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The Ladder



SEPTEMBER, 1968

EDITORIAL

THE LADDER has long needed to take a more active look at the current world. Beginning with this issue, we will make every effort to present a more balanced magazine, with the emphasis on better quality writing in every area.

You will notice that this issue marks the end of a publishing year and is marked, VOLUME XII, NUMBER'S XI AND XII. The next issue you receive will be the first of a new expanded, 48 page bi-monthly publication. This will be VOLUME XIII, NUMBER I, and it will cover the months of October and November, 1968.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find announcement of a new reader service which we feel will be of great benefit to all, those who take advantage of it personally, and those who simply examine the results.

From now on, all letters to the editor which require a reply will receive a reply within 30 days of receipt.

We need help from each of you. We need good current non-fiction articles. The only limitation is that the article must fit into the basic concepts of the magazine. Articles must deal with some aspect of minority rights for women in general, or topics in any way concerned with Lesbians or Lesbianism. We need to hear about any kind of community involvement—all aspects of daily life. NOW!!!

We have a continuing need for good stories, good poetry, unusual individual experiences, and photographs and drawings suitable for use on the cover of the magazine.

READER'S RESPOND has been missing too long. We need to know how you feel about any and all aspects of homophile life, and about this magazine. Tell us what you do and don't like and make your letter interesting enough, and well enough written, to print.

Material submitted for publication which cannot be used will be returned if you provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. You may use a pseudonym, but you must provide your full correct name and address. Manuscripts should be typed, double spaced, on ordinary white typing paper measuring 8 1/2 by 11 inches. If you cannot type your work, then print legibly. All material intended for publication in THE LADDER should be addressed to Gene Damon, Editor. You will hear whether or not your material is usable within six weeks from date of receipt. Anonymously submitted material will be destroyed.

Everyone can, and should, want to help. We need newspaper clippings, magazine articles and reviews of movies and books. We need to hear about any kind of prejudicial treatment of women in general, job discrimination, etc. Be sure to indicate CLEARLY on each clipping or article the name of the newspaper or magazine and the date of the issue. Material cannot be used in any way without this information.

Help us to please you. Help us to please others. Help make this magazine, THE LADDER, as good as it can be. You, all of you, provide the potential and the limitations of the magazine. If you work with us, we have unlimited growth potential. If you don't.....

GENE DAMON
Editor

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THE LADDER

VOLUME XII, NUMBER XI and XII

SEPTEMBER, 1968

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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 except such opinions as are specifically acknowledged by the organization.

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THE HOMOSEXUAL IDENTITY

by James Colton

In a *U. S. News and World Report* interview, 29 July 1968, Dr. George Gallup said voter registration in the U. S. at present is 27 percent Republican, 46 percent Democratic. "The Democrats don't have to do as good a job as the Republicans for one simple reason: Their party is a coalition of minorities. By keeping it together, they have a majority in most elections... If the Democratic candidate can keep labor in line, the Negro vote in line, the Catholic and Jewish vote in line—he's O.K."

This article isn't about politics—Democratic and Republican. It is about the position of one particular minority group—homosexuals—in the U. S. today and how it can change that position. The answer is that it has only one chance of wielding any kind of effective power. And that chance lies in its finding common ground with other minorities and with individuals of advanced ideas in the current effort to set our country straight and to assure everyone in it a right to his place in the sun.

The homosexual minority is a fact. In a feature article by Charles Alverson, 17 July 1968, *The Wall Street Journal* numbered it at 10 million. Dr. Wardell Pomeroy, the Kinsey associate, has estimated 15 million. Why the disparity? Because no accurate count is possible. Any homosexual can give you the reason.

The reason is that it is so easy to hide.

This single fact has hobbled homosexuals. If we could not mask ourselves we would be farther ahead. If there were no way of deceiving the rest of society as to our minority status, we would have been forced to change it. Upgrade it. We would no longer be second-class citizens.

We would also be better human beings, better able to make contributions to the community we live in, the nation, the world at large. Because duplicity is degrading and demoralizing. Furtiveness and deception as a way of life weaken the fabric of the personality. Integrity becomes hard to hang onto. So does happiness.

Why do homosexuals live as they do?

The root of the trouble lies in a simple and understandable desire to "belong." Aside from a small percentage of rebels, most children raised in a given kind of home, neighborhood, church, business, school community regard that background as natural. They want to continue in it as adults. Its values tend to be their values. They need its stability and continuum.

But those who find themselves homosexuals confront a problem. In order to be true to their deepest nature, they cannot conform to the sexual code of the society in which they want to live. Individuals meet this dilemma as best they can. If, that is, they choose to meet it at all. Most keep dodging it. Some dodge

it all their lives. There are Lesbians and homosexual males who have for 20, 30, 40 years kept those closest to them—parents, brothers and sisters, even wives and children—ignorant of their true nature. Diminishing if not destroying themselves in the bargain.

It's not a new story. Which makes it no less sad.

Even sadder is the fact that it is not necessary. The fear and hatred of homosexuality woven into our social fabric are not basic, not useful, never were. They sprang from ignorance and have done nothing but harm. This must be changed. Those threads must be pulled. They are ugly. They weaken the fabric.

Homosexuals are performing successfully at every level of our society today, from the professions—doctors, lawyers, teachers, clergymen, librarians—through the arts—writers, actors, painters, musicians, dancers—the civil service on Federal, State and local levels—and from the topmost executive to the humblest clerk in business and industry.

Homosexuals know this.

It is time, past time, that the rest of society was told it. One's sexual bent has nothing to do with one's capacity to function as a useful member of society. It has nothing to do with one's capacity to function as a loving son or daughter, as a parent, as a friend. It never did.

Homosexuals know this.

But too few of us have used the knowledge to take us to a logical and saving conclusion. Too many of us have assumed because the background from which we sprang has so many values we accept without question, that all of its values must be right. Including hostile attitudes toward homosexuality. Too

many of us—the vast majority—are ashamed of being homosexual. We hide the fact.

And we do this not only for our own protection. We do it in the mistaken belief that we are protecting others—usually parents. When, in fact, we are simply making life more complicated for ourselves, for them, and certainly for the next generation of homosexuals to come.

They will keep coming.

Because homosexuality is not a conditioned reflex, as today's establishment psychiatrists allege. The laboratory has given us the answer. Homosexuality is a congenital anomaly. Reports biologist Seymour Levine in the April 1966 *Scientific American*:

"There are distinct differences between the male brain and the female brain... differences that determine sexual activity." Research work by Dr. Levine and others at the University of Kansas and at Stanford shows that "the brain of the mammal is essentially female until a certain stage of development..." In the laboratory rat this stage is reached shortly after birth.

But in man it occurs *before* birth.

"If testosterone, the male hormone, is absent at this stage of development, the brain will remain female; if testosterone is present, the brain will develop male characteristics... Human homosexual behavior may depend in a fundamental way on what the hormonal makeup of the individual happens to be during the development of the nervous system."

In other words, homosexuals are born that way.

Among some 80 sets of identical twins studied by the Austrian scientist Kallmann, without exception

where one was homosexual so was the other, in spite of the fact that in many cases the twins were separated at birth and grew up in differing environments.

In other words, homosexuals are born that way.

E. Slater's figures in his study "Birth Order and the Maternal Age of Homosexuals" show that "the birth orders of 401 male homosexuals showed a significant shift to the right." Which simply means "they were generally born later in the life of the mother than would be theoretically expected."

In other words, homosexuals are born that way.

Princeton University biologist Robert D. Lisk has done some experimenting with rats that he believes indicates "that certain abnormalities of sexual behavior do occur naturally (sic) and have biological origin." Using male and female rats whose sex organs had been removed at birth, Dr. Lisk found he was able to "turn on" sexual reactions by injections of synthetic hormones into the brain. One injected group, whether male or female, followed a passive female behavior pattern.

But a second group of males and females, surprisingly, offered vacillating reactions, behaving at one time like females, at another vigorously and with aggressive movements which the doctor classified as "male response." Dr. Lisk believes his work may indicate that instructions for male sex behavior are inborn in the brain *side by side with instructions for female behavior*, one set of instructions being erased hormonally at birth. Where the erasure does not take place, later sexual behavior in the individual may fol-

low patterns contra-indicated by the physiological makeup.

In other words, homosexuals are born that way.

There is no shortage of hard scientific data. And there is, as a result, no excuse for a homosexual identity crisis. Not on the personal, individual level. Not any more. You and I are homosexuals as the left-handed are left-handed, the blue-eyed blue-eyed. Neither blame nor praise is attached. Agonies of self-loathing and struggles to "adjust" to some imaginary norm are pointless self-indulgence. Cures there are none, because there is no disease. When homosexuals do become mentally ill, homosexuality is not their sickness.

