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THE LADDER

FEBRUARY 1963

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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 DOTTIE DEE

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Gay Wedding

A report by Jody Shotwell

The ceremony was scheduled for five O'clock on a Sunday afternoon. We arrived promptly at the private home on a quiet street, ambivalent in our attitudes, yet eager for this new experience.

We had, of course, heard of gay weddings, but in most cases the couples were men. This time the marriage was to be that of one girl to another. This increased our interest and excitement because we thought of the ceremony described in "The Songs of Bilitis"--of Bilitis to Mnasidice, of the veiled bride and her ardent lover, of the flowers and song.

We were the first guests to arrive. A member of the wedding party admitted us, still in her house-coat and with her hair undone. Soon the bride-to-be appeared, dressed in kelly-green chiffon with rhinestone shoulder straps. No virgin white nor veil, alas, but then, she had been married before!

The "bridegroom" was a fresh-faced youngster with red hair, freckles, and braces on her teeth. She wore black trousers, a white shirt and a black knitted vest, and revealed the nervousness of bridegrooms standard the world over.

Other guests arrived, all female except for two young men, one of whom we learned was to perform the marriage service. We were curious about his qualifications for this job but felt that any direct questions would be a breach of good manners. Later we were able to discover only that he had "performed this ceremony several times before" and that he was currently the manager-bartender of a local gay bar. He told us, (rather naively, we thought) that he, himself, had been "married" in this fashion once...and that the marriage had lasted a month. We were tempted to ask him if he had presided at his own nuptials, but refrained.

When most of the invited guests had assembled, the performance (pardon, the ceremony) began. The bride-to-be

had assured us, very seriously, that the service was "poetic and beautiful" and that we, of all those present, should appreciate it most. We joined the others in respectful silence as the wedding party arranged itself in conventional fashion before the "preacher". The "members of the wedding" consisted of a "best man"--a stocky short-haired woman dressed in shirt, trousers and jacket, and two bridesmaids in short, tight black dresses with beehive hairdos.

The bride was right. The service did contain poetry--the whole piece on "Companionship" by Kahlil Gibran, lifted bodily from "The Prophet". Gibran is properly credited, however, so everything was in order. The rest of the service was orthodox, but with changes made to fit the situation.

One portion of the ceremony which might have been touching, the exchanging of rings and vows, was rendered, for us at least, somewhat ludicrous when the "preacher" mixed a potion consisting of wine, bitters and water. Even though he described the symbolic meaning of this drink, we could not help but notice that he applied his adeptness as professional mixologist to the job.

And so the ceremony was over and we lined up to kiss the bride and shake hands with the "groom". Refreshments were served and the wedding cake was cut and distributed.

We sincerely meant the good wishes we extended to the "newly-weds" because we felt they needed them, with or without a marriage ceremony. We left with the same ambivalence with which we arrived.

Only time will tell whether or not such an exchange of vows in the presence of a congregation of friends will impose a more serious intent upon this young couple. If it does, it will be, we feel, because both of them desire to live according to the mores of heterosexual society in which they exist. Having no status in the law of the land, the homosexual marriage must be maintained only through the mutual love and devotion of those involved--and this love and devotion must be dependent upon their feelings and their behavior, not upon any public exchange of vows.

WORDS

MANY WORDS ARE MAN'S WORDS -
TO BUILD - TO CARVE - TO STRIVE

OTHER WORDS ARE WOMAN'S WORDS
BUT WOMAN CAN CONTRIVE

TO BUILD ALONE, TO CARVE IN STONE
AND MAKE IT COME ALIVE.

THOUGH WOMAN'S WORDS ARE SOFTER WORDS -
KNIT, SIT, SPIN -

SHE CAN ERECT THE STRONGER HOUSE
TO LIVE LIFE IN.

- BLANCHE SMALL

* * * * *

NOW YOU HAVE LEFT

NOW YOU HAVE LEFT ME,
AND I AM FREE TO SLIP BENEATH THE SHEETS
AND REST,
TO GO ABOUT MY LITTLE TASKS,
TO WRITE MY POEMS. NOW I AM FREE.

NO LONGER NEED MY DREAMS
REST SMILINGLY ON YOU
MY LOVE.
AND PEOPLE SAY, "HOW WELL
SHE HAS RECOVERED." OR SO IT SEEMS.

ONCE YOU LOVED. THAT TIME SEEMS FAR
FROM HERE.
AND YET I CANNOT HELP BUT HOPE,
WHEN ANY STEP THAT SOUNDS OUTSIDE
MIGHT MEAN YOU'RE THERE.

- JAN FRASER

Narrow Escape

a story by Jan Addison

Coming out of the theater she turned south toward Washington Square where the Fifth Avenue bus stood ready for its uptown run. She could have caught it at the corner only a hundred feet north, but she didn't want to be stared at by the others waiting there. She hadn't been crying - hadn't cried in public since she was three - but she knew how her face looked after the end of Maedchen in Uniform, even if this was the fifth time she'd seen it.

Idiotic to come clear from Washington just for a movie. She must have a better story for the office Monday - without ever hinting at the real reason - which was that one had to have an occasional escape from weekends that were nothing but forty-eight hours of fighting crazy temptations. To go out and walk round and round that block in Georgetown, craving hopelessly for a glimpse of Stephanie and yet terrified of being seen. Or to phone her endlessly and have every suggestion, however impersonal, turned down in that cool, faintly amused voice. Everything, from concerts to galleries to lunch at the Watergate, turned down cold... Enough to make you jump off the top floor, like poor Manuela in the movie.

By the time she reached the bus her favorite front seat on the upper level was taken, and she sat down far back near the stairway and turned her face to the window. A flood of loneliness drowned her so deep she didn't even bother to move forward when a front seat emptied at Eighth. At Fourteenth so many got off that those boarding the bus had to wait while the stairs cleared. Staring idly at them, she jumped to sharp attention.

