

"The Circle in which we move"

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ses of mermaids beneath the sea, and that his lips have tasted the brown sweet flavor of Arabian throats.

It was all hog-wash and nonsense, of course. A sailor's body is formed like any other; his mind functions in the same commonplace way our own do. He is frightened and delighted by the things which terrify and please the stay-at-homes, But the uniform surrounds him with the shimmering glitter of an illusion, and we are frozen into our positions of adoration and desire. The uniform is the psychic link—the gazing-glass through which we look into another world.

(From an unpublished novel)

by John McAndrews

„The Circle in which we move“

by PAUL PETERS

It has been said that «East is East, and West is West, and never the Twain shall meet.» Far too many of our members live out their lives following this creed—they are homosexual and so they only want to mix socially with others of their kind. They want to have no part of «normal» society, of belonging to clubs—sports clubs, social clubs, etc.—and mixing freely with their fellow men.

I take them to task, and I go so far as to say that by their behaviour they make the task of creating greater tolerance and understanding of our «problem» all the greater. Let me draw a parallel which will be more readily understood. It is a known fact that many members of the Jewish faith (I am one of them) tend to be unassimilatable because wherever they go they will only join exclusively Jewish Clubs and mix socially with other members of their religion. The result is that many people who never get a chance to «get to know» them and consequently have no personal experience by which to judge them, condemn them as a class or a group—they lump them all together in one category, and apply their possible dislike of individuals to the whole group.

Years ago I joined a social-sports club where quite a fair percentage of the members are members of the Jewish faith. There is less anti-Semitism in the club than in many others I know where there are no Jewish members at all. The answer is simple. Sam X is a very decent chap, so is Abe Y, and the members generally like them; Ike Z is an outsider, mean and possessing no commendable qualities. Because of Sam and Abe, Ike is disliked as an individual and *not* simply because he is Jewish. By Sam and Abe belonging to this club, they are convincing a group of people that being a member of the Jewish faith does not make a person any less agreeable as a social companion or fellow member of a sports club.

I will most readily agree that there is one big difference between Sam the Jew und Sam the homosexuel. Sam the Jew can openly acknowledge his religion whereas Sam the homosexual can hardly broadcast the fact and expect to remain a member of the club. Nevertheless, Sam the homosexual can fight the battle for greater tolerance in another way.

Some months ago there appeared in the local press a report on a case in which two adult homosexuals were involved, and the fact was reported in court. A third person—also an adult was involved. The matter came up in conversation at the club one evening. After someone had passed a remark about «these pansies», I was surprised to hear one of the members pass the remark: «For good-

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.