Their sickness results from social pressure.

And here is where the real identity crisis lies. At the core of today's society. That society is a shaky construct. Negroes are tearing at it, burning it, intent on having a better, stronger, fairer society in its place. The poor want it rebuilt. And why not? Writes *New Republic* columnist Richard Lee Strout ("T. R. B."):

"The government pays racist Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi \$157,000 a year for not producing cotton, while it pays the plantation family deprived of work \$35 a month in relief to starve on . . ."

City dwellers are terrified of the crime and violence around them. University students are tired of being treated like so much anonymous livestock to be fattened with education and herded off to meaningless, identical lives. Americans of all ages and conditions are sick at heart about the bungling, murderous, suicidal mess in Vietnam.

Homosexuals too have a right to protest.

They have more than a right. They have an obligation. Risks, personal and very great, are being taken every day, on every hand, by individuals prominent and obscure, alone and in groups, in an attempt to revise and correct the shameful injustices and inequities of U. S. life at this moment of history. What right have homosexuals to stand on the sidelines, frightened, mute?

We have an identity. A group identity. Whether we like it or not. Just as a good many Negroes no doubt would prefer not to be black, to shirk having to struggle for rights the laws promise them but which the white power-structure withholds, so homosexuals have strict obligations to fight for their rights. A moral imperative—because no skin coloration readily identifies them—and a social and historical imperative.

Because the laws against us are still on the books. And prejudices against us are still in people's heads and hearts.

Until they are removed, the homosexual identity crisis will continue. We must face the fact that, like it or not, the majority regard us as members of a minority. They force us to form a minority. And because it is a small minority we must augment its strength. This we can do by finding common cause with other minorities and those individuals who, while not necessarily of minorities, are thinking and speaking, writing and planning and working at ways of making our society, our system, livable.

Where there are cases involving sexual freedom—not just for homosexuals—there the Lesbian and male homosexual ought to be adding their

support. Where censorship threatens full freedom of expression—not only in matters homosexual—there the Lesbian and male homosexual ought to protest. Where police entrapment, harassment, brutality occur—not just against homosexuals—the Lesbian and male homosexual ought to raise their voices. Where privacy is invaded, whether by government snoopers or private business—not just in homosexual cases—the Lesbian and the male homosexual ought to expose it, decry it.

Of course each of us is different. So are individual Negroes, Mexicans, Jews. Their differences don't divide them. Not fundamentally. Not on the big issues. On those they unite. Whether homosexuals do this in formal organizations or not is less important than that they have a *sense of identity* with others whose sexual pattern is like their own. And of course that they feel no guilt about it. Then they can act effectively.

When, for example, a play like *The Killing of Sister George*, wherein three lesbians are portrayed, each without a shred of recognizable humanity, write a letter to your local paper about it, get your objections to the management of the theatre that brought it to your community. Refuse to accept without a murmur a presentation that is going to confirm the general public in its outdated and patronizing, if not hostile, conception of Lesbians. Do your single, individual best to right wrongs and set people's thinking straight.

A picket line at the theatre would be even better.

Not to prevent people seeing the play. Fair is fair. One cannot claim

to believe in total freedom of expression only where one's own ideas are advanced. No . . . not to prevent people seeing the play. But to show people that responsible human beings feel strongly about being misrepresented. It would do no good? Don't you believe it. At least those playgoers who read your signs would know about your indignation and your courage. They would add another perhaps unsettling ingredient to their meager stereotype of the Lesbian—responsible human being.

Which would be quite a plus.

The Negro has stopped running scared. He has opted for his own identity. Black is beautiful. He has nothing to lose? Everybody has something to lose. Even the poor of Appalachia, even the Mexican grape harvester. But they have a world to win. So have homosexuals. A right to walk in the sunlight of full free-

dom, unmasked, upright, unshamed. We are a viable minority. With an identity. With a cause. Sexual freedom too is a civil right. You can't pick up a magazine, conservative or liberal, at this moment of history and not read "this is a time of change."

Are homosexuals going to let it pass them by?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Colton has written for The New Yorker, Harper's, the Atlantic and other magazines. His two published novels were *Lost on Twilight Road* and *Strange Marriage*. Another novel and a collection of short stories called, *The Corrupter*, will appear late this fall. He is at work on a novel and a non-fiction book due for 1969. He lives with his wife, the poet-artist Jane Race, in Los Angeles. They have a grown daughter, the writer Carol Harris.

Announcing THE COUNSELLOR'S CORNER by Ruth M. McGuire, Ph.D.

We are beginning a regular column in THE LADDER, to be made up of YOUR personal problems in the form of letters, and a reply by a distinguished psychiatric, social case-worker, Dr. Ruth M. McGuire.

Dr. McGuire has over 34 years of experience in this field, and has kindly offered her services to THE LADDER.

Heterosexuals are not unique in having personal problems that require expert advice. However, they have places to go and people to see, far beyond the help available to troubled or simply worried homosexuals. As everyone knows, for every person who seeks direct aid, there are hundreds who would accept the impersonal aid of a letter. The popularity of Ann Landers (we are not making comparisons, however) testifies to this.

Letters to Dr. McGuire MUST be addressed to Gene Damon, Editor of THE LADDER. The letters must not exceed 1000 words in length. Please DO NOT sign your name and address on the letter proper, but you must include your name and address either on the outside of your envelope or on a 3 x 5 slip included with the letter. You should adopt some form of simple identifying signature on your letter—but don't use "troubled" or "worried" or "unhappy" (columnists receive dozens thus signed every day)—pick something a little different.

Dr. McGuire will decide which letters to use, and those that cannot be used will be destroyed, and no reply will be made to them. NO letter will be replied to by mail. This is not possible.

The column will appear as soon as YOU provide the letters.

BE SURE TO ADDRESS YOUR LETTERS TO GENE DAMON, NOT TO DR. MCGUIRE DIRECTLY, AS THIS WILL SIMPLY DELAY THEM AND MAY CAUSE THEM TO BE LOST.

REPORT ON THE 1968 NATIONAL D.O.B. GENERAL ASSEMBLY by Sten Russell

Sandy and I arrived in Denver, Colorado at the International Airport beneath gathering storm clouds. Neither of us had rain gear, although I had come prepared with one good coat, just in case of snow. Lois Williams, National Vice-President, had preceded us from San Francisco and was kind enough to welcome us to the new city. It had been a nice flight by Continental and we had enjoyed the superb service given ordinary passengers. I had enjoyed the scenery and forgotten at least twice that the less said about the scenery below, to Sandy . . . the better. She does not thrill to take-offs, air-views of the geological formations, and landings, as I do. She sipped her bourbon and water and thought of land animals such as Ben Cat, perhaps; safe in a nice veterinarian's hospital in Southern California. She had brought with her an address by Ben Cat, to be read at the General Assembly Business Meeting, if time permitted. It did not. The crush of business was such that Sandy did not even request permission to read it to the convened Assembly the following day. The same was true of Del Martin's "Changing People" . . . an answer, or rebuttal if you will, to Meredith Grey's "Changing Times" published in the August 1968 Ladder . . . an item so hot off the presses, that we carried copies for the delegates with us on the plane to Denver. However, copies of Del's Address were also distributed

to all delegates and members present.

I quote here an abridged edition of *Ben Cat's Address* for the Ladder readership:

"Somehow, I was caught up in the Republican National Convention and some of the things my people were saying about the Daughters of Bilitis meeting sounded so similar that I am having a hard time understanding just what the minority is.

"To begin with, there is the element of cynicism. We are in a time that makes us question everybody's motives. We are in a time that causes us to presume that altruism is a thing of the past and that all proposals and promises carry with them a heavy binding cord. We are weary of clichés and weary of the idea of "change" for change's sake. We know that change is the order of things and that it cannot be forced into old patterns or into warped imitations of that which has been and what can be.

"Cats have short lives, so when they think of capacities for the future, they think in terms of "how long" and "how many." The Daughters of Bilitis is a young organization in the history of our nation. Yet, it has made a very great dent in the literature and the research of this time. Very few people have been involved. These people have proceeded cautiously, protectively. They have secured good legal counsel. They have yielded

to the desires of their Assembly. Every Assembly has been democratic and proper.

"I never met Shirley Willer's cat, but she spoke well of him and I understand that he has now joined the universe of good cats. I have sniffed Shirley and Meredith well and I think they are very nice. Many cats have been in this movement. Many have died in it. In addition to Shirley's, I raise my paw to *Patishaw* and *Ace* who were the friends of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon from the beginning of the organization. Ace was a host and Patishaw was a critic . . . a fine balance.