Stephanie! No, of course not. No such luck! But a pencil-slim girl so like her, in white tailored suit, bronze blouse and bag and pumps to match her shingled hair, that Mel's heart began its familiar heavy racing. As the bus loaded she saw the girl was with someone - a woman at least in her thirties, beautifully but not

slenderly built, wearing a conventional flowered print, white hat and accessories. Just a fairly average female.

To Mel's delight they came up the stairs and took a front seat where nothing interrupted her view of them. Even before they were seated she knew from the younger one's eager, solicitous courtesy that she was in love with the other. And every moment she watched them made it more certain. There was an intensity about their talk that practically sent out electric wave-lengths, and the girl sat rigid, her left arm along the back of the seat but not risking contact, her right shoulder forward to cut them off from the passengers across the aisle.

Past Madison Square it seemed to Mel they were all but quarreling, though so softly that not a syllable was audible, and her heart beat harder, feeling her own desperate arguments with Stephanie. Oh, if this only were Stephanie, and she herself the other woman... For it was fairly evident now that the girl was begging for something and the woman refusing. (How could she?) By Thirtieth Street the girl was so tense one could see her knuckles gleaming grey-white on the seat-back and her body curved as though to prevent her companion escaping. But within a block, the woman rose deliberately and the girl flung herself upright and stood rigid, not turning, as she left the seat.

The woman coming back along the aisle showed a serene, pink-powdered face with calm grey eyes and a wide straight mouth above a firm chin. Her hair was ash blonde, crinkly, heavy under the white confection of hat. She walked easily on the unsteady floor, looking neither right nor left, as imperturbable as a sculptured goddess. As the bus started on she could be seen marching regally westward toward Penn Station.

The girl sat next the window now, hunched and rigid. Though no motion betrayed her, Mel felt sure she was crying. Oh, how could that...that brick of ice-cream who had just left stay so frozen? How could anyone resist... She fought an insane temptation to go forward and join her companion-in-frustration. But the girl was definitely not the type to be picked up. She'd probably be as coldly ironic as Stephanie...

When the girl lurched to her feet and came half-stumbling back along the aisle at Forty-Second, Mel's inhibitions and common sense evaporated like snow on a stove. The thin face was haggard, dark smudges under the eyes, lips bitten till the mouth was only a thin line. She looked ten years older than when she got on at Fourteenth.

Mel sprang up, ran down the curving stairs all in one breath. ...I think you could use a drink and company. So could I, and for the same reason. Stop somewhere with me? The girl turned, glared, but when she tried to speak no voice came. Mel gave thanks. ...I've been a captive audience ever since you got on. I'm here for a week-end break from an identical set-up. Was going to drown my sorrows alone. Would you help? ...Suburbs, the girl said from a tight throat. On my way to Grand Central. Child's Bar all right? I'm 'little' Jimmy James, she managed to grin down from her thin height.

They were silent at a wall table till their glasses were half empty. Then Jimmy James said bitterly, since you saw the whole act - she was my nurse when they took me apart last year. I know I'll never get anywhere. Only she can't brush me off, is all. And damn it I can't quite let go. Mel emptied her glass in one gulp. ...Don't I know. My case, a last-June grad of the women's college I work for. Socialite in Georgetown. So I take a Washington job for the summer and so what? You're one up on me, my gal won't even have lunch in a department store tearoom. Just gets sarcastic on the phone about 'people of my temperament.' Jimmy grimaced: Oh, mine'll do practically anything but sleep with me, but 'so what'? I gambled on her maybe doing that after the film tonight - Maedchen in Uniform, know it? ...I was there, came up partly for that picture. Wha'd she say to it? ...Hysterical exaggeration. ...Yeah, so would my gal.

Over their empty glasses they stared at one another, trembling. Mel drew a deep breath. ...Let's have another, but not here. I have some stuff in my room, hotel on west Forty-Fourth. Anybody collapse if you're not home tonight? ...On the contrary. I was damn-fool

optimist enough to say I'd be over in Jersey. At Grand Central corner they found a cab and neither spoke during the ride across town or going up in the elevator. Outside Mel's room the girl faced her, said just above a whisper, We both know we're in love with somebody else. ...Yes, Mel answered as softly, and neither of us likes promiscuity. In theory. But I've reached the end of some rope or other tonight. ...Me too. I don't think we'll be sorry. In fact - ...I think we're both damned lucky, they heard themselves say in unison as Mel unlocked the door and they went in, locking it behind them with DO NOT DISTURB hanging from the knob...

A violent swerve threw Mel against the wall. Good lord, where - ? The bus was swinging in to the curb above Forty-Sixth. She hurtled off, crossed Fifth with the light, and began the lonely walk west and south. She was dizzy and slightly sick, and what she took for a night insect tickling her cheek turned out to be a tear. She smeared it off angrily with her hand.

So she'd lost her nerve, hadn't really got off and followed... Just as all her life she'd stuck with dreams, never jumped straight into reality. Coward! ...But - Reality? Lying all night with a stranger? Who, if she'd been worth lying with, wouldn't have come at all...

Oh, thank Providence she hadn't really got off at Forty-Second...

* * * * *

VERISIMILITUDE

A fleeting touch, a quick embrace,
Will never surfeit to erase,
The all-night longing, the all-day dream,
Kaleidoscopic though it seem;
I stand in longing for the day,
When you may search your heart and say,
"This thing is real beyond dispute,
There is no fear of disrepute."

J. Lorna Strayer

YOU AND BEAUTY

YOU AND BEAUTY
WEAR THE SAME GUISE
SPEAK WITH YOUR VOICE
DWELL TOGETHER

YOU AND BEAUTY
WALK WITH ONE GRACE
YOURS IS HER AURA
HERS YOUR FACE

YOU AND BEAUTY
WEARY AND WORN
HOLD ME FROM HURT
YOU ARE BEAUTY

- BLANCHE SMALL

* * * * *

The train rolls on along its track,
In haste, through dark to dark and more -
Each turn of wheel to bring me back
To further from you than before.

