Calling Shots

SENATOR CALLS FOR END OF PURITANISM

Senator William J. Fulbright touched a significant note recently when, after the assassination of President Kennedy and the murder of his accused assassin, he stated that America's great challenge today is to cast off the hatred bred by our Puritanical heritage.

He might have gone further and called for a renewal of practice of the teachings of love and understanding which came from Jesus Christ some 2000 years ago, distortions and interpretations of which let Puritanism develop in the first place.

Fulbright's message called for an end to intolerance, an application of the full meaning of freedom (implying that freedom was not something which said one is free to believe and behave in a manner approved by some group of self-styled authorities), and a diminishing emphasis on the violence which is now so played up on television and in mass media of information.

No area of human experience creates more social problems than the Puritanical repression of the sexual urge in Western culture. Without doubt this anti-sexualism forms a root cause for far more personality disorders and social ills in individuals than we know. And because we are loath to face this root cause, we indulge in wasted lives and wasted efforts time and again treating surface symptoms.

An example in point: Pressure is now mounting to amend the constitution and provide law forbidding American citizens the right to possess arms. Argument is advanced that the "dangerous frontier" days of 188 years ago are now past. The arms are dangerous in the hands of such twisted and psychopathic persons as Lee Harvey Oswald, therefore arms should be denied to all. Here again we treat a symptom, hoping to cure the disease. But it won't, other experts point out, because the law-abiding citizens in whose hands arms pose no threat will be denied arms for use in sports and in some cases food gathering, while the dangerous potential killers among us will get the pistols and rifles they want anyway.

Wouldn't it be better to teach love and respect of one's fellow man, to emphasize that thinking people may hold divergent views and still be honored, even though we may disapprove these views, and to realize that dissent and non-conformity are the basic strengths of advancing our knowledge and way of life?

(Continued on page 20)
FROM LONDON:

SOME OF THE PEOPLE, ALL OF THE TIME...

Shortly before Mr John Profumo decided to make, if I may so express myself, a clean breast of it, it was possible to isolate and observe a perfect example of the way in which Rumour operates. I was assured by three separate people in the course of a single afternoon that that week's *Paris-Match* was arriving in Britain with twenty-four pages of the original printing torn out, and that the missing supplement contained a detailed account of the whole affair, lavishly illustrated with pictures of the two protagonists *in flagrante delicto* and alfresco to boot. The pictures were described to me in detail, as was the article, and a list of other names mentioned in the course of it was thrown in gratis.

Next day I was lunching at a house where their *Paris-Match* is sent direct from Paris, not ordered from an English newsagent, and it was possible to see exactly what it contained on the affair. It was a single two-column picture (head and shoulders) of Miss Keeler, with a 200-word caption beneath it, which caption did nothing more than vaguely link Miss Keeler's name with Mr Profumo's, and hint that some people in Britain were saying that he had something to do with her disappearance. 'Shelved? No!' it concluded. Well, it was right there.

Thus, in the space of not more than twenty-four hours (for *Paris-Match*, with its one mutilated page, was almost immediately in the London newsagents), a single perfectly ordinary photograph with a largely meaningless caption had become a twenty-four page, fully illustrated guide to *la dolce vita anglice* beside Lord Astor's swimming pool.

This, however, is only half the story of Rumour's activities this spring. At about the same time, I was hearing equally detailed accounts of the evidence (which could not, by law, be published) being given at the hearing of the Argyll divorce case; these included synopses of the afternoon in which the ownership of the pubic hair (not to mention the male member) in the now celebrated—though still unseen—photographs was earnestly disputed, and the judge's reply to the Duchess's request to be excused answering when she was asked what she was actually doing in the photograph. And all this was perfectly true.

I begin like this because it is important to bear in mind throughout any discussion of these matters that any story one hears about anything or anybody involved may be entirely true, entirely untrue, or anything in between. One can hear, for instance, a story that the man whose head was missing from the relevant photograph in the Argyll case is a certain Minister. It may be right; or wrong. (Or conceivably both; it might be another Minister.)

Anyway, with that said it is possible to cast a discreet glance at the manners and morals of those whom Mr E. M. Forster called 'them persons what governs us—them dukes and duchesses and archbishops and generals and captains of industry', and perhaps draw a conclusion or two.

We can clear one or two objections from the runway immediately. The Profumo case, of course, raised questions of security; one may easily conclude, without overstressing things, that it is undesirable, from a national point of view, for the Minister of War to be sharing the services of a prostitute with a Soviet diplomat. To take this a point or two further, we might even assume that the latest achievement of our security services, in not bothering to tell the Prime Minister that his Secretary of State for War was a-mollicking when the sukebird was out, surely brings within reach at last the happy moment when the whole fatuous, perishing lot of them, bowler-hats and all, will be cleared out into some trade where their incompetence does not go quite so close to treachery as it does at the moment, and one or two of them hanged into the bargain, *pour encourager les autres*. (I am of course assuming here that the Prime Minister was telling the truth in Monday's debate. But if you can't trust the
Prime Minister, dogs and little babies, whom can you trust?) But this is a more tangible and less complicated problem than the larger ones the case raises. Similarly, the hypocrisy of much of the newspaper comment on the affair can be discounted. So can — what had to be heard sooner or later — the full, rich, oily, English tones of Pecksniff, represented on this occasion by Mr John Corden, Tory (but of course) mp for (but of course) Bournemouth East, whose contribution was as follows: 'I was appalled to hear that our beloved Queen should be so wrongly advised to give an audience on Tuesday next to the former Minister of the Crown, who had proved himself untrustworthy and at last made public admission of his guilt. It seems to me surely an affront to the Christian conscience of the nation at a time when standards in public life need to be maintained at the highest level. I am absolutely staggered.'

