

# The world of the spirit

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could feel that the bread of life that was being given us was performing a new miracle again by taking away our fears and by replacing it by confidence, joy in life and hope in the future. We really did have the conviction that we also had the right to belong to the flock about which Christ spoke, for he said: «there will be one flock and one shepherd», and everybody knows how different the sheep can be. Christ did not say: «there will be one church»! What a world-wide difference! All these words are here again to clothe us with confidence and hope. Oh, what would outsiders have said if they had witnessed our Christmas celebration! They would quickly have changed their minds about us for they would have been stunned to their hearts by seeing that the birth of Christ was being celebrated with the highest respect and the noblest feelings.

Many of us felt tears filling their eyes when Rolf closed the official part of our meeting by reading a most touching poem which is a prayer to Jesus by one of us who can offer Him in sacrifice nothing but toil, tears and a long life of intimate sufferings, loneliness and oppression . .

The lights of the Christmas-tree shed warmth and happiness among us and we felt cheerful again when Santa-Claus arrived in a merry mood in order to divide the rewards to the officials of our club. Then every member also received a lovely gift and the gathering ended up in the early morning after long hours of happy merriment in true friendship.

Our absent comrades in the English speaking world were not forgotten. We know that it will take time for us to find them in a large number but we are sure that if our readers make a special effort to get new members, we shall see our membership-list grow longer as the months pass by. We wish to thank all those who help us in this connection and hope that our combined efforts will bear fruit for the strengthening of our circle.

*Reno*

## The world of the spirit

«The Homosexual in America».

A subjective approach by Donald Webster Cory with an introduction by Dr. Albert Ellis, Greenberg: Publisher, New York, N. Y. (price \$4.00). Reviewed by H. S., New York.

Homosexuality in American literature is generally confined to a novel containing some hint or in some other cases a mood of dormant homoerotic. Alongside with those there have been published numerous novels dealing quite frankly, although rarely in a satisfactory manner, with Homosexuality. In the scientific field, particularly that of Psychiatry, we have no lack of material, pertaining to it. The Kinsey-Report finally, revealing the Sex Behavior in the Human Male, has presented the American public with an abundance of facts, which, one should think, cannot be lightly dismissed.

«The Homosexual in America» is not a book concerned with sex-morals and sex-modes, exclusively. In it is attempted to draw a broad picture of homosexual life as it is lived in America by all who share these inclinations. To the public, whether heterosexual or not, this book is equally enlightening.

Mr. Cory divides his subject matter so as to acquaint the reader with the many aspects of our life and he has a keen sense of the various parallels that exist between

our life as a minority-group and other such groups, persecuted openly or hidden, and denied, again openly or under some subterfuge or another, the full exercise of their human and civic rights. But he is not unaware either of the points of departure, those points, in other words, which make for the particular sociological situation in which suppressed groups may find themselves, due to history, tradition and other factors that enter into the relationship between majority and minority. Taking Mr. Cory's reasoning as a basis, it becomes, indeed, very clear that the question of right and wrong, Truth and Heresy, good and bad, Salvation and Damnation, is the very core of that which divides us from the world outside. Today we are accustomed to think in terms of rationalism and science and our world prides itself in its achievement of freedom for the individual, of libertine attitudes toward the other — whether by race, or by religion, by color or opinion, by language, custom or tradition. For us, all the advantages of a modern day and age seem highly limited, and for the world at large, we still represent the very embodiment of what they consider the wrong, the bad — or worse, the damned and false, and the thing to be damned. It is shown in Mr. Cory's book, how aloof the progressive and liberal organizations have ever stood, when our problem was presented to them. They have not spoken up in our defense, either because they were not willing or afraid.

The clarification of this part of our life shows the author of the book to be a man of great personal integrity, wide knowledge, insight and a fine understanding.

The genesis of Homosexuality is still somewhat shrouded in mystery. Two main theories have come up during the last seventy years, yet there are to each so many varieties and within each so many points that just do not seem to klick, that I, for one, would not venture, to take issue with Mr. Cory's chapter on Psychology. The Hirschfeldian viewpoint in this chapter is discarded, I feel, a little bit too lightly. While it is true that we may find ourselves more at ease when embracing that theory of the origin of Homosexuality, which explains it as an inborn, component, and constituent part of our soul, our real challenge upon following our drives and compulsive desires demands of us a conviction and resolution, to which the origin can contribute much less than the destiny.

