

# THE LADDER

A Lesbian Review

NOVEMBER, 1966



50¢

adults  
only



**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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*Friends in  
the Morning*  
**The Church  
in action . . .**

Del Martin, National Treasurer of DOB and active in the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, introduced the speakers for the morning session. The subject for the day was: "The Homophile Community and Civic Organizations -- How do They Relate?"

**Reported by Sten Russell**

Rev. Lewis Durham was the first speaker on the Panel, representing Glide Foundation at Glide Memorial Methodist Church, San Francisco. He speaks in a humorous, off-hand fashion that is very pleasing and very real. He connects with you and you know he cares, cares very much about the worth of all people, and especially the people in the homophile movement, which is the topic under discussion.

As Director of Glide Foundation, he explained that while the Foundation has very real ties to the Glide Memorial Methodist Church, it is a corporate trust with independent financing, which leaves it free to define and describe its own role in the Community. It tries to help people do what they need to do for themselves. It tries to get the Church involved with humanity were it ought to be involved.

The Church's learning to relate to homophile organizations for the last two years has created an "extreme learning situation" for everyone involved in the project. Now the ministers involved in Glide and the SFCRH can say with assurance to other churches, other ministers, "Come on in. Come on in. The water's not too bad. It's time for the Church to get with it!"

Rev. Ted McIlvenna, in his work as Director of the Methodist Young Adult Project in San Francisco in 1963 was to become the triggering, catalytic agent which eventually caused the Council on Religion and the Homosexual to be founded in San Francisco. Ted had a

great deal to do with his becoming involved, Rev. Durham told us.

Eventually, however, he continued, the churchmen must ask the meaning of what has happened, must cast it into their own phraseology. What has this two-year learning period done in terms of the good of humanity and "God's People?" In the beginning, there was a terrific chasm between the homophile community (as a self-conscious entity) and the Church. There was a good deal of alienation and hostile relationship on both parts. The problem then, the first question to be answered, is how does an agency such as the Church learn to relate? How specifically, do we become friends? Because it is not possible to come and observe. The homophile community is not too sure what it is you want to observe...it makes them feel like creatures in a zoo...and no good, no relationship can take place in such circumstances. So, what is needed is that the Church come and offer friendship -- become involved with homophiles in their various habitats and get to know them as people. From the Retreat at Mill Valley, to "Tours through the Tenderloin" (which were later stopped), to bars where homophiles go, interchange did occur and friendships did eventually evolve. There has to be sincerity on both parts, so that eventually the friendship can end up with visiting each other's homes in full confidence that this is a real thing.

Somehow, though, in the long run, the friendship will be, and must be tested for its depth, its permanency. "I don't know what we would have done without the event of 'The Ball' and other events which seemed catastrophic at the time, but which served the necessary function of testing the sincerity of both sides," Rev. Durham told us. Friendship has to produce something in the realm of action. The seemingly catastrophic events caused the ministers to issue press releases to the effect that "We stand by this situation and these people." There were supporting letters from the homophiles to the clergy, as they in turn realized the great courage this had to take, the potential risk to the ministers from their congregations. The CRH began to function as an entity.

"We are beginning to move out of some of our nasty ha-

bits of condemning people, Rev. Durham declared. He felt that the police would have been even worse at the Jan. 1965 Ball, had not ministers been present. This is part of the "guaranteeing" or "authenticating" function of the Church. The way Ted put it, back in the beginning, "The Church says 'yes' to people. Look, you count. You're people. You're human. Stand up, be counted. Live!!!"

"Now take the Vanguards," he continued, "there are not many people in society or in the homophile community who want to work with them. Rev. Ed Hansen, an interne, did fascinating work in this area and drove us all wild -- but the Vanguards was the result. "The guaranteeing function seems to do something for people." With some people saying to these young men of the Tenderloin, "Yes, you're people. Be people. Act like people. Be responsible." We are seeing some interesting results. The Leaders of Vanguard have taken to carrying briefcases and wearing coats and ties...makes them a much duller group, according to Rev. Durham.

But, now we can have "real" dialogue with one another. The Church has been essentially listening to the homophiles for two years -- we can now offer suggestions. We have told the Vanguards that they're going to have to act responsible if they're going to deal with the adult community. There are certain things that are going to have to stop being done. For instance: one of the Administrative Assistants brought in a sign to be posted in Glide Social Center, to wit "Not all people appreciate sex in the men's room. Please refrain!" The audience roared at this one.

In the beginning, when Rev. Ed Hansen was trying to get Vanguard started, Rev. Durham sent word to a Vanguard leader in the hall waiting to see him that he was too busy..."come back next Tuesday." The boy was on his way out when an assistant came rushing to the office. "He says, 'cut out the Mickey-Mouse; if the Church is interested, listen to us now!'" Lewis decided maybe he had the wrong attitude, even if he was too busy, and caught the young man before it was too late and listened to him. However, that taking place, Rev. Durham says, "Okay, but after we do that, there's got to be some rules to this thing."

