

Zeitschrift: Der Kreis : eine Monatsschrift = Le Cercle : revue mensuelle
Band: 27 (1959)
Heft: 2

Artikel: From : the New Statesman, London
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-567969>

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From:

The New Statesman, London

As Barbara Wootton says, what the Wolfenden Committee put 'between the covers of the Blue Book, can never again be quite as shocking as before they said it'. That remarkable publication, the *British Journal of Delinquency*, takes this for granted in its current issue, which is devoted to the problem of homosexuality. Its complexity lies in its relation to society. It is not a disease that can be isolated and treated apart from the social forces around it, but is itself, in a way which we do not fully understand, a product of the largely unconscious forces that govern public opinion about it. For this reason the most arresting piece in this symposium—from doctors, psychiatrists and social workers—is M. François Lafitte's study of *Homosexuality and the Law*, which is mainly a brief exposition of the social history of homosexuality in England. He illustrates the irrationality of public opinion by a quotation from W. T. Stead: 'If Oscar Wilde, instead of indulging in dirty tricks of indecent familiarity with boys and men, had ruined the lives of half a dozen innocent simpletons of girls, or had broken up the home of his friend by corrupting his friend's wife, no one could have laid a finger upon him . . . If all persons guilty of Oscar Wilde's offences were to be clapped into gaol, there would be a very surprising exodus from Eton and Harrow, Rugby and Winchester, to Pentonville and Holloway'. He also explains that on one occasion an effort to change the law was killed by the House of Lords because at the last minute the Commons had managed to include in it, without debate, and in response to some 'anti-vice' group, a provision to send Lesbians to prison. He shows that even the Wolfenden Report suffered from emotional inconsistencies; it did not dig nearly far enough into the social causes of homosexuality.

For Keith, on the Diving Board

by O. F. Simpson

*Lift up, lift up your boyhood to the sun;
He never had a lovelier acolyte
Aspire to serve him in his temple bright,
Nor ever were his rites more bravely done.*

*Your athlete's body curved across the sky,
Taut thighs like bronze fresh from the sculptor's hand,
And slanting silken torso, chestnut-tanned,
Invite us too to share your ecstasy.*

*Now all the coming murky winter through —
The thick grey sweater-trouser days
When we must often go our separate ways —
This is still how I shall remember you:*

*Naked, tiptoe, the manly swimmer's art
Inflaming all your soul with its strong joy,
Serious and sweet, a whole and perfect boy.
Spring forth, sixteen, and dive into my heart.*