"Now it appears that a time has come after two years of effort that Shirley and Meredith have presented a program for re-organization of the Daughters of Bilitis. I have read all of the material that has come to our home and I have mulled it over . . . though this has been hard, since it is our flea season in Southern California. It is my thought that what has existed in the past is like one wing of the political spectrum and what is suggested is like another. I will not label them "right" or "left," since this sort of labelling might be misunderstood. Then, it seems to me that for a time, what we need to do is find a middle ground . . . a consensus, if you will, on which we can operate until we have the kind of membership that will justify the bold and over-taking approach of the "new" wing. It would seem that we need to use everything we have to get new members and new chapters so that we can engage in the program that has been suggested. Being a cat who is terribly concerned with continuity and with property rights, I cannot see anyone's losing anything in this

time, but rather, I would be concerned with gains that can be made. I think you girls must attend yourselves to a program that will enhance your recruitive program, increase your LADDER circulation, create a broader spectrum of activities. It is my thought that if you cannot make what you have work for you, then there is little hope for a broader, more complex plan to work.

"I am simple in my needs. When I itch, I scratch. If I were in an organization such as yours, I would look hard at those areas that itch and I would try to do something about them. *I don't think money is the only answer.* I work entirely without money. My girls have money . . . not a lot but enough to keep me healthy and sleek. If an emergency arises, they meet it. I have considerable faith in their ability to keep me in good cess.

"It is the nature and the life-span of cats that I may not survive your evolvement. But I hope that you will understand that I have much at stake . . . for one thing, I have my career as a writer and then I have to live with two women who have been in this movement so very long that they truly *do* want the best possible *life* for it. I used the word "life." That is very important. It has become proper and tiresomely necessary to use the term "viable." Each year or two seems to bring its special word. A while back, it was "dichotomy." In any event, viability simply means to me, "it can live." A living organization must have living people. It cannot exist upon a structure of statistics, law, programming and probabilities. It must be made up of living people who need it. Their reasons for participation may be varied.

It is not important that all the members like each other. I like very few cats in my neighborhood, but we get along well enough. It is not necessary for an agreement on all policy . . . it is only proper that the rules are understood and adhered to . . . if they are the will of the majority.

"We are at the edge of the breakthrough that might make us *really*, the most important special magazine in the nation. In recent months we have begun to acquire top writers and poets and we are now pleased to have the best possible editor available to us. We have a production person willing to work to any schedule and we have a printer committed to producing the magazine in the best possible way at the least expense. Here we are. Will you cut loose? Will there be a lack of funds because one faction is unhappy with another? Will you prove all the diatribes and accusations leveled at you by society? Are Lesbians (or homosexuals) necessarily immature, incompetent, in states of arrested development? Are they sick? Perhaps some of you buy this book and think this is so, because the greater society says it is so. But I have viewed a lot of this life and I believe that all of you are intelligent, capable people who can serve your needs and your groups' needs and your nation's needs.

"I hope you will all use your powers of evaluation, consideration, deduction and reason. If you do this, you will be unique in your world and will have acquired an experience that might preserve you in the days ahead that will be fraught on all levels with lunacy and misalliance. We will find many areas in which survival dynamics may be

more important than movement and change. Let us all be ready for that. *I am.* I have informed my people of that which I expect."

My deepest affection,
BEN CAT

To many, if not all of you, this may seem the strangest report of a National D.O.B. Convention you have ever read. This may turn out to be true, because this is the first time in our history that we have not held a Convention (as we understand that term) in conjunction with our biennial business meeting. A D.O.B. Convention, complete with speakers, panels, rest periods, tours, parties, luncheons, banquets, etc. draws many people from across the entire nation, enriches our understanding and growth, and makes the General Assembly Business meeting bearable . . . for those who are not ecstatic about doing the hard work a Biennial Business Meeting requires. A Convention has in the past been hosted by a Chapter of the D.O.B. The first was held in San Francisco in 1960 and hosted by the San Francisco Chapter. The second was held in Los Angeles and hosted by the Los Angeles Chapter. The third was held in New York City in 1964 and hosted by the New York Chapter. The Conventions got better each time as the organization got practice and strength at this form of communication. The fourth Convention was held back in San Francisco in 1966 and became the kick-off for what became known as "The 10 Days in August." Many homophile organizations and organizations helpful to the cause of the homophile participated in the entire Ten Days Series. (Please refer to that period; we spent several

months reporting those events.) The point I am getting to is that when a Chapter and its leaders put on a National Convention for the Daughters of Bilitis, it takes a year of hard work and planning. There was no Chapter in 1966 willing or able to take on this responsibility for 1968. The Chicago Chapter had just dissolved, prior to the 1966 Convention. The Los Angeles Chapter had just re-formed. The newly elected National Governing Board proposed to put on the Convention and General Business Meeting at some city central to the entire United States. Denver, Colorado was chosen.

The General Assembly was held, August 9, 10, and 11th at The King's Inn in Aurora, a suburb of Denver, Colorado. The King's Inn has excellent service and accommodations, and reasonable rates. Shirley Willer went to Denver and Aurora personally and made the arrangements and reservations. She arranged for a Banquet speaker from one of the local Law Schools, but later had to cancel for lack of attending Daughters and guests. The perils of putting on a National function for our organization in a city which has no host Chapter for planning, organization, and contacts has perhaps become evident. Miss Willer had wanted the Convention to be held in Chicago during the same period as the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations but was vetoed by her Board.

There was so much business to take care of Saturday, before the Banquet, that elections could not be held until Sunday. The National Officers structure was somewhat altered Sunday. New Officers are: Rita Laporte, President; Rinalda

Reagan, Vice - President West; Joan Kent, Vice-President East; Lynd James, Secretary; and Lois Williams, Treasurer. The office of National Public Relations Director was killed, but not the function of this office. Chapter Representatives will no longer be elected by the Chapters. They will automatically be represented on the National Governing Board by the Chapter Presidents or Acting-Chapter Presidents. Gene Damon volunteered to be the new Ladder Editor. Helen Sanders volunteered to be her proposition worker and representative to the printer in Los Angeles. We trust you will read Miss Damon's Editorial well, and heed it, and help us. We want no "scapegoat" nominations for 1970. They are not really a very good thing. Some in the past have not survived them . . . or perhaps I should say, have not survived earning them. There are several unlisted non-survivors this year that we all grieve for.

Miss Willer was extended a Life Membership in the National Daughters of Bilitis, by Miss Laporte, on behalf of the out-going and in-coming National Board. Gwen McGregor was designated to give the Presentation Speech. Martha Shelley also expressed the appreciation of the New York Chapter. Miss Willer graciously accepted this honor, but felt it more properly should have been extended to Miss Meredith Grey.

Shirley Willer and Meredith Grey and Jane Kogan of New York were voted official delegates to the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations, being held in Chicago, Illinois, August 14-18, 1968.

The 1968 General Assembly unanimously elected Del Martin

to be "Ambassador at Large" for life.

The 1968 General Assembly Business Meeting Minutes, along with Shirley and Meredith's proposals for re-structuring the Corporation, Del's Address, Rita Laporte's letter to the membership and proposals for amending the present by-laws of the Corporation, and all pertinent correspondence will be sent to the entire membership via the Chapters, so that the membership may be given ample time for study, debate, counter-proposals, etc. before the General Assembly and Convention to be held in New York in 1970. Rita Laporte volunteered to help Sten Russell on this monumental task.

Monday morning was bright and clear in Denver, Colorado as we flew back to Los Angeles International Airport. It seemed to me that Denver could have had the decency to maintain inclement weather till we left, having rained floods all weekend. Perhaps, someday, we shall have the time and the money to take a real vacation in Colorado.

When we arrived home, Ben Cat would not speak to us, the front door lock would not work and the back door had to be forced open, and a small boy I love very much slightly dislocated my jaw in his exuberance. A week later I burned out the car on the freeway. Outside of that and the problem of breathing in this smogland of my birth, there is nothing much else to report at this time.

There were fifteen Daughters who came to all or part of the General Assembly, and two professional guests, Atty. Dave Clayton substituting for Atty. Herb Donaldson, and Research Director, Florence Con-

rad, both from San Francisco. Gene Damon and Lee Stuart, of Kansas City, visited the General Assembly. Liz and Nancy, two new members from New Jersey, had to leave Sunday morning, as did Lois Williams of San Francisco. Shirley Willer, Meredith Grey and Martha Shelley, of New York; Sten Russell and Helen Sanders, of Los Angeles; Rita Laporte, Gwen McGregor, Karen Wilson and Priscilla Cochran, of San Francisco; and "Kelly" of Salt Lake City; all stayed through Sunday night. Stalwart souls!!