Irrelevant, too, however important, are the more straightforward political aspects. It is not a good thing for a Minister to tell lies to the House of Commons in a loud, clear voice; on the other hand it is common. I have myself heard Cabinet Ministers, on at least six occasions in the last few years — and this does not include Suez — tell flagrant, deliberate lies on matters of the first importance and in circumstances which ensured that nobody in the House believed them, and that they knew perfectly well that nobody in the House believed them (these were of course political, not personal, lies, though it might be argued that that made them worse, if anything). And, to explore one or two of the lesser political points involved, there has already been committed to legend the spectacle of Lord Hailsham ringingingly declaring on television that the three-line whip had nothing to do with voting, but went no further than an instruction to the recipient to attend the debate; a contention which, incidentally, this gallant Christian gentleman expressed while kicking the fallen Mr Profumo repeatedly in the teeth for telling lies. One might say that Lord Hailsham was doing his usual roly-polyrb than thou act; and Mr Paget in the debate actually did say that 'When self-indulgence has reduced a man to the shape of Lord Hailsham sexual continence involves no more than a sense of the ridiculous,' while Mr Wigg went so far as to call his Lordship a 'lying humbug'. I think that is enough of Lord Hailsham for the moment; and indeed for a very long time. But, the gravy having been baed energetically aside, there is still meat underneath. And the question to which all discussion ultimately must return is, to put it as bluntly as possible, this: if Mr Profumo goes a-whoring, or the Duchess of Argyll likes it that way, is it any business of anybody else's? It is obviously no business of Lord Wheatley, for instance, whose obiter dicta during his unnecessarily prolonged judgment in the Argyll case only maintained the reputation for impertinence — in both senses of the word — that the Bench in this country has unhappily acquired Lord Wheatley's remarks about the 'disgusting' nature of the Duchess's sexual practices, and his contemptuous assertion that 'moderns' would find her behaviour acceptable, threw some light on his own psychology; but most of the 'moderns' I know would agree that a Divorce Court judge's function is to decide the case before him, and that he might with advantage leave sexual psychology and social mores to those better equipped to discuss them. Now, whether we realise it or not, it is true that we ask of our public figures, and in particular those charged with national leadership of whatever kind, a higher standard of personal conduct than we are willing to practise ourselves. Indeed, there is clearly a feeling that 'they' are in some essential way different from 'us', or at any rate that they should be. This is nonsense, of course; there is no reason to suppose (and plenty of evidence to deny) that the proportion of adulterers, fornicators, homosexuals, psychopaths and drunks is substantially lower among members of the House of Commons than among the sum of the various strata of society from which they come. But whatever these people are, we insist that they behave in certain ways. If a Cabinet Minister is a homosexual (I believe I am right in saying that at the time of writing none is) we insist that he be either celibate or discreet; if a University Chancellor is over-heterosexual, we take it amiss only if he is found abed with his girl students; if a Bishop is an alcoholic, he had better not start a jag on the wine at Communion; if an Ambassador has a penchant for cheating at cards, he ought not to be caught doing so by the natives. It is important to separate the moral element in all this; obviously no one this side of a mentality like Mr John Gordon's would regard a homosexual condition (whatever they might think of certain forms of homosexual behaviour) as in any meaningful sense sinful; equally obviously few would fail to condemn, say, the deliberate heterosexual seduction by a guardian of a minor ward. But the collapse of middle-class morality, and the resultant strain it has put upon middle-class hypocrisy, has meant that there is now much greater reluctance to strike moral attitudes that once would have been inevitable and widespread; we now confine ourselves, in the main, to asking our leaders to behave rather better in public than we do.

Is this not just another aspect of middle-class hypocrisy? I do not think so. It is, surely, a welcome step on the road towards full psychological health, nationally speaking. It implies that a man's private life is indeed his own business, and that only where it impinges on the public weal is it of any public concern; those whose lives do not impinge on the public weal at all, therefore, can do as they please. (Of course, there are here concentric circles of moral attitude: our neighbours may not forgive us if we are caught in behaviour they would condemn in principle, even if it affects none but ourselves. But of course one of the most important elements in a morally indifferent attitude to public figures among private ones is the distance between them; we do not feel personally threatened by a moral lapse on the part of a man we know only by reputation.)

But if, then, there is a tacit understanding that public men, whatever their inclinations, must behave better than we do; that they must not resort to prostitutes, accept gifts from those who might have motives other than friendship, or generally involve themselves in scandal or the rumour of scandal, then what is this understanding based upon, and has it any real justification? And how does the emerging pattern of la dolce vita fit into it?