The middle part of the book is devoted mostly to a description of our life in America. Mr. Cory is in these passages versatile and humorous, quite well informed and as throughout his book, frank in his pictures of the many varieties and temperaments, existing within our group. Reproduced conversations or flashes thereof, seem to me, however a shade too stereotyped in some cases.

The outlook, forming the last chapters, is as earnest as, one might be afraid, it is visionary. But it is exactly that latter quality, which not only gives comfort to the homosexual reader, but which, by its almost transcendental mood and expectation points to a way that has to be entered and upon which we may, step by step, effect an amelioration of the condition forced on us by the world outside.

Speaking of Transcendance, I believe, that this book has another message; conveying, as it splendidly does, a concept of America, the best of its traditions, of its guiding principles the finest. It mirrors, to the non-American reader, the state of mind of one who takes most seriously the constant alertness needed by each man in a free society. The great tolerance — or even more than that — which shines through the pages of «The Homosexual in America» must address itself to us and our particular need, but it contains also a valuable contribution to all of good will, a free mind, and an understanding heart.

An appendix, divided into four parts reproduces hearings and debates of a U. S. Senate Subcommittee on the question of the reliability of government employees who

are homosexual, and also on the security risk, which — according to that subcommittee — is involved in the employment of «sex perverts» in government branches. These papers shed some light on the unanimity of opinion among the members of the respective body.

There follow some extracts from laws and official regulations concerning the withholding of certain benefits from homosexuals who have received a so called «blue discharge» from the American Armed Forces, a discharge, which is actually not dishonorable — and which, therefore, would not warrant the withholding of benefits, but which in the case of Homosexuality is rather arbitrarily handled as such.

Appendix B. gives a detailed list of extracts from the laws and Penal Codes of the 48 States and does not include those laws under which, like «disorderly conduct» for instance, arrests often take place.

Appendix C. and D. finally furnish a rather thoroughgoing compilation of reference and source material, as well as a check list of novels and dramas.

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«The Conformist» by Alberto Moravia, published by Farrar, Strauss & Young, N. Y.

This Novel highlights Nihilism. It poses in the course of action a great many problems, ethical ones alongside with behavioristic, political, ones. The young Marcello, by his classmates called Marcellina, develops, if I am not mistaken altogether, along strongly sado-masochistic lines. One day he is taken home by a chauffeur who approaches him and who promises him a revolver — a very coveted instrument for Marcello at that moment since with it he hopes to impress a certain fellow in his class sufficiently, to stop him from continuing his nicknaming of Marcello-Marcellina. In the sequence of happenings Marcello eventually shoots Lino the chauffeur — who has made some unsuccessful advances to the lad.

On the basis of these events the writer develops his hero into one, who seeks to flee into conformity, due to a dormant feeling of guilt. Political intrigues and political murder are subsequent to our hero's attempt to normalize himself fully. There is an interlude of Lesbianism and the surprise moment of Lino's — the chauffeur's — reappearance, close to the end of the book — a climax much too inconvincing to be dramatic — and finally it all dissolves into the «Nothing».

Aside from the rather morbid content, «The Conformist» is good reading. The English translation which I had to use was well done, and in its original there need be no doubt about the quality and mastery of this outstanding contemporary writer in Italy.

My particular feelings about the story of Marcello are predominantly curious. I ask myself what would have happened, if the resistance of the lad would have broken down, if he had yielded to the advances of his chauffeur friend, if he had succeeded in relieving the tensions in himself, if he had established himself within such norms that conformity to general patterns would have become a far off land, unthinkable to be conquered and not desired enough to be striven at.

Of course, the turmoil presented in the picture of Marcello, is not as easily unravelled as that. But to some of us who will read this book, it will appear, I am sure, that the adherence to our ways of life, the seeking of fulfilment within our capacities and inclinations, will cause much less friction for us, than the following of that advice would, which a great number of otherwise well-meaning and even more scientifically trained guides recommend to save us from the nonconformity that is after all our destiny.

*Henry, New York.*