

## BOOK REVIEWS—cont.

usefulness of this information in estimating how a man uses his potentialities. In our training establishments we are in fact, groping towards analytic application of it, believing that if a man can be helped to use his potentialities in a socially acceptable way the satisfactions he will obtain will be greater than those hitherto obtained through criminal acts, and his behaviour will alter accordingly.

Also, Dr. Trasler seems to part company with good sense in asking that our establishments become laboratories until the psychologists eventually come up with a refined theory, embodying "quantified data" (implying that then our training problems will be solved by reference to a few principles and a table of psychological logarithms). It is when they approach human problems in such euphoric confidence that scientists seem not only simple-minded but often cold-bloodedly inhuman. For example, discussing child training, Dr. Trasler treats "affection" purely as a factor in creating a requisite dependant on the parents so that anxiety conditioning becomes possible. It is widely agreed that love is the essential element in child rearing; that good technique without it is as ineffective as the mere simulation of good man-management technique in promoting good industrial relations. But one can coolly "quantify" the giving of love without destroying its value to the recipient? And does not the same

hold for other emotionally derived attitudes?

I would like to see Dr. Trasler's researches pursued, but let us be very sure what recommendations for reformative action this Trojan horse of a theory produces before welcoming it unreservedly.

E.V.H.W.

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## THE HOMOSEXUAL SOCIETY

Richard Hauser

The Bodley Head, 1962. pp. 166. Price 18s.

"EFFORTS should be made to destroy the myth which represents the homosexual life as something noble, artistic, superior. Instead it should be shown to be the result of social stress which has retarded a person socially and bodily and as such may be equated with enuresis."

Once Mr. Hauser has diagnosed the homosexual problem in this way he goes on to stress the need in society for advice centres readily available to youths and men who may be anxious and miserable and also to parents, teachers and others responsible for the young who may need help. If one such centre could be opened in the near future as a pilot scheme and be allowed to grow from small beginnings into a multi-purpose service then he feels that a great stride forward would have been made in helping such socially sick people.

At the outset the author indicates his method by taking to task "the Art which is called Social

## BOOK REVIEWS—*cont.*

Science". He is convinced that there can be an over concentration of knowledge in one department, leading to a neglect of common factors underlying problems in different fields. Specialised studies are necessary but they must be balanced by a comparative approach which embraces a number of departments at the same time. In this way he prefers to call himself a "comparative sociologist", fitting this survey into the general framework he has adopted for his other community studies involving housing areas, schools, prisons and mental health. He brushes statistics aside, by so doing hoping to "find what is invisible behind the mask of what is visible and measurable". Whether he is successful the reader himself can best judge.

The material for the book was obtained by listening to the comments and views of about four hundred people, gathered together in groups, of whom most had experience of living homosexually. It is these views, carefully, and sometimes luridly, recorded which illustrate the diverse backgrounds, types and attitudes of this sector of society, and which forms by far the most satisfying and most valuable part of the book. For here is insight into the attitudes and behaviour of these men, the majority of whom feel condemned by society to live a Jekyll and Hyde existence. It is because this book succeeds far better descriptively than analytically that it may help in the valuable task of stimulating a far greater awareness and

understanding into the individual problems of the homosexual.

Mr. Hauser recognises that there exists a hard core of homosexuals (rating six on the Kinsey scale and forming four per cent of the male population) whom he fears may well be constitutionally determined, but by far the larger number are those he calls bisexuals. These men prefer their own to the opposite sex but have had heterosexual relationships and may well have married and had children. Their homosexuality is one response (alcoholism and other forms of anti-social behaviour are others) to stress situations which can happen at any time during maturation forced on the individual by his immediate environment,

Such a conclusion would have been more convincing had it been related not only to past studies of homosexuality but also to a consideration of the emergence of such practices and attitudes in other and earlier societies. This book leaves far too great an impression that this problem is a product of modern day society and as such could easily be minimised by careful social manipulation. Surely the causes of homosexuality have been shown to lie far deeper and be more complex than this? Is it so easy, for example, to become a homosexual through what he terms 'social infection' in all male societies—approved schools, prisons, public schools and the like?

Of course such practices take place—and all too frequently—but may it not be more to do with the strength of the sex urge in these situations (often at adolescent age,

## BOOK REVIEWS—*cont.*

and away from the opposite sex) than the direction it will take in later life? Haven't the basic behaviour patterns already been formed at an earlier stage (a far more subtle and less understood mode of social infection) making fairly certain that those who continue these practices afterwards would have done so anyway? The man who is a homosexual and marries, does so, not because he has no strong cravings for his own sex, but because he can more easily hide his true feelings from society this way. The tragedy is surely that so many of these marriages fail because the basic homosexual drives remain in spite of heterosexual experience. This relationship appears in no way to 'infect' the man back to normality as such a social infection theory could lead to believe. It was Gibbens' study of 100 borstal boys in 1957 that did much to discredit the over-emphasis on the significance of earlier homosexual practice in later behaviour patterns.

Mr. Hauser believes that homosexuality is invariably the outcome of social infection aided by an increasing lack of communication between the young of both sexes. At some stage in development stress occurs and a blockage or fixation is produced which hinders the person from growing up fully. He endeavours to relate this resulting 'immaturity' to a five-scaled table of Personal and Social Age (at the apex of which comes full personal and social maturity and integration), by means of which

any individual can measure his development. Through group discussion it is hoped to lead the individual to ever increasing insight and maturity which would eventually effect complete and healthy intergration with society. Thus the homosexual who states that he is happier without the responsibility of a family is accordingly seen to be socially and personally immature and could presumably be helped by being on one of Mr. Hauser's groups. Yet is it not more likely that he is rationalising his motives for not marrying and the true causes of his homosexuality lie, not so much in any immaturity that can be remedied, but in far deeper and more complex factors outside the scope of these groups and (unfortunately) Mr. Hauser's book?

Due to so much misunderstanding and bias the stresses on a man discovering he is a homosexual are excessively severe and it is to Mr. Hauser's credit that he is seeking to do something practical about it. It is an indictment on society that so many young men, their parents and others concerned, have nowhere they can turn for advice and information. It is not a convincing argument that he puts forward for the alleviation of the problem of homosexuality. At the very least, such group work as he envisages could help many who are desperately unhappy, at present, to come to terms with themselves and lead a more useful and guilt-free life than they are able to lead at present.

I. D.