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# THE LADDER



OCTOBER—NOVEMBER

# DAUGHTERS of BILITIS

INCORPORATED

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# THE LADDER

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## In This Issue:

The Intake Interview—by Ruth M. McGuire, Phd . . . . .	4
The Myna Bird—by Jinx Clark . . . . .	12
Dominance—by Jeannette H. Foster, Phd. . . . .	17
Lesbiana—by Gene Damon . . . . .	18
An Open Letter to Mary Daly—by Rita Laporte . . . . .	24
Part of the Way to Everywhere—by Jocelyn Hayward . . . . .	27
The Least of These—by Marilyn Barrow . . . . .	30
Publish or Perish—Editorial . . . . .	33
Sextet—Poetry by Maura McCullough . . . . .	34
Rachel, Rachel—Review by Gladys Casey . . . . .	36
Cross Currents . . . . .	37
Research Project Announced . . . . .	42
Readers Respond . . . . .	43
Cover—by Elizabeth Chandler	

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# The Intake Interview

PARTS 1, 2, 3

Ruth M. McGuire, Ph.D.

*Mrs. A. has come to the office of the therapist to discuss a burdensome problem. This is a not uncommon situation: many parents, siblings and relatives consult doctors about their children or family members. Mrs. A. appears to be reasonably intelligent, civilized, and genuinely concerned. She is middle-aged, neatly groomed and fairly articulate in an area where she is obviously uncomfortable.*

*In the service of economy of space, Mrs. A's comments are not enclosed in quotes; what the therapist says is in parentheses.*

Can you cure homosexuality? (No, not any more than I, or anyone, can cure heterosexuality.) What do you mean? Heterosexuality is normal, it's not a sickness, like homosexuality. (Do you think homosexuality is a sickness?) Of course, doesn't everybody? All you *doctors* say it is a disease and that homosexuals are sick. (What do you understand of what constitutes a disease, or sickness?) Why, just what everybody in this modern day and age knows a disease is! (It's true, our modern media have 'enlightened' great numbers of people about many heretofore un-understood or mis-understood conditions. But individual interpretations of what is heard and seen vary greatly. I am not being capricious in asking you, in all seriousness, to tell me what 'disease' and 'sickness' mean to you.)

Well, a disease is something that

happens to a person to upset the body and make it hurt, and it is painful. A disease can make a person feel miserable and if it isn't cured, it can lead to death. (What kind of diseases are you thinking of?) Why, the diseases everybody knows about: you hear about them all the time—like cancer and heart-disease and diabetes. And then there's arthritis and rheumatism and gall-bladder trouble. People who have those diseases are really sick. And oh yes, there's mental illness—that's a kind of disease, or sickness too, I've heard. (True, and have you known people who suffered those sicknesses?) Indeed I have. Thank God my family's been spared but I have friends who have had all those categories I named. (How does their sickness affect them?) Why, Doctor, surely you know that! They are in pain, uncomfortable, taking medications all the time, and, very scared about themselves. Depressed, too. They lose lots of time at work, and sometimes they lose their jobs—and their lives. They are sad, pathetic and wretched people. Crippled and often cut off from life. It's terrible to have a disease and be sick all the time.

(I couldn't agree with you more. But you first asked me if I could cure homosexuality and you called it a disease and a sickness. Are you concerned about yourself? Are you a homosexual?) Why, Doctor! How could you say such a nasty thing? Do I look like a homosexual! (How

does a homosexual 'look'?) Well! You should know! I've heard you have treated dozens of homosexuals and that's why I came to you. You were recently on a TV show and I heard you. (And did you not hear me say there is no such thing as a homosexual 'look' by which any homosexual can be identified?) I guess I forgot that part—or didn't hear it. I only heard you say you had cured some homosexuals. I guess that's the only thing I remember you said. That struck so terribly close to home, you see. (You are concerned about someone very close to you?) Yes, it's my daughter, you see. She told me recently she's a Lesbian and it's ruined my life. My heart is broken. I feel I can't look anyone in the face anymore.

I've got to find someone who can cure her. I've simply *got* to! (You are obviously very unhappy about this situation. Have you discussed with your daughter how you feel about it?) I've tried to, Doctor, but you just can't talk to that girl. I've really carried on about it but she just keeps insisting that I don't understand and that she feels fine. But I know she's sick!

(We have been discussing 'sickness' and 'disease'. You have told me how you conceive of them—that a disease is something that upsets the body and its functions, it is painful and makes the body hurt, that medications are taken and that if the body is not relieved, death can occur. Is your daughter suffering any of these things we've talked about?) Good heavens, no! Why, she's just fine—strong as anything; she's never been sick a day in her life! (And she isn't depressed, or withdrawn, or losing work, or scared about herself?) Not at all. Quite to

the contrary, she seems very happy and sure of herself and she works like a trojan. She's a very talented artist and is creative and productive no end.

(Have you talked with her about getting 'cured' or about seeing a therapist?) Yes, I've tried to. I've pleaded with her and when she hasn't listened, I've threatened. (Threatened what?) Well, I told her if she wouldn't come to her senses she could just get out of my house. (And?) And that I never wanted to see her again. (What happened?) She left. She's living in her studio with her girl-friend—her 'lover', I guess you'd call it. (Do you know her friend?) Oh, yes indeedy—for the past four years. Didi, that's my daughter's name, met her in their freshman year at college and they've been inseparable ever since! She's had little time for me since. And to think we used to be inseparable. (Is 'Didi' your daughter's real name?) No, it's my pet name for her and it stands for 'Daughter-Dear' which is what I used to call her until she made me stop. She doesn't like 'Didi' either . . . says it stands for 'Doomed Dependent'—isn't that cute?

(You say you *used* to be inseparable?) No two people were ever closer: no mother and daughter, I mean. She knew I thought the sun rose and set in her. (Did your admiration please her?) Not always. Often it seemed to embarrass and even anger her. I never could understand why. (Do you have other children?) Yes, two boys. But they're older and you know how boys are. (How are they?) Oh, they're always wild and free: they grow away from you so fast. A mother can never depend on boys. (Depend for what?)



Oh, companionship—doing things together. (Where is your husband?) He's around. But he's busy all the time. I never see him. In fact, I hardly saw him from the time the honeymoon was over. The only thing he wanted was work, work, work. I tell him he married his business—not me. The first real fun I had in my marriage was when Didi came along. She was so beautiful and smart. And in the earlier years she would do anything I said. She couldn't have been a better daughter. I never had any trouble with her. Until she went off to school. That was her first time away from home and it seems to me she went to pieces without me. (Went to pieces?) Why yes, when she met this friend I'm telling you about. After that—her attitude toward me changed like from day to night. (What do you think happened?) I know what happened—that girlfriend of hers, happened. That Jo!

(Mrs. A., I'm sorry but our time is up. I think we should discuss this further—what do you think?) Oh yes, I haven't told you nearly all the story yet. (Very well. Tomorrow at the same time?) I'll be here.

*Mrs. A. has kept her second appointment with the therapist to continue the discussion about her Lesbian daughter, 'Didi', and her own acute distress over the situation.*

(Good morning, Mrs. A.) No, it's not. It's a terrible morning. I mean I feel terrible. I couldn't sleep a wink last night. I just tossed and turned. I couldn't eat a bite of dinner, either. (That sounds distressing: do you know what caused this?) I certainly do. *You* caused it. You got me so confused about homosexuality and disease and sickness, my mind just wouldn't stop whirling.

After I left you yesterday I walked for hours and hours. I couldn't sit still. The more I tried to think, the more confused I became. And then I began to be really mad at you. (Tell me about that.) Oh, Doctor, I wouldn't dare tell you the things I thought about you. You'd throw me right out of here, or have me arrested for what I was thinking and plotting to do. I got so furious, I wanted to do you harm.

(Sounds like you worked up a good, old-fashioned rip-roaring rage.) I did. I don't think I've been that angry since I was a child. (Tell me about it. And be reassured that in this room you may say anything you please. Any words you want to use or any feeling you want to describe is totally permissible here. Anything we say to one another stays right here. It will never be repeated elsewhere. You are unequivocally guaranteed absolute confidentiality.) I thought only real Doctors took the Hippocratic oath. (Real Doctors?) Only M.D.'s—Doctors of Medicine. (True, only physicians go through the open, public formality of repeating aloud the ancient actual words of Hippocrates' creed. But if you'll think a moment, you will realize there are many categories of real Doctors—in the fields of Philosophy, Religion, the Humanities, Law, Engineering, and dozens more.) Oh, of course I know that: I'm not stupid. (I haven't thought for a moment you were. That's why I'm interested in your responding so defensively.) I guess I'm still feeling angry. To be perfectly honest, I guess I wanted to 'get your goat' or pay you back for upsetting me so yesterday. (This is understandable: when we're hurt we often want to hurt back. If we can

get back to your painful reactions of yesterday, I think you won't feel the need to provoke me into doing or saying something that you can justifiably point to as an excuse for your anger. And let me assure you that the trained and dedicated non-medical therapists observe the un-written ethical and moral law of respecting confidentiality just as devoutly as any physician. Now, you spoke of 'plotting against me'?)

Yes, I was planning to investigate you—or have you investigated. I can afford that, y'know. (Good idea. I would add that perhaps you can't afford *not* to.) Well! I must say, you say the most unexpected things. (You didn't expect me to agree or even encourage you?) Heavens no! I had come to the conclusion you were some kind of quack or imposter. I was going to investigate and expose you. (What made you think I might be a quack?) Oh, I don't know. Everything's so confused, beginning right with all the names people call themselves. One hears about psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, therapists, counsellors, and dozens more. I don't know anybody who knows what the differences are and it's hard to tell which one you want or need for a problem like mine. What is the difference anyway?

(Briefly, just this: the psychiatrist is a person with a medical degree and is a physician. After his medical school training and passing his State Board of Examiners, he may elect to practice in the field of mental health, treat patients for emotional or psychological problems, or the more severe mental illnesses such as psychoses. He is not required by law to train additionally in any approved or State chartered 'school' for teaching the theory and techniques of

psychoanalysis or psychotherapy. He is a licensed physician and permitted to make physical examinations, write prescriptions and so on. He *can* be a man who realizes that surgery, or pediatrics, or internal medicine are not for him and he *can* begin to treat patients without one more minute of formal or post-graduate training or experience. Unfortunately, some physicians do this. The majority, however, are ethical, responsible people and they invest in the additional time and money to learn the theory and techniques of sound psychotherapy.

The psychoanalyst may or may not be a physician. In some States social workers, psychologists, sociologists, educators, ministers, and priests who have Masters' degrees may be accepted for the post-graduate training in an accredited, State chartered School like I just described. If the person is not a physician, he may not call himself a psychiatrist. But in some States it is legal for him to call himself a psychoanalyst. A psychologist is one who has taken his undergraduate and post-graduate training in the field of psychology. He may elect to work in industrial, social, or clinical psychology. If he is a clinical-psychologist he is usually a therapist and works directly with patients. He may call himself a psychoanalyst, too, in most States. All these professional people who work with emotionally or psychologically disturbed persons are properly called therapists; but as you see their background disciplines can vary.)

And what are you? (My disciplinary background is psychiatric social work. I have taken the additional training described and am a therapist. My working techniques are em-



ployed in the forms of psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy, and, depth psychoanalysis.) I think I see . . . (And do you see why I encouraged you to 'investigate' me? Any patient has the right, if not the duty, to himself, to know exactly what the training and experience of his therapist has been. I have helped to pick up the pieces of several wrecked lives that had been damaged by unskilled and incompetent 'therapists'.)

I feel I should apologize . . . (No indeed. Your reactions to our first session, your confusions, doubts, suspicions, then anger, were almost to be expected. You have thought and felt nothing whatever to be ashamed of. In fact, I salute your courage to return here today and tell me about it.) Well, I did almost cancel several times, but something made me keep the appointment. (I wonder what it was.) Maybe I sensed you could help *me*—if not Didi. And anyway, you are a woman, and I didn't know any other women in this field. You were the only woman on that TV panel. I couldn't go to any man about this.

(You are more comfortable with women?) Well . . . yes . . . I guess I am. About something like this, especially. (Have you always been more 'comfortable' with women?) Come to think of it, I have—always. I was very close to my own mother, you see, and I've always planned that Didi and I would be just as close. And now—this bitter thing between us—what can I do? (We need to talk more about this. I suggest we plan a series of scheduled meetings to thoroughly explore *all* the things that upset you.) Are you saying *I'm* the patient? (What do you think?) Well, perhaps I am . . .

(I agree.)

*Mrs. A. has kept her third appointment and seems almost more agitated than she did the two previous visits. The therapist says nothing but looks interested and available. Mrs. A. starts talking at once.*

I notice you didn't say 'Good Morning' today. I guess you learned your lesson yesterday. (Perhaps I learned it a long time ago. When two people in a situation like this begin to know one another, the 'amenities' are unnecessary; in fact they can be distracting and often painfully ironic. I can see it is not a good morning for you.) No, it's not. I feel worse than yesterday. I walked and walked again, even more than the day before. It was what we talked about at the end—when I realized I did want more meetings with you and to talk some more. And then, when you said *I* was the patient . . . it stunned me. (*Did I* say you were the patient?) Yes, you said—oh, I guess I asked you if you *were* saying that. (And what did I say?) Well, I guess you asked me what *I* thought. (And?) Maybe that's what started me all off again—walking and trying to think what I really did think, and feel. (What occurred to you?)

What my husband would say. I dreaded telling him I would continue to see you awhile. He has to pay your bills, you know. But worse than that is, my coming here would give him the chance again to say the things he used to say to me. (Things he used to say?) Yes. He used to call me 'nuts' and 'crazy' and 'neurotic' and all those words. (Why?) Well, you remember I told you the other day that I hardly saw him after our honeymoon? (I remember.) He said I was cold and unresponsive, and

grudging in the performance of my 'duties' as a wife. (What did he mean?) I didn't enjoy sex with him. I never have. He was my first man. I was a virgin when I married.

I avoided intercourse whenever I could. (What do you think caused that reaction in you?) He was oversexed. He wanted it all the time! (All the time?) Almost. Why, the night we were married he had it five times! By morning I was hysterical—crying my heart out, and sick and sore. I wouldn't let him touch me the rest of the trip. (It sounds like a very traumatic situation. Go on.) He was furious and that night he began calling me 'nuts' and 'crazy': he said any normal, healthy girl would be glad to have such a vigorous husband. But it was awful, Doctor, he was like an animal. I think I lost all real feeling for him right from then. (Real feeling?) Well, yes. I'd liked him well enough up to then. (Liked?) I don't know what to call it. I've often wondered if I ever loved him. I never had the same kind of feeling for him I had for my mother: I *know* I loved her. (How did you feel about your father?)

I never knew him. He died when I was very young and there was just mother and me. (Was there any man—any father-figure in your early life at all?) No. My grandfathers died before I was born and I knew my grandmothers only a little. There was just mother and me. Oh, there was one man once: he was a teacher in junior high. I think I did love him, a little. (Why?) Well, he was handsome and he liked me. He was very gentle and kind: he never yelled at the kids and we all adored him. He could teach, too. We all learned a lot from him. He really liked children and he especially liked me.