At the very least, I think we have a right to demand that those who are to any considerable extent in formal charge of national public standards of behaviour, should themselves conform to a fairly high standard. A couple of years ago the Earl of Home made a highly significant speech, in which he urged the country to 'get a grip on itself', to remember that nations might have, as ours once had had, a moral purpose; to find again a faith we seemed to have lost. At the time he made that speech, Mr Profumo was at the height of his career (that is the word) of his liaison with Miss Keeler. Lord Home was not, at that time, to know; but, if he had known he could hardly have made such a speech. As a matter of fact, it is not easy to imagine anybody at any time holding up Mr Profumo as a kind of moral exemplar, but the principle is the thing. Ministers of the Government must not evolve in circles containing whores, pimps and criminals, because if they do the country's faith in its rulers, precariously at the best of times, is damaged, and its disinclination to get a grip on itself and find a faith consequently strengthened.

The same goes for those whose responsibility for leadership is less formalised than those in political authority; though perhaps the obligation on them is accordingly diluted. The French Stavisky case (the nearest thing in recent years, though not so near as all that, to our...
affaire Profumo) is a useful lesson for those who imagine that the open society is a tough plant that no frost can harm; corruption among those who are, or who are generally taken to be, or who implicitly claim to be, the arbiters of the nation's attitudes, can be a deeply dangerous thing. It is no coincidence that the most gleeful voice in the Profumo hubbub was that of the Daily Worker. It would seem, then, that we lay upon our public men and women an unfair hypocritical burden; that of behaving more respectfully than the rest of us. The unfairness is obvious; the hypocrisy never far below the surface. But to carry that burden must be one of the concomitant obligations of a public life. Nobody, after all, is compelled to stay in the Government; if he prefers to romp in the hay he can choose freedom, and the penalty which society exacts from those who try to have it both ways, though savage, cannot really be said to be unjust. Capricious, certainly; those who believe that Mr Profumo was the only one are the naive or the deaf. But if Mr Profumo was a fall-guy, at least he wasn't framed; and it may teach the others to behave better in future.

There remains one further conclusion to be drawn from these recent suggestions that the last days of the Roman Empire have returned. Central to this conclusion is the Duchess of Argyll (round whose case, incidentally, the hush-up was conducted a good deal more efficiently than in Mr Profumo's; they order these things better in Scotland). Now it is here that democracy can be seen to have grown up, and the result is twofold; for Mr Profumo, an understandable feeling of grievance, but for society as a whole a curiously useful demonstration of its progress. There was once no difference between the two groups of top people — those who were born in the purple and those who governed us; and the people looked up to and respected them for both reasons. This is no longer true. Few but local Tory chairman hungry for oases on the one hand, and Mr Godfrey Winn on the other, imagine that Dukes and Duchesses are of any significance any longer, let alone that they have any real power in the country. Once upon a time, the Argyll case might have dealt the country's opinion of its leaders a blow greater than the Profumo scandal; indeed, the Act which forbids the publication of divorce-case evidence was the result of the Establishment's consciousness of the harm such things did, following on a sensationaly sexy divorce in the peerage. But the Shrewsbury divorce case, the Marquis of Winchester enticement case, now the Duchess of Argyll's excursions into multiple hanky-panky, and her Duke's fondness for postcards with unusual views — few people any longer take such figures seriously (and rightly so since they lost all real power), so little harm is done to anybody when they fall spectacularly from grace. This seems to me an excellent state of affairs. It brings closer together the semblance and the reality of public life in this country, and when the truth corresponds to what people believe to be the truth it is always good for society. Indeed, from this point of view even the Profumo case can do good. It will be more difficult for a Minister, next time a liberalization of the laws against homosexual practices is proposed to advise the House to reject it, if speaking from a Despatch Box situated not more than twenty feet away from half a dozen men the speaker knows to be homosexuals. It will be more difficult in future for Lord Hailsham or Mr Henry Brooke (the two most inclined to do so) to talk about the moral rot affecting the nation. And it will be very difficult indeed for the next MP for Stratford-on-Avon to talk about any matter of wider significance than our imports of jute. And a good thing too. Jon, a Daily Mail cartoonist, summed up this aspect of the revelations; two girls, dressed à la mode, are talking. Said one: 'Not heard much lately about the low moral standards of the teenagers.' If only there had been a Bishop and a Judge beside Lord Astor's swimming-pool! But perhaps there were.

The following letter, received by this magazine, was referred to the eminent international authority on "sex change" problems, Harry Benjamin, M.D.

DEAR DOCTOR:

What can I do to end my misery? In body I am looked at by others as a male, but in my mind and heart I see myself as a woman.

Life has played a dirty trick on me, forcing me to live with the outer appearance of a man, but the inner feelings and emotions of a woman. Although my sex is male, I really think I am very much on the feminine side. Except that I do not have breasts, I have a womanly figure. On occasion, while dressed as a female (something I feel compelled to do quite frequently to ease my emotional tension) I have been told that I am quite beautiful. People look at me with respect and admiration. Not so when I am dressed as a man.