Shirley Willer, out-going National President, appointed Sten Russell, Acting-Recording Secretary for the General Assembly, as Meredith Grey and she are currently touring the country. Sten Russell, out-going National Corresponding Secretary, hastily looked around for all the help she could find. Thanks are in order for Liz and Kelly who helped Sten in taking full notes of the General Assembly for comparison and correction later on . . . for Karen and Priscilla, Liz and Martha, on three different tape recording machines, and for promises of help from Rita Laporte and Martha Shelley regarding reports to come. Special thanks go to Lois Williams, out-going Vice-President, for changing her plans at the last minute and coming to the Assembly as Acting-Treasurer to help us validate Chapter memberships and proxies, and give a Treasury report. Super credit goes to both Shirley and Meredith for the immense amount of work they have put in these past two years to put forth proposals of re-organization, authorized by the last General Assembly. To see them go down to defeat, and to continue working in this

months reporting those events.) The point I am getting to is that when a Chapter and its leaders put on a National Convention for the Daughters of Bilitis, it takes a year of hard work and planning. There was no Chapter in 1966 willing or able to take on this responsibility for 1968. The Chicago Chapter had just dissolved, prior to the 1966 Convention. The Los Angeles Chapter had just re-formed. The newly elected National Governing Board proposed to put on the Convention and General Business Meeting at some city central to the entire United States. Denver, Colorado was chosen.

The General Assembly was held, August 9, 10, and 11th at The King's Inn in Aurora, a suburb of Denver, Colorado. The King's Inn has excellent service and accommodations, and reasonable rates. Shirley Willer went to Denver and Aurora personally and made the arrangements and reservations. She arranged for a Banquet speaker from one of the local Law Schools, but later had to cancel for lack of attending Daughters and guests. The perils of putting on a National function for our organization in a city which has no host Chapter for planning, organization, and contacts has perhaps become evident. Miss Willer had wanted the Convention to be held in Chicago during the same period as the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations but was vetoed by her Board.

There was so much business to take care of Saturday, before the Banquet, that elections could not be held until Sunday. The National Officers structure was somewhat altered Sunday. New Officers are: Rita Laporte, President; Rinalda

Reagan, Vice-President West; Joan Kent, Vice-President East; Lynd James, Secretary; and Lois Williams, Treasurer. The office of National Public Relations Director was killed, but not the function of this office. Chapter Representatives will no longer be elected by the Chapters. They will automatically be represented on the National Governing Board by the Chapter Presidents or acting-Chapter Presidents. Gene Damon volunteered to be the new Ladder Editor. Helen Sanders volunteered to be her production worker and representative to the printer in Los Angeles. We trust you will read Miss Damon's Editorial well, and heed it, and help us. We want no "scapegoat" nominations for 1970. They are not really a very good thing. Some in the past have not survived them . . . or perhaps I should say, have not survived earning them. There are several unlisted non-survivors this year that we all grieve for.

Miss Willer was extended a Life Membership in the National Daughters of Bilitis, by Miss Laporte, on behalf of the out-going and in-coming National Board. Gwen McGregor was designated to give the Presentation Speech. Martha Shelley also expressed the appreciation of the New York Chapter. Miss Willer graciously accepted this honor, but felt it more properly should have been extended to Miss Meredith Grey.

Shirley Willer and Meredith Grey and Jane Kogan of New York were voted official delegates to the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations, being held in Chicago, Illinois, August 14-18, 1968.

The 1968 General Assembly unanimously elected Del Martin

to be "Ambassador at Large" for life.

The 1968 General Assembly Business Meeting Minutes, along with Shirley and Meredith's proposals for re-structuring the Corporation, Del's Address, Rita Laporte's letter to the membership and proposals for amending the present by-laws of the Corporation, and all pertinent correspondence will be sent to the entire membership via the Chapters, so that the membership may be given ample time for study, debate, counter-proposals, etc. before the General Assembly and Convention to be held in New York in 1970. Rita Laporte volunteered to help Sten Russell on this monumental task.

Monday morning was bright and clear in Denver, Colorado as we flew back to Los Angeles International Airport. It seemed to me that Denver could have had the decency to maintain inclement weather till we left, having rained floods all weekend. Perhaps, someday, we shall have the time and the money to take a real vacation in Colorado.

When we arrived home, Ben Cat would not speak to us, the front door lock would not work and the back door had to be forced open, and a small boy I love very much slightly dislocated my jaw in his exuberance. A week later I burned out the car on the freeway. Outside of that and the problem of breathing in this smogland of my birth, there is nothing much else to report at this time.

There were fifteen Daughters who came to all or part of the General Assembly, and two professional guests, Atty. Dave Clayton substituting for Atty. Herb Donaldson, and Research Director, Florence Con-

rad, both from San Francisco. Gene Damon and Lee Stuart, of Kansas City, visited the General Assembly. Liz and Nancy, two new members from New Jersey, had to leave Sunday morning, as did Lois Williams of San Francisco. Shirley Willer, Meredith Grey and Martha Shelley, of New York; Sten Russell and Helen Sanders, of Los Angeles; Rita Laporte, Gwen McGregor, Karen Wilson and Priscilla Cochran, of San Francisco; and "Kelly" of Salt Lake City; all stayed through Sunday night. Stalwart souls!!

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movement, bespeaks high character, great dedication. Super credit goes to Helen Sanders, also, for putting out the Ladder for two years, when she contracted for 6 months till an editor could be found. Gene Damon was a great source of help and inspiration to Helen Sanders during this period. So was Ben Cat, except that he has gotten a lot of hairs in the typewriters causing them to require extra cleaning. Considering the quality of his thoughts, however, I guess that is a petty thing to mention. The San Francisco Chapter, Dottie King, Lois Williams, Karen and Priscilla, Del and Phyl, must be thanked as regards to Circulation. Again, however, but for Shirley Willer's heroic efforts at obtaining large donations for the D.O.B. and the Ladder, the quality of production you now see could not have been paid for. Elizabeth Chandler has contributed greatly to covers and art-work for the Ladder. This type of crediting could go on and on, and I shall undoubtedly leave someone out. It always happens.

A highlight of the General Assembly is always the S.O.B. awards (Sons of Bilitis). These awards, which are printed on wallet sized cards, go to men, both in and outside the homophile movement who have been extremely kind and helpful to the Daughters of Bilitis, during the past two years. The list has grown over the years to where one wonders if there aren't about as many official S.O.B.'s as voting D.O.B.'s!! Nominations from the San Francisco area were: Attorney Dave Clayton; George Mendenhall, S.I.R.; Jim Hardcastle; Dorr Jones, S.I.R.; Tom Parker; Larry Howard, S.F.C.R.H. Orientations' Commit-

tee; Assemblyman Willie Brown; Congressman John Burton; Congressman Phil Burton and Cary Bowman. Nominations from the Los Angeles Area were: Rev. Alex Smith, L.A.C.R.H.; Harry Hay and John Burnside ('World's Oldest Hippies') and from the New York Area: John Lassoe. All the above listed are now official S.O.B.'s, no matter what anyone's private opinion may have been before. (Smile! That's a joke, son.)

A new addition this year was the "Unsung Heroine Award." These went to Mrs. Ruth Colwell and Florence Conrad, our Research Director. It is really not possible to assess the bravery and dedication to human values that is required for non-professional and professional men and women, alike, to aid us in our cause of promoting the integration of the Lesbian and homosexual into society, that we may be more able to aid society. There are those who would brave fire and ax handles in Selma, Alabama before they would find the reason, or the courage, to brave the possible consequences of association with our cause. There are, in fact, both men and women of heterosexual orientation whom we would like to honor, but may not, not because of any lack of courage on their part but due to the peculiar nature of their work or the total rigidity of their professional associations.

Mrs. Ruth Colwell has helped Daughters from New York to Los Angeles. She was a member of the San Francisco Chapter, before moving with her husband and family. The heterosexual woman with the rare courage to join our Chapters has been of inestimable value in helping us relate to "straight" so-

ciety and understand something of its viewpoints. There have been a number of them over the years and their contribution has greatly exceeded their numbers, for those willing to become members and help us work on projects for the homophile community, have been instrumental in helping many eventually become able to help heterosexuals work on projects helpful to the entire community.

Florence Conrad has given 1000's of hours of her time to helping us make our Research Division one with professional standards. Her report to the Assembly Saturday afternoon will be covered in a future issue.

The Banquet Saturday night was a highlight of the Denver Assembly, even without an outside speaker.