He also pointed out that we need to realize that the problems of minorities in this world are general, that one of the ways we achieve our rights is to stand up for the rights of others. He means that this should become an attitude or conviction for the homophile group, not just for some isolated individuals in it. "Being responsible (concerned about all humans) means you're God's People."

## IN A GLOOMIER MOOD . . .

Next on the program was Bernard Mayes, head of the San Francisco Suicide Prevention, Inc. Mr. Mayes is an Episcopalian worker-priest, this reporter learned, in talking to him after the panel had concluded. He is a very intense, sincere man. Sadness and vitality permeate his being. He has a British accent and has worked in London. He said that homosexuals (male and female) being a large percentage in San Francisco, present a large percentage of suicide threat for the Suicide Prevention Squad which he has set up.

"Suicides" in general want to know what's the purpose in life -- the meaning? Most professionals are not trained in this area, do not have a background in philosophy, art and the like, in Mr. Mayes' opinion.

Mayes has 60 carefully screened heterosexuals and homosexuals manning emergency telephones that are available 24 hours every day of the year. The calls that come in may last from 2 minutes to 2 hours. The Squad representative listens, offers sympathy, tries to get the facts (how imminent is the danger of suicide) and makes referrals. If it is a homosexual man or woman, he or she is referred to Mattachine, Daughters of Bilitis or Society for Individual Rights.

His staff has to be trained to handle all types of problems: alcoholics, gay problems, teen-agers, marriages, etc. The staff cannot have prejudice in any area. Rev. Mayes said, "We expect too much of them, I am afraid. We expect saints, we get martyrs." The staff is faced with the problem of being able to listen to anything without being shocked. People on the verge of suicide, gay people in this case, sometimes go into intimate details of their sexual lives in



terms the average heterosexual cannot know. They may never have talked to anyone before about their problems and are now prepared to bare their souls to anybody who will listen before they do make it out.

Rev. Mayes then went into the problem of trying to catch a dangerous suicide without getting the police involved. Let us say an ambulance is quite likely to be needed. If a police ambulance is requested, the squad car will arrive about 15 minutes before the ambulance does. If the potential suicide is in a gay bar or some similar circumstance, the patrons are very threatened and the situation is made much more hazardous. So usually, the Squad tries to avoid calling for any police help whatsoever.

Mayes, who has a rather dry humor, said that he understood that a truly neurotic person was entirely homosexual, or entirely heterosexual -- that the ideal was to be bisexual -- go with a boy this week, a girl the next. Unfortunately, he said, they were not at the point where they could train their staff to that point of view, or action!

He ended with the observation that they got some people as potential suicides who had no sexual organs at all. The problem was to show them that life was still worth living. That, he said, was neither easy to explain, nor to justify.

## ACTION - FLEXIBILITY - CITIZENS' ALERT

A. Cecil Williams, Chairman of Citizens' Alert, spoke next. Rev. Williams is Minister at Glide Memorial Methodist Church. He said that he had his "collar" on because his wife couldn't find his one white shirt that morning; so if we needed him for a "demonstration" after the Convention, just let him know, he was dressed for the occasion. In telling of his work with CA, Cecil spoke of his deep concern with the tremendous fear exhibited by all victims of police harassment or brutality....their extreme fear of retaliation from the police or certain elements of the police if they tried to get justice. He gave examples of three homosexual young men, beaten up; a Negro boy held 45 days even though witnesses present at the time of an assault on a young girl, could not and would not iden-

tify him as the culprit; the fact that the boy's grandmother was going to take him and leave San Francisco if a Negro policeman involved in the case did not stop harassing him. He gave an example of a young man, bearded, "beatnik" type who had his home searched without a search warrant. He was pushed and hit when he asked for a search warrant. He said that CA had worked with cases involving Hell's Angels, other motor cycle groups and had even had one "Bircher" defended by one of their Negro lawyers! "Now you know something's happening!," he expostulated as the audience exploded with delight.

Cecil went on to say that he had helped to organize three Citizens' Police Review Boards in different cities, but that he didn't believe in them anymore. He said that they always get the "big, fat cats" who've forgotten what's happened to them and don't know what is going on anymore. He felt that the CA concept was much more practical, effective. It is very flexible as an organization with a 24-hour service -- doctors, lawyers, photographers, ministers, bailbondsmen, all on tap. Anybody is free to use this service, to call for help if he or she needs it.