Perhaps I could live always dressed in a woman's clothes; but then I would always live in fear of being recognized and arrested. That will not help. Even now, I feel that I am a true woman hiding in the false physical shell of a man.

I understand that some people like me have been able, after years of torment, to find relief and happiness by actually becoming female through treatments and an operation. I am convinced that this is what I really need to end my misery.

I want to change my sex. Can you help me? — F. T. S.

DR. BENJAMIN'S REPLY:

Medical science and modern surgery have indeed helped cases like yours, although not too many and not always too well.

An operation to have your sex "changed" is probably foremost in
your mind. Sometimes you may feel that such an operation is all you live for and that, without it and without the change you can accomplish that way, life is not worth living. This is an understandable emotional reaction to your deep-seated ambition to go through life as a woman.

You must realize, however, that emotion, especially if unusually intense, is not always rational and may well conflict with sound reason. Therefore, you should make an effort to think over your problem as unemotionally as possible, and to do so more than once. Let me help you to do it by supplying a little more knowledge and common sense. It may prove useful for your entire future life.

First of all, sex is determined at the moment of conception and therefore never can be changed. The so-called “change” by surgery concerns only those organs that make you physically and legally a man (or a woman). A serious major operation or series of operations are required to change the external appearance from male to female.

The difficulties of finding a competent surgeon are great. Few hospitals at the present time will allow such operations. Complications may arise afterwards, more operations may become necessary and the outcome is never certain. The artificial vagina that can be created by plastic surgery may or may not make you look like a woman, from a glandular viewpoint as well as legally.

Yet, it is true, you could look like a woman in the genital region and function as one after the operation. Even a climax (orgasm) during sex relations has been reported by most such patients. But remember, a time may come when sex is no longer important. Would you still want to be a woman then? Constant glandular treatment with hormone injections or tablets—off and on—probably would be necessary for the rest of your life.

Is your general appearance and physical build such that you can pass as a woman, or is it possible you will look more like a man dressed up as a woman? Don’t ask the mirror. Take the word of an objective outsider.

Masculine features, a heavy bone structure, a height above the average, a prominent “Adam’s apple” could be handicaps because they cannot be changed.

The law too may cause you many difficulties and complications, even after the operation. Much red tape stands in the way for you to have your birth certificate read “female” instead of “male.” But you may need that for a new job, or if you should want to get married as a woman.

And then, please remember that you are not alone in this world. You undoubtedly have relatives, parents, brothers and sisters. You must ask yourself how they would feel, having a daughter instead of a son, a sister instead of a brother. Their attitude and their happiness deserve your consideration before you undertake such an irrevocable step as a “conversion operation.” You can only hope that they will put your happiness before their own preferences.

Religious convictions may trouble your conscience. Find peace and clarity before you decide on something that cannot be undone.

Even if all obstacles (including the important financial one) have been overcome and the operation has become possible for you, you should remind yourself once more that when you awake from the anesthesia, you are not a woman by any means.

When you have recovered from the pain and the after-effects of the operation, after a few weeks or months, your real work begins—to change into a “woman.” You have to learn how to behave like a woman, how to walk, how to use your hands, how to talk, how to apply make-up and how to dress. Existing handicaps would require special attention.

Of course, you may have had your experience with dressing, etc., for some time already, but it was then more or less a game. Now it would be so much more serious because it is permanent. Also, your beard and body hair may require long and costly electrolysis to be removed.

Finally, but highly important, how do you know you can make a living as a woman? Have you ever worked as a woman before? I assume that so far, you have only held a man’s job and have drawn a man’s salary. Now, you may have to learn something entirely new. Could you do that? Could you get along with smaller earnings?

Again, I ask you to think over all these problems carefully, sensibly and unemotionally. If you could try, perhaps with the help of a psychologist, to adjust yourself to your present male status, making the best of it in whatever form or manner, you may certainly save yourself immense complications in your future life and probably many sacrifices too.

Furthermore, the operation, even if successful, does not change you into a woman. Your inborn (genetic) sex will remain male. You must be aware of this fact, although it may have no practical meaning for your later life as a woman. If the surgeon castrates you as part of the operation, you would be, technically and from the glandular point of view, neither male nor female. You would be a “neuter.”

Only your psychological sex is female. (Otherwise you would not have wanted the operation in the first place.) If the surgeon merely places your testicles in the abdomen to make them invisible, you would have to be considered a male, from a glandular viewpoint as well as legally.

If the surgeon merely places your testicles in the abdomen to make them invisible, you would have to be considered a male, from a glandular viewpoint as well as legally.

Dr. Benjamin is a prominent N. Y. endocrinologist and specialist in gerontology. He was consulting endocrinologist of the College of the City of New York and has contributed to numerous scientific and medical journals.
If you can, discuss the problem with someone who is understanding but who does not have the handicap of emotional involvement. If everything seems favorable, a doctor—preferably an experienced psychiatrist—should still be asked to approve of the step you want to take. If he agrees with you and recommends the operation, then I would say "by all means, go ahead and the best of luck."

The above advice was written with the male transsexual in mind who desires to become a woman. But there are also female transsexuals who want to become men and live and work as such. They are much rarer, but their emotional problems are the same. My explanations and warnings, in principle, apply equally to them.