Shirley and Sandy addressed the ladies present. Shirley read the awards. Sandy told jokes and also suggested that there be "Scrapegoat" Awards (a term coined by our out-going National Vice-President). She suggested that there be three "Scrapegoat Awards" for this year: one for Shirley Willer, President; one for Lois Williams, Vice-President; and one for herself, as Ladder Editor.

If we gave Beauty Contests, Lois Williams would easily have taken first place Saturday night. What is there about a black sheath dress on a beautiful woman? I asked her later if it were true that "blondes have more fun"? And she answered that she hadn't had time to find out yet, since she had just had her hair "lightened" before leaving San Francisco.

WHAT PRICE TWO-NESS?

by Helen Sanders

In the history of the Daughters of Bilitis there have been some outstanding pairs. They have made history in the movement and they have confounded the poll-takers and the researchers.

The most outstanding "pair" is Del and Phyl (or Phyl and Del). Almost everyone in the DOB and in any other homophile organization in the U.S. knows the names of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon. Phyllis Lyon originated THE LADDER as a small mimeographed 8-sheet and nurtured it to a point where others might take on the task and reap the glory. Phyl took her broad experience in true journalism and scaled it

down to the work at hand and made do with what was available, yet never did she falter in principle. It was the several years of her effort that has made today's LADDER possible.

Del was more involved in organization and in that field one usually has more touch with people. Yet, these two always worked as a pair and it was their home, their faith and their devotion that has kept the DOB alive and progressive.

Your past editor recalls being cajoled, threatened and sweet-talked into work that helped to establish THE LADDER as the magazine that can, today, claim to be the homophile publication in America with

the longest history of continuance. In a sense, it is a monument to Phyllis Lyon, who knew that it would grow and be more and more important. She set rigid standards that have mostly been adhered to. She did not let problems of production and circulation keep the magazine from being the best possible in its field.

When the history of The Daughters of Bilitis is written, THE LADDER must be the textbook and that book will be primarily the work of Phyllis Lyon.

Another famous pair is Meredith Grey and Shirley Willer. Shirley has had the voice of action, but Meredith pioneered the New York Chapter of the DOB and has long been one of the strongest workers in every phase of our endeavor. DOB, East, without Meredith would not seem possible, and, indeed it likely would have been improbable without her. She has given unstintingly of time and money and energy . . . and as with many couples, she has been strength to Shirley in many difficult hours. Meredith is the soul of order and her work is marked with dignity and proper reporting. Without her cool and calculated analysis of problems at hand, we may have floun-

dered at many a point.

Some people think that Sten and Sandy are a pair. This is not so. They are in real life a devoted couple, but when it comes to the business of the DOB, there are many areas of disagreement. In the DOB they have chosen to be individuals, but they have not always been accorded this privilege. The fact that they have survived their differences is a test of their personal devotion to each other.

We hope that the DOB will always enjoy a membership of many couples and that these couples will feel free to exercise their togetherness and their independence in the furtherance of our cause.

When awards are made and when laudatory speeches are given it is sometimes easier to praise the loudest voice. What we intend here is to honor the people who work so very hard every day to make the DOB a vital force in our land. If medals are to be struck, they should probably be made for Phyllis Lyon and Meredith Grey. And there are a lot of other wonderful people, coming and going throughout the years who have made this a nationally known organization . . . an organization with integrity and real purpose.

A PERFECT EVENING

by Julia Bradley

Ten times Max had asked Adrienne why she didn't want to see the movie, and ten times Adrienne had said, "I don't want to discuss it." Exhausted, Max walked down the hall to the study and sat at her desk. "Swivel around to reach Proust and

read some," she told herself, but instead she stared at the gray desk blotter.

Adrienne, with pointed pixie chin, pattered down the hall. "Max," she said at the door, "bowling maybe. No movies."

"I wanted to see it," Max said, doodling on the edge of the blotter and not looking up.

Adrienne's rosebud mouth blew a kiss. "Oh, Max," she sighed.

"This time it won't work, Adrienne," said Max, turning around to gaze at her. "Don't use that sexy bit again. I'm immune."

"Immune?" said Adrienne, pouting. "Oh, Max, come now."

The doorbell rang and Adrienne paused indecisively between study and hallway. "Find out who in the hell that is," groaned Max, running a hand absently through her short hair until it stood on end.

"You're butch tonight," Adrienne said with a giggle.

"In your tortured little mind I'm always butch," Max said, turning back to the desk. "Good God, answer the door."

The visitors were Trisha and Dee bearing wine bottles. "Windy talk," Max told the desk blotter, and walked down the hall to the living room.

"Chianti and Chablis for the bookburning fete," said Dee, peering up anxiously at Max from under the brown bangs.

"Shaddup," said Trisha, and flopped down onto the most uncomfortable seat in the house, a wicker rocking chair.

Max sat down beside Adrienne, who was bouncing violently on the divan. "Oh lordy lordy, wine, how nice," she said. "Max, isn't it sweet, absolutely sweet of them?"

"Very," said Max.

"Go pour the wine, Max," urged Adrienne, and Dee nodded in agreement. Max glanced over at Trisha, who raised one eyebrow in silent reply.

Out to the kitchen Max went, to decant the Chablis. She poured too rapidly, removed the bottle just in time, and slopped the dregs into her hand. Many whispered curses. Three trays tumbled out of the cupboard before she found the antiqued green mosaic tray which Adrienne preferred for tiny evenings in, and when Max reached up for glasses, one of the Orrefors goblets crunched into the sink.

"Max Baby, what's doing?" called Adrienne. "So much noise, and you're taking eons."

"Just being me," said Max.

She stood in the living room balancing the tray in one hand and parcelling out glasses with the other. Trisha accepted her glass with a reluctant sigh, and Max raised her own glass to her forehead in a mock salute. "I fill this cup to one made up of loveliness alone," said Max to Trisha, and drank down the wine in one gulp.

"How charming, Max," cried Adrienne. "One for me too, please!"

"Guests first, Adrienne," Max said. "For you, Deirdre. She refilled her glass and nodded to Dee. "Oh, fancies that might be, oh, facts that are!"

"Was that proper?" said Dee doubtfully, while Trisha shook with laughter.

"But Max," Adrienne said impatiently, "I want one too." She sat on the edge of the divan, her blond hair falling into her eyes. "What fun this is!"

"Let me get the damn glass filled," muttered Max, and the crystal decanter shook as she filled her goblet once more. "Very well," she said then, holding the glass high, "if you're certain you want one, here's

something from Charles Dickens."

"I love Dickens," said Adrienne.

Max turned away from Adrienne and said, more to Trisha and Dee, "'Cows are my passion,'" then sat down in a wing chair in a far corner while Adrienne shrieked angrily.

"Naughty, naughty," said Dee, waving her glass at Max.

"Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls," said Max from the chair. Trisha laughed again.

"That's much better," said Adrienne, and settled back against the divan again.

"Max," said Trisha, "let's hear yours."

"Mine?" said Max and thought a moment. "Here it is. 'Cruel as death and hungry as the grave.' Suitable, yes?"

"How dreadful," said Adrienne with a shiver. "You're not one bit entertaining tonight, Max."

"Perhaps you'd prefer this, my sweet? 'Secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.' That's your Mr. Dickens again, Adrienne," Max said.

"I don't find it amusing," said Adrienne, and Dee stopped giggling. "Go get some more wine, Max. 'We're almost out,'" she said, and poured the last of the Chablis into her glass.

Max removed the decanter to the kitchen and stood for a long space of time at the counter by the sink, staring through the Formica top into a nothingness where there was no Adrienne, no Dee, no desks or bookshelves. "I wish," said Max to the nothingness, "I wish, I wish." Angrily she began pouring the Chianti into the decanter. "Dregs be damned," she said, and smiled with satisfaction as she watched the sediment from the bottle settling through the

wine in the decanter.

When she returned to the living room, Adrienne (pretending to be drunk on two glasses) was swinging her slim legs up in the air. "Fly like a bird, Max," she laughed, "fly fast."

Dee, not drunk either, was following Adrienne's example. "Oh," she cried, a long syllable gliding down the range of the scale, "isn't this delightful, Trisha? Aren't you glad we came?" Trisha was leaning back in the rocker as if she were wrapping it around herself. One slender hand on the armrest held her still-full glass of wine.

Max poured herself two glasses of Chianti in quick succession, rather enjoying the fiery weight of wine in her stomach, and retreated to the john, where she stood leaning her head against the cool glass of the mirror and staring at her reflection. When she returned to the living room the visitors were preparing to leave. Dee and Adrienne were murmuring and laughing by the coffee table, while Trisha stood in silence near the door.

"Hey," said Trisha as Max joined her, "I'm sorry about your book."