When far away, from some strange bed
I rise, to face an unknown sun,
I feel I have but left unsaid
The word, that found, would find you won.

Returning, once more as of old,
Half-waiting welcome I shall stand,
To find again, I seek your hand --
And you - some other heart to hold.

All this I knew before flaw showed -
What want of wit, what sense gone slack,
Permits me to retrace this road -
Unless, I too, run on a track.

- N.F.K.

ARTURO'S ISLAND IS A CAPSULATE VERSION OF EVERY MAN'S EXPERIENCE, THE DEVELOPMENT AND BREAKING OF HIS EMOTIONAL BONDAGE TO HIS PARENTS. ARTURO'S DISCOVERY OF HIS FATHER'S HOMOSEXUALITY IS A DRAMATIC EXAMPLE OF THE ADOLESCENT DISCOVERY THAT THE ADMIRERED PARENT IS ACTUALLY NOT A SUPER-BEING BUT RATHER A FOOLISH, INEFFECTUAL, AND SINFUL MORTAL.

ARTURO'S ISLAND HOME, THE STAG, IS ON A SMALL ESTATE, A GIFT BEQUEATHED TO ARTURO'S FATHER. IT IS IMPLIED THAT IT MAY ONCE HAVE BEEN A PLEASURE HOUSE FOR HOMOSEXUAL MALES. THE MASTER BEDROOM HAS AN UNOBSTRUCTED VIEW ACROSS AN INLET OF THE PENITENTIARY WHICH HOUSES PRISONERS FROM THE MAINLAND. DEATH IN CHILD-BIRTH OF ARTURO'S MOTHER STRENGTHENED THE LEGEND THAT A CURSE FELL UPON ALL WOMEN WHO VIOLATED THE "MEN ONLY" DICTUM OF THE FORMER MASTER OF THE STAG.

THE LONELY CHILD IDOLIZED HIS FATHER, A BIG MAN OF RESTLESS AND CONFLICTING PASSIONS. THE FATHER'S FREQUENT AND MYSTERIOUS LONG ABSENCES FROM HOME ONLY INTENSIFIED THE BOY'S ADORATION. WHEN ARTURO IS 15, HIS FATHER BRINGS HOME A SECOND BRIDE, AND DEPARTS IN HIS USUAL INEXPLICABLE FASHION, LEAVING HIS YOUNG PREGNANT WIFE AND THE MISERABLE ADOLESCENT. THE BOY'S INITIAL JEALOUSY DISPERSES IN A COMPASSION WHICH DEVELOPS INTO ARDENT LOVE FOR HIS STEP-MOTHER.

A YEAR LATER ARTURO'S FATHER RETURNS, OBVIOUSLY NOT IMPELLED BY ANY INTEREST IN HIS FAMILY BUT RATHER BECAUSE OF A RELATIONSHIP ESTABLISHED WITH A MAN BEING CONVEYED TO THE ISLAND PENITENTIARY. ARTURO'S DISILLUSIONMENT IS COMPLETE WHEN HE REALIZES THAT HIS FATHER HAS HUMILIATED HIMSELF AND SACRIFICED THE SECURITY OF HIS FAMILY TO OBTAIN THE FAVOR OF A WERE WORTHLESS OPPORTUNIST.

(105 MINUTES, ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH TITLES)

BLANCHE M. BAKER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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A GIANT STEP FORWARD

It is no longer difficult for the average person to learn about homosexuality. There is an abundance of material to be found on newsstands, in book stores, in public libraries; stories and articles in magazines, scientific journals, and books both fiction and non-fiction--all running the gamut from nescent trash to literary compositions of high merit. That this wealth of information exploring (and exploiting) various aspects of homosexual behavior, is the result to a great degree of the activity of several homophile organizations, is indisputable. A strong link in the chain of human relations has been forged, irrevocably binding the homosexual minority to a society newly aware of homosexual problems, vices, and virtues.

The next step is up to society. What will be the cry? Ostracize them, keep them illegal, deny them civil rights, break them, stamp them out! They must not be--these degraded, obnoxious vermin! Or will society, true to itself, forge another link? A new link of cohesion, acceptance, understanding?

The homosexual revolution is not a revolution. There will be no uprising, no incitement to rebellion, no insurrection. A new epoch, perhaps; a period of sexual enlightenment; a change in thought. No more than this, and no less, is the final goal of the homosexual element of society.

Do not minimize the significance of this effort. Success in the homosexual struggle for equality among men ensures a further end. The evolution of a humane humanity implies the abolishment of each and every social injustice.

The homosexual has been presented and is presenting himself to the world in all his modes. Good and evil, healthy and sick, believer and atheist, literate and ignorant, esthetic and prosaic, conformist and individualist--from all walks of life, from every corner of the world, distinctly human, embracing all the virtues and foibles natural to homo sapiens.

The influence exerted by the uncompromising efforts of homosexuals to establish just treatment for themselves, not necessarily as homosexuals but as individuals, is perceptible in many areas. The unswerving dedication of some homosexuals to the furtherance of civil rights cannot be brushed aside by society. As the average individual begins to realize the significance of the aims of the various groups organized to secure the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for the homosexual, and recognizes that these aims are important not specifically for the homosexual but for society as a whole, progress in community living will have taken a giant step forward.

- M. L.