The first thing that happens when you call if you happen to be in jail and have been beaten up or otherwise mistreated, is that a lawyer will be sent to interview you on what he calls their "short form." He will find out exactly what you think happened. Also, if you need one, a bailbondsmen will be sent to you. Once getting out of jail, CA will have a photographer take pictures of the evidence of physical mistreatment, if such exists. The third step is to get you to a physician for a documented medical report. The fourth step is to have you interviewed on the "long form." Finally, a lawyer will pursue legal redress of grievances for you, if it has been proven to the satisfaction of Citizens' Alert that this is a true case of police brutality or police harassment outside the scope of police duty and responsibility. (For instance, if you resist arrest or become violent, the policeman may have to use some force to take you in.) A report is then filed through the Community Relations Unit of the S. F. P. D. Chief Cahill created another group for reports and protests of this nature to be

filed through, but CA will not use it. They feel no other S.F.P.D. division is as trusted in the community and that they have the pulse-beat of the community better than any other group in the department. The Chief then sends investigating teams out on the case, and CA does likewise.

Rev. Williams added that Citizens' Alert had become a rather persuasive, forceful group in the community. Due to its extreme flexibility in concept and action, they could, if they wanted to, "police the policemen tomorrow" or create a Police Review Board or whatever. However, he had already stated what he thought of the Police Review Boards.

He told us that the question was not "does police brutality exist?" It does, in fact, exist. The question is "how much?"

Where problems that affect the well-being of the self-hood of individuals and the health of the community like this are involved, one must deal with forces involved from a "power position." We have to mobilize people so that they may become operative. Too long we have attempted to solve things by "contemplating our navel," (as Rev. Lewis Durham had stated earlier) or thought we could change things on an individual basis.

Rev. Williams ended his presentation with an example from a recent play, wherein the author of the play is standing on stage with the rest of the actors. He is concerned about a guy in the balcony called Joe Smith. Joe represents all the spectators of life at the present time. He calls to Joe Smith, asks him why he is sitting up there being a spectator; he asks him to come down and get on stage with the rest of the actors but Joe Smith won't budge. The author sends a couple of actors up to get him and bring him down on the stage with them. They say, "you got common problems with us, Joe Smith." They tell him, in essence, "how come you been settin' up there all this time spectating?" So Rev. Williams throws down the gauntlet to all ministers and other people who could help, but prefer to think and talk about minority problems and not get dirty doing anything about them. He tells these people, "You gotta come down and get on the stage....because that's the way things are at this time and this place in history. And if you don't, then one of these

days, we gonna go up and get you from the balcony, get you down from there, and put you on the stage. Then you're gonna find out what it's like to be an actor!"

While all the speakers received rounds of applause, Cecil probably received more because of his humor, his intensity and his hard-hitting "tell 'em how it is, baby approach." This Methodist minister is the Chairman of Citizens' Alert? "Holy Justice," I thought, "You just gotta know something's happening!!"

## SOMETHING HAPPENED TO ME !

Dr. Clarence A. Colwell, President, The San Francisco Council on Religion and the Homosexual, then came on with the opener that after the big cannons of Lewis Durham, Bernard Mayes and Cecil Williams had been shot off...comes the BB gun! Do not let this false modesty fool you. "Clay" Colwell, Minister of Metropolitan Mission, Northern California Conference of the United Church of Christ, is probably one of the strongest ministers going. Anyone attending the National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations, Aug. 25-27 which he chaired as a service to the homophile community knows better. Also, anyone working in the SFCRH at the present time knows better, I understand.

Clay gave a humorous build-up that had the audience rocking with laughter before he became deadly serious. Among other funnies that he treated us to was that he said that he'd considered himself an "honorary S.O.B." for two years, but that he was sure his wife on occasion was sure there was no "honorary stuff" about it." (Clay got his official S.O.B. card to carry that night at the banquet.)

He told us that he had long had an interest and concern in the way society labels, judges and condemns the homosexual..."Society is you and me," he clarified. Before coming to San Francisco, he admitted that the cause of integrating homosexuals into society was mid-range on his list of concerns. But, through the SFCRH contacts he met and made friends with many homophiles. He said, "When for me homosexuals became people, something happened to me. Which is probably the reason why I am standing here, instead of a dozen other places I'm



often called to be." Now he puts our cause right up there at the top of the list of his concerns.

The main or primary value of CRH, he feels, is to provide opportunities for ministers, church workers and others to meet homophiles face to face and talk to them personally - to learn then that first and foremost the homosexual is a "people," an individual and a person whose sexual preference may be predominately with persons of his or her own sex.

As a sensitive clergyman, Clay knows something about stereotypes and molds that people hold in their minds - all people do this - that rob other individuals of their right to be themselves and which totally or partially cut off communication between human beings so that no common project undertaken can function right or well.