"Vain, very vain, my weary search to find that bliss which only centres in the mind," said Max. "Goldsmith."

"I know," said Trisha, lighting a cigarette and regarding Max over the flame of the match before she blew it out. "Listen," she said at last, tossing the match into a potted philodendron at her feet, "that book will get published eventually."

"But if only," said Max, "if only she would understand."

"She's Adrienne," said Trisha, shrugging her shoulders, "she's not

you or me." She opened the door and leaned past Max, her long dark hair brushing Max's shoulder. "Come on, Dee," she called. "I'm leaving."

Dee smiled her way to the door, her eyebrows raised so high that they were hidden by her bangs. "Bye, Max," she said. "It's been delicious fun."

Max sat down heavily in Trisha's rocker when the two had gone, and Adrienne fell into her lap, clutching an empty wine glass and the decanter of Chianti. "A perfect evening," she said, dribbling some Chianti into her goblet, "yes, Max, a perfect evening. Better than your old movie."

UNDER FULL SAILS

by Dorothy Lyle

Today, when we think in terms of militant homosexuals, we tend to consider a very short historical period. After all, we believe, no one really dared to admit her homosexuality in the past—or else she was damned, if not destroyed.

It isn't true. There have been many women who were very open about their orientation, and the nature of their personal relationships who did not suffer any kind of public censure. Oddly enough, many of these women were adults in the closing years of the Victorian era, and in the early years of this century. We know about them today because of the fame they achieved—not the notoriety.

One of these was Dame Ethel Mary Smyth, minor composer, militant suffragist and advocate of free personal relationships, and major memoirist.

Dame Ethel was born April 23, 1858, at Sidcup in Surrey. She was brought up there, and in the closeby village of Frimley. Her father was Major General J. H. Smyth, C.B., and she was the fourth child in a family of eight (six of them female).

Her family background was solid, respectable, stuffy, filled with clergymen, soldiers, minor politicians, etc. Her childhood reflects the expected history of a dominant personality in a mildly repressive atmosphere. She was a headstrong tomboy, bossed her siblings shamelessly, never showed any interest whatever in males, and absorbed education as rapidly as it was made available to her.

Her love for music developed early, but her family did not approve of the intensity of her interest. After suitable education and preparation, she was formally introduced into society.

From the start of her teen years, she began her lifelong pattern of passionate friendships. She must have had a very compelling personality, for despite her many accomplishments from her very early years until her death, she is best remembered today for her famous friendships. She was quite sincerely loved by dozens of women (besides those she was actually in love with, or was loved by) and by a surprising number of men.

Her father bitterly fought against her desire to become a composer. He even wished her to give up all study of serious music, but after a rather unpleasant two year period, he finally gave in to her wishes, and in 1877, she was allowed to go to Leipzig to further her musical education.

In 1878 she became the pupil of Heinrich von Herzonberg. At the same time she became the lover of his wife, Lisl (Elizabeth von Herzonberg). This relationship was to be the first of two that basically shaped her life.

Lisl and Ethel were separated by a family argument, which had nothing to do with their personal relationship. Ethel never got over this disappointment, as is amply reflected in her enormously detailed autobiographical works. The sense of tragedy in this affair is multiplied by the fact that when there came a time that a reconciliation was possible, Lisl died before it could be accomplished.

For years after Lisl there were many women in Ethel's life. None of them mattered to her greatly, however, except perhaps one, the pale and lovely Julia Brewster. Julia was important in two ironic ways. While Ethel was courting Julia, Julia's husband, Henry Brewster was busily pursuing Ethel.

A list of the men and women who were extraordinarily fond of Ethel would, or could, be endless. Ethel, in her many biographically formed memoirs, always carefully separates these people into categories. The men are lumped together as a species apart. Women are divided into two groups, friends and lovers. There was little overlapping of the latter two groups. There is also a small group of women that Ethel thought

of as friends, but that clearly wished Ethel were more than friendly. Among her friends were Lady Ponsonby, The Empress Eugenie (who was enormously fond of Ethel), Sir George Henschel, Virginia Woolf (Ethel was passionately in love with her, but there is no evidence that this was returned), V. Sackville-West and her husband, Edward, who once lovingly described her as having the profile of Wagner and Frederick The Great at the same time.

She was a social person, a traveling person. She was busy with her many friendships and the obligations entailed by her wide circle of intimates. Still she found time to compose over 200 works, ranging from operas through symphonies, concertos, dozens of lieder (German folk songs), orchestral songs, choruses, canticles, string quartets, comic short operas, and masses. When women's rights became a burning issue, she allied herself with the Pankhurst women, and became a militant suffragist. She carried on a particularly strident battle in trying to get her works judged on a sexually impartial basis. She did not succeed. However, this is an artistic battle that is not yet settled today.

The pattern of her emotional relationships is, in one way, amazing. Though she was briefly attached to perhaps thirty women in her lifetime (on a passionate level), she had only two major affairs. The first, as I have recorded, began when she was 20 years old and the object of her affections was much older. The next time she fell in love with any real seriousness was in 1919, when she was 61 years old. The object of this romance was Dr. Edith Anna Oenone Somerville—the famous lady of the Somerville and Ross writ-



Dame Ethel Smyth

ing team. By this time, 1919, Martin Ross (Violet Florence Martin), Dr. Somerville's lover from 1886 until 1915, had been dead three years and over. For many years, these two Ediths were to trade endearments and insults, publicly and privately, and to remain very close. There is no question that this was a physically unconsummated affair (unlike Ethel's early affairs) both because of the age of the ladies and Dr. Somerville's known views on the "grosser" aspects of passion.

At the same time, in 1919, Dame Ethel began to publish what was to become a fantastic amount of autobiographical writing. A full list of her works is in the bibliography at the end of this article, and to fully appreciate the amazing lady, they must all be read.

Ironically, Ethel is much more

famous for her writing and for her enormous capacity for good friendships than for her composing. Despite the essentially self-centered approach necessitated by this kind of writing, where I, I, I, is the major subject, she was able to remain fascinating at all times. She had the skill necessary to make the most tragic and mundane recountings interesting and interesting. Part of it, no doubt, is because she genuinely enjoyed living, and liked so many diverse people. On the other hand, she disliked, or did not approve of, some people, and was not above "savaging" them in person or in print. (She blasted Vernon Lee for not admitting her Lesbianism to herself—in print.)

In addition to her travelling, her writing, her music and composing, she carried on a voluminous correspondence with, literally, dozens of people over long periods of time. It was said that her letters ran to at least 1000 words apiece, and often they were 4000 words long. V. Sackville-West commented that if her correspondence were to be printed in its entirety, it would rival the Encyclopedia Britannica in bulk.

Dame Ethel lived until 1944, and apparently enjoyed every minute of her long life. This is very clear in her own writings. She had unhappy moments, but the overall picture is a bright and useful one. She wrote good and bad music, excellent books, made many good friends, virtually no enemies, and lived every hour until her death at age 86. If there were a heaven, she'd be, no doubt, in charge of organizational details.

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With her dog, Pan



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(As is true in any biographical article, other sources have been consulted. Only the most substantial are listed here.)

UNTITLED POEM

Love is where I am not
 sometimes:

in the cold night
 when she is angry and turns away
 —that lump of her pulling the blankets
 to her side of the bed—
 and lies in silence, resisting
 (Don't bother me! Leave me alone!)
 and, pretending sleep, breathes deeply
 though I know she's awake
 (her nerves tense as mine)

listening,

and she knows I know
 but we play the game seriously;
 then love is where I am not.

Love is where I am
 sometimes:

in the chilly kitchen
 padding barefoot, morning after
 with the cat rubbing my ankles
 and crying piteously, for instance,
 coffeepot on the stove, steam rising
 and the damp brown smell of coffee
 reminding me of her warm body
 waiting like a panther in the night
 still, flesh gleaming pale;
 reminding me how I took her then
 (but diffidently)
 and her dark anger rose to engulf her
 and flowed over me when she turned
 abruptly dismissing my dismal efforts
 and we lay feigning sleep
 until 4 a.m. emptiness made our stomachs growl,
 then fell dreaming as dawn sifted
 its grey rain into the room.

And now, in the familiar morning,
 Love is where I am.

by Jane Kogan

LESBIANA

by Gene Damon



Ernest Borneman is making himself the only "legitimate" chronicler of the many men who fancy themselves as male Lesbians. Workers familiar with the mail received in the Daughter's of Bilitis offices through the years realize that many such men do exist. They often write wanting to make the acquaintance of the Lesbians in their respective geographical areas. Because such requests are repugnant to most Lesbians, these letters get filed in the nearest wastebasket.

