SEXUAL HERETICS

Male Homosexuality in English Literature from 1850–1900

An Anthology Selected with an Introduction by Brian Reade

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Sexual Heretics

*Male Homosexuality
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Preface

Perhaps the fashion for books on homosexuality is passing, and it will be only with previously unco-ordinated inferences that future writers on this subject will be anxious to concern themselves. The present book may be regarded as attempting to close a gap – a gap I myself could have filled years ago, I think, if circumstances had permitted. As it happens, it is a gap greatly reduced by Mr. Croft-Cooke in his very readable *Feasting with Panthers,* except that the author dealt there with prominent Victorian figures and he made no attempt to cover homosexual literature generally during the period. Moreover, aiming to cut everybody and everything down to size, as he confessed, he abetted himself with the slang of our time – which must have given younger generations an odd impression of Victorian vocabulary and manners. I would emphasize willingly my indebtedness to Mr. Croft-Cooke, if I felt any – that is, apart from places in the text where he is mentioned. Unfortunately the present work was more or less finished when his book came out in 1967.

I am however distinctly indebted to a few people: first to Dr. W. H. Bond, Librarian of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, by whose permission I am able to quote from the library's collection of privately printed poems by John Addington Symonds. I am indebted also to Mr. Donald Weeks, of Detroit and London, a leading authority on Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo), who lent me several photographs from his collection and responded most patiently to my enquiries about such comparatively little-known writers as John Gambril Nicholson and Charles Kains-Jackson. Equally I would have fared worse without Mr. Timothy d'Arch Smith and Mr. W. G. Good at hand, willing to impart bibliographical and other information essential to the subject; and to Mr. d'Arch Smith moreover for lending me rare books from his library. To these friends I can add Mr. Anthony Symondson, who sent some material of his for reproduction and who engaged in helpful correspondence.

It is a pleasure to recall the names of others who took an interest in this compilation while it was under way; including Mr. John Adlard,

Dr. Ian Fletcher, Mr. Peter Gunn, Mr. Lionel Lambourne, Mr. Ronald Lightbown, Mr. Henry Maas, Mr. Jonathan Mayne, Miss Sybil Pantazzi, and my wife Mrs. Margaret Reade.

An all-embracing study of nineteenth-century homosexuality was not what I projected, nor was there scope for it in the introduction. This introduction is a guide to the anthology; and while some of the material included here is of merit, some of it may be considered merely amusing. That is not the point, however: all of it seems to me to be of particular interest.

London — Brian Reade

Introduction

It was during 1964 while I was doing researches in the life of Aubrey Beardsley and his friends that I found something was taking shape in the distance which amounted to the beginnings of the anthology presented here. In the introduction to a book on Beardsley published in 1967 I suggested that this artist was not 'a homosexual' in one of the current senses of the word, but rather an ironist who mocked the impulses in himself which responded to homosexual young men in the art world of his time.

It is unwise, perhaps, to use the word homosexual in this way as a noun, with the suggestion that anyone so-called has sexual feelings only for persons of the same sex. Many people who are homosexual are heterosexual too, though either at different times in their lives, or with one or another state in the ascendant. Of these again, some like Lord Alfred Douglas grow out of a youthful phase, or become like Oscar Wilde more homosexual as they grow older. Here we are not concerned with these personal transitions, only with the literary evidence of homosexual moods and with the idea of homosexuality as a romantic stimulus.

But the sexual element in a homosexual condition is less important than it is in a heterosexual condition, which offers wider and longer developments – as in family life for example. Why then not avoid using the word 'sexual' and keep to the word 'friendship' for attachments between persons of the same sex? This indeed was done in the days when homosexual males were legally persecuted, and the phrase 'romantic friendship' was used for relationships of the kind inspiring so many of the poems in the present anthology. But as soon as psychologists evolved the idea of sex underlying many other springs of emotion, homosexuality began to be seen as a normal but unresolved state, abnormal perhaps in persons who habitually imitated functional (that is to say heterosexual) acts.

The result of this considerable change in the values of the words sex and friendship makes it harder than ever to draw a firm line where homosexuality begins. What is it that distinguishes it from friendship

today? Eroticism, perhaps. For, when erotic forces of physical attraction motivate a friendship, some tincture of the emotions which form heterosexual relationships will be found, and at that stage the word friendship is superseded by the word homosexuality. Naturally many friendships are, and were, thus motivated, often quite unconsciously.