He said that if he were at a meeting where it was not known that he was a clergyman, once it did become known, he could not only feel, but could almost see the gears shift to where he almost ceased to be a man to his former conversationalists and was filed neatly away under "clergyman" in a matter of a split-second. He was no longer "a people," an interesting conversationalist, but had become whatever the person's concept of "clergyman" meant to him based on his past experiences with clergymen. This usually meant to Clay he would become a "sexless, sinless, joyless, judgmental, stuffed shirt, and ipso facto, not much of a human being." If that is true for the clergy, how much more true it is for the person of homosexual orientation, especially where the word "homosexual" is mentioned within church circles. "pervert, criminal, mentally unbalanced, child molester, deviate, etc.," were the usual stereotype synonyms to come to mind. We will never confront each other as people so long as we permit these stereotypes to exist and to remain in our thinking, he told us.

The CRH is interested in legal reforms relating to private, consenting, adult sexual behavior be it homosexual or heterosexual. It is also interested in fostering and engaging in research on homosexuality within the broad spectrum of sexuality.

Clay conveyed with uncompromising intensity that it was his belief that since the Church had, by and large, been responsible for the anti-homosexual attitudes in society, that the Church had to have a part, perhaps even a major part, in the changing of these attitudes. If it is true that the laws of the land reflect the Church's teachings and biases, then the Church must begin to say clearly and uncompromisingly that private sexual behavior between consenting adults, is no business of the law. The Church must get it across so sharply that legislators can no longer hang the responsibility on the Church, but will have only their own biases to blame. Clay does not believe that there is any basis whatever in Hebrew or Jewish scripture for deducing that homosexual behavior is a violation of the "laws of God," and that somehow the Church must make this so clear that there will be no room left whatever for the most zealous policeman to enforce the law in the name of God. "January 1st, 1965, California Hall, must never be allowed to happen again anywhere in this country, not ever, for such an event borders dangerously on the edge of witch hunting," he said with candid passion.

The United Church of Christ is the very first to take a public stand behind the aims and goals of CRH...to give both fiscal and official support to the project. The Methodist Church and other groups have been making gestures in the direction of verbal commitment to the Council, but Clay said he would welcome even more their fiscal commitment. "Like it or not, I think that it's really true that 'where the treasury is--there also is the heart.'" And furthermore, nobody gets off the hook just because he considers himself outside the pale of the church. Help is needed from interested homophiles, of whatever religious persuasion, or lack of it.

While erasing racial injustice is a number one cause in the country today, it must never be forgotten that it is still more respectable to be a Negro than to be a homosexual. The homophile minority has just as heavy and unjustifiable burden to bear as the racially oppressed.

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visiting Henry David Thoreau, who was in jail for an act of civil disobedience. The dialogue between the two men has been reported to be the shocked query of Emerson: "Henry, why are you here?" and the sad, but furious answer: "Waldo, why are you not here?"

## THE EPITOME OF THE WORLD

*a review by Gene Damon*

### THE MICROCOSM By Maureen Duffy

N. Y., Simon & Schuster, 1966

London, Hutchinson, 1966

The psychologically necessary defect of virtually all Lesbian novels is the personal and subjective tone of narrative. The recounting of personal tragedy or personal success has heretofore, been the scope of the genre. THE MICROCOSM visits the personal realm of Lesbianism and effectively shows that this is neither the beginning nor the end of the world.

It is evening, and from the edges of their daily lives the members of the community gather. Down the wooden stairs, stage left, comes the first of the many -- to the "Shades of Night," a club for Lesbians in London, England.

Dominating the center of the stage is Matt, narrator-heroine, intellectual butch, lover of Rae, former lover of Jill and life-friend of Carl, a deceased woman much like Matt in temperament. From Matt we learn first of the community life in The Club. Then individually, the many major characters occupy the spotlight to speak their individual, personal stories. Each of their views is necessarily limited, personal, subjective. The author has devised the clever means of allowing them dialectal freedom, so that they speak, not in the voice of the narrator, but in natural tongues, according to their intellectual and societal positions.

There is Steve, physical education teacher at a girls'

school, busily counting the probable Lesbians among her charges and idly wondering why anyone could love a little girl and being amused and dismayed at the idea that some people imagine Lesbians desire children. She is, of course, much too involved with a colleague, the French teacher, and worried about the progress of this love affair, to be concerned with the children.

Then there is Marie, married and going slowly mad with repression.

A new girl in London, running away from the provinces, is brought to Matt's tender loving care by a sympathetic gay boy. The poignant scenes in The Club as Matt and Rae make this child, Cathy, welcome and safe unobtrusively are among the most successful of the many vignettes presented in the book.

Sadie, a Cockney piece, dreams over her typewriter of her Jonnie. They, Sadie and Jonnie, work hard for their small corner of the world; which consists only of happy evenings before the "telly" and an occasional visit to The Club.

Judy, the narcissistic beauty, is visited on Saturday, the morning before the evening, and we follow her elaborate preparations as she embarks on her weekly cruise, Saturday night at The Club.

Suddenly, the novel becomes a kaleidoscopic whirl through the history of Lesbianism and the connection between this club, these people and the larger world they inhabit (not always contentedly) becomes clear... the "Microcosm" is an enormous society and most wholly integrated on a "like-it-or-not" basis with all the world at large.

