

Book review

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selves—soul and body—to the earth-spirit, and the cold light issuing from the pit of wheat . . .

«Danny,» he said, and could trust his voice no farther.

From somewhere below them, in the vast blackness of the bay, a tugboat whistled twice.

*

John Sanders sighed again, and adjusted the folds of his black and silver dressing gown. It had been six years since that night, a long time. His own black hair had a threading of silver in it, a very little, at the temple.

There was the small grating sound of a key in the door, and John did not look up. Danny came in, and deposited a sack of things on the chair by the telephone. He took off his coat and hung it in the closet. And still John Sanders did not look up.

Danny walked to his chair, and rested easily on the arm of it. «Dreaming again?» he said. With the thumb and forefinger of his hand he kneaded the back of John's neck, and John made a little sound of pleasure, twisting his head.

«Just thinking,» he said. «Where shall we go this summer? Scandinavia? Africa? Italy? France?»

«Anywhere you want,» said Danny, and took a small bite at his ear.

«They will play the full *Oresteia* in Sicily, at Syracuse in August, in the open air of the handsomest Greek theatre in all the world. Shall we be there?»

«Let's,» said Danny.

(Drawings by Rico)

Book Review

A Minority. By Gordon Westwood, London, Longmans, 30 sh.

This is the report of a research into the life of the male homosexual in Great Britain. It was carried out on behalf of the British Social Biology Council. As Sir John Wolfenden points out in his foreword, it is excellent within its deliberate limits. These are due to the sociological austerity with which it has been compiled.

The material consists mostly of answers to questions put to 127 self-confessed homosexuals. This is a small sample compared with the estimated total of three-quarters of a million homosexuals in Great Britain; but it is spread over a wide variety of classes and occupations and there seems no reason to suppose that it is not representative, even if some of the tabulated deductions may not be altogether relevant.

The strict sociologist approach often makes it difficult to see the wood for the trees, and the first impression which the book makes is a slightly confusing one. The frequent snatches of recorded dialogue and personal confessions are often extremely vivid and characterful, but they are nearly all short. There are almost no full length portraits or complete case histories.

The questioning was thorough. A Kinsey report in miniature on the sexual practices of homosexuals is included. There is plenty of information, though few new or surprising facts emerge. One possibly less expected conclusion is that it is not possible to make a clear division between active and passive homosexuality. Among some of the important findings are the limited proportion of paedophiliacs among adult homosexuals so that 'the dangers of child molestation are small but not negligible.' Promiscuity was widespread among two-thirds of the sample, 19 per cent of whom had prose-

lytising tendencies. Male prostitution seems to be a minor part of the problem. The general conclusion is on sane, humane Wolfenden lines. While, in Mr Westwood's word's, 'many homosexual acts and attitudes are undesirable, present social and legal methods of dealing with the problems are irrational and tend to create more social evils than they remedy.'

A particularly interesting section is the one on attempts to combat homosexuality by homosexuals themselves. Homosexuality, in clinical psychological parlance, is a perversion which affords gratification and not a neurosis with distressing symptoms. This does not mean that homosexuals cannot also suffer from neurosis, but in many cases the homosexual does not wish to be cured of his condition and psychotherapy is often unlikely to be effective except in so far as it can help him to achieve social adaptation. Judging by some of the experiences recounted, the type of psychiatric treatment available can do harm.

The impression that a change in the law on the lines suggested in the Wolfenden Report would have the effect of raising rather than lowering the moral and ethical tone of the homosexual minority comes out very strongly from the findings of this research.

From: New Statesman

THE THREE AGES

I love small boys,
Their twittering noise;
I love them willy nilly,
However silly,
In a mob or one by one,
Their grins, their fun,
Scuffling and giggling the whole day through —
I love the whole mad zoo.

I love the growing youth,
Bright in his moment of truth;
Careful about clothes, his hair curled,
Looking out gravely at the big new world,
Slim, shy and lovely, needing help a bit,
And asking rather awkwardly for it —
I love him too.

But crowning all, and all the rest above,
There's one magnificent young man I love;
The paragon of perfect twenty-four,
Standing athirst at manhood's open door,
Healthy and happy, bold, not always wise,
A laughing invitation in his eyes,
Whose naked body is my final bliss,
Who gives all heaven in his hard young kiss —
Jim, I love you.

O. F. SIMPSON