This book is not concerned with female homosexuality, or lesbianism. A similar anthology might be made out of literature with lesbian qualities, though this would be less easy to achieve out of English than out of French or German literature of the period 1850–1900. So far as England goes in this context, therefore, it is true to say that homosexual literature for all practical purposes is male homosexual literature. Our concern is with male homosexuality alone, and this includes pederasty, or the love of boys by men. Sodomy, a word often used unwittingly with reference to male homosexuality, means nothing more than anal penetration and applies heterosexually too.

Homosexuality breeds readily in environments that exclude members of the opposite sex; schools, prisons, military units remote from towns or villages, ships at sea, and so forth. But pederasty has the peculiar distinction of being once practised in ancient Greece, where it was a respected relationship between teacher and taught, senior and junior, the soldier and his page. And the cult of homosexuality in its pederastic form gained support from the arguments of Plato and other Greek philosophers who took this educational pattern in their lives as they found it, only maintaining that the less physical it was the more philosophical, and therefore the better. Platonic Love became a glib phrase for attachments both homo- and heterosexual which by evasion or restraint excluded physical expression.

What interested me particularly in studying Victorian homosexual literature was the problem of how much we all were indebted to it. In a similar way one might legitimately wonder how much the French were indebted to the homosexual court of Henri III. As a result, the selection here has been made from literary works revealing certain cultural ideals, and with one or two debatable exceptions (such as the novel *Teleny*), works openly published, or like the 'peccant pamphlets' of John Addington Symonds published for circulation among sympathetic friends. *Teleny* – issued in an edition of two hundred copies in 1893 – was partly in the above category and partly in the category of pornography, which developed along lines of its own, reflecting social values maybe, but cultural issues only in the most fossilized forms. In spite of contrary assertions,[1] homosexual pornography was not altogether rare in our period in England, and the Parisian Depot in Holborn and

[1] See Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians*, London, 1964, p. 261.

similar places in London, and in the country too, existed for its distribution. Into this class falls a novel like *The Adventures of a Mary-Ann*, which exploited the subject of transvestism as it was revealed to the public in 1870 in the trial of Boulton and Park. Some years ago one might even have hoped to see passages from *Don Leon* (1866) in an anthology like this, but the poem is now dated well before 1850 and its authorship is still a matter for doubt. Homosexual literature after 1900 has been equally excluded from this book. In fact chronological convenience agrees with what I believe to be a discernible wave of homosexual subculture, beginning around 1850 and closing shortly after the Wilde trials of 1895. When after that date homosexual literature revived in England, it seems to have changed with the changing scene.

While everything in this anthology was written in English, including the only Colonial example I was able to find, which was Australian (No. 85), it could not be claimed that I have represented all late nineteenth-century homosexual literature in English without including American–English examples. But to have done this would have overbalanced the book. Homosexual literature in the United States was not uncommon, and the influence of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, published in 1855, can be traced in England and in other parts of the English-speaking world. In Whitman's famous series of poems pederasty had no place, but in the sections 'Adam' and 'Calamus' especially, what Whitman called adhesiveness – which could be interpreted as the state of loving anybody of either sex – was especially recommended, and illustrated in his own life, as an emotional heightening of friendships between men. When challenged by his admirer, John Addington Symonds, to say once and for all whether eroticism was comprehended in Whitman's adhesiveness, the American poet denied such a thing had occurred to him. It has been generally felt in later years that he was disingenuous, partly because his message was the message of a democratic egalitarianism of the spirit; and he could scarcely have wished himself a prophet of 'crimes against nature'. To do Whitman the justice of the doubt, it is possible that when he spoke ardently of embraces and other physical contacts between men, he did not see that gestures like these could, in certain cases, lead to some kind of climax. Whitman himself was by no means entirely homosexual. There are men who must be counted the masculine equivalents of *demi-vierges*; and Whitman may have been one of them. We do not know. What we do know is that erotic relationships between persons of the same sex may continue without physical contact, so that everybody is happy to believe in their 'chastity'. Recognizing at least a potential of men like this in the world, we are astounded perhaps less at the apparent restraint in some of the nineteenth-century homosexuals

whose lives are remembered, and whose works appear again in these pages.

Oddly enough it was in England – in the realm of a state Church – that three homosexual men made their conspicuous bows to the tottering altars. These men were John Henry Newman; his close friend Richard Hurrell Froude, who died young; and another friend, Frederick William Faber, whose dog-like devotion to Newman was inspired and resented by the older man. Froude's diaries reveal his recognition of, and worry over, his own sexual orientations, while Faber's collected poems in an edition of 1856 include many emotional verses to men and to youths, written for the most part before 1850. Newman's poems, although never erotic except in a generally symbolic sense, are none the less emotional secretions of a mind in which female images counted for little. The most famous of these, *The Pillar of the Cloud* (1833) and *The Dream of Gerontius* (1865), are best understood in an all-male context: women have no place in such poetry. It is not difficult therefore to understand the transition from the repressed homosexuality of certain Tractarians to the emphasis on Christ, not the Virgin Mary, in the poems of Newman and Faber after both men had been converted to the Roman faith.