The pace is slowed, by long chapters devoted to Matt's soliloquies. These range from a thorough examination of the butch-femme dichotomy to the effect of the current civil rights movement in homosexual organizations -- from the adventures of 18th Century actress and transvestite, Mrs. Charlotte Charke, to the loves of Florence Nightingale -- from the emotions created by visual art to the physical needs of the masculine Lesbian.

We are also told, in clever inserts, of Matt's life

with Rae and her past, as well as the tragic death of Carl -- and the effect these things have had on Matt. In the end, as Matt and Rae leave the world of The Club to join an archeological expedition, we realize subtly that there is no safe world away from the mainstream of life, no "rockpool" at the water's edge of life; that to live you have to swim in the whole ocean.

Miss Duffy is an immensely clever writer with an enormous range in characterization and philosophy.

The first dictionary definition of "microcosm" is a "little world" and the second is "a community thought to be the epitome of the world." THE MICROCOSM is both of these; more it is the definitive Lesbian novel.

Maureen Duffy, author of THE MICROCOSM, is a young English novelist. This is her third book, the first to be published in the United States. Her first novel, THAT'S HOW IT WAS, and her second novel, THE SINGLE EYE, were published in England only. She lives in Clapham and is a teacher.

A detailed examination of THE MICROCOSM and the author's personal goals in writing the novel, appeared in the English periodical, BOOKS AND BOOKMEN, June, 1966.

## NEXT MONTH

We will tell you about "Our Acquaintances in the Afternoon"...some more happenings at The Convention. And since it will be our Christmas issue, we will print a message from a minister who has something different to say about the Church. Book reviews and a welcome-back of our "Readers Respond" column should make the December LADDER a welcome holiday guest in your home.

Don't overlook the splendid gift THE LADDER can be for some friend on your Christmas list. Order early to assure delivery in December.

## WHAT CONCRETE STEPS CAN BE TAKEN TO FURTHER THE HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT?

*An address by Shirley Willer, Pres., DOB*

To an extent it is difficult for me to discuss what the homophile movement should be doing. I have some very clear ideas about what the Lesbian should be doing but the problems of the male homosexual and the female homosexual differ considerably.

Most perceptive authorities have stated that the basic problems in relations between the sexes arise from the completely artificial dichotomies of role and appearance ascribed to each sex by society. From the median beds wherein we lie, few persons, homosexual or heterosexual, arise whole and healthy individuals.

The social conformist is wracked by anxieties in his ambivalent clinging to the social artifacts which require his denunciation of his nature. The social non-conformist is driven to propound his personal revelation as being above reproach and beyond question. In such a society Lesbian interest is more closely linked with the women's civil rights movement than the homosexual civil liberties movement.

The particular problems of the male homosexual include police harassment, unequal law enforcement, legal proscription of sexual practices and for a relatively few the problem of disproportionate penalties for acts of questionable taste such as evolve from solicitations, wash-room sex acts and transsexual attire.

In contrast, few women are subject to police harassment and the instances of arrest of Lesbians for solicitation, wash-room sex or transsexual attire are so infrequent as to constitute little threat to the Lesbian community beyond the circle of the immediately involved. The rare occurrences serve to remind the Lesbian that such things are possible, but also that they rarely happen.

The problems of importance to the Lesbian are job secur-

ity, career advancement and family relationships.

The important difference between the male and female homosexual is that the Lesbian is discriminated against not only because she is a Lesbian, but because she is a woman. Although the Lesbian occupies a "privileged" place among homosexuals, she occupies an under-privileged place in the world.

It is difficult for a woman to be accepted as a leader in any community or civic organization and the woman who does succeed in breaking down the barriers in recognition is usually greeted with a mixture of astonishment and sympathetic amusement. There are few women who desire to emulate Carrie Nation, chained to a fire hydrant and swinging a battle-axe--but the few women who achieve community, professional or civic leadership are compared to that image, sometimes rightfully so, since despite legal recognition of feminine equality, the road to public recognition for each woman leads across the battlefield.

Lesbians have agreed (with reservations) to join in common cause with the male homosexual -- her role in society has been one of mediator between the male homosexual and society. The recent DOB Convention was such a gesture. The reason we were able to get the public officials there was because we are women, because we offered no threat. However, they did not bargain for what they got. They did not expect to be challenged on the issues of male homosexuality. In these ways we show our willingness to assist the male homosexual in seeking to alleviate the problems our society has inflicted on him.

There has been little evidence however, that the male homosexual has any intention of making common cause with us. We suspect that should the male homosexual achieve his particular objectives in regard to his homosexuality he might possibly become a more adamant foe of women's rights than the heterosexual male has ever been. (I would guess that a preponderance of male homosexuals would believe their ultimate goal achieved if the laws relating to sodomy were removed and a male homosexual were appointed chief of police.)