(How do you know?) Well, he paid extra attention to me: he thought I was very bright and he encouraged me to work hard. And I surely did. I studied more for him than for any other teacher. It was he who began talking to me about planning for college in the future. I guess you'd say he gave me a lot of faith in myself that I could do the 'impossible'. (The impossible?) Yes, mother never talked about college. I think now she may have been afraid I'd leave her and go off to school. (Did you?) No. After High School she became ill and needed me more than ever. I stayed home to care for her. (How did you feel about that?) Oh, I guess I didn't mind, at first. Although I must admit I was a little disappointed not to go on to school. The truth is, I was very disappointed: I think I was very bitter about it. I'd received a scholarship to a very good, small college. I had to refuse it. That junior high teacher had given me something I couldn't shake off the rest of my time in high school—a belief in myself that I had some brains. I'd made very good grades all the way through. Then, all my childish hopes and dreams fell through. (Those were not childish hopes and dreams. I think you had a perfect right to be disappointed. What was your mother's illness?) It was a little bit of everything. First one thing bothered her, then another. We went to doctor after doctor: they could find nothing really wrong. Finally one doctor said it was 'pseudoneurosthenia.'

(Can you recall anything special about the onset of her condition?) What do you mean? (Did it occur suddenly, say, around the time of your high school graduation?) Well, for heaven's sakes—I believe it

did! Although there were short flare-ups before. (Anything special about those times?) Why, yes, now I think of it: she'd have a 'spell' with something or other whenever I wanted to do something. (Do something?) Like go on a weekend somewhere with the crowd; or have a date with boys she didn't like. (Boys she didn't like?) Yes, I never did manage to bring home a boy she liked. She found something wrong with all of them. I finally gave up. (What did you do then?) I got a part-time job as a library clerk so that I could be with her most of the time. That job let me be with books and I could continue reading and studying things that interested me. (How long did that continue?) For four years. Until mother's death, when I was twenty-two. (What did she die of?) She was killed instantly in an automobile accident. I was really alone then. (What did you do?) I married my husband. (Why?) I was lonely. There didn't seem to be anything else to do. I thought then it was too late to return to schooling. All my friends were married and it seemed that's what most people did, anyway, so I did, too.

(How well did you know him?) As well as I knew any of the boys. We were in high school together; he was very bright and we often ran neck and neck for top grades. I guess we were sort of in competition for highest achievement. He came to the library where I worked quite a lot. He was always studying everything he could lay his hands on about business. I admired his industry and his brains. We dated a little from time to time and I sort of got used to him. Then when mother died, he asked me to marry and I didn't see any good reason not to, so we did.

(It sounds like you made a compromise—that you settled for the least of several evils.) I guess you're right, though I've tried to not think about that all these years.

(Was there any happiness at all for you in your situation?) Almost none. I got pregnant our wedding night. I became so bitter I wanted to commit suicide. I guess I became pretty unpleasant to him about it all. And nine months later the boys were born—twins. They made a lot of difference. I really loved them until they began to grow up. (You could love them as long as they were helpless and dependent?) Yes, then when they didn't need me anymore . . . (What did you do?) Oh, I got more and more involved with the girls. I'd always liked the Garden Club and our Bridge Club and I also volunteered a lot of time on various womens' committees—that sort of thing. I wasn't home much and that's when my husband began calling me the old nasty names again like 'nuts' and 'crazy'. Doctor, do you think I'm crazy?

(That depends on what you mean by 'crazy'. Again, words are interpreted quite differently by different people. To many the terms 'nuts' and 'crazy' are merely part of our modern, everyday slang and are meaningless except for the connotation that the people being called those words are in disagreement with the name-caller. Many use those words as gently derisive, others as indicating amusement or even endearment. But I think you are questioning something more serious.) All right, then. Do you think I'm mentally ill?

(Again, we must be exceedingly careful to qualify and understand the degree, or extent, or your psy-

chological discomfort. There is vast difference between a simple neurosis and a psychotic state. Certainly I see no evidence of psychosis in you at the present.) What do you mean, 'at the present'? (Just that. During our three meetings you have been in contact with reality, your responses have been appropriate. You have not tried to repress or deny your part in various relationships. Your honesty is refreshing and very much a credit toward the success of any therapy work we may do together. However, when I said 'at the present' about being psychotic, I stated a fact about your current level of stability and also acknowledged the fact that you, myself, anyone—at any time—has the potential to become psychotic.)

I never heard of such a thing in all my life! (Quite likely you never did. Most people outside our field have not. It hasn't been until relatively recently that workers in the mental health field, the researchers and clinicians, have had a sufficient body of knowledge to formulate theories, and to demonstrate that any human being, given just the 'right' set of circumstances of pressure and ability, or inability, to withstand those stresses, can break down and withdraw from reality into a protective psychosis. The late, and truly very great, Dr. Karl Menninger was one of the first to teach us that fact. He said he doubted very much if there was an intelligent human being who reached adult life who had not, at some time or other in his life, experienced a period of psychosis, or of serious schizophrenic illness.)

Well, I didn't realize I'd been quiet so long. At your prices, I should do my thinking at home. (Silences can be very good—ones

like yours just now are highly therapeutic. I'm thinking you experienced some kind of relief.) Yes, I did. I think I began to see I've been 'cliff-hanging' for a long time—maybe since high school days. And another thing I must confess—the night we, Didi and I, quarrelled so horribly—I think I must have been crazy, er, psychotic, or nearly so, then. I was in such a terrible rage I'm sure I lost my usual sense of reality. (That is quite possible. Anger of that enormity is so overwhelming—so much adrenalin is released within the body—that one truly takes leave of reality. It is so painful and so frightening, it seems like it will last forever. Fortunately, it usually does not. But then, after, we're caught in the vicious back lash of remorse, guilt, and the disturbing fear of our own potential for such a force of feeling.)

You seem to understand exactly what I felt—all those ghastly things. Are you a mind reader, too? (No indeed. Nor do I have any crystal ball. Your experience is a very human one. You are not alone in having had those thoughts and feelings. Most people have experienced, or will experience, sometime in their lifetime, the things you have been telling me about.) Doctor, I must do something about this: I've got to clear things with Didi. And even with her Jo. For myself, too: I can't afford to skirt so near that 'edge' again. And I've got to understand more about Lesbianism. I want to begin working with you on a regular basis. I don't care what my husband says. I guess he said it right last night, after all. (What did he say?) He said, "Well, it's about time!"

Analysis will be continued.



# The Myna Bird

Jinx Clark



There was a time when the names Fran and Jennifer could inflame certain cocktail parties. Mention the two girls to a group of their former friends, and heated conversations would break out. "Cut off without a word," one woman was fond of remarking, "as if we were dirt beneath their feet." Heads would nod in agreement. "But still," someone else would usually add, "it was all Clarence's fault. Who else could be blamed?"

Which was very true. If it hadn't been for Clarence, nothing would have happened. Fran and Jennifer would have remained in their apartment on Poplar Street, seeing the same circle of friends and never altering the patterns of their life together. It's not likely that they would ever have parted. But Clarence came, and changed all that.

"It's your doing," Fran would scream at Jennifer during the most difficult weeks. "You're the one who always wanted a myna bird. A myna bird, of all things!" She would swear and stamp out of the room, leaving Jennifer to stare at the birdcage and develop another migraine headache.

"Clarence," Jennifer would say at such times, while she rubbed her aching head, "I absolutely despise you." And then she would go clean Clarence's cage, for it always seemed to need cleaning.

They had seen Clarence in a pet shop window one spring afternoon when they both felt especially exuberant. Fran had received a pay raise the day before, and they'd gone shopping to celebrate.

"Look, Fran, a myna bird!" said Jennifer

when they passed the window. And she ran up to look, pressing her nose against the glass as she watched the bird pace around his cage, his head tipped to one side while he peered back at Jennifer out of the corner of one eye. "Isn't he sweet?"

Thirty minutes later and considerably poorer, they left the pet shop, after spending most of the week's grocery money on the bird, a cage, equipment, food, and an instruction booklet about the care of mynas. Jennifer struggled through the shopping center mall on the way to the car, carrying the heavy cage, the bird clinging wild-eyed to the wire mesh cage floor and moaning all the while.

"Do you think he's going to be sick?" asked Fran, eyeing the bird suspiciously. Crowds of people had gathered in clumps, talking and pointing at the girls.

"You don't have to carry this damn cage," muttered Jennifer, "so don't complain. If he does get sick, it'll be all over me, not you. Besides, I don't see you with your arms full of much except birdseed."

"Let's do gripe, shall we?" said Fran, and opened the car door with a flourish. During the ride back to their apartment, the bird flopped over on his sides, his wings limp and his eyes halfclosed, as his moans grew louder.

"Pretty bird?" said Fran when they set the large cage in a corner of their living room. "Pretty birdy?" The myna stared back, drooling and still moaning. "Come on, bird, talk. Hey, Jennifer, this bird is a fake. He won't say a thing."

"Not right away, silly," said Jennifer. "He has to learn how, first. We have to teach him."

"Jolly," said Fran. "I thought mynas came with a readymade vocabulary. So now what do we do? Spend our evenings gurgling baby talk to this bloody bird? That sounds like great fun." She glared at the myna. "Stupid! Stupid bird!"

"Stupid!" said a hollow echoing voice from within the cage. "Stupid, stupid, stupid!" And then Fran and Jennifer heard a long line of shrill laughter, ending at last with a hic-cough.

"My God," said Fran. "He talks."

"Stupid, stupid, stupid," said the bird in a pleasant voice.

A week later the bird had acquired a name: Clarence. "Chosen," Fran and Jennifer told their friends, "because he resembles Fran's great uncle Clarence, who has black beady eyes just like the bird's." And their friends would trail across the living room carpet, to stand distrustfully in front of the cage as they looked at Clarence. "Does he talk?" they would ask, and Clarence would remain silent. "Clarence is shy," Fran and Jennifer would explain.

Alone with the girls, Clarence was not shy. By the end of the first week he learned to imitate the sounds of the telephone and doorbell so accurately that the girls found themselves opening the door when no one was there, or picking up the telephone receiver at odd hours of the day or night to hear only the dial tone. Fran suggested that they not bother to answer the telephone after ten at night. But then Jennifer's mother confronted her the following weekend, demanding to know where Jennifer had been at four in the morning the preceding Friday—her brother Bill had been sick, and the unanswered telephone had added to her mother's worries. So they continued to answer the telephone, and Clarence would chuckle disrespectfully when they slammed the receiver back down.

At the end of a month, Clarence had become a library of sounds, including imitations of the apartment house elevator, several varieties of automobile horns, three jingles (words plus music) from television commercials, and a squeaky violin, the last from listening to the little boy in the next apartment practice every afternoon.

"I don't think I can take this noise much longer," Fran said one evening as the girls sat wearily at the far end of the living room while Clarence, in his cage at the opposite end of the room, ran through his repertoire several times, pausing now and then to laugh at himself. "If he would talk to us it would be different. But Clarence doesn't converse—he performs."

Clarence hopped up to his perch in the cage and made his newest sound, an imitation of a jackhammer which he'd learned the day before when a construction crew tore up the street in front of the apartment building.

"I don't mind the noise as much as the mess," said Jennifer. "You don't have to clean that damn cage six times a day." She mashed out a half-smoked cigarette.

"Six times a day? Don't kid me," Fran

said. "You're not home that often, unless you've started coming home from work on your coffee breaks and lunch hours to take care of Clarence."

"Three times a day, then," Jennifer said with great irritation. "But it's a mess. I've discussed the advantages of being housebroken with Clarence, but he won't listen. He pretends to be picking lice from under his wings when I talk. He won't even pay attention when I tell him he'd better be more tidy in his habits. He likes being the perfect slob. As it is—well, you can see his cage."

"And smell it," said Fran. "Have you bothered to clean it today? The apartment smells foul, and I feel nauseated. I am embarrassed to go into my office each morning. I smell like I live in a zoo. Why the hell can't you keep the odor down? It's all your fault."

"I cleaned that cage an hour ago," cried Jennifer, and ran into her bedroom, slamming the door behind her. With a sigh (and a frown at Clarence, who was trying to whistle), Fran went off to apologize.

As the weeks went on, Clarence continued to learn. He liked to imitate the sound of a match being lit, and would run through books and books of imaginary matches just as the girls were going to sleep each night. Once during the summer the air conditioning broke and made a horrible clattering sound until it was repaired; Clarence learned immediately to imitate a broken air conditioner and could do it so successfully that the neighbors would knock at the girls' door, anxiously inquiring whether the unit had been fixed.

But the worst was the screaming. One night Jennifer had a nightmare and awoke in a sweat at four in the morning to the sound of her own screams. Fran fixed a pot of tea and the two talked over cigarettes then returned to bed, thinking that was the end of it. But no. From then on, Clarence began to scream. Fran and Jennifer had managed to salvage some remnants of a sense of humor about Clarence and his noises, but who could have a sense of humor about blood-curdling screams, followed usually by a loud cackle of laughter? Even the neighbors complained.

"Your parrot's been screaming all day," said old Mrs. Harper to Jennifer as they rode up together in the elevator late one afternoon. "Frightful sound. I thought it was a person in some mortal agony, until Elsie Powell told me it was a bird." Mrs. Harper stared through narrowed eyes at Jennifer. "Can't you keep the thing quiet?"





"Oh Fran," sighed Jennifer as she entered the apartment a few minutes later, "now Mrs. Harper has complained about the screaming. That makes ten people already. From the way the neighbors talk, Clarence must scream all day long. What on earth shall we do?"

Fran was in the kitchen, her face expressionless as she mixed herself a drink. "We?" she said to Jennifer. "What do you mean, 'we'?" It's your bird, not mine."

"Oh Fran," cried Jennifer, and ran to her bedroom.

"Oh Fran," said Clarence, ruffling up his feathers and preening himself. "Oh Fran! Oh Fran! Stupid, stupid, stupid." And the doorbell rang.

Fran strode over to the cage, took a long gulp of her drink, and threw the remains at Clarence, who shivered and moaned and sputtered as the liquid ran down his feathers while the ice cubes clattered onto the soiled newspapers at the bottom of the cage. "Listen, bird," said Fran, her hands on her hips and her face next to the wire mesh of the cage, "that better not be the real doorbell, because if it is, it won't be answered. And I'll give you credit for one bit of truth—I'm stupid, all right. Damn stupid, to put up with this for another minute!" She collected her cigarettes and purse, and stomped out the door, past the startled apartment manager who was standing there with his finger on the doorbell. "Talk to my roommate," Fran said to him over her shoulder as she went down the hall to the elevator. "I don't live here anymore. As of now."

"Neither do she," chuckled the apartment manager, and rang the doorbell again. "Well, miss," he said to Jennifer when she opened the door, "some call it a myna and some call it a parrot, but I don't give a hang what it is. When you and your friend got the bird I said you could keep it in your apartment because it didn't appear to be destructive like a cat or dog. But I wasn't bargaining on the noise that bird would make, no mum I wasn't. We can't take that noise. I've warned you once about it, and that was before this business of the screaming. I've had more complaints, miss. Now you gotta go. I met your friend in the hall and she said to settle this with you because she don't live here no more. So settling I am. You be out by Saturday or else there's trouble with the owner."

"Fran said she doesn't live here anymore?" asked Jennifer, her eyes very wide and very red. "Didn't you hear wrong? You must be mistaken."

"I heard right, miss," said the manager.

"Not to mention the face. Didn't you see her face when she left the apartment? Yep, she's out." He peered around the corner of the door at Clarence. "That's the bird? Looks vicious to me, with those black feathers. I'm partial to canaries myself. Too bad you didn't get a canary. You don't get no screaming from them, no mum." And he was gone, shuffling cheerfully down the hall with his hands in his pockets.

Jennifer spent the evening in a frenzy, drinking too much coffee and calling everyone she knew in a futile effort to locate Fran. Finally she went to bed, crying into her pillow while Clarence sat in his cage burping over some brownish lettuce she'd given him to keep him quiet.

