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a few stars were shining and the moon shone her beams upon them. They were quite close to each other and breathed the beloved smell of their bodies. They did not hear the noise of an aeroplane, nor the ghostly metal-like singing as it shot downwards that, like a nightmare, lay on thousands at the same hour. Only when a bomb crashed, did the two realise the danger. But they stayed in their embrace. However, the feeling of acute danger to their lives, added to their power in neverending giving and deepened their readiness for receiving. Whilst around them the bombs whizzed round and exploded, they rose the heights of their union until they had become one.

The light of early morning found them awakening still in their embrace. The freshness and cleanliness of their lips told them that their rapture had been complete and knew no staleness. They parted from each other in the knowledge that their experience had been unique and would know no repetition.

During the day Karl Folker did his duty with mechanical punctuality; there was a veil between him and the world. His ears took in the thunder, so well known, from the big guns of the advancing army. There, ahead of him, was the goal of his friend whose regiment had been thrown into battle to relieve another unit. He would never see him again but he was waiting for a sign that would be given as the last manifestation of the law which had governed them during the night at Roupy.

Several days later at the beginning of April, when the German offensive had long since been called to a standstill at Montdidier, the Signal Unit, 825 was erecting connections at Doge, on the fields near Faverolles. The unusual posture of a dead French soldier forced Karl Folker to look at him. He saw the young virile body from whose lips blood had spurted forth and the blue eyes were open as though the dead soldier was still seeing the world around him. His arms were stretched as though he would draw a beloved body into his embrace. Then Karl Folker realised that fate had taken its full course and this dead French soldier was the sign he was waiting for.

Heavy and crushing loneliness descended upon him and he saw the utter futility of all that happened.

(Translated by R.B. and B.W.)

Note: This story from the first world war was published in German in 1924 in DER EIGENE, the first homophile monthly ever published. THE CIRCLE reprinted it in German in 1952.

BOOK-REVIEW

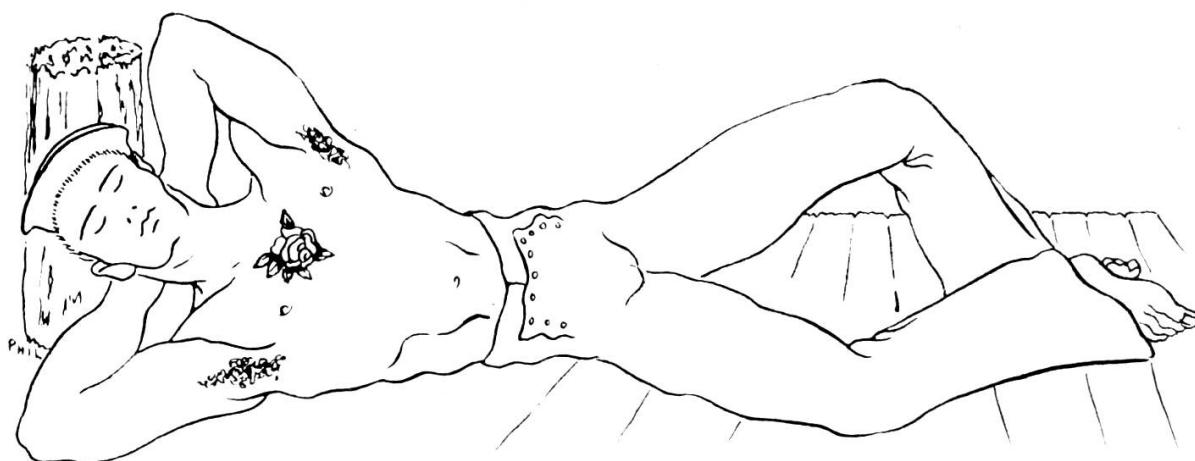
SAM, a novel by Lonnie Coleman, D. McKay Company, Inc., New York, 3.95 dollars.

There is a growing tendency in homosexual novels appearing both in England and in the United States to let the 'gay' hero live 'happely ever after'. We are no longer facing the murder or suicide chapters at the end of such novels, but meet people who — like the hero in «A Way to Love» by James Courage — break up a homosexual relationship for valid reasons of their own. We are finally allowed to meet others like Sam, the publisher-hero of this new American novel who finds in the end what he has been seeking. With courage and in defiance of the laws of society, they accept good fortunes when it is offered to them and

try to make a success of their relationship with another man. Whether this new trend in homosexual novels is an act of defiance or not — it leaves the homosexual reader of such books more contented than the former run of murder and suicide novels of this nature.

«Sam», Lonnie Coleman's new novel, deals nearly exclusively with the homosexual theme. Readers of «The Circle» will be acquainted with the author's excellent short story «The Theban Warriors» reprinted on our pages. Coleman's new novel is filled to the brim with action. People and events move equally fast, and the novel depicts most successfully the hectic jerkiness which is so much a part of New York's gay and straight life. A host of characters are grouped around the hero — there is Addie, the married woman he has loved for years; there is Walter, the mediocre actor who has shared his life for a couple of years and leaves him, when by going to bed with his fifty years' old future leading lady he hopes to find the success he has been hungering for. New York's frantic search for success at any price comes utterly true on the pages of this novel. Packed with action it is written so frank that it leaves nothing to the imagination, and yet it retains in the central figure of its hero, dignity and a deep appreciation of human values. It would be a pity to give the plot of this novel away, but when we finally take leave of «Sam» we leave him with the feeling that here is at last one man who has searched for his one special kind of happiness, and has been lucky enough to find it. Thanks are due to the author for having given his readers this different and positive angle to the old problem of how a homosexual novel must end.

R.B.



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