* * * * *

TEENAGE ATTITUDES BY BARBARA STEPHENS

WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE WE LOOK TO THE TEENAGERS, THE GENERATION WHICH IN THE NEXT DECADE WILL IN PART JOIN US AND IN PART JUDGE US AND SHAPE THE DESTINY OF OUR WORLD. WITH THIS VIEW IN MIND, H. H. REMMERS AND D. H. RADLER OF PURDUE UNIVERSITY HAVE CONDUCTED AN EXTENSIVE RESEARCH ON TEENAGE ATTITUDES, WITH RESULTS WHICH ARE STARTLING AND DEMANDING OF OUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

WHAT IS TODAY'S YOUNGER GENERATION REALLY LIKE? WHAT IS THE PREVAILING ATTITUDE? PARAMOUNT AMONG TEENAGE CONCERNS IS THAT OF POPULARITY, WHEREIN 38% DECLARED THAT THE "WORST OF ALL CALAMITIES IS TO BE CONSIDERED AN 'ODDBALL'." BUT WHAT THE AUTHORS ARE MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT IS HOW "THE PASSION FOR POPULARITY TRANSLATES ITSELF INTO AN ALMOST UNIVERSAL TENDENCY TO CONFORMITY AMONG OUR YOUNGER GENERATION. AS A NATION WE SEEM TO HAVE A SYNDROME CHARACTERIZED BY ATROPHY OF THE WILL, HYPER-TROPHY OF THE EGO, AND DYSTROPHY OF THE INTELLECTUAL MUSCULATURE.

"MORE THAN HALF OF OUR TEENAGERS BELIEVE THAT CENSORSHIP OF BOOKS, MAGAZINES, RADIO AND TELEVISION IS ALL RIGHT. MORE THAN

(CONTINUED ON P. 22)

ANNIVERSARY

So...on this night a year ago
I did not linger futile and sick,
Drenched in black mist to the core,
With a thin moon
Such as behind these ragged clouds tonight
is barely born!...

Then moonlight lay like snow,
And there was singing, carnival of lights...
And I...
All in smooth silk and fragrant hair
Neared the fulfillment of long days
of hunger---
Sat with you knowing, glowing,
Only waiting
What time your pleasure should speak out
And take me to your heart...

Love is a delicate fabric....(and its counterfeit
flimsier still!)

Tonight I hug my tatters close,
Knowing I may not follow where you are,
And through the empty chambers of my heart---
Doors broken and ajar---
Blows the dark mist.

- Abigail Sanford

* * * * *

Something to Remember

It has been worth the lonely years,
To know your touch
To feel the electric spark
Ignited by your presence.

And should I again know desolation,
My starved heart will remember
Being fed; my nakedness --
Wrapped in a blanket of love.

- J. Lorna Strayer

MY HEART EMBRACES YOU IN A HUNDRED WAYS
FOLDING MY LOVE AROUND YOU;
TUCKING IN LAUGHTER HERE - AND SERENITY THERE,
TO KEEP YOU WARM.

MY EYES, OF THEMSELVES, SHINE IN THE LIGHT OF YOU
AND I WONDER THAT YOU DO NOT TASTE
THE SALT OF TEARS FROM THEM,
WHEN YOU ARE SAD.

IN MY MIND I FASHION SUNS FOR YOU FROM STARS
TO LIGHT YOUR WAY AT NIGHT;
AND GOLDEN SNUFFERS TO DIM THE SUNS
WHEN YOU WISH FOR EVENING.

ALL AROUND YOU AND BESIDE YOU
I PLACE MY STRENGTH;
TO TEST AGAINST THE BAD THINGS YOU KNOW
TO ABSORB AND CRUSH THEM.

IN COUNTLESS SMALL WAYS I OFFER YOU
THE ABUNDANCE OF LIFE ABOUT US;
SNIPS OF SYMPHONY FOR YOUR EARS,
THE WILD MOTHER CALLED SEA FOR YOUR EYES,
CHOCOLATE KISSES FOR YOUR LIPS.

FROM THE EARTH AROUND I PLUCK RED FLOWERS
AND ARRANGE THE PETALS TO FORM SONGS FOR YOU;
CAREFUL TO SEE THE NECTAR IN EACH
DOES NOT ALL REST IN ONE WORD.

NOW AND AGAIN A BIRD SOFTLY SPINS
A BRIGHT TAIL FEATHER TO ME;
AND I DUST THE LOOKING GLASS OF MY TOMORROWS
TO SEE YOU.

MY LOVE GOES TO YOU IN A HUNDRED WAYS,
IN A HUNDRED WAYS YOU MAKE ME PROUD
AND STRONG - AND TENDER;
ALL ENCOMPASSED BY THE PROMISE
OF YOU.

- ALISAN

Male Impersonations on the Stage A Brief Survey of Its Past

by Robert Liechti

Part One of two parts

The English theater public of Shakespeare's day, long familiar with the sight of boys acting in the most difficult roles in women's clothing, found that King Charles II in 1660 had ordered that henceforth only women should play such parts, so that plays could be "esteemed not only harmless delights but useful and instructive representations of human life." For Shakespeare's public knew the romantic parts were played by immature youths in gowns. But came the Restoration and women in such roles, there was an added pleasure and zest--the final touch being women in men's garments as youths, soldiers, or shepherds in breeches, uniforms, and pantaloons. It livened up old plays and contrasted noticeably with the dandies in the boxes in their laces and ribbons, muffs and scented clothes.

The heyday of male impersonation on the stage was undoubtedly the Restoration in England, when playwrights turned out numerous dull plays enlivened by scenes when actresses donned male breeches and so brightened up the evening's entertainment. Women seem always to have had the desire to perform in masculine roles, either to outdo the male performer, or to show off their pretty limbs to an admiring public. Surely such roles were not those that induced great acting--though occasionally they did--but they brought that sexless ingredient to the stage, the added novelty that neither the male nor the female performer alone could provide.

