught us the degree to which man's sexuality and ability to love affects his personality. The celibate life is only open to those who have reached that stage of development which makes sublimation possible in a freely willed and creative way. In other cases, celibacy could remove one from human involvement into a situation which would bring the evils of a deteriorated personality."

"Mature sex expression is available only to those who have reached a certain level or kind of psychic development. On the basis of our knowledge of personality, this (the requirement of celibacy) is to put the homosexual in a vacuum, which is in itself destructive and productive of rebellious sexual conduct."

THE POTENTIAL FOR LOVE

"It is the belief of the Church that man has no right of his own to the gratification of his sexuality, but rather that the sexual energy is a potential for love. The sex act is seen not as a physical relief or pleasurable indulgence, but as the means of expression, of self giving, as the means of making a bond with another which is itself creative. Love is not mere passion, feeling or sentimentality. Love may include any of these items but if it is to be creative, it must transcend them."

"Love is difficult for anyone...Love is difficult for the homosexual because he is a human being....."

"The moral life is the life of love filled with hope. This may sound idealistic, but you begin to see what is lacking in a group where there may be no elements of hope, but only self-hatred and despair. The Church's major mission...is redemptive; the bestowal of health, love and maturity on mankind...We are asked to nourish

our lives beyond that self-centeredness which is our common lot, and distorts and darkens our lives."

"Just what the wholeness, the sanctity, and the perfection of the homosexual may be I can not say. I do not believe that it is put down in adhering to a set of prohibitions just as I am sure it does not lie in living the life of abandon in the jungle which marks many of the 'gay' set, where there are few loyalties, few standards, little hope. Perhaps it lies in living under God's love and being a channel of that love directed toward others." Rev. Zion concluded, "I do not believe we, any of us, can be moral or loving without help from a transcendent source."

POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPROVED LAWS

Robert V. Sherwin, executive secretary of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex, spoke on "Possibilities for Improved Laws Governing Homosexuals." The major premise of his address was that the enactment of improved legislation requires the creation of an atmosphere of favorable public opinion. Mr. Sherwin pointed out that much carefully considered reform legislation has been offered, but generally it was the public who had rejected these proposals. Mr. Sherwin reproved the attitude of resigned acceptance of the current public verdict.

The task of creating an atmosphere of public opinion where improved sex laws might be enacted requires renewed effort in presenting a more acceptable image of the homosexual to the public. Mr. Sherwin observed that in this highly emotional area, the appeal to reason is not enough. The carefully thought out, reasoned proof, substantiated with logical arguments is not enough. The public should be made aware that they share with the homosexual the conditions, problems and sensibilities common to the human race. The public should be made aware that all persons develop through a somewhat analogous homosexual stage.

Mr. Sherwin believed the acceptance of reform legislation would be substantially hastened if the individual would accept his personal responsibility to openly subscribe to greater justice for the homosexual.

LESBIANA



BY GENE DAMON

204. ANOTHER KIND OF LOVE BY PAULA CHRISTIAN. CREST, N. Y., 1961.

THE AUTHOR OF EDGE OF TWILIGHT (1959) IS FINALLY RETURNED TO US IN THIS EXCELLENT SECOND NOVEL WHOLLY DEVOTED TO LESBIANISM. THE PLOT LINE IS THE, BY NOW, WELL REHEARSED GIRL PLUS GIRL PLUS CONFLICT AND MORE GIRLS. THE ELEMENT WHICH SETS THE BOOK APART IS THE WRITING AND THE HUMOR AND THE COMPASSION AND THE REALISTIC APPROACH WITHOUT RESORTING TO "BATHOS" OR SARCASM OR SATIRE. SIMPLY AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF THE VERY WELL HANDLED "PROBLEM NOVEL" WITH A WELL WORKED OUT BELIEVABLE HAPPY ENDING. NOT TOO MANY TEENAGERS; NOR TOO MUCH VILLAGE. (A NOTE TO PLEASE THE DIEHARDS.)

BOTH OF MISS CHRISTIAN'S NOVELS ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE DOB BOOK SERVICE. COST OF EACH IS 35¢ PLUS 10¢ HANDLING (4% SALES TAX IN CALIFORNIA). SEND ORDERS TO DOB, 1232 MARKET ST., SUITE 108, SAN FRANCISCO 2, CALIFORNIA.

205. LESBOS HILL BY GEORGE P. TOWARD. NEWSSTAND LIBRARY, 1960.

REALLY VERY UPBEAT, THOUGH UNHAPPY, SLICK-TYPE PAPERBACK. THE STORY IS THE CUT-AND-DRIED "END IN A MURDER" TYPE OF THING, BUT THERE IS ONE UNUSUAL FACET WHICH MAKES THIS A VERY INTERESTING BOOK. THE MAIN LESBIAN CHARACTER, MARZEE GAINITOR, IS CLEARLY A TRUTHFUL, UNADORNED, ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE REAL LESBIAN WOMAN AS SHE IS MOST LIKELY TO BE, AND MARZEE BEARS NO RESEMBLANCE TO THE CHARACTERS USUALLY TO BE FOUND IN PAPERBACK FICTION.

CORRECTION!! IN THE NOVEMBER, 1961 EDITION OF THE LADDER, ITEM #193 SHOULD READ: THE BREAKWATER BY GEORGE M. MANDEL. HOLT, RINEHART & WINSTON, 1960. ALSO IN ITEM #195, AMERICANA ESOTERICA, THERE ARE TWO OVERT MALE ITEMS - A STORY AND A PLAY - NO MALE POEMS.

mood miscellanea

RESOLVE

DESTINED THEN TO LOSE, AM I?