The operations they are seeking with the same emotional intensity, naturally are different. They want a reduction in the size of their breasts, in order to appear masculine, the removal of the womb, so that there is no menstrual period to fear anymore, and sometimes the closing up of the vagina.

More complicated plastic operations on the genitalia are practically never requested. For instance, the construction of a penis that could be of use would require a series of complicated operations, costly through long hospitalization, and highly uncertain as to results.

Glandular treatment with hormones and psychological guidance are as important for females as for males, but naturally hormones produce no permanent changes. These can only be accomplished through surgery, which in turn requires as much mature and unmotional consideration as the parallel procedures in men.

Note: The proceeding article was submitted for reprinting in Mattachine REVIEW by the author. It appears here as it was originally published in SEXOLOGY MAGAZINE, of which Dr. Benjamin is a member of the Board of Editorial Consultants.

Curt Stephen Curtiss

"Good afternoon, I'd like to withdraw my money, please."

"All right, sir, may I have your bank book?" replied a blonde teller, who could have passed for Miss America.

This is the day on which I had planned to rebel against this hick town or, perhaps, society in general. I don't know which. But I do know that I have to strike out and find the true facts about life, in any manner in which they may appear. So, here I stood in my bank in Wilton, Connecticut, drawing out all of the money I had. I thought myself somewhat of a knight errant, and this money was going to finance my gallant expedition.

"Here is your money, sir. Would you sign here, please?" questioned the teller.

I signed swiftly, with a feeling of confidence.

"Thank you, sir," she said. "Come again."

I turned sharply and sauntered out of the bank. I walked to the bus stop to catch a bus to Darien where I could take a train to New York City. New York looked like heaven to me, as it might look to any 16-year-old boy from a small town. I wandered about restlessly for awhile looking for some extraordinary type of excitement. I certainly didn't want to look like a tourist, but to act as one would be worse yet. I was appalled by the size of the buildings, the swift-moving crowds, and the noisy traffic. All of this seemed as though it were threatening my life, so I ducked into a theater to relax for awhile.

In the theater I groped about in the dark for a seat. I finally found one in the rear and since the movie which was playing did not interest me very much, I didn't care if I could see or not. After about a half hour had ground away, I got the shock of my young and naive life.
The man beside me placed his hand on my leg. In fact, he began to move his hand up my leg, towards my pride. I was in terror. I did not know what to do or think! This was wrong... it just couldn’t be happening!

I jumped up from my seat quickly and moved to another, considerably ahead of where he was sitting. Again I felt safe—shook up—but safe.

The dark of the night hit me in the face as I walked out from the theater afterwards. Neon lights flashed everywhere, magnifying the excitement of the night crowd. The lighted marquees glamorized this commercial city.

The drinking age in New York is 18, and I figured that I ought to try and fake it. I sauntered into a bar on Broadway as if I owned it, and placed myself beside two lovely ladies. Now, this was something I could handle and understand, I thought to myself—women.

A rather tall, heavy-set man stood across the bar from me staring. I could see that he was about 35 and very strongly built. His handsome features showed that he must be a real knock-out with women.

"How old are you, son?" he asked in a deep voice.

"Eighteen," I said, and carrying out my bluff, I reached for my wallet. He winked, smiled, and with a quick gesture, wiped the bar in front of me with the towel he had in his hand.

"What will you have?" he questioned, in an extremely pleasant tone.

"A draft, please," I replied, wondering if he knew.

The girl beside me looked as if she were from Hollywood, a real curvy damsel.

"May I buy you a drink?" I asked.

She turned and looked at me. Her eyes cut right through me, but her face remained expressionless.

"Well, I didn't mean to offend you by that," I said. "I'm a nice guy, I assure you."

The girl sitting beside her laughed at that, which really disturbed me.

"I'm not talking to you, so why don't you mind yourself, or are you jealous?" I said angrily.

"Say!" she said, jumping up from her seat and walking over to me. "First you bother my girlfriend, then you insult me. Damn right, I'm jealous, but not the way you think!"

Before I could realize what was happening, I was sitting on my dignity, in the middle of the floor. I never dreamed a woman could hit so hard.

"Hey, son! Come down here," the bartender said.

His sympathetic voice caught my attention and I looked up. He was down at the end of the bar motioning to me. I stood up, and, with my tail between my legs, I walked over to him.

"It looks as though you're a small-town boy lost in a big city. Well, I guess it's about as good a time and place for you to get educated. There's a girl right over there all alone. She can become extremely friendly if you offer to buy her a drink, so go to it."

I turned my head and looked at her. She looked quite drunk already and acted like a woman trying to prove she was a woman. I got off the stool at the bar and walked over to her.

"Excuse me," I said. "May I buy you a drink?"

"Oh! You certainly may," she said. "I'm drinking martinis."

I ordered two drinks from the bar and then sat down beside her at her table. She really was quite friendly, because she put her arm around me almost immediately. I ran my hand across her back and snapped her bra strap.

"It's a good thing you're cute, honey, or I'd slap you for that," she said, in a real seductive voice.

"Is there anything I could do that would make you slap me?" I questioned.