When she got to work the next morning she telephoned Fran at her office. "Fran!" she said with relief when she heard the familiar voice, "you're all right. My God, I've been worried sick. Where did you go? What happened?"

"What do you want, Jennifer?" said Fran, very cool and distant. "I'm busy."

"Well gosh, I know you have work to do, but what do you expect me to think? You left without a word of warning last night. I didn't even realize you were gone until the apartment manager said he'd passed you in the hall. He told me you were moving out, that you weren't coming back. He's wrong, isn't he? Well of course he's wrong." And she laughed, tapping her pencil against the edge of the desk and trying to avoid the curious looks from the other secretaries.

"I don't know what to tell you, Jennifer," Fran said. "There isn't much to talk about. I'm busy. You know that Thursday is a dreadful day here. I don't like being disturbed."

"But Fran, what am I supposed to think? Are you coming back? We've been evicted because of Clarence and his screaming, or did you know already?"

"You've been evicted, sweetie, not me," said Fran. "I left last night pre-eviction, and no, I'm not coming back. I've had it. It's finished. Kaput. Count me out. Do I make myself clear?"

"Fran, you can't mean it. This isn't like you. What am I to do?" Jennifer hunched further over the telephone and reached around in the bottom desk drawer for a kleenex. "All this time, and you just decide to walk out on the spur of the moment? What about us? Oh, I can't believe it." She mopped off her eyes with the tissue, trying not to let anyone see her.

"I'm going to hang up, Jennifer, because

to be blunt I'm tired of discussing this whole ridiculous mess. I'll be by tonight to pick up my things, but I'm warning you, don't expect any conversation. I have nothing more to say to you." And the phone went dead.

That evening Fran arrived about eight o'clock, slightly drunk and in a foul mood. Jennifer fluttered between the living room and Fran's bedroom while Fran, in a stony silence, packed her belongings into suitcases and cartons. Jennifer tried to apologize, tried to find out what had gone wrong, tried to get Fran to say something, but there was no response.

"The furniture," Jennifer said at last, "and the dishes. They're yours too. Oh Fran, please stay. I'm begging you." In the background Clarence hummed a little melody.

"It's no use," said Fran from the front door, her arms filled with boxes. "I'm fed up and I won't be back. Keep the damn dishes and this repulsive furniture, and find yourself another roommate to share them with." And she slammed the door behind her.

Jennifer jerked open the door. "But where can I reach you?" she called down the hall after Fran. "What shall I tell your mother? Where are you going?" There was no reply. Fran walked briskly down the hall and jabbed the elevator button. "I'll leave the address of the new apartment with the manager here," called Jennifer hopefully.

"You just do that, sweetie," said Fran, and the elevator doors banged shut.

By Saturday Jennifer had found an apartment, an icy expanse of white walls and blue carpeting in a highrise apartment on the other side of the city. Not until she had signed the rental agreement did she realize that she couldn't possibly pay the rent on her salary alone.

Some fellows from her office helped her move, and later a group of hers and Fran's friends stopped by to inspect the new apartment. Jennifer refused to talk to them. Instead she sat on the kitchen counter drinking beer while she unpacked the set of Sears Roebuck china which she and Fran had bought on a lark the year before. "Nice place you found," the friends said, wandering in and out of the kitchen. In the background Clarence coughed angrily.

"Too bad about Fran," someone said to her, "but you know Fran. She'll turn up."

"You help me find her, then," said Jennifer, and smashed three cups by accident in the kitchen sink.

But no one had seen Fran; no one had heard from her. Everyone was astonished

and mystified. One fellow suggested she contact the Missing Persons Bureau, and someone else made weak jokes about forming a search party, but no one did a thing.

"Let me help you unpack," said a gray-haired woman whom Jennifer scarcely knew. "You look exhausted, poor dear." She tried to shove Jennifer off the counter.

"I can manage," said Jennifer, refusing to budge. "And don't ask me how Clarence liked the move over here. I've been asked ten times already. Clarence hates change and so do I. We've got that in common. Come on now, can't you get everyone to clear out? I can't take this party atmosphere. I feel like a funeral."

One by one the friends drifted away, leaving a litter of empty cigarette packs and beer cans on the tabletops. "Gracious goodness," said Clarence when everyone had gone, and made a sound like someone being sick in the john.

"Clarence, hush," sighed Jennifer.

Jennifer called Fran's office the following Monday and was informed that Fran had quit her job the Friday before and had a new job. Where? No one seemed to know. Jennifer hung up in frustration.

In the evenings she would come home to the unfamiliar rooms and would sit in what was once her favorite chair, a half-eaten TV dinner on her lap as Clarence chattered cheerfully. "Oh Fran," he would say, "stupid, stupid, stupid," until Jennifer couldn't take it any longer. She telephoned Dave.

Dave was an old friend who had introduced her to Fran years ago. She hadn't seen much of him for months, ever since the troubles with Clarence began. "My dears," he told Fran and Jennifer at the time, "I don't want to become embroiled in your domestic problems. What if I had to take sides? A fine friend I'd be then." And he had avoided their apartment.

"Dave," Jennifer said as soon as she heard his voice on the telephone, "come get this idiotic myna. All it can do is talk about Fran, and I'm going out of my head. You know everyone. Surely there is someone somewhere who'd like to have Clarence."

"Stay calm," he said. "I'll be right over." In a half hour he was at her door, a bottle of Rhine wine and a plate of fudge in his hands. "Here," he said, shoving them at her, "maybe these will cheer you up. I think the wine is still cool."

"Dave," said Jennifer, "you're the only friend I've got in the world. Thank God you weren't among the group that came over here

the night I moved in. I don't think I'll ever speak to any of those simpering fools again in my life. No one knows where Fran is. No one cares very much."

"They meant well," said Dave, "but I daresay they got on your nerves. Bad timing." He walked over to Clarence's cage. Clarence had retreated to a far corner and was flinging birdseed over half the room. "So, Clarence, we meet again," Dave said. Clarence stared up at him and squawked, his feathers on end. "Nasty beast," said Dave, and turned away. "Looks like a vulture."

Two hours later Jennifer was staring at the empty wine bottle as she continued to talk about how unbelievable the situation was, how miserable she felt, how much she wanted Fran to return, while Dave sat opposite her, eating the last of the fudge.

"Fran just got mad," he said, wiping fudge crumbs off his shirt. "I've been saying it all evening. A person can take only so much, and when that person is Fran—well, my dear, you know Fran's temper. It wasn't you; it was Clarence. But she blamed you because you wanted the bird in the first place."

"I don't think it's like Fran at all," Jennifer said mournfully. "It's not like her to get so angry about a bird. It's not like her to walk out and leave me, especially to leave right when we were being evicted. And she's not got such a dreadful temper. Not at all."

"Don't defend her," said Dave. "Now tell me. Do you want me to take Clarence off your hands or not? Good heavens, what is that sound he is making now?" Clarence seemed to have his beak stuck in the wire mesh of the cage and was making an ear-splitting noise.

"Jackhammer," said Jennifer. "I hate that bird." She looked as if she were ready to weep.

"I know some ladies," said Dave, "who will love Clarence. I'll stop by tomorrow afternoon to pick him up, and that's the last you'll see of him. Okay?" He walked over to the coffee table and shook the empty wine bottle. "Out of wine? Maybe I should have brought two bottles."

"But what about Fran?" said Jennifer. "Am I supposed to sit here for the rest of my life wondering where she is?"

"Jennifer, my dear," said Dave, "stop worrying. I can't possibly help you chase down Fran. I haven't seen her. Besides, she's too clever to let herself be found. Why not be glad you're getting rid of Clarence and let Fran take care of herself? She's twenty-six."

"Twenty-seven," said Jennifer, "and I do worry."

"I've got to go," Dave said, and ambled to the door. "Remember, I'll be by tomorrow, probably around six o'clock. Have that vulture ready to ship out."

Late that night Jennifer awoke to the sound of a doorbell ringing and ringing. "Be quiet, Clarence," she muttered, and tried to go back to sleep. But then she sat up in bed with a start. That was the doorbell of the old apartment. Clarence hadn't imitated it since the move. From the living room came a cackling myna laugh, and then Jennifer heard Clarence say, "Oh Fran, stupid, stupid, stupid," followed by an enormous crash and a yelp from Clarence.

"Clarence, you fool," said Jennifer, struggling out of bed and into her robe, "that did it. I hope you killed yourself, or else I'll do the job myself once I get my hands on that feathery little body of yours." She stumbled through to the living room. In the corner was Clarence's cage, overturned as she had expected, with what looked like Fran's purse beside it on the floor. And there, sitting in her old chair with a rueful smile on her face, was Fran.

"When," said Fran, "are you going to remember to lock the front door? All these years and you still won't listen to me."

"Oh Fran," said Jennifer, "you're back!"

"Stupid, stupid, stupid," said Clarence as he clawed at his cage.

In another part of the city the next evening, two women were standing in their living room in front of a badly dented bird cage.

"Do you think he'll talk?" said the taller of the women, while the shiny black bird in the cage glared at her, his eyes narrowed to slits.

"I hope so," said the other woman. "I've always wanted a talking myna bird. Haven't you?"



## DOMINANCE

**Jeannette H. Foster Ph.D.**

*The following was intended as a letter to the editor, commenting on the necessity of maintaining a strong national organization. However, the comments on dominance as a basic part of the Lesbian personality are an interesting view, and the editor would welcome further views on this subject.*

As a member of D.O.B. and subscriber to THE LADDER almost from their birth, I have watched with keen interest the changing colors and temperatures of opinion within the organization and its published voice.

Its first convention, as I recall, gathered in May, 1960, in San Francisco, and biennially since then such of the membership as could manage have met, now west, now east, and finally midway. From each of these general gatherings—personally when there, by mail otherwise—I have heard repercussions of debates on group policy and action. Some echoes have seemed mere healthy differences of opinion. Some have sounded dangerously close to civil war and secession. Thank heaven the latter has been averted.

For decades now, first in literature and then in life, such dissensions have left me curious as to why they should break out repeatedly among a "minority" as closely homogeneous as any except a racial group. The fruit of much reading and analysis, for what it is worth, may be summed up as follows.

I am not a believer in the "butch-femme" dichotomy, although I grant that a fair number of Lesbians can be so divided on external appearance. But that a considerable number of the sisterhood have a strong need to dominate—even though some may look delicately feminine—is beyond dispute. Among external evidences of this are such things as refusal to marry a man—or inability to stay married if the attempt is made; insistence on taking a job whether financially pressed or not, for the sake of independence; dressing as one pleases rather than as fashion dictates; and of course, where circumstances make it possible, openly proclaiming oneself a Lesbian, at least to others of the same disposition.

Independence of social mores is not of course confined to Lesbians, but I believe it is more prevalent among this group than outside it. Even isolated Lesbians who must conceal their true nature exert their independence by becoming rather noticeable lone wolves.

Now, when groups of such women organize, even those who are comparatively passive are aware of an inner defiance of society at large. And because any minority group feels disadvantaged, all its members wear—however unconsciously—a slight chip on the shoulder. Success and acceptance within their own group assumes great significance. If a woman enjoys holding office, then she wants to be an officer. If she does not, she wants those in office to operate within the range of her own preferences.

During my service at the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research, I learned that homosexuals are homogeneous in nothing except their



preference for their own sex. When one considers the geographical, racial, economic, intellectual and social differences among the national members of D.O.B., what can be expected but sharp variations in interest and sympathy? Even among such comparatively homogeneous groups as college faculties and women's clubs—whether social or business and professional—there are disagreements, one of the commonest being that between the younger generation and the oldsters: those old fuddy-duddies! This too, of course, operates within D.O.B.

The wonder is, then, not that there are dissensions, but that they have been so comparatively amicable. Again speaking from a half-century's experience in various organized groups, I know that there is quite literally safety in numbers. A national organization (I am thinking of A.A.U.W., A.A.U.P., N.A.A.C.P.) is in the end stronger

than a lot of separates. May D.O.B. struggle along undivided, even though granted it is sure to have a struggle. And may its voice continue to be THE LADDER, perhaps more varied than it has been by spells in its history, but nevertheless our national magazine. For it is now in a format we may be proud to see exhibited on newsstands.

Dr. Foster has just celebrated (June 1968) her 50th anniversary of graduation from college, and (August 1968) her 33rd of achieving the doctorate. Also, for four years she was librarian of the Kinsey Institute, within its founder's lifetime. Throughout the past half-century she has read all available literature, scientific and fictional, relating to Lesbianism, and in 1956 published a 324-page volume, **SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE**. She has known scores of Lesbians of every social and economic level, and feels that her opinions are not mere arm-chair philosophizing.

# LESBIANA

by Gene Damon



An unusual look at sexual prejudice against women is aired by Mary Daly in her book, **THE CHURCH AND THE SECOND SEX**, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1968. Miss Daly is Professor of Theology at Boston University, and her arguments are primarily directed at the Catholic Church for its stubborn historical view of women as basically inferior to men. This is a slight study, only a little over 200 pages

on a subject that might have taken 100 volumes. She reviews the Catholic Church's history through the words of its more famous philosophers, and the mind boggles at some of the descriptions of women. However unfortunate the world finds the latest Catholic reiteration of its traditional views on birth control, one can be almost grateful for this approach in the past, for, except for procreative abilities,

women have been viewed as subnormal beasts, unfit for polite society, less than human beings. There is nothing in the book about Lesbians, nothing about homosexuality in general except some rather stupid re-mouthings of the same old tripe about mothers and sons we all know so well . . . and it is unfortunate that Miss Daly has not seen fit to even mention Lesbians (if in no other way than to indict the Pope who saw fit to burn all of the writings of Sappho—one of the churches' blacker hours). However, she does show us some very ugly, even terrifying evidences of a kind of basic prejudice that is more damaging to all WOMEN than the immediate prejudices against Lesbianism.

For our English readers, the 1967 Herma Briffault translation of Colette's **THE PURE AND THE IMPURE**, has been issued in 1968 by Secker and Warburg in London. It has also been issued as a quality paperback in 1968 in the United States from Noonday at the reasonable cost of \$1.35. If you have missed this before, don't fail to get it now. There was only ONE Colette, and this was her personal favorite work . . . You'll see why.

And now a report on an item that might be, in a different world, a literary scandal. The sad thing is that the sweet little housewife who will be exposed to W. H. Manville's article, "The Lesbian Experience," in **COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE**, for August, 1968, will not have any idea about the history of the author. Mr. Manville, in this vituperative study of Lesbians, talks as if his experience has been rather off hand. He tells that one woman of a pair, with family problems, ask-

ed him to engage in a "white marriage" to fool her family, while he would go on having lovers as he pleased and she would continue to live with her lifelong partner. He refused the offer, of course, and the rest of the article is a sort of tacked on examination of stereotypes. There are some wonderfully nasty digs along the way, including statements that would indicate that all couples are divided into butch and femme (except in bed) and that all "femmes" are frigid, and so on far into the night. The humorous part of this is that the author of this article, W. H. Manville, wrote a novel called **BREAKING UP**, published by Simon and Schuster, in New York, in 1962 and reprinted by Dell, as a paperback, in 1963. Now **BREAKING UP** is a patently autobiographical novel about a man with male homosexual tendencies which he is desperately fighting married to an admitted Lesbian. And, the wife does not discover her homosexuality until after the marriage, and, this further throws the man . . . People will do anything for money, including lie. Of course, he is quite safe, having chosen an audience he does not expect to have read his book. There is, of course, nothing one can do to him, either, for this kind of devil's revenge. The article, incidentally, is just another example of the fact that you cannot damn ANY minority group today in print, except **HOMOSEXUALS** and **LESBIANS**. Think about that . . .