THE EAGER, EARLY SEARCH FOR FREE, STRONG ACTIVE LIFE
CONDEMNED TO HALF-WAY DEATH
BY RULE, AND WHAT THEY SAID WAS REAL
(THOUGH NOW I SEE THE UNREAL ALL ABOUT ME COMING TRUE);
THE LATER, HIDDEN QUEST FOR LOVE - TO HAVE AND GIVE
FOUND, AND FOUND, AND STILL TO FIND;
DISCOVERED BEAUTY, SEEN IN THINGS - A JOY INDEED
(BUT NOT FOREVER);
THEN LAST, NOT LEAST - THE WORK TO DO,
IN SERVICE BOTH OF TRUTH AND LOVE -

DEFEATED ALL? AH, NO!
I'LL NOT TAKE DESTINY LIKE THAT
THOUGH GODS AND REASON MOCK ME!

- ANONYMOUS

HOW I WONDER...?

BY NIK

TWINKLE, TWINKLE LITTLE QUEER
SOAKING UP YOUR DAILY BEER
IN THE SOLITARY GLOOM
OF YOUR TINY TWILIGHT ROOM.
TELL ME WHAT YOU CONTEMPLATE
WHILE YOU SIT IN THERE AND WAIT.
DO YOU THINK YOU ARE RESIGNED
TO THE LIFE THAT'S BEEN ASSIGNED?
OR ARE YOU, IN CONCENTRATION,
PLOTING FOR YOUR LIBERATION?
JUST WHY IS IT THAT YOU HIDE
FROM THE GREAT BIG WORLD OUTSIDE?

by jay wallace

EXPLANATION

WE MET, AS TIME TURNED SLOWLY
IN ITS COSMIC FLIGHT.
HER DAWNING BRUSHED AGAINST
MY NIGHT....
HER PALLID FLOWER REACHED UP
TOWARD MY STAR....
WE WALKED WHERE AGES ARE.
I LAUGHED ALOUD; SHE SMILED.
I WAS A MYSTIC; SHE, A CHILD.
WE LOOKED UPON EACH OTHER ONCE;
RETURNING TWICE....
MY FIRE COULD NOT TOUCH
HER ICE.

AH, SO

A WOMAN LOVES A WOMAN
TRUSTING HER;
AS SHE WOULD LOVE
HER OWN HAND,
AS A SEPARATE THING,
APART.

A WOMAN LOVES A WOMAN
SEEKING
QUALITIES
SHE MAY HERSELF
POSSESS,
WITHIN
HER HEART.

A WOMAN LOVES A WOMAN
HOLDING THIS
LOVE DEARER
THAN ANY SHE HAS
KNOWN.

A WOMAN LOVES A WOMAN
AS SHE LOVES
HER MIRROR,
WHEN ALONE.

APOLOGY

IF I HAVE CALLED IT "LOVE",
FORGIVE
THIS INSULT
TO YOUR
SENSITIVITIES.
WELL THEN,
WE'LL CALL IT
"FRIENDSHIP"
(AS YOU PLEASE....)
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SIT
UPON
MY KNEES...?

Here and There

HOWARD TAUBMAN, CRITIC FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, IN A RECENT ARTICLE DEPLORED THE INFILTRATION OF HOMOSEXUAL ATTITUDES IN THE THEATER, THE INTRUSION OF PRIVATE JOKES TURNED PUBLIC IN A SPIRIT OF DEFIANCE, AS A DISTORTION OF HUMAN VALUES, A HETEROSEXUAL MASQUERADE.

HE CITED THE FOLLOWING PLAYS DEALING WITH HOMOSEXUALITY AS PROBING WITH DIRECTNESS AND INTEGRITY: LILLIAN HELLMAN'S "THE CHILDREN'S HOUR", TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' "CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF", ROBERT ANDERSON'S "TEA AND SYMPATHY", PETER SHAFFER'S "FIVE FINGER EXERCISE" AND "A TASTE OF HONEY".

"WHERE THE WRITER KNOWS WHAT IS IN HIS MIND AND WOULD LIKE TO EXPOSE IT UNCOMPROMISINGLY, IT IS A GREAT PITY IF HE FAILS TO DO SO. HOMOSEXUALITY HAS BEEN A FACT OF HISTORY FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. IT IS A FACT OF LIFE, EVEN IF A GENERALLY CONCEALED ONE, IN OUR SOCIETY. NOTHING HUMAN SHOULD BE ALIEN TO AN ENLIGHTENED THEATER."

* * * * *

IN HERB CAEN'S COLUMN (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE): "NOTED PLAYWRIGHT LILLIAN HELLMAN JETTED IN VIA AMERICAN AIRLINES YESTERDAY TO CATCH SNEAK PREVIEWS OF A NEW AUDREY HEPBURN FILM BASED ON ONE OF HER PLAYS. I LIKED PARTICULARLY THE AD FOR THE REVIEW TONIGHT AT OAKLAND'S ROXIE. IT READS 'NO CHILDREN WILL BE ADMITTED WITH OR WITHOUT ADULTS'. NAME OF THE MOVIE: 'THE CHILDREN'S HOUR'."

* * * * *

LESLIE LIEBERMAN IN HIS ARTICLE ENTITLED "WOMEN TAKE OVER THE PANTS" APPEARING IN THIS WEEK MAGAZINE CLAIMS THAT THE MANUFACTURE OF WOMEN'S PANTS (SHORTS, JEANS, CAPRIS, SLACKS, ET AL) HAS BECOME A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRY. 78% OF AMERICAN WOMEN UNDER 25 HAVE 3.2 PAIRS OF PANTS IN THEIR CLOSETS, AND 51% OF ALL WOMEN IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE 2.8 PAIRS OF TROUSERS.



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