She shook her head no and sipped her drink, looking catlike at me out of the corner of her eye.

After a couple of more drinks, I felt rather brave. I placed my hand on her knee and she immediately kissed me on the cheek. This strengthened my inward feelings and I turned slightly to face her better. My hand went under the edge of her dress and I could feel the end of the stockings she wore. At this point for some unknown reason I remembered the man in the theater. I quickly shook this thought from my head.

I suddenly found out what the bartender had meant by education. When I brought my hand to the point where her legs met—this was no woman, that's for damn sure! It was now someone else's turn to sit on the floor, and that is where I put him/her—or her/him, whichever it was.

I returned to the bar again. To the protection of the bartender. Apparently he was the only one that was understanding.

"Now, let me buy you a drink," the bartender demanded.

"Thanks, I think I need one. A draft if you don't mind."

"Where are you staying in town?" he asked.

"Nowhere just yet. I imagine I'll get a room when the bars close. I don't know for sure. I may go to Chicago tonight."

"Chicago," he exclaimed. "Why on earth would anyone want to go to Chicago? Look, why don't you come up and stay at my place tonight?"
LITERARY scene

An informal column of reviews of fiction and non-fiction books on themes of sex variation

GENE DAMON

OUT OF THE DOZENS OF TITLES each year which touch upon homosexuality ranging in length from a paragraph to the whole book, few indeed are very satisfactory. After one reads several hundred homosexual titles, they tend, with few exceptions, to blur together in a dull lumpy mass like the colored clay of childhood.

The exceptions—for these we keep reading.

Three young men and one young woman are the narrators of Imaginary Toys by Julian Mitchell, London, New Authors Ltd., 1961. Two of these young men, Jack and Charles, are heterosexual and friends of Nicholas, the homosexual. The fourth narrator, Elaine, is in love with Jack.

The story is basic: how school is, was, and will be—the day in and day out eternal theme of college life, students’ viewpoint. It is a satisfactory homosexual novel in many ways. The theme is vital in the novel, not inserted or pasted over. While a major treatment, there is still objectivity and balance. If Nicholas is the most fascinating character, it is either in the eye of the reader or in the author’s trick of recording Nicholas’ chapters in the form of self-analytical diary entries. These chapters from the “notebook of Nicholas Sharpe” cover his sex life (actual and imaginary), his political beliefs, comments on his friends (normal and otherwise) and his philosophy on the state of being a homosexual. It is in these last entries (the philosophical) that he contributes most and somehow his feelings have an immediacy for the young or not so young male homosexual of today that no reading of Gide or Proust could satisfy as well.

Partly from affection (admittedly), and partly to protect, he refers to his male loves by Greek letters (Phi and Delta). His love affair with Delta (Giles) is touching and lovely, quite special.

Possibly the only distracting note in the book is the long propaganda conversation that Nicholas has with Charles about homosexual love. It is excellent and belongs in the book but in the “notebook chapters,” not in the rest of the text.

The epilogue tells us the later years of the four main characters. Sadly, Nicholas and Giles have broken up after many years together (seven or eight) and Nicholas has decided simply to live alone. No reason is given for this ending of what has appeared to be a most happy affair. This is a really special title to make up for some of the disappointing ones.

James Clavel’s King Rat (Little Brown, 1962, Fawcett Crest, 1963) is a good novel on many levels. It is a war novel, specifically a prison camp story, and depends upon characterization more than action for its impact. Many kinds of homosexual love are depicted: the sublimated affection between two men who love one another just below the border of sexuality, the male prostitute hospital orderly who sells his sex one moment and nurses tenderly, with the greatest love, the dying men another moment, and the story of Sean, a pilot, who is a complete transvestite and a homosexual. Sean is the leading light of the local “drama” society (the only girl, after all) and is generally liked. His death is not the stereotyped (and much overdone) suicide; it is possibly the only solution for his particular problem in the here and now world.

Remember when movies didn’t believe in fairies? At least homosexuals were written out of many a story on its way to the silver screen. For example, in 1936, William Wyler produced “These Three,” an adaptation of Lillian Hellman’s Children’s Hour, substituting a wholly heterosexual triangle for the homosexual plot in the original. Now we have a reverse trend apparently. Last year the movies took Nelson Algren’s novel, A Walk on the Wild Side, and wrote out the fat Negro proprietress of the cat house and wrote in a brittle Lesbian (brilliantly played by Barbara Stanwyck). The novel was completely devoid of homosexuality, and the movie gave it the major portion of the plot.

This year we have the new Leslie Caron vehicle The L Shaped Room based on the novel of the same name by Lynne Reid Banks (Simon & Schuster, 1960, 61, Pocket Books, 1962). Much shifting has been done in this movie. In the novel there is a minor male homosexual character who does not appear in the movie. But in the novel there are no lesbians at all and in the movie they have taken a character from the novel, left certain superficial details the same, but written into her past life a big lesbian romance. Perhaps the “gay white way” has followed Horace Greeley’s advice: “Go west...”