A very nostalgic book, **BEING GENIUSES TOGETHER**, has a curious history. This was first issued in 1938 in London, by Secker and Warburg. The original version was authored entirely by Robert McAlmon. He wrote it in 1934 and it is a



history of his literary involvement with the world shaking expatriate colony in Paris during the 1920's—with asides into his personal life. It has been reissued (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1968) in an entirely new form. The now very famous (and then very young) Kay Boyle, one of McAlmon's many assisted geniuses, has lovingly rewritten his chapters to some extent, and she has added complimentary chapters lined up in time sequence to match her experiences of the same period to his. The result is less than successful, but it is well worth reading. McAlmon, to those of us who believe he is one of literature's most mistreated persons, gave much of his time and energy and money and love to others, often at the cost of his own work. What little he did produce is now almost unknown, though he was a marvelous writer, particularly of short stories, and it is the reader's loss that he is ignored today except in certain academic circles. There are a number of homosexuals, of course, in *BEING GENIUSES TOGETHER*. Most of the well-known of the period are here, and a large number of the lesser known. However, Miss Boyle is traditionally an extremely tactful writer when it comes to personalities and Mr. McAlmon was writing his portion of this at a time when candid remarks were not met with the same reaction they are today. Those of you who know the circumstance of that time and those people will very much enjoy the book. McAlmon's comments on his marriage to the lesbian writer, Bryher, and her relationship (active at that time) with the famous poet, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle) are very interesting.

In the last issue, I reviewed Mari-

ana Villa-Gilbert's excellent novel, *THE JINGLE JANGLE SONG*. Now, having searched out prior works by this author, I find that her novel, *MRS. CANTELLO*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1966, is of some interest in this field. This is the story of Harriet Cantello and it is told entirely in reminiscence. When we meet her, she is elderly and has lived an uninvolved personal life, though she is a writer by profession. She charts the progress of her life by recounting various relationships, primarily with men, but also with one woman, Daphne. All have loved her, but she chose the least of them, her publisher, Walter. She has never loved, and feels she is incapable of returning love. There is no action, almost no dialogue, severe restrictions on the novel form. Daphne is shown in about the same light as the males, wanting, and rejected by, Mrs. Cantello. This is a very limited book, and nothing to compete with her more recent *THE JINGLE JANGLE SONG*. In any case, Mariana Villa-Gilbert will bear watching in the future.

*UP FROM THE PEDESTAL*, edited by Aileen S. Kraditor, N.Y., Quadrangle, 1968, is subtitled "Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism," very fittingly. After too many history books treating this subject via the biographical route, this is a better, clearer look at the four hundred year fight that women have been waging to prove that they are NOT women first and human beings second. The anthology ranges from Anne Bradstreet writing in 1642 to the present time, and it includes works by most of the more famous battlers from the late 1800's on. Some of the material will be familiar to the ardent feminist read-

er, but some of it is relatively unavailable and it is a good book to have as a reference tool. The editorial view here, presented by Aileen Kraditor, is that women will always be forced to occupy an inferior position until some radical changes are made in basic family structures. Don't skip the introduction or the annotations.

That the world is changing can be seen even in such pedestrian library stock as *COMMONSENSE SEX*, by Ronald M. Mazur, Boston, Beacon, 1968. This is for the between group, between basic sex education manuals and marriage manuals, and it is a very broad view. Mr. Mazur is plumping primarily for more loving relationships and he includes homosexual relationships without especial condemnation. He cites social drawbacks but is hardly damning. He also throws the concept of adultery out altogether as not having a valid meaning today.

*WINTER DAY IN A GLASS-HOUSE*, by Sally Griffiths, London, Hutchinson, 1968, is set in a Catholic girls' school in England. The winter day celebrated here is the day following the death of a popular senior girl. Bernice has plunged through a glass window. It is assumed by the authorities to be an accident, but there are those on the staff who do not believe that it was, and many of the students doubt it also, especially Rose, the dead girl's beloved friend.

Much is revealed, much is concealed. It soon becomes apparent that Rose had a rival for Bernice's affections, in the form of a teacher, who is herself the object of another teacher's scrutiny. There is a monstrous and believable picture of an older girl who sadistically torments

the younger children, and just what is her connection to the dead Bernice?

Mrs. Griffiths' talents are best seen in the close survey of the intimate activities of daily life. Every active character is pursued from waking to sleep, and all motives, actions, settings and sensations are minutely studied. Although obviously very young, she has learned that most relationships are, under the surface, very unlike their public face. The school microcosm as setting is inevitably among the most overworked, but this is a successful handling of that area. There are so many degrees and types of Lesbian relationships studied that the book almost achieves some sort of social significance. It is, however, simply good literature. This is Mrs. Griffiths' second novel, her first having come from the increasingly well thought of, *NEW AUTHORS, LTD.*, from Hutchinson. A public service for the reading world, the publication of new young novelists.

And a bit of reprint news, Macfadden Books has reprinted Louise Tanner's, *MISS BANNISTER'S GIRL*, 1968, for the first time in four years. It is light and amusing, a minor study, but worth finding on your newsstand if you've missed it before.

With each passing year, and each death, we learn more about the fascinating literary circle called "The Bloomsbury Group". This is the name given to a number of close friends, artists, writers and philosophers who began to meet in England, around 1906. This small crew shaped literary and political history in England (and sometimes in the United States) for many years, during and even after the lives of the

individual members of the group.

The outstanding characteristic of this group is the enormously high incidence of homosexuality, both male and female. Of course, though much of this has been known to a few people, it is just now, in the increasingly free writing climate, becoming generally known.

Different critics assign different members to the primary group. However, the people intimately involved in the group generally name the following: Vanessa Stephens and Virginia Stephens (who became, respectively, Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf); their husbands, Clive Bell and Leonard Woolf; John Maynard Keynes; Duncan Grant; Roger Fry; the brothers of Vanessa and Virginia, Thoby and Adrian Stephens; Lytton Strachey, his brothers, Oliver and James, and his sisters, Marjorie and Dorothy Strachey.

All of this leading up to a magnificent two volume biography of one of the members, and all of the members of this famous group, simply titled, **LYTTON STRACHEY: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY**, by Michael Holroyd. Volume One, called "The Unknown Years" covers 1880 to 1910 and Volume Two, called "The Years of Achievement" covers 1910 to 1932, the end of Lytton's life. (London, Heinemann, 1967 and N.Y., Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968.)

Lytton, himself, was famous as an historian and biographer. He was homosexual, exclusively, never marrying, though many women professed love for him. He loved several famous men, and his loves include economist John Maynard Keynes (of which, much more lat-

er), and artist, Duncan Grant. These volumes, naturally, revolve around Lytton's professional and private life. Both were fascinating. However, it also mentions the numerous homosexual involvements of the others in the "Bloomsbury Group".

John Maynard Keynes, 1st Baron of Tilton, lived from 1883 to 1946. He was the most famous economist of his time. He was patently and openly homosexual, with his most famous affair a long-termed love with painter, Duncan Grant. This is fully covered in the volumes here discussed. But what is not covered, is that John Maynard Keynes, in addition to lecturing at Cambridge on economics from 1908 until his death, was the most important influence on Franklin Roosevelt's recovery program for the United States during the depression years.

Of special interest here is the knowledge that Strachey's sister, Dorothy Strachey, in marrying a minor French artist by the name of Bussy, became the woman, Dorothy Bussy, who is more than slightly famous in Lesbian circles as the pseudonymous Olivia, author of **OLIVIA**, one of the most famous frankly autobiographical Lesbian novels. This was Dorothy Bussy's only novel. Her life work was the translation of French works into English, and she was for many years Gide's official translator. Further, Michael Holroyd carefully documents the background of the women who are the adult protagonists of **OLIVIA**. Teacher Marie Souvestre became Mlle. Julie, and her friend in real life was named Mlle. Samaia. These two ran a school at Fontainebleau called Les

Ruches, which was later turned into the girl's boarding school, Les Avons, in **OLIVIA**.

As fond as I am of creative writing (i.e., fiction, poetry and drama), it is clear that some of the most exciting literature about homosexuals during the last year or so is in the field of literary biography, and especially collective biography. This two-volume set is highly recommended. I have only given a brief precis of the amazing contents. Both volumes are very well-illustrated, and more importantly, very well indexed. It is astonishing to see the changes in protocol for scholarly works in the last few years. For example, it is customary in the index of a biography which involves many persons to provide a very careful subject listing for the major persons involved. Michael Holroyd has listed all of the events of Strachey's life (that is, all of the outstanding events) in the index in subject form. He carefully includes listings for each of his romances and includes "homosexuality" as a subject heading, with dozens of references in each volume. With less major persons, he simply indexes references in each volume, giving relationships by name. All of which may give the erroneous impression that the biography is "sensational". On the contrary, it is scholarly, well handled throughout, without a trace of prurience. The changing, every day changing, times we live in. Please don't miss this biography.

A reprint of a very old item, by the famous Denis Diderot, **LA RELIGIEUSSE** (in English, **MEMOIRS OF A NUN**), has been issued by Holloway House, 1968, in paperback, using the title, **THE**

**NUN**. The book and the author have equally interesting histories. Diderot is primarily remembered as the author of a scholarly encyclopedia. This book, **MEMOIRS OF A NUN**, was first written in 1760 and published in 1796. Diderot was anti-Catholic, and it is this dislike, apparently, that inspired the book. It is an interesting old chestnut and worth picking up in paper if you haven't seen it before. It first appeared in English, published in London by Rutledge in 1928, and was reprinted in London, by Elek, 1959. I am not familiar with a hard-back publication of this novel in the United States, though I would not dare to claim there has been no such incarnation, as well known as this book has become. Plot, of course, concerns Lesbian affairs in the convent, really quite inflammable material in the 1700's though less so today.

**I AM MARY DUNNE**, by Brian Moore, N.Y., Viking, 1968, is being met with alternative praise and blasts from the critics. All of the reviews are concerned with Moore's accomplishment at writing in the first person from the standpoint of a female protagonist. This is admittedly a very difficult thing to do, and he is, within limits, quite successful. This is not, however, the important part of reviewing a novel. He writes well enough to make it essential to consider the book a success as far as literature is concerned. He is remarkably intuitive about the female mind, and his only major error is having the heroine react sexually as if she were a man. What rankles a little is the apparent pointlessness of the book. Mary Dunne is a terrible slob. She is boring, pretentious, stupid at



times, nervous, unsatisfied and unsatisfying. In short, the epitome of the undesirable in a heroine. The book manages to remain interesting despite this, and that is Brian Moore's real accomplishment. Mary has been unhappily married, has had a lover or two, has been either very successful or a complete mess at her jobs, and nothing either very bad or very good has happened to her. Along the way she has been ardently loved by Ruth McIver

(Mackie) a stronger figure than any of Mary's male lovers or husbands, and though she recognizes the pull of Mackie's ability to help her shape a liveable world, Mary is not emancipated enough to accept it. Mackie plays a good and believable role, and the more deserving readers among you may well wonder where Mackie was when you were looking around. Ah well, the world of fiction and the world as it is!

## AN OPEN LETTER TO MARY DALY

Rita Laporte

(Author, *THE CHURCH AND THE SECOND SEX*, N. Y., Harper & Row, 1968.)

On first reading *The Church and the Second Sex*, I read it as the woman I am: one long resentful of her oppressed condition. I grew more and more excited as I read on. Here was a writer, a thinker, and a woman after my own heart. I cheered you on, Mary, page after page. Those were the best words I had yet read on woman's predicament and, incredibly, they were words from a Catholic. And then I reached page 134. Suddenly you set aside your mind as Betty Friedan did and you quote her. Most readers of this letter can guess the gist of your quote: the usual tired old stuff about mothers turning their sons into homosexuals, followed by total silence on Lesbianism. Just as, apparently, there is really no point in considering women where human nature is the topic, so, where homosexuality is discussed, Lesbians are left in limbo.

These approaches are in a certain sense neater. The complexities of woman's nature only baffle and mess up an otherwise profound discourse on the nature of man. Likewise, a logical and compelling explanation of homosexuality (male) falls flat on its face when the female enters the picture.

How well did you read Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, Mary? She knows about Lesbians and the deep and lasting love many of us are graced with. You rightly say that, as an atheist, Simone de Beauvoir can see the Church from a perspective not available to the lifelong Catholic. And she can accept the Lesbian. Here, too, no heavy dogma blinds her. Perhaps I should be forbearing, Mary, and say that, for a Catholic, you have done very well indeed to see as far as you have into the human (heterosexual) predicament. But I shall not let you off so easily for I too am a Catholic. To be sure, I am a convert and have had the advantage of the mental

freedom enjoyed by atheists. Nor have I let conversion put limits on my thinking. On the contrary, the grace of faith has added new horizons to what my atheistic upbringing and secular education began.

On rereading your book recently, I read it as the Lesbian I am. This time you never spoke to me at all. Who do you suppose are the women most concerned with women's rights? No heterosexual woman can match the passion some of us Lesbians have for our rights. And we are everywhere. We are teachers and professors, social workers and psychologists, nurses and doctors, business women and lawyers. We are married and single, with children and without, and, yes, we are in the convents. We are very much in Betty Friedan's NOW (National Organization for Women), though most of us must continue to "pass" even there. Weed us out of NOW, if that were possible, and you would have little left.

The Lesbian has a perspective on the man-woman relationship that the heterosexual, especially Catholic, woman cannot have. As the atheist perceives aspects of the Church to which the Church herself is blind, so the Lesbian, from her vantage point outside heterosexual society, sees the blind spots of that society. To the heterosexual, God made male and female and we can tell which is which by undressing them and using our eyes. How crude and naive is this test! Human sexuality is far more diverse and complex; human beings come in marvelous variety, a variety you heterosexuals have yet to discover and to be thankful for. "... there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gala-

tians 3: 28). Some theologians might conclude from this that none of us exists. On the other hand, the passage could mean that God made Lesbians, of both masculine and feminine inclinations; the similar spectrum of male homosexuals; transsexuals; and—I almost forgot—male and female heterosexuals.

We Lesbians live all our lives among you. Except for a few of us, we have heterosexual parents and learn as toddlers to play the heterosexual game. You cannot recognize us unless we choose to let you. You are no mystery to us. And what we see is sad indeed.

Men have about bankrupted themselves while women nod approval from the sidelines. Men's "manly" occupation of war is becoming an embarrassment. Men are, biologically speaking, obsolete, except for a few studs needed for breeding purposes. Humanly speaking, it is time they abandoned their preoccupation with their "manhood" (euphemism for penis) and grew into adulthood. It is up to women to force them into maturity; they will never do it on their own. It no longer makes sense to carry on the female conspiracy of pretending, in the presence of one or more males, that they are demigods. Sure, they are incredibly easy to fool; but in the long run this is to hold them in contempt. We Lesbians often find ourselves forced to cooperate in this conspiracy, but only for reasons of job security. Men have yet to learn the lessons of humility that the Catholic Church teaches so well and that only women have taken seriously.