This background may help you understand why, although the Lesbian joins the male homosexual in areas of imme-

-diate and common concern, she is at the same time, preparing for a longer struggle, waged on a broader base with the widest possible participation of the rank and file Lesbian. It shows why, to the Lesbian leader, diffusion and consensus are as important as leadership and direction. Demonstrations which define the homosexual as a unique minority defeat the very cause for which the homosexual strives -- TO BE CONSIDERED AN INTEGRAL PART OF SOCIETY. The homosexual must show that he is, in fact, NOT a unique "social problem." That concept is too widely held to require endorsement from homophile organizations. Demonstrations that emphasize the uniqueness of the homosexual may provide an outlet for some homosexuals' hostilities, but having acted out his revolt, he loses a part of the drive that might have been available for more constructive approaches to problem solving.

The basic objectives of the homophile organizations must continue to be open to new avenues of in-depth communication. Its energies must not be channelized--its attempts must be repetitive -- its approaches must be as diverse as imagination will allow. To put this more specifically, THE MORE WAYS WE CAN GET MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE GREATEST VARIETY OF APPROACHES TO THE WIDEST POSSIBLE CONFIGURATION OF THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO HOMOSEXUALITY, THE MORE LIKELY WE ARE TO ACHIEVE SOME MEASURE OF SUCCESS.

I can name a few dozen of the concrete steps your organizations should be taking. I do not doubt that you have tried them. Then, I say continue these and add more and more and more.

The argument that concentration is more productive than diversity is false when applied to homophile organizations. You cannot "retool" the talents of your membership to meet a current market. The only thing you may do is warehouse talent which could be of use to the common cause. Because this is a fact, one also hears the notion that instead of re-tooling the members, we should retool the organizations and perhaps, eventually, each person will find the organization of his level and interest.

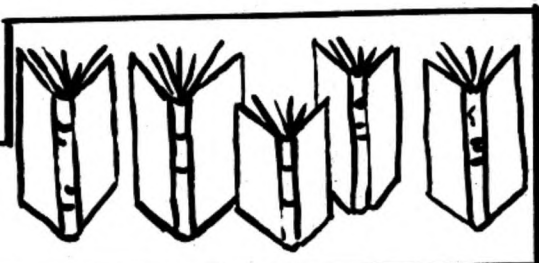
Accordingly, proceeding from our statement of wish to offer a few constructive steps --steps we do not like to call concrete, but in full knowledge of the shifts of time and structure, we believe to be firm and



tread-worthy.

1. To affirm as a goal of such a conference: to be as concerned about women's civil rights as male homosexuals' civil liberties.
2. To suggest that homosexual men attempt to appreciate the value of women as PEOPLE in the movement, respect abilities as individuals, not seek them out as simple "show-pieces."
3. That those philosophical factors of homosexuality which engage both sexes be basic to our concepts of reform.
4. That the number of one sex not be a determinate factor in decisions of policy, but that a consideration of all arguments be heard and that CONSENSUS be the goal of the conference. Insofar as we do find trust and value in the male - oriented homophile organizations, we will find common ground upon which to work.

## *Poetry of Lesbiana*



by Lennox Strong and Terri Cook

Fiction is said to be the dramatized reflection of the mores of the times. Poetry, a much more intimate expression, is the soil of the poet -- an intense examination of his needs, fears, impressions and hopes. It is the most beautiful of the written arts, and the least understood, requiring patience and compassion from the reader.

Many poets have written about Lesbian love. The male poets have, perhaps rightly, primarily confined themselves to expressing this in terms of sexuality or of hatred. The female poets speak in softer terms for the most part, using emotional reaction in place of overt sexuality to delineate experience. Some of them resort to disguise by eliminating or changing personal pronouns; but the practiced ear soon learns to distinguish the difference in tone and to identify that

touch which says clearly, "for women only."

The poetry of Lesbiana covers a 2,500 year period and we have necessarily relegated the more famous classical poets and virtually all of the male poets to the bibliography, discussing here only that poetry most properly termed variant, i.e., subtle evocations of love between women, most often without overt expression. Some minor items are included in the text because they are not as well known as they deserve to be. With the exception of Renee Vivien, only poets whose works (or parts of works) can be found in English are included. We have rejected chronology in favor of simple alphabetical order, since poetry is properly both timeless and timely.

Mercedes de Acosta was deeply involved in the early years of this century with our theatrical and literary history as testified to in her autobiography, *HERE LIES THE HEART*. Her poetry, particularly *STREETS AND SHADOWS*, reflects her emotional involvement with other women. She has a soft, though thin voice, and almost the entire collection is pertinent to this study.

A pale evocation of classic passions, *THE LOVE OF MYRRHINE AND KONALLIS*, by Richard Adlington, is a gentle version, albeit more palatable, of Louys' *SONGS OF BILITIS*.