Mary Stewart, a current bright star in the gentle mystery-suspense field, skirts homosexuality in her books. Her latest, The Moon Spinners (Mill-Morrow, 1963) has a male character described by one reader as a “twitchy British pansy”; a very apt description at that. In her two novels, Thunder on the Right (Mill-Morrow, 1955, Fawcett Crest, 1962) and Wildfire at Midnight (Mill-Morrow, 1956, Fawcett Crest, 1962), variant women play minor
roles—sometimes vital to the plot but generally just as background pieces. Her heroines are all heterosexually oriented but they are always the physically androgynous types of childhood dreams—lean and fleet (Nancy Drew in modern dress and a little older).

Michael Blankfort, a reliable but not prolific novelist, includes a pair of homosexual portraits in his novel, *Goodbye I Guess* (Simon and Schuster, 1962, Signet, 1963). It is primarily the story of a grandfather taking his grandson to Europe during the summer before the boy’s first year in college (what used to be called “The Grand Tour”). On board the ship the grandfather falls in love with a woman whose past life includes a homosexual husband. This is told in great detail with considerable sympathy. Also on the ship, Tewfik Bey (perfumed and Arabian, too) throws a pass at the grandson. Perversely, the author applauds the miserably unhappy husband who has attempted heterosexuality but hates the homosexual who simply lives as he is.

Yet another treatment of the Burgess and MacLean case has appeared. This one emphasizes the homosexual aspects of the case out of all proportion to the facts. It is called *Burgess and MacLean* and is co-authored by Anthony Purdy and Douglas Sutherland (Doubleday, 1963).

An excellent, very long short story by James Norrison Hall, “The Forgotten One,” is available now in an inexpensive reprint, *The Forgotten One and Other True Tales of the South Pacific* (Little Brown Paperbacks, 1963, $1.95). It is the story of a man who isolates himself on an island because he is homosexual.

Another reprint of interest in general is the Richard Burton translation of *The Kama Sutra of Vatsayana* (Putnam Capricorn Books, 1963, $1.95). The hardcover edition last year was not the Burton translation. Stylistically the Burton is superior, and it is equally unexpurgated.

Several years ago, Crowell brought out a collection of three short novels by a young Englishwoman, Rosemary Timperley, called *Child in the Dark* (1956). One of these novels was an excellent and unusual study of homosexual influences on children and the tendencies present in many children. Since then Miss Timperley has published steadily in England but she has not been published in this country. Her latest book, *The Bitter Friendship* (London, Robert Hale, 1963) concerns the lifelong attachment of two women from age 8 until the death of one of them at about 45. It is never overt but it is not in any sense a heterosexual friendship. Miss Timperley is a teacher and her knowledge of the emotions of children is brought out in this book as it was in the earlier title. It is in this narrow sphere that she is most convincing. The most moving part of the book treats of the love of one of the heroines for a mannish (but heterosexual) teacher when the dual heroines are about 13 years old.

Humorously, English novels which reach America often come in reverse order. That is, an author becomes well-known and his latest and so-called greatest novel reaches this country first. Then publishers scrounge up all his old ones if he is a sales success and bring them out. With Anthony Powell, famous for his “Music of Time” series, this has now happened with the first American edition of his 1939 novel, *What’s Become of Waring?* (Little Brown, 1963).

It is a very minor homosexual treatment but it is a good dry English novel with an intriguing thread on suspense. Very pleasant reading.

Mary McCarthy’s big new novel, *The Group* (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963) is the story of eight Vassar graduates of 1933 and their lives after graduation for seven years, until 1941. Out of the group only two have happy lives and one of these is Elinor Eastlake (Lacey) who has a successful homosexual marriage with a cosmopolitan European woman. It is a good book, though not nearly so big or important as many of the reviews would lead one to believe. The homosexual is an exceedingly desirable personality and this, or course, enhances it for readers of this column.

John Bowen’s latest book, *The Birdcage* (Harper & Row, 1962, 1963), is a gentle English satire about the love affair of Peter Ash and Norah Palmer. These two have lived together for nine years, sans wedlock. They are reasonably adjusted to one another. Previous to this liaison, Peter has been wholly homosexual. As the novel opens, the affair falls apart and Peter returns to his past ways. However, Peter is incapable of caring for himself and a less-successful homosexual would be hard to imagine. The Venetian gondolier rolls him, the Soho spiv knocks him out, takes his money and all his clothes except his BVD’s and a shirt, an unnamed partner gives him scabies which requires a treatment calculated to end all sex.

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or dead) is the limit for the few remaining heterosexuals. Unfortunately, Burgess has failed miserably with the novel. The theme has barely been developed and the narrative pace crawls along as if imbedded in molasses. It is a much more unsuccessful treatment, for instance, than even Charles Beaumont’s short story, “The Crooked Man.” This is such a good idea that one hopes a better writer will develop the theme thoroughly someday. The part that is hard to imagine is why Burgess thought he could write about homosexuals on a world-wide basis when apparently he hasn’t met one who wasn’t swishy.