Mr. Borneman, a German born novelist and film worker (and also a well-known ethnomusicologist) has written at least two novels dealing with Lesbians from the viewpoint of a man who fancies himself as one of them, though perhaps a shade removed by the barrier of gender. His first novel on this theme, *THE COMPROMISERS* (London, Andre Deutsch, 1962), dealt with Joe Nanyon, a film man when he works, and his wife, Paula and her lover, Carole, the Comtesse de Morlaix. It is a shifting, confusing book, marred by its lack of cohesiveness. It is a very major study, but one that few will enjoy since identification with the characters is, almost without exception, impossible.

His latest novel, *THE MAN WHO LOVED WOMEN*, N.Y., Coward-McCann, 1968, is so much the better novel, and such an improvement as far as the writing is con-

cerned, that Mr. Borneman must be lauded on these grounds. The plot of *THE MAN WHO LOVED WOMEN*, is so melodramatic in capsule form that the seriousness of the tone will be impossible to convey. The hero, Willard, has been married for a number of years, very happily, to Ruth. They have allied careers in the theatre. He designs sets, she costumes. However, her career has soared and his has been rocky. He received a good offer to go to Germany and work in a repertory theatre. For a time Ruth and Willard are separated, and then she joins him in Germany. She becomes bored (for there is no work for her), and it soon becomes obvious to Willard that she has taken a lover. In a sense the novel really begins when Willard discovers that the lover is not a man, but a woman, and one to which he is also very attracted. Magda, the fatal interest for both Willard and Ruth, is not very believable. She is, far too easily, "all things to all men"—and women. For a time Willard is able to balance his interest in the two of them, and to keep his world from completely crumbling. His downfall comes when he learns what most of the readers of this column could have told him, that the women want each other, but not him. Willard tells us, steadfastly, that he does not resent this. But Willard or Mr. Borneman, one

of them, doesn't agree, in view of the diabolical ending devised for the women.

This is a very good novel, and it contains some interesting views. Some of the laboratory detailed sex will be disliked for lack of subtlety, and the finale is unnecessarily violent, and worse, a frankly "deux ex machina" ending.

WOMEN IN BATTLE by John Laffin, London and New York, Abelard-Schuman, 1967, 1968 (out here in 1968) is a rather sentimentally told account of some of the major female soldiers, sailors and marines of history. Mr. Laffin is very fond of his plucky females, obviously, but in his eagerness to please a wide audience he glosses over a few things. He assures his audience that most of these girls were just as ordinary as the girl next door. He apologizes at length for the fact that some of them began life in enforced prostitution, and assures us, too, that only a "few" were Lesbians. At times like this, I wish I knew what a "few" was, numerically.

I am not really carping, because the book is delightful fun if you like to read about adventuresome and, for the most part, incredibly brave women.

Some of the women he discusses will be familiar to readers of *THE LADDER*, since articles on them separately or collectively have appeared at various times through the years. The book is divided into two sections, with the first devoted to wars in general and female soldiers of general or group rather than personal fame. The second section covers the famous ones (or most of them) such as Kit Welsh (Mother

Ross), who was a dragoon; Hannah Snell, marine; Mary Hays (Molly Pitcher), a soldier; Mary Anne Talbot, sailor; Lucy Brewer, marine, Dr. James M. Barry, soldier and first woman doctor in Great Britain; Loreta Velasquez, soldier, spy, tramp, etc. . . .

There are some astonishing omissions. He leaves out Christina de Meyrac, the really dashing young woman, who, under the name of St. Aubin achieved fame as the "Woman Musketeer." Her history, however, was so flamboyant and so openly sexual, that perhaps Mr. Laffin felt it could not be properly watered down. Of this woman's Lesbianism, it is safe to say there is no doubt.

Mr. Laffin gives some space to Catalina de Eranso, the "Nun Ensign," but deletes her Lesbianism from his account, and he also fails to mention Dr. Barry's reputation as being "a hells with the ladies." Of the latter it was said not to be safe to leave "him" in the room with one's wife. No mention is made, either, of Deborah Sampson's well documented Lesbian history. (Since this is an England oriented book it is possible to forgive Mr. Laffin his general slighting of Deborah's accomplishments, though she is this country's most famous female soldier.)

There is a very brief and inadequate bibliography, omitting such basic tools in this field as *FAMOUS IMPOSTERS*, by Bram Stoker, C.J.S. Thompson's *MYSTRIES OF SEX*, and perhaps the best little catch-all of otherwise unobtainable data, *FORGOTTEN LADIES*, by Richardson Wright. Since all of these named older sources are long out of print, and

generally unavailable, **WOMEN IN BATTLE** is a good book to pick up for its transvestic history, and the occasional admission from Mr. Laffin, that, yes indeed, there were a "few" Lesbians in this "select" group.

At last, there is an honest biography of Dr. Edith Anna Oenone Somerville and her life-long friend, Martin Ross (Violet Florence Martin). The author of **SOMERVILLE AND ROSS** is Maurice Collis, and he has done a splendid job. Publisher is London, Faber and Faber, 1968, and it is possible that there won't be an American edition of this book since these women are not as well known over here, though they are important figures in Irish literature.

The Somerville and Ross pair is one of those wildly romantic life-long literary collaborations that attract so much interest and attention. Martin Ross was a delicate girl, and after a severe injury and years of semi-invalidism, died young, much before Dr. Somerville. They had collaborated on many books by that time, but Dr. Somerville went on writing for years and years and issued each book under their joint names. She communicated, she said, with Martin, "over there" through mediums, etc., and quite obviously believes this to be so.

I suspect that almost all serious readers of this column will want to go to the trouble of getting this English title. However, for further information, check the entries for both of these women in **TWENTIETH CENTURY AUTHORS**, edited by Stanley J. Kunitz, H. W. Wilson, 1942. All but the very tiniest libraries will have this basic reference book, and the lengthy biographical

entries for these women are very informative and surprisingly uncensored. There was also a brief article on their lives in the December, 1960 issue of **THE LADDER**, by Lennox Strong, entitled **THE LITERARY LADIES**. A future issue will devote considerable space to them.

A scholarly biography, **FEMINISM AND ART: A STUDY OF VIRGINIA WOOLF**, by Herbert Marder, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968, will be of interest to the more serious readers, particularly those who have thoroughly read her fictional works. Mr. Marder is an English professor at the University of Illinois. He has done a good, tight, uncommonly sympathetic study of Virginia Woolf's writings. He emphasizes her strong resentment of the discrimination practiced against women in the various worlds of the arts, and he discusses at length her thesis that truly creative people are androgynous. None of this, of course, is new to readers of **ORLANDO** or **A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN**. It is quite clear that Virginia Woolf held no brief for homosexuality as a cause, would not have even understood the need for such, but she respected all aspects of all personal relationships and bitterly resented restrictions upon any of them. In her lifetime she loved and was loved by many women. On the other hand, she loved and was loved by many men. So far, no one has done an intimate biography of her, and her papers are still being guarded, edited and examined, with overly loving care. (It must be mentioned that one reason for this is protection of the still living, rather than censorship. She happened to

move in an almost totally homosexual milieu, and care is necessary.) Some future readers (and me, too, if I last long enough) will be very happy with the ultimate publishing of the whole of her diaries. In her case, as with Anais Nin, it is presumptuous and boring to think of editing. The laundry lists of the truly great have fascination. We are too many years away from an age where people recorded (without the aid of typewriters and other means of communication now prevalent) the daily detail that makes up a life, for many correspondents throughout a lifetime. It may be that Joe the trash man does not lead a fascinating life, and his memoirs, should there be such, may need editing. For people whose words shape the world, there should be no such editing. Anyway, for now, Professor Marder's work needs reading. Your large libraries will get this, but it is the kind of book that should be bought and kept, not borrowed.

Harlan Ellison, who can write very well, can also do a very poor job, and I am sorry to have to classify his short story, "A Path Through The Darkness" in **LOVE AIN'T NOTHING BUT SEX MISPELLED**, N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1968, among his less successful stories. It is about a young writer with a girlfriend who seems hung up on watching other people in moments of tension. The denouement is ugly, and the psychology lame. Other stories in the collection are good, and in general recommended, but don't cry if you miss this one.

On the other hand, the very famous George P. Elliott, who is, alas, not very prolific, has a new collection of short stories out called **AN**

HOUR OF LAST THINGS AND OTHER STORIES, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1968, and it is very special. The title story concerns Betty Hollander, 38 years old, just widowed, a tall, self-effacing woman, who has worked as a volunteer social worker. By accident (not from her husband's death) Betty inherits a great deal of money and she quits her job and moves into a Long Island home (also part of the inheritance). How she lives during the first few months following her husband's death, in these new surroundings, makes up the story. Inexplicably she develops a compelling sexual attraction to a young Negro singer, Mulia. Mr. Elliott is a philosopher, rather than an entertainer, but this is an excellent story in an almost uniformly excellent collection. He is, almost without doubt, one of the best in genre writing today. Not to be missed...