Only one collection of Natalie Clifford Barney's works is available in English, *POEMS AND POEMES: AUTRES ALLIANCES*, though she is an American by birth. Like her fellow expatriate, Renee Vivien, her work was almost wholly Lesbian in subject matter. This collection is rare and very expensive but it is well worth searching out.

Possibly the full mystery of the glorious and tragic Bronte family will never be satisfactorily solved, but much of the tension and frustration present in Emily Bronte's life is explained in her interfeminine love poetry.

Emily Dickinson continues to be considered a critical enigma, very undeservedly, since Rebecca Patterson's biography, *THE RIDDLE OF EMILY DICKINSON*, quite conclusively proves her Lesbian orientation. This book read in conjunction with Dickinson's poetic works, tells a



tragic and very loving love story.

Hilda Doolittle, the imagist, contributed many subtle variant poems. Her entire poetic work is pertinent to some extent, as is her single novel, *BID ME TO LIVE*.

Romantic love and tender companionship marked the lives of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, who used the pseudonym, Michael Field, for their published work. Their personal love story is an amazing example of the marriage of two minds. They were so close that it is impossible to determine which of them was responsible for what portion of their work together. Virtually all of their poetry is variant, and some portions of it is very explicit.

It is amazing, particularly in view of her fame in Lesbian literature, that so little attention has been paid Radclyffe Hall's poetry. It is entirely Lesbian in viewpoint and very rewarding from an emotional standpoint. She is a classic example of pronoun disguise, since all the poems are passionately directed to women from, supposedly, a male narrator. (This is particularly unusual, since her poetry volumes were published under her full legal name, Margueritte Radclyffe Hall, which could leave little question of her sex in the minds of her readers.)

One of the mavericks of the 16th Century, Louise Labe, pricked by societal restraints, threw the traces a little in some of her poems and left a touch of frustrated Lesbianism for today's history lovers.

Amy Lowell, ugly and fat, an overgrown toad, who smoked cigars and slapped backs. Amy Lowell, ugly and fat, died a little each day for love and loved hopelessly in life. Fortunately she was not silent and she left behind a glorious record of that love which dares more and more to speak its name.

Katherine Mansfield lived a quiet, bitter, frightened inner life beneath her noisy exterior and a careful reading of her more personal diaries (which include her poetry) shows the cause, as do some of her short stories.

Jeannette H. Foster cited Edgar Lee Master's *DOOMSDAY BOOK* in her famous historical survey of Lesbian liter-

ature, *SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE*. She recently discovered and brought to the present authors' attention the sequel to this epic poem, *THE FATE OF THE JURY*. Ironically, the sequel is far more overt than the original book dealing with several Lesbians in great detail. Written in free verse, this can, indeed must, be read as a novel. Local libraries will have this book and even readers who normally shun poetry will not want to miss it.

The flamboyant actress, Adah Isaacs Menken, despite her heterosexual history, was pretty clearly a man-hater and the core of her emotional response seemingly belonged to women. Her only surviving volume of poetry, the very rare *INFELICIA*, makes any other interpretation of her life impossible. Several of the flood of recent biographies of her life allude briefly to this (to her biographers) discrepancy in her life, since she was rather notorious for her heterosexual involvements in her day.

Charlotte Mew, unhappily for literary history, took her own life, after destroying most of her poetry. Only 2 slim volumes remain, and of these, *THE RAMBLING SAILOR* is the most pertinent. Again, this is relatively rare but it is worth searching out. (There is a striking frontispiece, a portrait of the author, in the 1929 edition cited in the bibliography, which shows her to have been as severe, though not as handsome, as Radclyffe Hall, and much the same type.)

Because of her known Lesbian tendencies and the profusion of works about her life, we feel tempted to relegate Edna St. Vincent Millay to the bibliography. However, if there is one among you who has not fallen in love again to the voices in her lines -- do now -- there is no other quite like her.

Alphabetically following Miss Millay, and ironically, very rightly so, is young poet Mary Oliver, whose sole volume to date, *NO VOYAGES AND OTHER POEMS*, is reminiscent of Millay's more romantic poems. However, Miss Oliver has a fresh, tangy, modern tone in her poetry which more than gives it a life in its own right. Watch this name; we will hear more from her and it will be worth listening to.

The fey and affected creature, Rose O'Neill, left us THE MASTER MISTRESS as her only poetry volume. Her titular use of Shakespeare's most homosexual sonnet sets the tone.

Katherine Philips, known by her soubriquet, Orinda the Matchless, must be searched out in poetry anthologies, since no single volume of her work exists. Her available poems celebrate intense emotional attachments to women -- particularly those dealing with her beloved Lucasia.