Your really invaluable book, Mary, introduced me to an unfamiliar area: the theology behind to-



day's topsy-turvy heterosexual world. And the psychologist in me was vastly amused. Theologians generally must be a humorless bunch. But then men are when it comes to their superiority and what they fancy to be their badge thereof. You demolish the theologians' arguments with force and skill. Here are a few more that sound every bit as sound theologically to this non-theologian:

Christ was born male rather than female to help even things up. And all the Apostles were men because because Christ came to save sinners. And, the only human being born without sin was a woman. Women are more intelligent than men, as the story of Adam and Eve so aptly proves. Eve not only had the more inquiring and venturesome mind, but the force of character to lead dumb Adam. (Men have been poor sports about this ever since.) And of course the early Fathers were right: they *were* sorely tempted by women; but what woman in her right mind found them tempting? Men do fall by Eve and rise by Mary; they can't do a damn thing without women. And to add a recent "scientific" discovery: men with *two* "y," or male, chromosomes are beasts indeed.

Your book advocates women in the Priesthood. Oddly, this Catholic policy had never bothered me. You opened my eyes as to why. Here is, roughly, what went on in my mind just beneath the surface of full consciousness. The first time I went to Mass, feeling foolish and awkward as converts do, I could not quite see what the priest was doing. This was before Vatican II and the priest carried on his chores with his back to the audience. At

one point I was sure he must be washing the dishes. This was later confirmed. So the priest fixes dinner, serves it, and washes up afterwards, chatting in Latin as he goes along. Prior to getting on with the cooking itself, he bores everyone to tears with a homily. Now why should I have any resentment over the fact that only men are allowed to do this? How clever of my unconscious! It allowed me to enter fully and without anger into the spiritual meaning of the Mass.

You state, Mary, that "Individual nuns have transcended the eternal feminine to a greater degree than most of their married sisters." I agree. And how many of those nuns were Lesbians—Lesbians who, with the aid of society's repressive measures, went beyond their natural sexuality to become the world's greatest saints? I am thinking in particular of St. Theresa of Avila and St. Catherine of Siena, saints that Simone de Beauvoir mentions too. (It may amuse you, as it does me, to know that many of us at one time or another have fallen in love with Jeanne d'Arc.)

St. Theresa is my very special saint. She *does* talk to me. I understand her great friendship for St. John of the Cross, the young man half her age, for I have also known such a friendship. It is more than a little irrelevant whether these two unsurpassed saints were homosexual or heterosexual—they went so far beyond us ordinary mortals. But a psychological, as opposed to a spiritual, account of their rise to sanctity makes sense only on the premise of their Lesbian and homosexual natures, respectively.

Perhaps you can see now where

I stand with the Church. If you are part of the Church in Diaspora, I am in the Diaspora of that Diaspora. I never shared your subdued optimism in looking to the Hierarchy. Witness Pope Paul's birth control pronouncement since your book was published. This was to be expected in the ever accelerating backward march of the Church; or, to put it another way, the Church's increasingly desperate efforts to stand still.

I shall end this letter to you by quoting from your book's last paragraph, with only a slight emendation: "In the exercise of self-transcending creative activity, inspired and driven forward by faith and hope, sustained by courage, men and women," *whether homosexual, Lesbian, or heterosexual*, "can learn to 'set their pride beyond the sexual differentiation.'"

Sincerely,  
Rita Laporte

## Part of the Way to Everywhere

Jocelyn Howard

Dawn had made the land opalescent—amethysts came later when the sun crept up over—and it was five o'clock and the highway a shining black bridge across a sea of dew and emptiness.

And I could not have driven past her because the fact of our being alone in that great dawn-hung desert made a very personal thing between us from the moment I saw her. And I hadn't talked to anyone in twenty-four hours except to say "Fill up, regular", which is not stimulating conversation.

She was about 20, very slim. She walked as

if the crown of her dark, cropped head was trying to touch the sky. She had on battered jeans, a blue shirt with the pocket half off and she walked as if she had a right to touch the sky.

I swung open the door without saying anything and she got in without saying anything. The sun finally got a foothold on the mist and a whole row of sagebrush hills turned suddenly pink against the dawn sky. I drove on with neither of us saying anything as if we had been travelling together all our lives.

She fished in her torn pocket and lit a cigarette without offering me one, and I knew then already that she would have the power to hurt me.

"Where're you from?" I challenged. I was, after all, at least five years old than her.

"Everywhere."

"Where're you heading?"

"Everywhere else."

"In any particular order?"

"Doesn't it drive you wild," she said, "to think of all that world to be seen and you with only two eyes and two legs?"

She stared at me. Without taking my eyes off the highway, I knew hers were blue.

"Okay," she said, "So it doesn't drive you wild."

The sun did another push-up and another old, cold hilltop turned pink. "One doesn't expect," I remarked, "to find a kid standing all by herself in the middle of the desert at crack of dawn."

"One was riding," she retorted, "with a trucker who wanted to pull over and have sex with one. One was not in the mood, so got down."

"Commendable," I turned for a brief glance and for the first time she grinned. She had a wide grin, almost too wide for her elfin face.

"His name was Joe," she said. "He said he had seven beautiful beds in the back of his household goods van. He was a nice guy really."

"Travelling with seven beautiful beds," I agreed, "could influence your thinking."

Something had relaxed between us. "Name's Gin," she said. "I hope it was for Virginia. What do you have in back?"

"A thermos of coffee for one thing. That is also a proposition."

"Great." So I slowed and drove off the blacktop into the sagebrush emptiness and straight away she was out and up a hillside, running. Her shirt-tail came adrift. On a small knoll she yelled, "Up here!" So I took

a rug and the thermos to join her and we sat up there looking out on the silent amethyst-and-opal world.

It was different between us there, more the way it had been when I first saw her. The huge empty land and the huge vaulted sky seemed to push us closer rather than separating us—a joint act of self-defense, I suppose, against the impersonal vastness.

I passed her coffee. "Don't you honestly have a destination in mind?"

"I like to travel," she said. "And I hate to arrive."

"All the same—"

"Look," she said. "Have you ever reached the end of the rainbow?"

"I . . . No, I guess not."

"But you think you'd like to?"

"Doesn't everybody?"

"Give it thought," she said. "What'll you do when you get there? Sit and count your multi-colored bellybuttons?"

"But surely the end of the rainbow implies—"

"Hey!" she interrupted. "Talking of multi bellybuttons—did you know an earthworm has four hearts? Man, that's for me! It's almost better than two pairs of eyes! Four loves at one time—you could really get some living done!"

"You know, you're crazy!" But whatever she had, it was infectious. I felt bubbly inside. Maybe it was partly the dawn and the pearly desert.

"Let's see now! I'd give one to a white man and one to a black man—you'd experience a lot, being in love with a negro. And one to a yellow man, I guess. And one—" she looked me straight in the eye—"to a girl. Okay?"

We were the only two people in a world full of amethysts and opals.

"Poor old American Indians," I said weakly. "Always missing out."

Gin said, "You have very well-shaped hands." She put one of hers on one of mine. Hers were thinner. She looked at them, our two hands, as if together they formed a great truth.

"You aren't an earthworm," I said. "You need to be more selective."

"Oh, I'm young. There's time for almost everything." The sun swam higher out of the mist and another tumble of bare hills blushed. She lifted her head suddenly and looked at me. "You know, we could—"

"Look!" I was saved. "Down by the car—it's an animal of some kind!" And I took my hand from hers—cold the morning air in

the places where they had touched—and got up and went down the hill, not looking back.

It was a kitten—a skinny, grey and white, raggle-coated kitten with one lop ear. It stretched up to smell a hubcap and it was so thin behind its ribs you feared its spine might snap.

Gin had come down the hill behind me. She gathered the kitten up. Immediately it began to purr loudly.

"Raggle-taggle," she said. "What are you doing here, in the middle of the desert? They threw you out of a car, that's what. Poor raggle-taggle!"

The kitten screwed up its face in delight and thrust its nose under her chin and really they were very alike.

"Now what?" I said.

"He's coming with me."

"All the way?"

"All the way. Here he is all alone in the desert and needing warmth and love. Well, he was lucky. He found the right person."

Not looking at me, she got into the car. The kitten climbed on to her shoulder and closed its eyes. Duly reproached, I went back up the hill and got the things. Then we drove on.

In the next half-hour she hardly spoke to me. She spoke to the kitten quite a bit, about finding it some breakfast and who the hell wants a rainbow's end. She occasionally looked over at me and grinned, and it didn't feel unfriendly between us. But we had surely come down from our hilltop.

The village was called Willow Creek. There were no willows but there were gas stations. I filled up, then parked outside the restaurant.

Gin scanned the menu, then asked what kind of cereals they had. In a booth behind us a fleshy man with a city accent was telling a trucker how his wife had walked out on him last May. The waitress reeled off brand names. "Prairie Pops," Gin said. "With cold milk."

"You'd do better on bacon and eggs," I said. "More sustaining."

"Sure I'll have bacon and eggs. The Pops are for Raggle-Taggle."

"Who the hell," I said, "ever heard of a cat eating Prairie Pops?"

She cast me a superior glance. When the bowl of cereal came, the kitten crunched the lot down in sixty seconds flat, batted its whiskers a few times with a grubby paw, belched gently, climbed back on her neck and fell asleep.

Gin looked at me and smirked, and went on smirking right through her bacon and eggs.

I finished my coffee and went in search of the washroom. The graffiti artists of Willow Creek were prolific but without subtlety and I left quickly because the scrawled walls gave me a grimy feeling.

Back in the restaurant, the trucker had gone and Gin had taken her coffee and moved into the booth with the fleshy man whose wife had left him. The kitten was still sleeping round her neck.

There were three checks on the counter. I thought first that I wouldn't pay them—either hers or the kitten's. Gin didn't look round. The kitten's eyes were blissfully shut. Then I decided—martyrlike, I think—that I would pay for them both. And I paid and walked out and still she hadn't looked round.

I drove mad all through most of the day—mad at her and me and the kitten. Mad at the desert which, now in the heat of the day, went on and on, hard and metallic with the sun ringing up off it in blasts of white, dusty heat. I drove muttering "Slut" and "Hobo" and other things less polite.

And for all that, because cars were constantly passing me and I could not always see inside, whenever I went through a settlement I slowed down in case I saw a thin figure in a blue shirt, and once, on the open highway, I slowed down so much I got caught and had to give a long lift to a boy in a blue shirt who smelt of horse manure.

Around five-thirty, when both my mood and the harsh light on the hills were beginning to soften, I saw I was getting low on gas. I found a service station in a place where the highway went through a miniature sandstone canyon. The sun had gone from it already and it was blue with evening. There were two service stations, a peeling restaurant and three mobile homes.

I got gas, then went over to the restaurant. And Gin was there.

She was sitting at the end stool with Raggle-Taggle round her neck and she was watching the door as I came through it. She said lightly, "Coincidence, coincidence," but her eyes were bright.

I sat down at the far end and ordered coffee. There was no one in the restaurant except ourselves and a sad blonde behind the counter. There were four cigarette butts in Gin's saucer.

She hesitated, then moved up. "I've been waiting for you."

"Oh no," I said. "Not for me. I'm not the one with seven beautiful beds in the back."

"You filled up at Willow Creek," she said. "Your tank holds 12 gallons and you must get around 25 to the gallon. We're about 290 miles from Willow Creek and you use an Esso card." She gestured at the Esso sign flickering in the dusk outside. "Quod erat demonstrandum."

"Neat," I allowed. "What happened? Didn't Old Wifeless measure up?"

"Oh him. He was a means of getting me out of your hair." She grinned suddenly. "But I couldn't follow through. I began to count the miles the moment I got in his car. And made him put me down here."

"And now—"

"Oh don't worry. I just wanted to say thank you for my breakfast. And Raggle-Taggle's. And sorry for making a fool of us both back there."

Raggle-Taggle woke up and blinked and pushed his little pointed face under her ear and looked at me from there, all wide-eyed and elfin and charming. Really, they were very alike.

"I could give you a ride on," I said. "At least part of the way to everywhere."

"I made a mistake," she said. "I don't think I'm going your way."

"You're right." The sad blonde's coffee was tepid; I finished it quickly and stood up because things were getting difficult. "Good luck then." I put down some change and went out without looking at Gin.

I had the car running when she came to my window. Her thin face was pale in the dusk and she was holding out the pale shape of the kitten.

"I haven't enough to pay for our breakfasts," she said. "But have Raggle-Taggle. I think he'll be handsome. And I think he needs a rainbow-end."

The kitten was in my arms. He worked his way up to my neck, then flopped, purring. He was very warm.

I took a pencil from the glove compartment, wrote on a scrap of paper and handed it to her. "If ever," I said, "you're in the market for rainbow-ends yourself, you could look us up." I added, "Provided you're sure which end of the rainbow you want. It's important."

"But," she said, "that means you—"

"That means everything and nothing," I said. "To a kid who's going everywhere and nowhere. Goodbye, Gin—take care."

I wheeled out on to the highway. Behind me, she yelled, "Why you damn pokerface, you!" and in the rear-view mirror I saw her grin and wave, and I yelled back, "You damn

a rug and the thermos to join her and we sat up there looking out on the silent amethyst-and-opal world.

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There were three checks on the counter. I thought first that I wouldn't pay them—either hers or the kitten's. Gin didn't look round. The kitten's eyes were blissfully shut. Then I decided—martyrlike, I think—that I would pay for them both. And I paid and walked out and still she hadn't looked round.

I drove mad all through most of the day—mad at her and me and the kitten. Mad at the desert which, now in the heat of the day, went on and on, hard and metallic with the sun ringing up off it in blasts of white, dusty heat. I drove muttering "Slut" and "Hobo" and other things less polite.

And for all that, because cars were constantly passing me and I could not always see inside, whenever I went through a settlement I slowed down in case I saw a thin figure in a blue shirt, and once, on the open highway, I slowed down so much I got caught and had to give a long lift to a boy in a blue shirt who smelt of horse manure.

Around five-thirty, when both my mood and the harsh light on the hills were beginning to soften, I saw I was getting low on gas. I found a service station in a place where the highway went through a miniature sandstone canyon. The sun had gone from it already and it was blue with evening. There were two service stations, a peeling restaurant and three mobile homes.

I got gas, then went over to the restaurant. And Gin was there.

She was sitting at the end stool with Raggle-Taggle round her neck and she was watching the door as I came through it. She said lightly, "Coincidence, coincidence," but her eyes were bright.

I sat down at the far end and ordered coffee. There was no one in the restaurant except ourselves and a sad blonde behind the counter. There were four cigarette butts in Gin's saucer.

She hesitated, then moved up. "I've been waiting for you."

"Oh no," I said. "Not for me. I'm not the one with seven beautiful beds in the back."

"You filled up at Willow Creek," she said. "Your tank holds 12 gallons and you must get around 25 to the gallon. We're about 290 miles from Willow Creek and you use an Esso card." She gestured at the Esso sign flickering in the dusk outside. "Quod erat demonstrandum."

"Neat," I allowed. "What happened? Didn't Old Wifeless measure up?"

"Oh him. He was a means of getting me out of your hair." She grinned suddenly. "But I couldn't follow through. I began to count the miles the moment I got in his car. And made him put me down here."

"And now—"

"Oh don't worry. I just wanted to say thank you for my breakfast. And Raggle-Taggle's. And sorry for making a fool of us both back there."

Raggle-Taggle woke up and blinked and pushed his little pointed face under her ear and looked at me from there, all wide-eyed and elfin and charming. Really, they were very alike.

"I could give you a ride on," I said. "At least part of the way to everywhere."

"I made a mistake," she said. "I don't think I'm going your way."

"You're right." The sad blonde's coffee was tepid; I finished it quickly and stood up because things were getting difficult. "Good luck then." I put down some change and went out without looking at Gin.

