

Book reviews

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ness sake why don't they leave them alone as long as they don't start messing about with kids. I don't mind what a fellow does, as long as he sticks to fellows or girls who are grown up and know their own minds.» I know he is as normal as anyone—I have known him too long not to have noticed if he acted in any way suspiciously—and so I promptly backed him up. An interesting argument followed, and at least I can say that those who had been quite prepared to condemn all homosexuals as «pansies» finally agreed that there was something for the argument advanced by the first speaker. In a tiny way then, I had contributed to turning a «pansy» hater into a slightly more tolerant person. Nobody suspected that I was indirectly involved in the argument, or that I was defending «my own kind»—I have been far too cautious in my general conduct to give anyone cause to suspect. If the truth about myself became known I should have to resign from the club, but whether a member of this club or not, my business career would in any case be ruined. In other words, losing my membership of the club would be the least part of what I would lose. I therefore intend remaining a member and if the occasion arises I can still add my small voice in a plea for greater tolerance and understanding. I can well imagine that if the truth came out, not a few members would exclaim: «Good heavens, I would never have suspected it—his behaviour was absolutely normal»—perhaps a seed of tolerance might have been sown.

What then do I suggest to my fellow homosexuals. It is simply this. Join social and sporting clubs, but whilst there be one of the normal crowd. You can still enjoy your «gay» circle of friends in part of your spare time. As a member of a normal social or sporting group watch for the odd opportunity to preach tolerance—not just tolerance towards homosexuals, but towards all minority groups and towards all people who may think and feel differently on any issue.

If we can do just a little towards making people more tolerant in general, we shall be doing our own cause a good deal of good. Are you disinterested? Are you too intent on seeking your own pleasures or are you simply unassimilatable?

BOOK Reviews

THE FLAME AND THE VISION, a novel by Shelley Garner.
(Frederick Muller Ltd., London, 18 sh.)

The glory that was Greece burns in this novel of the life of Krethon, competitor in the ancient Olympic games. The careful research is evident on every page, recreating vividly the days of Alexander of Macedon. Pagan rites, the training of the athletes in the palaestra, the all-pervading gods and goddesses of Olympus illuminate the background against which Krethon of Athens disarms all with his beauty and prowess as contender in the pentathlon. This meticulously woven tapestry is interspersed with the story of the friendship between Krethon and Antilochos of Thebes. The detailed account of the origin and depiction of the Olympic games makes very interesting reading.

EROS

edited by Patrick Anderson and Alistair Sutherland (London: Anthony Blond 1961, 35 sh.)

This 433-page book, subtitled «An anthology of friendship,» is a «must» for the person interested in the theme of homophile love as represented through the ages. Between the moving *David's Lament* to the sophistries of Roger Peyrefitte's *Special Friendship* there is a wealth of excerpts from novels, plays, journals, and short stories, as well as whole poems on the theme of the love of one man for another.

Offhand, the only other collection that comes to mind in this field is Edward Carpenter's *Iolaus*, now out of print. To browse through these pages and discover exotic tidbits is a veritable feast («During the summer let your desires incline towards youths and during the winter towards women»—from the Persian *Qabas-Nama*). It is fascinating to learn that Oscar Wilde's «the love that dare not speak its name» is the title of a book by Michel de Montaigne, in which he describes the four-year association of two noblemen who both had a lively enjoyment of women but who banished them from their friendship.

We are given a sampling of Michelangelo's sonnets to Tommaso Cavalieri as well as two letters; an excerpt from Gide's *Third Dialogue* roguishly propounding the untenable theory that Darwin was a pederast because he admired the unadorned beauty of the native men, a beauty that did not need concealment as did the women's. (And pointing out that Robert Louis Stevenson felt the same about the young Polynesian men.)

If any Christmas book certificates are still to be spent, this is the book for one's shelf, to be opened at random and delighted in, to create the urge to look further into unknown authors' works. There is only one blemish: no listing of contents, and no index. Diego de Angelis

(Reprinted by courtesy of the Mattachine News Letter, New York.)

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