QUITE a promotional fuss is being made over **THE EXQUISITE THING**, by Joyce MacIver, N.Y., Putnam, 1968. This author first put her name in the blue lime-light a few years ago with **THE FROG POND**, a "tell it like it was" history of a trip to the borders of insanity and back again, with lots of sex. This novel also has lots of sex, and it is all pretty repellent. The titular "exquisite thing" apparently, is a person who can satisfy the narrator's particular hangup. We aren't told just what this problem is until well into the book, and the knowing reader wonders just what sort of exotica will be uncovered. It turns out, however, that the lady enjoys being beaten and raped, and enjoys, to some extent, mistreating others. One of her "lovers" is a woman, and this produces a reversal in roles in

that the narrator decides she will terrify, humiliate and sadistically treat the innocent and very lovely older woman who has fallen in love with her. Fortunately the Lesbian gets away from our "heroine" with very little damage. This is well written, but what a waste of time and words. Even the famous "one-handed readers" will be disappointed because the action is spread out and slowly paced. The pain of a book like this lies in the reporting of such a loveless and unloving life.

For me the reward for searching through endless hundreds of books each year is the occasional title that makes all the boredom and all of the irritation engendered by many of them, worth it. The unlikely title, *A JINGLE JANGLE SONG*, by Mariana Villa-Gilbert, London, Chatto and Windus, 1968, is one of the special books.

Sarah Kumar is a young naturalized American folksinger, of the Joan Baez type, on a concert tour in London. Born in India, she is half Indian and half British. Her part is told in brief bits and never made entirely clear. She is nervous and uncertain, a product of her racial mixture in a less than pleasant world, and a product of the frenetic, distorted musical world she inhabits. She has been married, unhappily and briefly, and she had lived with a beautiful, young feminine boy, equally unhappily though not so briefly. She drinks too much, too often.

She is attracted to, and attracts, Jane Stankovich, a much older married woman, who has, ostensibly, a "courteous" marriage with a man who admits his little affairs and allows her considerable freedom.

For a few days, between concerts,

between rehearsals, between public appearances (including a march protesting United States involvement in Vietnam), Sarah and Jane are together, intensely, erotically, completely.

Sarah agrees to return to London as soon as possible, and then, at the last minute breaks off the relationship. She tells herself, at first, that it is because of Jane's husband (who has proved to be less than "courteous" when the rival is a woman), and later, that she hadn't really loved Mrs. Stankovich at all.

But the reader never really knows which solution to believe. The narrative is told from both women's viewpoints, but always in the third person, which is awkward and unsatisfactory. Despite this drawback, the novel is compelling and, at times, intensely vital, an ingredient sometimes lacking in contemporary fiction.

Some special things stand out: Sarah's pop world is portrayed with chilling believability; the love scenes are very erotic but very well handled; the nature of love is discussed and examined without clinical detractions. There is no such thing today as a "romantic" novel, but this will do well in its place. Miss Villa-Gilbert is the author of three previous novels, none of which has been published in the United States. It is very possible that this book will also not appear in this country. It is well worth going to the trouble of ordering it from England, however. I will be looking into Miss Villa-Gilbert's previous novels, and will report in the future should any of them prove to be pertinent.



CROSS CURRENTS

THE HOMOPHILE COMMUNITY VERSUS DR. CHARLES W. SOCARIDES

On Wednesday, June 19, 1968, *THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE* carried a front page article by science correspondent, David Perlman, covering the June 18, 1968 talk by Dr. Charles W. Socarides before the American Medical Association, then meeting in San Francisco.

Dr. Socarides, a psychiatrist at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, characterized homosexuals from every standpoint, personality, social adjustment and biological evolution, as mentally ill and potentially curable. He went on to advocate a government supported "national center for sexual rehabilitation," where homosexuals desiring help would be treated "humanely."

Mr. Perlman quotes Dr. Socarides as calling homosexuality a "severe pathology." Admitting that there are a large number of homosexuals in the United States, Dr. Socarides went on to say that they seldom asked help for their condition because of "their guilt and shame over their sexual activities." To top off this spate of poppycock, he finished

strongly by calling homosexuality "a dread disfunction, malignant in character, which has risen to epidemic proportions."

Obviously, the homophile community had no alternative to rebutting this sort of biased and inaccurate treatment, and they did a fine job, too.

THE SOCIETY FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS (SIR), THE DAUGHTER'S OF BILITIS, THE SAN FRANCISCO COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND THE HOMOSEXUAL, and Dr. Joel Fort, a psychiatrist and lecturer at San Francisco State College and founder of the SAN FRANCISCO CENTER FOR SPECIAL PROBLEMS, held a joint press conference at Glide Memorial Church's Fellowship Hall on June 20, 1968.

At the same time, members of DOB and SIR handed out 2,000 leaflets to persons attending the June 20, 1968 meetings of the A.M.A.

Both THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER and THE SAN

FRANCISCO CHRONICLE gave coverage to the press conference in their June 21, 1968 issues.

"The text of the leaflet circulated at the A.M.A. meeting follows:

The Society for Individual Rights, the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, the Daughters of Bilitis and the National Legal Defense Fund, call upon the American Medical Association:

1. To present at its next national convention an interdisciplinary seminar on homosexuality at which anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, zoologists and psychiatrists of the non-sickness, as well as the sickness school, participate. Representatives of the homophile movement should also be invited.

2. To undertake to educate the medical profession by opening the pages of its journal to the subject of homosexuality. (The AMA "Journal" has had only a handful of articles on homosexuality in the last decade. By contrast, in England, "The Lancet" and the "British Medical Journal" have had many articles and letters.)

3. To promote the better education of future doctors by strengthening and expanding medical school courses on sexuality (including homosexuality).

4. To help educate the general public on the subject of homosexuality by speaking out informatively and acting responsibly on both the national and local levels.

5. To join with the homophile organizations and many others in:

a. Supporting the legal changes proposed by the American Law Institute;

b. Calling for an end to present federal policies which exclude homosexuals from the draft, which results

in the undesirable discharge of homosexual servicemen followed by denial of veterans' benefits, which deny employment to homosexuals wholly because of their sexual orientation and which arbitrarily label all homosexuals sex psychopaths;

c. Criticizing the harassment of homosexuals by police and liquor authorities, the exploitation of them by unscrupulous persons, utilization of arrest procedures which involve such unsavory tactics as clandestine observation, enticement and entrapment by vice squad decoys, and the use of homosexuality as a political weapon or as the basis for witch-hunts;

d. Requesting responsible treatment of the subject of homosexuality by all news media, all public officials and all professional persons.

6. To encourage our institutions of higher education and our professional groups to undertake an extensive program of research on the subject of homosexuality in order to replace theories and opinions with facts."



COVER—"Pleasure Boat Excursion"

"Cover artist, Jane Kogan, is 28 years old. She is a graduate of Brandeis University, Magna Cum Laude, with Honors in Fine Arts. She received her Master of Fine Arts degree in painting at Columbia University, June, 1965. She is presently teaching in the New York City school system.

In 1961-1962 she received a Fulbright Fellowship to Rome. From 1962 to 1968 her works appeared in six outstanding "group shows." In 1967 she had a "one man show" at Griffin Gallery, Madison Avenue at 58th Street, New York City. Her works are in several outstanding contemporary collections.

Miss Kogan is associated with more than half-a-dozen art galleries, and has dozens of additional professional credits. THE LADDER is honored to present another of her paintings on the cover of this issue, as well as to include her poem in this issue (on page 22). (Previously, THE LADDER has featured her work on the August, 1967 and October, 1967 issues.)

Jane Kogan, in addition to her already busy professional life, is a member of the New York Chapter of DAUGHTER'S OF BILITIS, and was Editor of that chapter's Newsletter."

THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE a bibliography

By Gene Damon and Lee Stuart

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THE LADDER is a monthly magazine published by Daughters of Bilitis, Inc., mailed in a plain sealed envelope for \$5.00 a year. Anyone over 21 may subscribe to **THE LADDER**.

CONTRIBUTIONS are gratefully accepted from anyone who wants to support our work. We are a non-profit corporation depending entirely on volunteer labor. While men may not become members of Daughters of Bilitis, many have expressed interest in our efforts and have made contributions to further our work.

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New York Chapter
P. O. Box 3629
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