I had the car running when she came to my window. Her thin face was pale in the dusk and she was holding out the pale shape of the kitten.

"I haven't enough to pay for our breakfasts," she said. "But have Raggle-Taggle. I think he'll be handsome. And I think he needs a rainbow-end."

The kitten was in my arms. He worked his way up to my neck, then flopped, purring. He was very warm.

I took a pencil from the glove compartment, wrote on a scrap of paper and handed it to her. "If ever," I said, "you're in the market for rainbow-ends yourself, you could look us up." I added, "Provided you're sure which end of the rainbow you want. It's important."

"But," she said, "that means you—"

"That means everything and nothing," I said. "To a kid who's going everywhere and nowhere. Goodbye, Gin—take care."

I wheeled out on to the highway. Behind me, she yelled, "Why you damn pokerface, you!" and in the rear-view mirror I saw her grin and wave, and I yelled back, "You damn



hobo, you!"

And then the highway was looping away ahead of us out of the little canyon and towards the last lurid streamers of the sun, and

Raggle Taggle was warm and furry against my neck. Almost certainly, we were going to be very happy together.

## The Least of These

*Marilyn Barrow*

For the first time in modern history the world is conscious of minority status. Politicians work actively for the support of minority groups. Religious leaders take vigorous, even dangerous, stance in defending them. People from all levels: intellectual, monetary, societal, take up banners (often ill-advised) and march with them.

From within the homophile movement talk is generated of taking up other banners, other causes. Some of the staunchest of all supporters of the homophile movement are activists in other causes.

Someone is missing the boat, and it may well be that we are.

The homosexual is, without possible challenge, the most disadvantaged citizen in America. We have less civil rights than any other group, except possibly the American Indian; and even less than they, if we dare surface our heads above our sand holes (where we traditionally spend all of our time).

I have personally sat in rooms hearing leaders in this movement say that "the Lesbian has nothing to worry about provided she keeps this fact about herself a secret." I might mention here that all black people could appear to be white if they stripped off all of their skin and hair. Of course they would also be dead.

Why? Well, there are many reasons. One of the big ones is that a good proportion of even the most active homophile workers still carry around inside a sign that reads "I am not really sure that I am right." The homosexual has the complicated disadvantage of being faced with a multiple view. On one side, there are those who still insist that the homosexual is sick and must be treated as an ill person. On another side, the homosexual is wilfully wrong and must be punished—and this is not a dead view, it is everywhere. Just open your ears. Recent television coverage of the black question has shown that black children draw psychologically disadvantaged limbless children and view themselves as NON-PEOPLE. How shocking!!! Not really. A large proportion of the conscious homosexual population considers itself sick. It has heard it so often it believes it; and that is one of the reasons why the homophile movement in the United States can be counted as having less than 10,000 active members while there are better than 10,000,000 homosexuals, at a very very conservative estimate.

It is true that as long as one pretends to be heterosexual and is very careful to keep up a double image, one is relatively safe. But what kind of a life is this? Much is made of the fact that with a great deal of caution one can

manage to have a happy marriage, giving up only 99% of the public life of a normal marriage and suffering only twice as many insults and internal conflicts. Is this even reasonable?

Just because we cannot march in the streets screaming that rats are eating our babies doesn't mean we don't have as vicious a prejudice directed against us.

Want to get your head shot off in any big city? Just run into the streets around dusk screaming about "niggers" and see what happens. But run into the same streets shouting "Down with queers!" and you can raise a mob to back you.

Read any good books lately? Have you recently read anything against colored people, Jews, Catholics, Sicilians, Middle Europeans, Indians? Not likely, not in anything copyrighted in the last 20 years or so. But you can still read about "queers," "faggots," "dykes," "bulldikes," "fairies," "queens," etc. etc. etc. No more wops, dagoes, niggers, no fish eaters, none of these, because those minorities will no longer tolerate vilification. Oh sure, you say, on television you still hear anti-Jewish humor, and anti-black humor, but it is only in fun and the audience is made to know it and know it well; and anytime the audience doubts it, there's always someone out there with gasoline bombs to put the point across.

There are almost as many homophile organizations in the United States as there are states in the United States. Most of them are concentrated in the large coastal cities; but there are many springing up in the large mid-western population centers as well. They have made enormous strides in terribly limited areas; they have enlisted the aid of liberal heterosexual attorneys in many instances; and they are in intimate contact with more liberal clergymen from many faiths. On small scale local levels, they have made "in-group" breakthroughs. They have won minor court skirmishes (while major ones have been lost).

And while all of this has been going on, of course the general homosexual population has sprung to their aid and defense. Not on your life, baby; the ostrich population has grown even larger, with even deeper sand holes. The unintelligent, or at least those with less social conscience, hope only for a relaxed atmosphere at the local bar. To this extent they back the organizations; but just let a local organization stir up enough public notice to bring the vice squad down on a local bar, and they are quick to take up arms against THE LOCAL HOMOPHILE ORGANIZATION, not the local vice squad. "Don't rock the boat" is the cry. Leave us alone to live here in the flat beer suds, forever and ever, amen. Whatever rights this group feels entitled to, it isn't its basic civil rights.

The male homophile view very naturally concentrates on less restrictions in their sexual pursuit. That is fine, within the limits this imposes on them as homosexuals and individuals. Every thinking adult realizes that we must have MUCH more liberal sexual views to survive as a civilized society; but there is a hell of a lot more at stake here than the right to cruise in the local bar.

We must have, without qualification, absolute and understood self disclosure. It must be possible someday to be admittedly homosexual and

still have no possible fear of any kind of job loss, governmental, educational, whatever. It is essential, as well, that we obtain the rights of property which fall to all heterosexuals. This last is a very important right that is seldom mentioned in the homophile press, primarily because the male homosexual leaders are not very concerned with the permanent household. On the other hand, the millions of Lesbian couples in this country who do marry and stay married—and there are far more of these than any statistical survey is likely to uncover just because of their protective coloration—have a multitude of social and moral and legal stigmas that they live with that have to be altered.

Whether you think in terms of being legally able to marry your girlfriend or not is not important here. If you do want to, however, you ought to be able to do so; and you ought also to have the right of divorce, with the legal division of property which goes with this. And for those that marry and stay married, there should not be the constantly reenacted tragedy of early death leaving one partner without any property at all while the family of the deceased walks off with all you have built together.

What this comes down to is very simple. You have no more, even less, job opportunity as a homosexual than you would as a black person. At least if a black person gets a job, he knows they know he is black.

You cannot marry. You cannot protect someone you love. If you are young and something happens to one of you, you may not even be able to go to the funeral. It all depends upon how the family looks at you and your relationship to the deceased. If you are older and you have lived together a long time and you haven't had extremely good legal counsel, you may find yourself without a dime if your friend dies.

Or let's leave the tragedy out of it. Let's just live a moment on a day-to-day basis. If you are very brave and live—as I do—under the doctrine of “living propaganda” wherein you make damned certain without absolute statement that everyone with any modicum of intelligence realizes the nature of your relationship with your partner, you suffer only the sometimes social errors. The events to which you are rightfully entitled to go with mate or boy friend, you cannot quite manage to attend with your friend. It doesn't really matter once or twice or three times; but it might matter about the fiftieth time it happens. And what does this do to your relationship? If you are well-balanced, probably nothing. But why should it take almost twice as much internal integrity as a human being to live as a well-adjusted Lesbian as it does to live as a well-adjusted heterosexual?

Most people know, if they do not stop to think, which of the persons they know are black, are Jewish, are Catholic, are Middle Europeans, are Chinese, are public drunks, are good kids, are bad kids. But most people do not know which of the people they know are homosexual, are Lesbians.

We are, even more than the male homosexuals, the least of these. We are the Lesbians, the most hidden, the least noticed of any minority group. As homosexuals we share the dubious honor with the males of being the “last of the minority groups.” As Lesbians we are even lower in the sand hole; we are women (itself a majority/minority status) and we are Lesbians: the last half of the least noticed, most disadvantaged, minority.

There is no room here for any other cause. We have the biggest bag to carry and we need a good many strong shoulders. Get your head out of the sand hole and help win this very urgent, very needful, battle.

(Editor's Note: The Cleveland Press, August 19, 1968, in an article about the court fight over Gertrude Stein's belongings, mentions again how Alice B. Toklas died in poverty because Gertrude Stein's heirs took her property away from Toklas....)

## **PUBLISH OR PERISH**

**THE LADDER NEEDS MONEY IF IT IS TO CONTINUE BEING PUBLISHED.** THE LADDER has been many things to many people these past twelve years. We know that it can be a much better magazine, and reach many more people in the future, if we have a future.

Bluntly, we must have money. For many years THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS have not asked for help in publishing the magazine, but now we must have your help. As you can see from the We have set up a separate trust to pay for the publication of the magazine. This insures donors that their donations for this vital work, will go directly to the magazine.

If THE LADDER dies, we believe that with it will die hope for attaining any form of civil rights for Lesbian women in this century.

If THE LADDER dies, the permanent record of our years of work in behalf of the Lesbians of the world comes to an end, and in a sense, we lose our place in the records of the future.

There are many ways to help. Is your subscription up to date? Are you one of the few persons receiving this magazine free, because someone thought you would be interested. If so, isn't it time you subscribed? And for those of you who can, and there are very few among you who cannot, send us some little extra, take some portion of the money you have and earn and give with it, in effect, your voice for our goals.

Please help us to continue providing this magazine to the world.

Make checks or money orders payable to THE LADDER and send them to 1005 MARKET STREET, ROOM 208, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 94103.

If THE LADDER DIES .....

# SEXTET

by Maura McCullough

## OUTCRIES

i

Choose me please please  
My hands frozen to this leather chair  
And the room is filled with you  
They all have you  
All but  
Me please choose me

ii

Now you will look at me you must look  
If you will turn your head  
Turn ever so slightly for no more than a moment  
You will see me my eyes  
You would hear my eyes speaking  
If only you would look at me if only

iii

But I have touched you yes  
Just then gently in your mind  
Surely you felt it  
My hand reaching out to touch you  
Was there no contact none none at all  
But I did touch you just then

## DIALOGUE BETWEEN POETS

You told me I was the foam  
on the sea's last crushing wave  
foam being not at all like froth  
that somewhere in me were a pair of wings  
and you said O you've got yourself a flight  
but wings must pulse and throb  
make the full circle and fly home  
I said that you distilled thoughts to an essence  
each word a concentrate  
like seeing the ocean  
in one small drop of sea water  
and I said put red into my wings  
make me bleed and ache and fly

## THE AMBUSH

I knew you would find me here one day  
I've pictured it  
how you would choose this path some afternoon  
take the trail through the birches on the hill  
to discover me waiting for you here  
Your eyes would widen in wonder  
full of fears and softness  
things I have never glimpsed  
not in five years of waiting  
I would see an amazement in your eyes  
a yearning  
and you would say why here why now  
but I would wait silently  
You would remember to veil your thoughts  
too late you would try to shutter your eyes  
with a cool stare  
while I watched you and waited  
I have dreamed how it would be for many weeks  
spent hours in the dry grass  
near the pines and the pin oaks  
the sun hot on my back as I waited  
Watching ants creep through the woods  
I have thought of five silent years  
and how they would be shattered at last  
when you found me waiting for you here  
Now you have come as I knew you would in time  
past the birches there on the hill  
and all is as I had pictured it  
when I was waiting for this moment  
Waiting to see your soul burn through wide gray eyes

CYNTHIA  
a roundel

Cynthia, pensive and shy, walks on the shore,  
And wild gray gulls, filling the air  
With their shrill notes, are suddenly mute for  
Cynthia, pensive and shy;

The sand at her feet, once dry,  
Is kissed by silent tides; the birds soar,  
Silhouettes against a twilit sky;

Around her all is hushed; no more  
Do whitecapped waves pound rocks nearby;  
Ocean and gulls come whispering to adore  
Cynthia, pensive and shy.

Continued  
on Page 45



# RACHEL RACHEL

## A REVIEW

(Paul Newman production, from Warner Bros.—Seven Arts) (Illustrations courtesy Warner Bros.—Seven Arts, starring Joanne Woodward, with Estelle Parsons as Calla.)

Margaret Laurence's successful novel, *A JEST OF GOD*, would not, at first, seem a likely candidate for a successful movie. This slow paced novel about a spinster, mother dominated, plain and unhappy, who has a brief caustic and abortive affair, is special material rather than popular material.

Joanne Woodward, undersung actress, read the novel and fell in love with the idea of doing *RACHEL*, the spinster. Unable to find a producer willing to risk it, she convinced her actor husband, Paul Newman, to try his hand at production and direction. It seems that this was very wise, for Mr. Newman is an able new director, and Joanne Woodward has never had such a meaty part.

This is a small movie, despite its success, and many won't bother to see it, but it is a well-done film, using all of the potential human material in the original source, the novel, and exploiting it without distorting it much.

Miss Woodward is superb, her Rachel immaculate in conception and delivery.

Playing Rachel's closest friend, and would be lover, is Estelle Parsons (the famous "best supporting actress" for her role in *BONNIE AND CLYDE*), and Miss Parsons is superb in her necessarily limited role.

The triumphs in a movie like this, a human document, are small ones. It is enough that Rachel survives her love affair, her disappointment about her condition when she suspects pregnancy and finds only a tumor, and her final blasting of her evil mother. It is equally enough that Rachel is not cruel to Calla's attempt at seduction, for Calla, though she has a tenacious loveableness, is one of life's rejects, and rejects come in all kinds. heterosexual and homosexual.

There are flaws, bad ones, the insistence of using masturbation as a movie must, and close cut shots of intercourse are becoming silly. But this is slight carping at a genuinely rewarding movie. Try it.

Gladys Casey



# CROSS CURRENTS

THE KANSAS CITY STAR for September 8, 1968, reports that women are getting better breaks in the field of management training . . . we hope it is so—but doubt it!

McCALL'S MAGAZINE, in its September issue comments on the fact that ladies may now, officially, become Generals in the Army, Admirals in the Navy—Fancy that!

## HOMOSEXUALS ASK CANDIDATES' IDEAS

### SEEK VIEWS ON PENALTIES—'BILL OF RIGHTS' URGED

*Special to The New York Times*

CHICAGO, Aug. 18—The North American Conference of Homophile Organizations has proposed that all political candidates be asked this year for their views on penalties imposed upon homosexuals.

At the closing session of the five-day conference here late last week, the 75 delegates recommended that the 40 local organizations of homosexuals forward questionnaires to aspirants for office.

The conference also adopted a "Homosexual Bill of Rights." Major contentions are that laws dealing with homosexuality should be modified and that employment should not be denied anyone solely because he is a homosexual.

#### Cleric Is Chairman

Local organizations were urged to exert pressure on police officials, state legislatures, and the Federal Government to put provisions of this "bill of rights" into effect.

The conference chairman was the Rev. Robert Warren Crome, vicar of St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in San Francisco. He said it had been estimated that over the nation there were 15 million homosexuals, most of whom sought to conceal their homosexuality from the public for obvious reasons.

The local homosexual organizations have

about 2,000 members, he said.

Most homosexuals, he asserted, are normal except for their homosexuality and are responsible members of society. Many, he said, hold important positions in business and the professions.

To subject them to legal harassment and exclude them from employment solely because of sexual orientation is a denial of their constitutional rights, he declared.

Mr. Crome, 37 years old, is married and has three daughters. He said he was one of the few heterosexuals who attended the conference. Until assuming his present pastorate three years ago he was executive assistant to the Episcopal Bishop of California.