Ladies who played breeches parts in the Restoration theaters were often a rather bold lot; few appeared on stage except for the need to earn a living and they were

free with their ways and their charms. In an age of frankness and of lusty, bawdy plays, the breeches part play found a ready home. However, it was not sufficient to merely allow male eyes to feast upon the female form as emphasized by such attire. There must also follow the exposure and revelation of the imposter as the high point of the play when the true sex was discovered. In Hopkins' play "Friendship Improved," Princess Locris, dressed in helmet and tunic, refusing to duel with Maherbel, the man she secretly loves, cries, "Here's my bare breast, now if thou dar'st, strike here." Her helmet drops off, revealing her hair, and her tunic is loosened sufficiently to display to Maherbel much of a startling nature, for he cries with evident pleasure, "Oh all ye gods, what wonders do I see!" Or, a fainting spell in which the garments had to be loosened, a struggle or a duel when hat and periwig fell off suddenly at a crucial moment, were other devices to the same end; the youth was revealed as a young girl and her charms were in evidence for all to view and appreciate. The audience had known of the deception all along; the slow-witted characters alone had ignored all the apparent signs. Blushing, with her loosened hair about her shoulders, the breeches part actress stood thus revealed while the cast chorused "A Woman! A Woman!" and the crowd rose up and cheered wildly.

It was surprising how many good actresses were made of ladies who were not quite ladies. Nell Gwynn, the little orange seller who became a king's mistress, did notable acting in plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, Killigrew and Dryden. She was beautiful, had the legs for the parts and a sense of theater that never left her. As Florimel in Dryden's "Secret Love" and as Macheath in John Gay's "Beggars' Opera" she was well received. There was Charlotte Cibber, daughter of playwright Colley Cibber, who wore male clothes as a child, later to wear them with glory on the stage; Anne Bracegirdle, whose odd name hampered her not at all in appearing in breeches roles in works of Centlivre, Cibber, and Burnaby; George Anne Bellamy, a successful actress who, according to historian Macqueen-Pope, "at one and the same time was an illegitimate daughter of an Irish peer and yet born in lawful wedlock." Other well-known breeches part players were Susanna Percival who appeared with the Kings, United,

and Drury Lane companies from 1681 to 1703, and Elizabeth Boutell of the Lincoln's Inn Fields company, who appeared in the spring of 1672 in the prologue of a revival of Dryden's "Secret Love" in breeches, the cast being composed entirely of women. Elizabeth Barry, the noted Restoration actress, appeared in five breeches roles in her brilliant career from 1675 to 1713. And Peg Woffington, the sensation of London in 1740, was unrivalled in male attire and had great comic gifts as an actress and attraction to men, playing as Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's comedy "The Constant Couple" in both Dublin and London and achieving a complete triumph in both cities in the role.

One of the greatest of all performers in the nineteenth century was Madame Vestris, actress-manager and an extraordinary woman of the theater. Her lovely figure made her ideal for breeches parts, her singing voice had much appeal, and her dancing enchanted her viewers. She made a great hit in London in May 1820 in a burlesque version of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" in the title role, for her voice was notably suited to parts in high male register as well as the female in low key. In the English version of Boieldieu's opera "La Dame Blanche" she sang the role of George Brown. Other roles in breeches were Artaxerxes in Arne's opera of that name, Macheath, Puck in "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Sheridan Knowles' "Love" and Auber's "Fra Diavolo". Married to ballet dancer Armand Vestris who soon left her, she appeared in ballet as well as comic and grand opera and breeches roles in a career of great brilliance. In 1831, Madame Vestris operated the Olympic Theater where she became known for her extravaganzas and farces; later she ran the Lyceum with the same success. Several tours to America followed, and marriage to the English comedian Charles Mathews, with a brief joint management of Covent Garden before the end of this noted artist's career.

In a study of male impersonation one also encounters strong, dominant women, almost masculine in nature, who have attempted noted male roles in the theater and opera, bringing to their interpretations a strength and power that had all the elements of great acting. Much has already been said elsewhere of the famed French tragedienne, Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923), who played fifteen

roles of male characters in her long and illustrious career on the world's stages. The possessor of her own theater, the divine Sarah wrote that she appeared as a man in the theater because it was an intellectual challenge and allowed greater freedom in performing the playwright's work more fully. While Bernhardt had her great triumphs as L'Aiglon, as Ruy Blas, Phedre, and Tosca among others, many remember her for her Hamlet, her Shylock, her Pelleas, her Duc de Reichstadt, and Cyrano of Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac"; they speak of the tremendous vitality and spirit she gave these roles. The divine Sarah played male characters in plays by Moliere, George Sand, Beaumarchais, de Musset, Shakespeare, Rostand, Goethe, Maeterlinck, Sam Benelli and Louis Verneuil--and all with success. A woman of great depth, perception, and infinite compassion, she infused even dull plays with a fire and a reason beyond the writer's hopes. Playing youths some forty years her junior, she captured the spark of eternal life in her vibrant voice, a movement of her eloquent arms, in an extended moment of stillness that said more than words could. Rarely if ever has the theater seen her like.

Composers have often used the female singer in male roles in comic and grand operas, in some cases in the principal roles but more often the lesser ones. The added fillip of the shapely leg plus the further qualification of a lovely voice is surely the reason for the appeal of such roles as Prince Orlofsky in Johann Strauss' "Die Fledermaus" and Octavian in "Der Rosenkavalier" by Richard Strauss, both sung by mezzo sopranos. Other important roles are those of Arsaces, a commander of the army in Rossini's "Semiramide", for contralto voice, Niklausse in "The Tales of Hoffman" by Offenbach, and the part of Puck in Weber's opera "Oberon".