Morris L. West is becoming another author to watch as a matter of course. Almost everyone is familiar with his use of male homosexuality in his famous novel, The Devil’s Advocate (Morrow, 1959, Dell, 1960). However, he has also used the subject in two other novels. In The Crooked Road (Morrow, 1957, Dell, 1962), there is a minor male homosexual theme. The book is a good fast paced adventure suspense novel. His latest novel, The Shoes of the Fisherman, (Morrow, 1963) is almost equally divided into two parts. One story is of the election of a “maverick” Pope. The other story is of the marital life of an American news analyst and commentator who is in love with a woman married to a prominent Italian homosexual. At first the homosexual is portrayed as a rather ugly-weak individual but by the end of the novel he is admirable in a left-handed fashion.

It becomes increasingly apparent that homosexuals and homosexuality is staple fare for novelists—not just the sensational aspects, but just as everyday people. This is a very good sign, of course, of the trend toward personal sexual freedom. Jeannette Howard Foster in her book, Sex Variant Women in Literature (Vantage, 1956), still the only really comprehensive study of lesbianism in general, despite the limiting title, states a belief that the literature reflects the age. Accepting this premise we have a certain cause for rejoicing in the prevalence of homosexual literature and the much greater quantity of individual incidents and portraits in all kinds of novels not directly concerned with the subject. This also has a “snowball” effect in that the novelist is a propaganda tool to a certain extent.

CALLING SHOTS
(Continued from page 2)

Finally, wouldn’t it be in order to realize that liberties diminish in every nation where church and state are not separate, and that this separation denies no one the right to worship as he chooses? And to recognize that mankind has a right to individual expression, a right which applies to his private sexual expression with another consenting adult, so long as there is no harm or force, or so long as no non-consenting third party is involved? We think so.

BOOKS in review


So many books have appeared on the subject of male homosexuality in the last few years that a large part of what can be said without careful documentation or without further detailed research has already been written. Plummer’s brief essay, stating his views on this still controversial issue, has nothing specifically new to add but is valuable as the person-alized commentary of an admitted British homosexual to place alongside the more comprehensive, better written, and more analytical pioneer work of Donald Webster Cory on the homosexual in America.

Intended originally for publication in British newspapers, Plummer’s articles were rejected by five different editors on the dubious grounds that “public opinion is not yet ready for them.” Now enlarged and rewritten, they have been published in book form in an attempt “to tell the truth” about homosexuals, to enlighten the uninformed, and to help individual homosexuals to understand themselves better and to lead more satisfactory lives. The term “queer” rather than homosexual is used to make sure that all who see or read the book will know exactly what subject is being discussed.

Plummer (not his real name) maintains that the number of homosexuals is larger than most people think; that there is no evidence to support claims that the percentage of the total population which is homosexual has recently increased; that most homosexuals are indistinguishable from “normal” people; that homosexuality must be seen as a condition over which the individual has no choice and not as a disease which can be cured; that homosexuals are no more immoral in their behavior nor any more security risks than heterosexuals; that many homosexuals are not promiscuous and would like nothing better than to settle down with another person of like nature; and that free and open discussion is necessary if the lot of the homosexual is to improve. What homosexuals want is stated simply and directly: freedom from fear of persecution and rejection, recognition and toleration by officials and their fellow human beings, removal of the stig-
ma of criminality from their acts (when performed in private between con­senting adults), and integration with the rest of society.

Especially worthy of careful reflection are Plummer's contentions on the matters of hostility and reform. There is no “instinctive disgust” for homosexuals or homosexual acts, he insists. Rather, hostility has to be taught; people have to be indoctrinated to hate and to fear; and prejudice has to be fostered by discriminatory laws couched in carefully chosen color words. Pointing out that the slaves did not free themselves, the author maintains that most reforms come from outside and not from the people who suffer from injustice. When reform comes in England, he feels, it will be as a result of the efforts of heterosexuals such as those associated with the Homosexual Law Reform Society.

Conditions in Britain today, it would appear, are not good so far as the homosexual is concerned. Prosecution, witch hunts, and prison sentences are still commonplace. Perhaps it is an exaggeration, however, to write “Hundreds of us go to prison every week.” The upper class is seen as tolerant, and the working class is said to be indifferent toward homosexuality. The opposition, Plummer believes, comes mainly from those middle class persons with little education who pride themselves on being “superior” and “respectable” citizens.

The value of this book is limited. As already suggested, it has little that is new to offer. Except for chapters eight and nine (“The Policeman at the Door” and “Change the Law!”), which should arouse the reader’s sympathy and should appeal to his intelligence and sense of fairness, the book is not especially well written. Many statements are vague, undocumented, and somewhat dated in time, interpretation, and current pertinence. Views are often expressed with greater personal conviction than with the logic and clarity needed to impress the opposition and the uncommitted. Organization of the material and transitions from one subject to another could be improved throughout. Repetitious statements and thoughts could be reduced or re-expressed. Yet, as a personal statement, this volume finds a rightful place on the bookshelf of all persons seeking to understand and help the homosexual in our midst.

CORRECTION: Legal fees have not been paid to the attorney handling the Black Cat Case, states Morris Lowenthal of San Francisco, who prepared the monumental briefs for the 8-year-long appeal which was reported in November REVIEW. Mr. Lowenthal has asked that the correct impression be made, to the effect that his interest and work on the case was solely a matter of principle in law and justice.
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