In many states homosexuality is a crime, and in some, homosexuals are prosecuted under sodomy laws, Mr. Crome noted.

He said that known homosexuals were denied employment in any position requiring security clearance in the Federal Government or in private businesses doing Government work.

In the "bill of rights" adopted by the conference, the following "basic rights" are outlined:

Private sex acts between consenting persons over the age of consent shall not be offenses.

Solicitation for any sexual act shall not be an offense except upon filing of a complaint by the aggrieved party, not a police officer or agent.

A person's sexual orientation or practice shall not be a factor in the granting of Federal security clearance, visas and citizenship.

Service in and discharge from the armed services, and eligibility for veterans' benefits, shall be without reference to homosexuality.

A person's sexual orientation or practice shall not affect his eligibility for employment with Federal, state or local governments.

Under "areas for immediate reform," the

conference declared that the police should cease entrapment of homosexuals, not notify employers of those arrested for homosexual offenses, keep no files solely to identify homosexuals, and refrain from harassing business establishments catering to homosexuals.

(The New York Times — 8/19/68)

## A Minority's Plea

### U.S. HOMOSEXUALS GAIN IN TRYING TO PERSUADE SOCIETY TO ACCEPT THEM

WITH A GROWING MILITANCY, THEY BATTLE DISCRIMINATION ON SOCIAL, LEGAL, JOB LINES

### WINNING THE RIGHT TO A DRINK

By Charles Alverson  
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

In Washington, they have picketed the White House, Pentagon, State Department and Civil Service Commission. Last fall in San Francisco, candidates for city office actively sought their vote as a bloc. They have recently protested successfully against job discrimination and police harassment in New York. More than 40 regional and national organizations including a newly formed National Legal Defense Fund, fight for their cause.

This sounds like a militant minority, and so it is. But the members of this movement cut across traditional areas of prejudice like race, nationality or religion. What sets them apart is their sexual preferences. They are a tiny but vocal minority of this nation's estimated 10 million homosexuals.

Long the target of whispered comments or off-color jokes, homosexuality is fast coming out in the open. Homosexuals in many instances are boldly challenging the right of others to make them second-class citizens. With growing support from heterosexuals, they are fighting discrimination on legal, economic and social fronts.

#### "Against the Morals of the Public"

It's a formidable task. Under present laws, homosexual acts—even between consenting adults in private—are illegal in every state except Illinois. A number of occupations—notably teaching—are closed to homosexuals. A military man discovered to be a homosexual is abruptly discharged—often with few legal formalities—and is likely to lose

his veteran's benefits. Known homosexuals are barred from any post requiring a security clearance and from almost all Federal jobs.

Says Leo M. Pellerzi, general counsel for the Civil Service Commission: "Homosexual conduct is against the morals of the public."

There is a school of psychiatric thought that believes homosexuality is a sickness capable of being cured and thus that efforts to help homosexuals live with their condition are misguided. But the great majority of sex researchers holds that homosexuality is not a disease but is a deep-rooted sexual orientation. Because more and more people are now accepting this latter view, homosexuals are winning ground in their efforts to improve their lives.

Until quite recently, for example, known homosexuals in New York had considerable difficulty getting and keeping city jobs. The Mattachine Society of New York, a homosexual group of 1,000 members, complained to the city's Human Rights Commission and provided case histories of hiring discrimination. Apparently as a result, in January 1967 the city said it had stopped asking job applicants if they were homosexuals.

#### "If You're Gay, Stay Away"

Protests from Mattachine Society members also prompted the New York State Liquor Authority last year to rule that state law doesn't forbid a bar to serve homosexuals. The group had staged a well-publicized "sip in" at a Greenwich Village bar that—to avoid police pressure—had posted a sign reading "If You're Gay, Stay Away."

In several other big cities, police are taking a softer line toward homosexuals. Three years ago San Francisco police regularly raided the social functions of the Society for Individual Rights, a 1,000-member homosexual group. Today, the raids have ceased. Instead, police officers address the group on such topics as the legal rights of homosexuals.

Particularly heartening to homosexuals are signs of changing attitudes on laws relating to homosexual conduct. In 1961, Illinois adopted a penal code that took sexual acts in private between consenting adults out of the province of the law. Nearly a dozen states are studying similar proposals. Abroad, Great Britain last summer passed the Sexual Offenses Act, which removes from criminal statutes private homosexual acts between consenting adults.

That lawmakers are even considering such changes is a major spur to the militancy of homosexuals. Federal agencies are among

the biggest targets; homosexuals whose Government jobs or security clearances are threatened are increasingly choosing to stand and fight, either through administrative channels or in the courts.

#### The Case of Mr. Wentworth

"Until recently, the only court cases we got involved in were the ones we couldn't avoid," says Clark P. Polak, executive secretary of the Homosexual Law Reform Society, a Philadelphia group that offers legal and financial aid to homosexuals in court. "Now we are very much concerned with initiating litigation."

A case in point: Benning Wentworth is a 33-year-old electronics technician at a large private research laboratory in New Jersey. He holds a "secret" security clearance from the Defense Department. In the spring of 1966, Air Force investigators accused Mr. Wentworth of having had homosexual relations with a former Air Force enlisted man. Shortly thereafter, the Defense Department began action to revoke his security clearance, which he has held for seven years.

But instead of quietly quitting his job, as is usually the case with discovered homosexuals, Mr. Wentworth denied the charge—though he admitted he is a practicing homosexual. With the support of the Mattachine Society of Washington, he is fighting revocation of his clearance; he lost a round before the Defense Department's Industrial Security Clearance Review Office in New York and now is appealing. "My sex life is my own private business," says Mr. Wentworth. "It has no bearing on my job or my loyalty."

While not questioning Mr. Wentworth's loyalty, the Government maintains that as a homosexual he is subject to "coercion, influence or pressure that may be likely to cause action contrary to the national interest." In short, say Government officials, his vulnerability to blackmail makes him a poor security risk.

Mr. Wentworth's attorneys argue that, as an admitted homosexual, he can't be blackmailed. "The only one exerting coercion, influence or pressure is the Defense Department," says Franklin E. Kameny, a physicist who is president of the Washington Mattachine Society and who is serving as attorney for Mr. Wentworth in the current administrative hearings.

Except for the controversy, Mr. Wentworth would seem to be the model of a junior technician. An Air Force veteran, he has been with the same employer for seven years and has never been arrested. Soft spoken and shy,

he seems anything but a crusader, and nothing in his manner evokes the stereotyped homosexual.

But sitting in the plainly furnished living room of his split-level home in suburban New Jersey, he becomes less reserved and speaks with indignation of the Government action, which could cost him his job as well as his security clearance. "Like anyone else," he says, "I want to be judged by my public acts, not my sexual preferences when they harm no one."

Mr. Wentworth says he was gratified by the reaction of his employer and his fellow workers when it became known that he is a homosexual. "I was worried that there'd be some bad reaction," he says, "but the company never said a thing, and people at work went out of their way to be nice to me." Mr. Wentworth admits that for a time he had considered quitting under pressure from the Defense Department, "but it seemed like a cowardly thing to do, so I decided to fight it."

Mr. Wentworth says he stands ready to take his case to Federal court if the Defense Department turns down his appeal. If so, he will join a growing list of court cases currently in litigation to test laws and rules against homosexuals. Philadelphia's Homosexual Law Reform Society, one of the more active legal aid groups, spent \$5,000 for court actions last year, and has set aside another \$25,000 for future litigation. (The funds come from membership contributions and profits from the group's monthly magazine, *Drum*, which has a circulation of 15,000.)

There's no shortage of lawyers to argue cases for homosexuals. Says Mr. Polak of the Philadelphia group, "Volunteer heterosexual lawyers are the backbone of our movement. It's very similar to the early days of the civil rights movement when the strongest supporters were the whites."

One such attorney is Gilbert M. Cantor of Philadelphia, who is currently handling the case of a woman fighting dismissal from a Federal civil service post on the ground that she is a homosexual. Mr. Cantor has been representing homosexual groups and individuals for four years as part of his practice, sometimes at no charge. "Good representation ought to be available to anyone," he says, "and I admire their willingness to assert their rights as citizens rather than acting as members of an underground society."

Among the homosexuals' other allies in the heterosexual world are growing numbers of Protestant clergymen. Churchmen in some of the bigger cities are working not only to

help create better public understanding of homosexuals but also to help homosexuals improve their lives.

Rev. Walter D. Dennis, canon of the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York, says Christians must "re-think the usual position that has turned homosexuals into modern-day lepers." The Rev. Robert W. Crome, an Episcopal clergyman in San Francisco, says, "I believe the sex act is morally neutral."

Of course, only a small minority of churches and clergy accept Mr. Crome's view. The official position of his own church is that homosexuality is a "mysterious sickness" and a "demon to be cast out, not an incurable condition that can only be endured." The Roman Catholic church holds that "homosexual acts are objectively sinful," although "the condition itself is not sinful."

At least some politicians also are changing their attitudes about homosexuals. In San Francisco last fall, several candidates for mayor, supervisor and sheriff appeared at a candidates' night at the headquarters of a homosexual organization and advertised in the organization's magazine.

Homosexual groups also are starting to form on some college campuses. Last spring a Student Homophile League became an officially recognized student group at Columbia University. (Homophile is a coined word that indicates the group consists of both homosexuals and heterosexuals who support the homosexuals' aims.)

The organization at Columbia has only 16 members, half of them heterosexuals. Nonetheless, they have sponsored lectures and panels on homosexuality and they plan a monthly publication. Similar groups are forming at Stanford University, the University of Miami, the University of Pittsburgh and a handful of other schools.

(The Wall Street Journal—7/17/68)

## PASTOR FIRED; REFUSED TO CONDEMN MOVIE

Lafayette, La. (UPI)—People were driving in from miles around this weekend to see for themselves the movie that caused a Church of Christ preacher to lose his pulpit.

Dr. H. B. Mason, pastor of the University Avenue Church of Christ for more than three years, was fired by his board of elders for re-

fusing to condemn the movie, "The Fox."

Starring Oscar winners Sandy Dennis and Keir Dullea, "The Fox" is a graphic story of a triangle between a young man and two lesbians, based on a novel by D. H. Lawrence.

### Refused to Censor

Mason, a member of a special citizens' panel appointed by the Lafayette Parish (county) grand jury, refused to vote to censor the controversial film.

As soon as his position was made public, the four-man board of elders called for his resignation, saying they thought the film was "degrading, sensual, obscene and should be condemned as it serves to weaken the moral fibre of the people."

Mason said later it was his understanding that the elders had not seen the film.

### Sellout Crowds

Harold Boudreaux, manager of the Nona Theatre which was showing the film, said the movie has been exhibited to "sellout" crowd representing a broad section of the population. No one under 17 years of age is admitted.

He said extra showings of the film were scheduled to accommodate the customers. It is possible the management will request a longer run of the film, now due to close July 24. The theatre seats 608 persons.

### Film Seized, Returned

The movie was confiscated by police last Monday at the request of the district attorney on grounds it was lewd and obscene.

Since a majority of the citizens' panel, including Mason, felt that the film did not meet the U.S. Supreme Court criteria for pornography and obscenity, the grand jury dropped its investigation and the film was returned.

"I felt from the first scene onward 'pity and revulsion'; that the film could have had some scenes deleted that were unnecessary to the story and pretty far out," said Mason.

Mason said he felt the treatment of the homosexual theme in "The Fox" pointed out to viewers "the sorrow, anguish and ultimate despair of those who choose to deviate."

(The Houston Chronicle 7-7-68)

## SPECIAL RELEASE TO THE LADDER

Houston, Texas: The night of August 14, 1968, several vice squad officers raided the Plantation Club and made several arrests of women wearing "fly front" pants. The official charge was "wearing the clothing of the

opposite sex." The officers of the Promethean Society, who were attending the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations in Chicago, learned of the raid. They immediately called the office of the Mayor in Houston and entered a complaint. The Mayor's first administrative assistant, Dave Beckwith, apologized for the incident and assured the Promethean Society that positive steps would be taken to assure that such acts of harassment would not happen in the future. The incident will be investigated to determine if administrative or policy change is desirable. The Promethean Society is an association of adult men and women concerned with the social problems of the homosexual. The Society has been active in Houston since January 1968.

Special News release to The Ladder,  
Ray Hill, President, Promethean Society

## WHO CAN TELL BOYS FROM GIRLS?

The fashion world itself, not the 11 women arrested "for wearing clothes of the opposite sex" as the charge read, was to go on trial today.

However, the trial never materialized because the corporation court judge dismissed the cases.

Percy Foreman, that monumental lion of the courtroom, tried to hide his disappointment.

He was ready, he had announced, to defend his clients in the grand manner which is his trade-mark.

However, the vice squad detectives who had arrested the 11 women failed to appear. Two were on vacation and two were in another court. Thus Foreman triumphed by default.

### THE TEST THAT NEVER CAME

Prior to the hearing Foreman had announced:

"This will not be a test of the law. It will be a test of the vice squad's concept of the law.

"I find it extremely difficult these days to tell what many people are as I walk down the street. And new fashion magazines are illustrating identical he and she outfits. And the men today? They wear medallions and long hair.

The way the vice squad tells it, a bunch of the girls were whooping it up last September at Rocky's Club, 3412 W. Dallas, and later at the Roaring Sixties, at 2305 S. Shepherd.

"They were dressed in men's pants, men's

shirts and men's shoes," said vice squad Sgt. G. S. McMenemy.

"This is a violation of the city ordinance that forbids wearing of the clothes of the opposite sex."

Foreman snorted: "That ordinance was probably passed in 1868."

### HAD WANTED RODEO WEEK

He had hoped, he said wistfully, the trial would be held during the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

"I would have subpoenaed women dressed in cowboy clothes," said Foreman.

One of the girls, built on non-Twiggy lines, said:

"I'm a truck driver. That's why I wear men's clothes."

(Houston Chronicle—7/26/68)

## POLICE WILL REFILE CHARGES

Sgt. G. S. McMenemy of the Houston Police vice squad said Thursday he "definitely intended" to refile charges on ten mannishly attired females who hired Percy Foreman and then didn't need him, to escape conviction for wearing the clothes of the opposite sex.

They went free from Judge Raymond Justice's Corporation Court Thursday when McMenemy and two other police witnesses didn't appear for the trial.

SOMEHOW Prosecutor Robert Bates had failed to communicate with police, or they had not communicated with him. But with no evidence the case fell by default.

McMenemy explained that he was testifying in another court at the time, but Foreman indignantly said the sergeant could have appeared "at some time while we waited there from eight until ten in the morning."

"Oh, well," Foreman continued, "if it weren't for people filing stupid charges, I'd be a very poor man."

THE WOMEN were arrested in two raids last fall. In September the vice squad swooped down on Rocky's Club, 3412 West Dallas, and in December raided the Roaring 60's Club, 2305 South Shepherd.

Conviction under the city ordinance against wearing clothes of the opposite sex normally amounts to little more than a \$25 or \$50 fine.

Foreman claimed he had no intention of losing and then appealing the constitutionality of the ordinance in a higher court.

"I WOULD have pleaded this case on the



basis of the facts and argued that the defendants were not guilty," he said. "After all, what are the clothes of the opposite sex these days?"

He said he was confident he could prove with clothes receipts and fashion experts that the difference between men and women's attire is now too ambiguous to be legislated.

(*The Houston Chronicle* 7-27-68)

## VICE SQUAD RAIDS ARE DEPLOYED

From Bob Adams, P.O. Box 1379

It makes my blood boil to read that the Houston Police vice squad raided and seized books at a local newsstand and that the same vice squad filed charges on a number of women for wearing men's clothes.