Gounod, Wagner, Donizetti, Goldmark, Berlioz, Offenbach, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Debussy, Weber, Thomas, Richard Strauss and Johann Strauss were some of the composers who wrote parts in opera for the female singer in male roles. Verdi, Meyerbeer, Humperdinck, Puccini, Massenet, Gluch and Handel also contributed to the list. The roles have not had the depth of characterization written for the male voice, except in rare instances and then only

in the emergence of a great singing actress, such as the noted Scottish singer Mary Garden. She performed the role of the young juggler in Massenet's "Le Jongleur de Notre Dame" when only men had sung it before. She saw the part best suited to a woman such as herself with her remarkably boyish form, slender hips and small bosom. The simple boy juggler who had only one talent to give the Lord--this needed a tender spiritual quality that only a woman could give it, and it became one of Garden's most significant and successful roles in a long career of distinguished singing and acting. Other male roles essayed by her were Prince Charming in "Cendrillon" and Cherubin in Massenet's opera. From the time of her remarkable debut in Paris in Charpentier's "Louise" in 1900, all through the years of her great triumphs, she has remained a thoroughly vital personality of courage and freedom of action.

(To be concluded next month)

* * * * *

Secret and sly,
love will not leave the heart that held us
even though we die.

Our reign still unchallenged,
this unresolved balance
gives death the lie.

We silently wait - not to awaken
until our particular place is taken,

and then return and tenderly touch
with eternity's cool remembering needle
the flesh we loved so much.

This then the secret -
and this the slyness -
Late comers all must bow
to the old love's Highness.

- Blanche Small

TEENAGE ATTITUDES (CONTINUED FROM P. 14)

HALF BELIEVE THAT THE F. B. I. AND LOCAL POLICE SHOULD BE ALLOWED WIRE-TAPPING AT WILL, THAT THE POLICE SHOULD BE PERMITTED THE USE OF THE 'THIRD DEGREE,' THAT PEOPLE WHO REFUSE TO TESTIFY AGAINST THEMSELVES SHOULD BE FORCED TO DO SO.

"ON PRACTICALLY ALL QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL POLICY, THE YOUNGSTERS LEAN STRONGLY TO STEREOTYPED VIEWS. SUCH ANSWERS MAY REPRESENT EITHER UNTHINKING RESPONSES OR CONVINCED AND DELIBERATE ACCEPTANCES OF AN AUTHORITARIAN POINT OF VIEW. UNTHINKING CONFORMITY PROVIDES A SETTING WHICH MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR A DEMAGOG TO LEAD A NATION INTO SLAVERY."

TO FIND THE ORIGINS OF SUCH ATTITUDES, WE MAY LOOK TO THE HOMES AND TO MASS MEDIA. SOCIAL SCIENTIST DAVID RIESMAN ASSERTS THAT "TODAY'S PARENTS MAKE CHILDREN FEEL GUILTY NOT SO MUCH ABOUT VIOLATIONS OF INNER STANDARDS AS ABOUT FAILURE TO BE POPULAR." MOREOVER, AMERICAN ADVERTISING DELIBERATELY BASES ITS APPEAL ON "FOLLOW THE CROWD" MAXIMS.

ALL OF THIS IS ALARMING IN VIEW OF OUR PRECARIOUSLY WON VICTORIES AND OUR QUICKLY VANISHING CIVIL RIGHTS. IN THE AUTHORS' POINT OF VIEW, "THE FUTURE OF OUR DEMOCRACY IS NOT PROMISING UNLESS WE RESTORE A SOCIAL CLIMATE WHICH WILL REWARD INDEPENDENT THINKING, PERSONAL MORALITY, AND TRULY ENLIGHTENED COOPERATION IN PLACE OF GOING ALONG WITH THE CROWD."

READERS RESPOND

"SOUNDING-OFF IN THAT-LONELY-ROOM-CALLED-MEMBERSHIP!

"I WAS VERY SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT WE HAVE SO FEW MEMBERS AND SO MANY SUBSCRIBERS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HOW CAN ANY MEMBER OR SUBSCRIBER OVERLOOK THE HONEST AND EARNEST APPEAL FOR SUPPORT WHICH THE LADDER HAS PUT FORTH NOT ONCE BUT SEVERAL TIMES? IF YOU WILL ALLOW ME, I WILL GIVE YOU THE HONEST ANSWER THAT ALL HUMANS GIVE: "LET THE OTHER PERSON DO IT. I'M TOO TIRED, LAZY, OR BUSY." WELL, OPEN YOUR EYES WHICHEVER YOU ARE!

"EVERY MEMBER AND SUBSCRIBER HAS BEEN PRESENTED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE LADDER'S SITUATION. ALL TOO OFTEN MANY SAY, LET THE OTHERS DO IT. AND THE FEW WHO DO OFTEN GET A THANKLESS REPLYMENT. BUT STOP AND THINK--WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOUR MONTHLY PLEASURE AS A LADDER SUBSCRIBER IF THE FEW GOT TIRED OF CARRYING YOUR LOAD TOO? THEN WHAT??

"I AM A MEMBER AND DAMN PROUD OF IT! I DIDN'T TAKE THE LADDER FOR PERSONAL GAIN. I JOINED DOB BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN WHAT IT'S TRYING TO DO. DOB STRUGGLES TO PROVIDE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING AGAINST APPALLING ODDS, TOO MANY DEMANDS, TOO FEW WORKERS. THE FEW HARD-WORKING MEMBERS TAKE THE TIME SATURDAY, SUNDAY, AND EVENINGS SO THAT SOME INGRATES WILL HAVE THE PLEASURE OF READING! THINK HOW FEW PROMISES YOU INGRATES HAVE MADE FOR THESE WORKERS WHO TRY TO MAKE YOUR TOMORROW BETTER.

"WITH THE FEW DOB WORKING MEMBERS I HAVE MET, I AM REALLY SURPRISED AT THEIR RESILIENCE, INITIATIVE, PATIENCE, AND MOST OF ALL OPTIMISM FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR ORGANIZATION.

"THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW THE WORK-LOAD AND SIT ON YOUR BACK-SIDES, I HAVE NO APOLOGY FOR. THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED AND CONTINUE TO DO SO, THEY NEED NO APOLOGIES.