Some years from now when all of the principals and their descendents are deceased, literary history will be enriched by the full story of that illustrious coterie, The Bloomsbury Group, which included most of England's important writers and artists over a 25-year period. Among the more central figures are Virginia Woolf and her dear friend, Victoria Sackville-West. The latter's only published poetic contribution to Lesbian literature is the muted volume, KINGS DAUGHTER. (Miss Sackville-West, in addition to being the central figure of Virginia Woolf's ORLANDO, has, herself written a Lesbian novel, THE DARK ISLAND, and a biography of a famous French Lesbian.)

May Sarton, contemporary poet and novelist, has made a tremendous contribution to Lesbian literature in her poetry as well as in her novels. Her entire poetic output is highly recommended since each volume contains many pertinent items; but particular emphasis here must be placed on her books: CLOUD, STONE, SUN, VINE; IN TIME LIKE AIR; THE LAND OF SILENCE and THE LION AND THE ROSE. The long sonnet sequence, "A Divorce of Lovers" in CLOUD, STONE, SUN, VINE relates the entire history of a Lesbian affair after its agonized termination.

"Never the sound of your name on my lips/ And my heart speaks ONLY IN WHISPERS" is the titular designation of Alicia Kay Smith's only known pertinent volume. This is the rarest of the Lesbian poetry volumes known to the authors. It is also the most overt and among the most romantic. She is certainly not a great poet; but she deserved a better fate than obscurity. We have no way, short of reprinting the book, to recommend it more highly than to say that it is worth skipping meals to afford it IF you can find a copy.

"Strange Waters," an unusual esoteric story-length poem by George Sterling is included because of its uncommon use of Lesbianism and for the high quality of the poetry. It belongs primarily in complete collections.

It is hard to be enthusiastic over someone who obviously wrote in hatred, but Boris Todrin's poem, "Hate Song," in 7 MEN is excellent. This is the story of one man's loss of his wife to another woman. It is very effective poetry though certainly negative in its approach.

NAKED POEMS, by Phyllis Webb, is the most overt of the examples of Lesbianism treated in the so-called modern poetry form. Unlike many of her contemporaries, however, she is very primarily concerned with the importance of love in the human condition. Her book is very welcome since it reminds us that even in today's age of machines instead of emotions, some people do, literally care for one another.

When James Wright's first volume of poetry was published in 1957, he was a part of Yale University's series of young poets. Today he is one of our leading contemporary poets. His two poems, "Sappho" and "Erinna to Sappho," are unusually intuitive, coming as they do from a male author's pen.

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The Editor would be greatly pleased to hear any comment as to those things that either offend or please about the manner in which we offered this new and larger format of THE LADDER this month. We need your criticisms and suggestions -- also your writing.

## Sorry about this.....

For those readers interested in the following up of the life of Lady Hester Stanhope, QUEEN OF THE DESERT (LADDER, Sept., 1966) here is the bibliography for the article which had to be deleted due to space requirements.

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## *Cross-Currents* and miscellany

Conventions always have an aftermath of opinion which may be new or just old and reinforced. Several comments have come our way and we give you a sampling.

From ONE CONFI -- and since it is "Confi" we give just



a jot and a tittle of what they really said: They thought Shirley Willer "boomed" too much. Perhaps she hurt their little ears with some truths. They also thought that the DOB had a few "secret sessions" that left the fellows out. All we can think of is our always dreary, sometimes explosive, but very necessary business meeting and the very practical "feed" that followed it. Truly, men, you did have so much going on all the time, we can't imagine your caring very much about the Daughters' little affairs. We gave you so big a day at Saturday's Convention.

\*\*\*\*\*

We prefer to quote from the Prosperos' TRENDS by Thane wherein a rather prophetic view is taken:

".....while it was a Lesbian convention, it turned out in spite of, or regardless of the sponsoring organization, to be a plea for the homosexual male minority much more than the female. In either regard, it was the most portentous confrontation of this minority with city officials and the religious fraternity in history.

"One thing that will emerge, I am sure, will be a re-vamping of the DOB concept. They will play down the Lesbian factor and go after the "whole woman" and the bigger area of women's rights in general.....

"Someday the women of this country, possibly the world will know what a debt they owe to the pioneering DOBs, modern Lillian Pankhursts and Margaret Sangers, who were so reviled in their day and are so revered today. For that matter, men will owe as much to these pioneers as women. The fact that the recent DOB Convention proved to be more of a battle for the rights of men than women establishes that the Lesbian has as much sense of nurture and motherhood as any woman."

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Elsewhere in the text this month, "The Love that Dare not Speak its Name" is mentioned. A gay boy told us recently that it used to be this way, but now "it just won't shut up!"

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Did you know that there are only 3 qualified women blacksmiths in the United States?

\*\*\*\*\*

Don't be surprised if your next LADDER comes rapidly close on the heels of this issue. For Christmas, we are trying to catch up! See you soon.

# DAUGHTERS of BILITIS

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