In our city where so much real crime is committed, you'd think the police could find something a little less frivolous to occupy

their time instead of harassing such people. And don't tell me that they're only nipping it in the bud. I've been to Sally's Newsstand and I never saw one thing that could be called pornography and I saw it all. If you call nudes such, I hardly think the human body is obscene. There are many people who like to view them, most people for that matter.

As for the few unfortunate women in male attire, it's too bad that Percy Foreman wasn't allowed to present their case. He could have made the vice squad look ridiculous and they knew it. That's why they didn't show up for the trial. Are we going to let the local vice squad dictate to us what we can read and wear? It's really hard to believe that I actually read this in the Houston papers, where we are supposed to be such a growing sophisticated and broad-minded city. Who is responsible for having the police pull these gestapo-type things? They should be recalled! No wonder we have so many murders and crime here. Can you believe this is happening? And they want us to respect them!

(*The Houston Chronicle* 7-30-68)

## PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE STUDY IN THE WORKS

Florence Conrad, Research Director for Daughters of Bilitis, Inc., reports that a study of professional attitudes toward homosexuals, being sponsored by the former Director and a present associate of the San Francisco Center for Special Problems, has been underway over the past two years, with D.O.B. involvement.

Dr. Joel Fort and Dr. Claude Steiner have been looking into the views of professionals in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area regarding such things as the legal and employment rights of homosexuals, as well as the treatment and diagnosis of homosexuality. The professionals include psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. They are now analyzing preliminary results, with a view to eventual professional publication.

While THE LADDER will hold

off its full report on this study until such time as it has been completed, a few points are quite clear already: All three professions manifest a far more liberal attitude on employment questions than is commonly believed by homosexuals or the general public. All three are extremely liberal on legal questions. They show a critical attitude toward diagnoses that link homosexuality with sexual crimes. And they show tolerance toward the notion that homosexuals can be normal and well-adjusted human beings rather than necessarily "sick."

In addition to the above announcement, Miss Conrad has recently expanded slightly and fully annotated her BRIEF NON-FICTION BIBLIOGRAPHY ON HOMOSEXUALITY.

(Available from D.O.B. on request, without charge, though we would appreciate your including 25c to cover handling and postage charges...)

## Readers Respond



Dear Editor:

It was good to see Zee Paulsen's common-sense remarks (in the article "Make It Last, Baby," May/June issue) that we aren't so very different from heterosexuals and that human relationships require the same careful handling whatever the sexes of the participants.

However, in telling us that the rosy glow fades when "one day you realize she has so damn many faults," and in later commenting, "Be glad you've got her, faults and all," Zee has, I think, over-stressed one side of the coin.

It was George Eliot who said, "The responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have the wider vision." And it is surely imperative that one's vision is sufficiently wide-angled to perceive one's own faults before one decides nobly to live with one's partners. There is one great difference between my faults and hers: I have a chance to do something active about mine—i.e. correct them—whereas with hers, many of which are probably mirror-images of my own anyway, only the weaker passive course of tolerance is open to me.

On the whole, instead of continuing on the old well-trodden path of grandmother's advice, one might also have wished that for the LADDER's somewhat special readership the article had concentrated on some of the special problems involved in a homosexual marriage. Because special problems there are, and the successful handling of them often has considerable bearing on whether or not the relationship lasts.

For instance, having made a homosexual marriage, how do the partners go about the delicate task of presenting it to the outside world? Just how forthright—or reticent—can we afford to be about our relationships?

Until the enlightened day when we can be quite sure that the fact of our homosexuality will not close any doors in our faces, we are probably not doing ourselves a favor by being too forthright. We are each of us many other

important things besides being homosexuals; the exercise of these things—and of our membership in the human race as a whole—involves contacts in heterosexual society without which we would be the poorer. My burning interest in star-gazing and yours in poodle-breeding has absolutely nothing to do with our sexual orientation and if we insist, in a surfeit of honesty, in introducing this (in these circumstances) irrelevancy about ourselves into our contacts with astronomers and animal-lovers, we may soon find ourselves alone with our stars and our pooches—and with our partners, upon whom some blame will doubtless fall and with whom we shall have begun to share the shades of the prison house.

If we openly invite ostracism by heterosexuals, we are risking cutting ourselves off from 75% of the world. This is a very big slice of world to turn one's back on at the best of times; as we grow older and our waning romantic interests require replacement by others, it is going to look bigger still.

Conversely, over-reticence to the point of secrecy is obviously equally destructive. It matters not that this is a policy of circumspection, not shame, that inside oneself one knows one's love to be a strong, proud and shining thing. The act of behaving furtively breeds of itself a furtiveness of spirit which can quickly corrode to guilt.

I know a couple who try not to be seen in public together; I understand they even have a shopping rota lest they should be observed in the dreadful intimacy of jointly choosing a chicken. It has not worked; the home to which they separately return is without warmth and in it they are crouched over a dying flame. They have become so used to hiding from the outside world that they have learned to hide from each other too.

As well as being psychologically harmful to the partnership, such behavior does nothing to encourage acceptance by others of the close

relationship between the partners. It is virtually asking for those separate invitations which at best can be awkward to handle and at worst can make for real trouble.

It should not be so difficult to get across the fact that one shares a close relationship with one's partner. View things objectively for a moment. You share a home; it is therefore obvious that you like each other and nobody should be surprised to hear you say so. It is, in fact, possible to tell 99% of the truth; a straightforward, casual statement that you get on extremely well and spend a lot of time together is much less likely to raise inquiries than a strained silence on the subject.

(Of the other 1%, I know Browning said, "Oh, the little more, and how much it is! And the little less, and what worlds away!" and of course he was absolutely right. But it should not be too hard to regard that as a private matter between you on public occasions. Heterosexual couples have plenty of intimacies which they do not feel impelled to share with all their friends.)

Another special problem is that of how much contact with homosexual society the partners should seek. This of course is where many heterosexuals become shocked. Raised upon a diet of prurient paperbacks, they view homosexual society exclusively as a succession of marketplaces for the exchange of sob stories and bedfellows, and as soon as we foregather we are up to no good.

But when we are in love we are all, to a degree, exhibitionists. "Here is my love and miraculously she has chosen me and together we are a miracle"; it is a perfectly natural reaction and one which we as homosexuals can only express in the company of other homosexuals. And, just as common interests will lead us to spend time in the company of those star-gazers and poodle-fanciers, we shall also naturally seek out the company of other homosexuals now and again.

Fortunately there are plenty of meetings between homosexuals that do not conform to the paperback stereotype. And it should hardly be necessary to suggest that couples sincere in their endeavours towards a permanent relationship will do best to pursue their homosexual contacts in surroundings other than the tearful trading-posts.

There are plenty more problems peculiar to homosexual marriages which have to be met and managed to "make it last, baby." How to handle parents, for instance? Or the predictable reactions of single, heterosexual males to a two-bachelor-girl set-up? How necessary is it for homosexual couples to find a jointly

creative project to replace that of having children, and what sort of projects work? If one partner is faced with an urgent demand upon her loyalties by her family (who are unaware of her marriage), how far is she justified in ignoring it in favor of her loyalties to her partner?

Maybe other readers have comments upon these problems which might be helpful to us all?

Jocelyn Hayward  
British Columbia, Canada

(Editor's Note: Our new column "The Counsellor's Corner" is open to inquiries on any and all personal and marital problems that may concern Lesbian readers.)

To the Editor:

The student homosexual has been called "alienated" by Stephen Donaldson, President of the Student Homophile League of Columbia University ("The Anguish of the Student Homosexual," COLUMBIA DAILY SPECTATOR, April 11, 1968). Surely this is the byword of all homosexuals no matter what the context.

A major characteristic of this alienation is its anonymity—a war with invisible combatants. The individual is directly shot down only when (s)he shows her face but the psychological toll is constant and omnipresent. Society feels itself hurt only when it knows its true face and becomes self-aware. This demarcates the irony and fault of this war—the so-called enemy of Society is itself—not its individual members, but the facade of its superstructure.

If, however, the individuals were to tear away the cobweb of hypocrisy which envelopes them, they might more clearly see their nature, and if superstructure be necessary, erect a more truthful one.

The university can be seen as a microcosmic society to which the individual is an unknown until (s)he voices her opinion. This is the essential task of student government and the principle behind the formation of interest groups: living groups, social groups, political groups, and now, Black Student Unions.

Other techniques can and have been used. Even the hippies, alienated from society as they are, have gained some space and notoriety by being obvious. Unlike the negro who is known by natural appearance and the hippie by assumed appearance, the Jew has sometimes used anonymity to gain a foothold. Once gained, he then claimed his rights.

Individual homosexuals can opt to act in either way (anonymity or obvious) with ef-

fectiveness. Many of us already have a good deal of power; those of us over 21 have the vote; and all of us can influence people. We have just to put these forces to work.

The student has a unique opportunity. Student awareness and unrest is being translated into social and political consequence. Students are pardonable protesters: they are in part the protected of society and future society. They have the opportunity to learn about and infiltrate society in its many branches. If the university is mock Society, it is also translatable into Society.

As it exists, the university is a bastion of heterosexuality. The subject matter taught, its approach, and the established institutions there are all heterosexually oriented, and usually, homosexually antipathetic. The homosexual student has no focus for expression in the university community and faces everything from non-direct ridicule to open hostility and discrimination. I personally know of two persons expelled from college

due to their private relationship.

However, the homosexual must be a tough breed—despite the added pressures levied on us, we manage to survive. THE LADDER conducted a study in 1958 (dealing with women) which showed that 41% of the respondents had completed four years of college and 21% had gone beyond the fourth year. This is a higher percentage than the national average. 1957 statistics show that among caucasians over 25 years, only 8% completed four years of college. The homosexual group also earned high grades: 78% had grades of "B" or better.

Despite the large representation of homosexuals in colleges, only three have recognized homophile organizations to date: Columbia, Hartford, and Stanford. Every college might form an association: "There is strength in numbers."

Shawn Keene  
Washington (State)

## TRIOLETS TO LONELINESS

i  
I shall grow pale from wanting you;  
The nights are long in my narrow bed;  
Where now there is one, there once were two;  
I shall grow pale from wanting you.  
I yearn, in dreams that never come true,  
For your fragrant hair that pillowed my head;  
I shall grow pale from wanting you;  
The nights are long in my narrow bed.

ii  
Sharing silence and a glass of wine  
Was better than talk on a stormy night;  
We would sit by the fire, your hand in mine,  
Sharing silence and a glass of wine.  
I choke on dregs that have turned to brine,  
And remember, now, by the embers' light,  
Sharing silence and a glass of wine  
Was better than talk on a stormy night.

iii  
Alone I walk on frozen ground  
Beneath the elms, now dark and bare;  
I scuff at leaves, yet make no sound;  
Alone I walk on frozen ground.  
Once we two walked here, and I crowned  
With a wreath of leaves your windblown hair;  
Alone I walk on frozen ground  
Beneath the elms, now dark and bare.

(Continued on page 47)

by Maura McCullough

# On Marriage

**Martha Shelley**

One of the topics which comes up frequently at discussions in the New York Chapter is that of homosexual marriage. A lasting marriage is held up as the ideal, and we applaud those members who have lived together for the longest periods of time.

Those clergymen who find homosexuality morally acceptable envision a homosexual marriage modeled after the heterosexual pattern: two respectable, hardworking, churchgoing individuals, faithful to each other and basing their relationship on mutual love and respect. And most of us cherish our particular version of the vine-covered cottage, and we want the straight world to know it. See? We're not so different after all; just one little thing separates us from the rest of America.

Well, perhaps, but I think differently. The majority of homosexual marriages, from what I've seen, are not permanent affairs; and even heterosexual marriages, bound by legal contracts and often by children, end in divorce at least one-third of the time. If you add in separation, legal and de facto, the numbers climb even higher.

Is it true that there's something wrong with these people—or is there something wrong with the institution of marriage? Maybe the notion of permanent bliss, even allowing for occasional spats, is as unrealistic as the notion of love at first sight. We change as we grow older, and the world changes at a frightening pace. Ideologies and art forms spring up and die overnight. Huge numbers of people change jobs and residences every few years. And now the heterosexuals have what we homosexuals have always enjoyed: effective contraception, paving the way to sexual freedom.

Maybe the institution of marriage, developed in stable agricultural societies and tied to the values of property and the church, is no longer necessary or desirable in many cases. Why should homosexuals, who are not, in most cases, obligated to provide for offspring, bind themselves together for life? Why should they struggle to maintain a less-than-happy relationship in pursuit of an impossible ideal? That an institution endures does not guarantee its desirability. Slavery still endures in the world, and so does war and tyranny.

Personally, I refuse to enter an agreement which binds me to have sex with one and only one person; which gives that person jurisdiction over my friendships and finances. I have dozens of relatives, equal numbers of friends, and hundreds of acquaintances, and nowhere among them have I seen a marriage that even approached the ideal of permanent love and respect, or even permitted a tolerable degree of mutual freedom. And there's no real security in it, or anywhere in this world.

Even assuming that the married state, permanent or temporary, is preferable to a more loosely organized love life, why do we hold up an ideal of

permanence in spite of the evidence that most homosexual marriages are impermanent? Partly, I think this is done to reassure the straight society that we are respectable. This is a form of Uncle-Tomism. Negro culture is not just like white culture; each minority group differs in its values from other groups; why should we all pretend to cherish the same values?

The other part is that we often refuse to face certain realities. A relationship may be valid and productive for a limited time, and then the two parties may outgrow the relationship, may find that their needs are taking them in different directions. Many of my friends have privately told me of the plans they are making if and when their marriages break up. They enter marriage with the roseate hope that it would last forever, and now they are upset and ashamed, as though the breakup meant that they were failures as human beings. If so many marriages are destined to come to an end, why do we hold up an ideal which makes so many decent people feel like failures when it happens? Why don't we face the fact that people change and grow throughout adulthood?

There exists also a minority, including myself, who do not believe in marriage, even temporarily. We are not necessarily "immature," a term the psychiatrists apply to anyone who does not fit into their notions of what is right and proper. In the New York Chapter, I have encountered a great many people who seem to think that the only proper alternatives are a straight marriage or a gay one, and who regard me as "queer" for desiring a different way of life. But I, too, have the right to choose, and I believe that DOB should defend the rights of those of us who prefer not to marry.

*Martha Shelley comes from Brooklyn, did her undergraduate work in English Literature at C.C.N.Y., and has worked as a social worker. She is President of the New York Chapter of DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, INC.*

## THE RETURN

You do not fool me, friend Cat;  
I've watched you lie there,  
scarcely breathing as you play at sleep,  
but I am not deceived.  
You are awake,  
and those slanted topaz eyes gaze beyond me,  
beyond and past,  
to ancient Egypt,  
To a temple of frankincense and shadows,  
sandstone columns in the heavy still air,  
and Bast, goddess of joy with a cat's head,  
carved from a wall of rock.  
There on a high stone ledge you sit,  
silent and motionless,  
the sacred cat,  
listening to the sacred Nile flow to the sea.

*by Maura McCullough*





**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 Lesbian, enabling her to understand herself and to make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic, and economic implications - by establishing and maintaining a library of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public meetings on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by providing the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group.
- ② Education of the public, developing an understanding and acceptance of the Lesbian as an individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices - by public discussion meetings and by dissemination of educational literature on the Lesbian theme.
- ③ Encouragement of and participation in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.
- ④ Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposing and promoting changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group through due process of law in the state legislatures.