"TO THE MEMBERS I SAY: THE GROWTH OF ANY ORGANIZATION LIES WITHIN THE ZEAL OF THE MEMBERS AND CAN ONLY BE AS STRONG AS THEY ARE. I WOULD RATHER HAVE NO HAND TO HOLD MINE IN THE CHAIN OF MEMBERSHIP, THAN HAVE ONE THAT IS INEFFECTIVE, THAT WILL NOT BEND TO HELP ANOTHER MEMBER. IF A MEMBER CAN SHOW NO ADEQUATE CONSIDERATION FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS WORKERS--THEN BUDDY, WHY DID YOU JOIN?? STOP AND THINK, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR DOB? AND WHAT WILL YOU NEVER DO?? GET MAD, CUSS AT IT, BUT FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE DON'T DO ANYTHING TO HELP DOB! YOU'D FAINT!

"NO SINGLE ONE OF US--MEMBER OR SUBSCRIBER--SHOULD EVADE THE BROAD RESPONSIBILITIES OF DOB. IF YOU HAVE NO CONSTRUCTIVE IDEAS, THE BEST YOU CAN DO IS OFFER MORE CONCERN AND COMMENDATION FOR THOSE WHO FACE DOB'S PROBLEMS FIRST-HAND. HELP, WHETHER FINANCIALLY OR OTHERWISE! AND LET THE FEW DOB WORKERS KNOW THEY ARE NOT ALONE!

"ARE THE MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS ASLEEP? THE TENDENCY TO SIT BACK, COMPLAIN, DO NOTHING, OR WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO DO SOMETHING, CAN IN THE LONG RUN ONLY SPELL THE FINISH FOR A FINE MAGAZINE."

F.C., OHIO

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"THE LADDER IS THE ONLY LIFELINE EXTENDED TO SOME OF US. YOU SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT OUR CAUSE REQUIRES INTELLIGENCE, COURTESY, PATIENCE AND DETERMINATION. THROUGH YOUR PAGES WE RECEIVE ENCOURAGEMENT IN OUR DAILY LIVES."

NEW ENGLAND SUBSCRIBER

* * * * *

"SOMETIMES I FEEL THAT THE LADDER IS TOO 'NICE.' IS THE LADDER TO SERVE ONLY THOSE NOW RIDING THE CREST OF THE WAVE? ARE THE GREATEST PROBLEMS OF OUR GROUP SOCIAL SNUBS AND SLIGHTLY DENTED HEARTS? CERTAINLY THERE IS ROOM FOR FICTION IN WHICH TEEN-AGERS DISCOVER LESBIAN LOVE IN A COLLEGE DORMITORY, BUT SERIOUS FICTION AND FACT (NOT ALWAYS WITH A HAPPY ENDING) SHOULD NOT BE REJECTED. I BELIEVE THAT UNTIL EVERY LESBIAN, INCLUDING THE PRISONER - PAST OR PRESENT, THE MENTAL PATIENT - PAST OR PRESENT, THE ALCOHOLIC, THE JOBLESS, THE ANTAGONISTIC, AND THE FRIVOLOUS CAN BE WOODED INTO COOPERATION WITH THE MORE FORTUNATE, THROUGH COMMUNICATION WITH THE LADDER AND MEMBERSHIP IN DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, WE WHO ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT OUR PARTICULAR PROBLEM ARE FAILING OURSELVES AND FUTURE HUMANITY."

A READER, CONNECTICUT

* * * * *

"I HAVE DISCOVERED A LOT OF ANSWERS, AND I BELIEVE THAT I SHOULD SHARE THEM. THIS MAY BE STUFF THAT LITTLE LESBIANS DO NOT WANT TO HEAR; BUT LET'S FEED IT TO THEM ANYWAY. THE RUN OF VAGUE, INSIPID FICTION THAT THE LADDER HAS BEEN PUBLISHING IS ONE OF ITS FAULTS."

"WE WANT UNDERSTANDING, BUT UNTIL WE UNDERSTAND OURSELVES, WHY WE ARE LESBIANS, AND HOW WE CAN LIVE WITH THIS 'MARK' UPON US, WE CANNOT EXPECT THE REST OF THE WORLD TO UNDERSTAND OUR PROBLEM. WHAT HAS CAUSED HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL? DID HIS MOTHER DROP HIM ON HIS HEAD WHEN HE WAS AN INFANT; OR, (AS SOME DOCTORS SUGGEST) THINK BAD THOUGHTS WHILE CARRYING HIM; OR FONDLE HIM TOO MUCH; OR FONDLE HIM NOT ENOUGH; OR NEGLECT HIM; OR OVER-PROTECT HIM...? NO, NO, NO. ALL THESE THEORIES ARE COMPLETELY ERRONEOUS. A TRUE HOMOSEXUAL IS BASICALLY OF THE OPPOSITE SEX. A TRUE LESBIAN IS A MALE ENTITY. IN A FORMER INCARNATION SHE WAS A MALE; AND SHE WILL RETURN TO THIS STATE AFTER HER EARTHLY LESSON IS LEARNED. HOMOSEXUALITY IS A LESSON TO BE LEARNED; AND THE QUICKER WE ALL REALIZE THIS, THE BETTER FOR ALL OF US."

"OH, YOU ARE UNDOUBTEDLY THINKING, MUST WE GET INTO RELIGION, AND OCCULT STUDIES? WE MUST, IF WE WANT TO GET AT THE TRUTH CONCERNING OURSELVES, YES. IF ALL WE ARE TO WORRY ABOUT IN THE FUTURE IS WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE LAWS TO PROTECT US, OR SHOULD WE WEAR PANTS IN PUBLIC, THEN WE ARE SKIMMING THE SURFACE OF OUR EARTHLY CONDITION."

"LESBIANS ARE BASICALLY MALES, AS I SAID; THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THEIR TRUE FEELING FOR WOMEN. HOWEVER, SOME OF THE WOMEN WHO PREFER LESBIANS DO SO FROM A DESIRE FOR PLEASURE, OR FOR CONVENIENCE. OCCASIONALLY, THE LESBIAN WILL MEET HER 'ONE'...OCCASIONALLY. THE REST OF US GO THROUGH LIFE SEARCHING IN VAIN. IS IT BECAUSE LESBIANS ARE MORE IMMORAL THAN HETEROSEXUALS? HARDLY!!! WHY IS THIS PROMISCUITY SO EVIDENT THEN IN OUR RANKS? IT IS BECAUSE THE THRILL-SEEKER CANNOT PRODUCE LOVE THAT IS ETERNAL; AND IT IS BECAUSE THE LESBIAN USUALLY MUST WAIT BEFORE SHE CAN ONCE AGAIN BE REUNITED WITH THE MATE WHO WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED FOR HER, AND HER ALONE. THE LESBIAN IS HERE ON EARTH, NOT FOR HAPPINESS, BUT FOR ENLIGHTENMENT. WHEN SHE BECOMES EVENTUALLY ENLIGHTENED, SHE WILL UNDERSTAND HER POSITION, AND NO LONGER DESIRE FROM LIFE, THE IMPOSSIBLE."

"IN THE HOLY BIBLE (WHICH MUST BE OUR GUIDE CERTAINLY) WE READ THAT GOD MADE MALE AND FEMALE. IT IS NOT RECORDED THAT GOD MADE ANYTHING ELSE, SEXUALLY SPEAKING. WHEN GOD MADE A MAN, HE AUTOMATICALLY MADE A WOMAN TO CORRESPOND WITH THIS MAN. LESBIANS WERE NOT MADE BY THE HAND OF GOD; THEY CREATED THEMSELVES, THEIR OWN CONDITION, DURING A SINFUL INCARNATION AS MALES. THEN WHAT?"

THEN THE LESSON CAME, A FEMALE-BODY FOR THE NEXT INCARNATION. WHEN THE LESBIAN REALIZES THAT SHE IS A MALE ENTITY, SHE WILL CEASE TRYING TO 'BECOME' A MAN. SHE IS A MAN. HER FEMALE CARCASS WILL SOON DISSOLVE BACK INTO THE CLAY FROM WHICH IT WAS TAKEN, AND ONCE AGAIN SHE WILL ASSUME HER MALE STATE, EITHER IN ANOTHER INCARNATION ON EARTH, OR IN A FUTURE WORLD, A SPIRITUAL WORLD, WHERE SHE MAY ALSO BE THE POSSESSOR OF A MALE ASTRAL BODY.

"REINCARNATION IS A DEFINITE TRUTH. EARTH IS A SCHOOL, AND WE ARE ALL HERE TO LEARN, HETEROSEXUAL AS WELL AS HOMOSEXUAL; BUT THE LESSON OF THE HETEROSEXUAL IS NOT CONCERNED WITH SEX. WE LESBIANS HAVE A SEXUAL LESSON TO LEARN, AND THIS IS WHY WE ARE 'AFFLICTED' IN THIS MANNER. MANY OF US HAVE LEARNED TO LIKE THE FEMININE PART OF US..OR SO WE TRY TO BELIEVE. SUBCONSCIOUSLY JEALOUS OF THE ARROGANT MALE, WE DRAW WITHIN OUR OWN CIRCLE, AND EXCLUDE HIM; ALL THE WHILE IMITATING HIM IN SECRET. AND YET IF THE TRUTH WERE KNOWN, WE ARE NOT IMITATING ANYTHING--SIMPLY BEING OURSELVES! WE ARE MALES, BUT WE DO NOT REALIZE IT. AT ONE TIME I TOO BELIEVED THAT ANY WOMAN WHO 'LIKED' OTHER WOMEN WAS A LESBIAN; BUT NOW I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF CREATURES IN THIS GUISE; SOME ARE TRUE LESBIANS, SOME ARE THRILL-SEEKERS, SOME ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL MISFITS. THERE IS A GREAT DIFFERENCE. A TRUE LESBIAN IS BORN, NOT MADE. WHEN THE TRUE SOUL-MATE (AND THERE ARE SUCH THINGS!) IS REINCARNATED AT THE SAME TIME, AND FINDS HER TRUE-MATE, EVEN THOUGH THIS IDENTITY MAY POSSESS (TEMPORARILY) A FEMALE BODY, LOVE AND DEVOTION FOLLOW IN A NATURAL COURSE, THE SAME AS IN THE HETEROSEXUAL WORLD.

"NOW...YOU KNOW WHAT A LESBIAN IS. HEADY BREW FOR LITTLE LESBIANS WHO ARE WORRIED ABOUT MORE SIMPLE THINGS, SUCH AS SHOULD WE DRESS IN 'DRAG' IN A GAY-BAR, OR NOT? NOW A FEW YEARS SHORT OF 50, I HAVE LEARNED WHAT THIS LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. I STUDIED; I READ; I MEDITATED. THE HOLY BIBLE HAS BEEN MY MOST VALUABLE TEXTBOOK. WE CANNOT PICK AND CHOOSE IF WE STUDY THIS BOOK; WE MUST ACCEPT IT AS IT IS. WE WILL FIND MENTION OF REINCARNATION AND HOMOSEXUALITY BOTH, IF WE ARE ASTUTE.

"IF YOU THINK THAT THIS MATERIAL IS TOO HOT, THEN WE SHALL NOT BOTHER WITH IT; BUT SHALL CONTINUE WITH MUNDANE FICTION AND CRABBY ARTICLES. I AM A HOT-BOX OF SEETHING INFORMATION!!!"

J.R.J.W., NEW YORK



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