Since Geoffrey Faber wrote *Oxford Apostles* in 1933, a book in which he disclosed underlying or repressed homosexuality in Newman's make-up, it should have been plausible to see in Newman an archetype of Englishmen passing through homosexual and religious crises during the period reviewed. Throughout that period he was much admired as a prose stylist. But when a style is admired it is often that the admiration obscures from admirers psychological links between themselves and the author.

Apart from that, if we are to believe Canon J. M. Wilson in his address to the Education Society in 1881 on *Morality in Public Schools and its Relation to Religion*, 'there is, and aways has been an undoubted coexistence of religiosity and animalism'.[2]

A further significance in the link between the Oxford Movement and the Roman Church should not be overlooked. And that is to be found in the romantic revival of chivalry. The first half of the nineteenth century in England saw a notable awakening of interest in this subject, stimulated partly no doubt by Walter Scott's novels. An early convert to Roman Catholicism, Kenelm Henry Digby, had brought out in 1822 his book, *The Broad Stone of Honour, or Rules for the Gentlemen of England*, which afterward went into several larger editions; and the

[2] *Morality in Public Schools and its Relation to Religion*, a fragment by the Rev. J. M. Wilson, Headmaster, Clifton College. Delivered as the Presidential Address to the Education Society, 1 November 1881. Printed in the Supplement to the *Journal of Education*, 1 November 1881, pp. 253–9.

Eglinton Tournament of 1839, a kind of pastiche tournament in the mediaeval style, described by Disraeli in *Endymion*, was the most spectacular expression of this revival. It is interesting to note that Edward Fitzgerald, who later translated *Omar Khayyam* and is known to have been homosexual, published his anonymous essay *Euphranor, A Dialogue on Youth* in 1851, and in this little book he gave perhaps currency to the romantic notion of bringing chivalrous values to male friendships. If Fitzgerald knew Faber I have no information of it. But already, about then, Faber revealed that a friend of his had arrived at a similar notion.[3] This quiet combination of Platonic and Neo-Gothic ideals had of course associations with the monastic institutions of that very Church towards which Faber and his friend were drawn.

The confluence of Romantic and Tractarian chivalry was later to reach a related stream in the ideals of John Addington Symonds, whose poem in honour of Walt Whitman, 'The Song of Love and Death' (c. 1875), contained one passage which went through Whitman's adhesiveness and on into a Graeco-Mediaeval chivalrous fantasy.[4]

> There shall be comrades thick as flowers that crown
> Valdarno's gardens in the morn of May;
> On every upland and in every town
> Their dauntless imperturbable array,
> Serried like links of living adamant
> By the sole law of love their wills obey,
> Shall make the world one fellowship, and plant
> New Paradise for nations yet to be.
> O nobler peerage than that ancient vaunt
> Of Arthur or of Roland! Chivalry
> Long sought, last found! Knights of the Holy Ghost!
> Phalanx Immortal! True Freemasonry,
> Building your temples on no earthly coast,
> But with star-fire on souls and hearts of man!
> Stirred from their graves to greet your Sacred Host
> The Theban lovers, rising very wan,
> By death made holy, wave dim palms, and cry:
> 'Hail, Brothers! who achieve what we began!'

Women, it will be noted, did not come into this fantasy. Nor had they anything to do with the political amours that Symonds conceived. Farther back in the same poem he apostrophized Whitman:

[3] The relevant quotation from this letter is given by Geoffrey Faber in *Oxford Apostles*, London, 1933, p. 231.

[4] 'The Song of Love and Death' formed part of 'Love and Death – A Symphony' in *Studies in Terza Rima etc.*, privately printed, Clifton, c. 1875.

Thou dost establish – and our hearts receive –
New laws of Love to link and intertwine
Majestic peoples; Love to weld and weave
Comrade to comrade, man to bearded man,
Whereby indissoluble hosts shall cleave
Unto the primal truths republican.

All that is very well; but knowing, as we do, about John Addington Symonds, it is difficult not to repress a smile at the thought of clashing beards and tinkling watch-chains as the comrades became more and more republican. Symonds was not without a sense of humour; yet here he shared with the French generals of fifty years back a solemn innocence of the English Eye.

The idea of chivalry between men, and between men and youths or boys, or even between boys, survived a whole half-century, to emerge again in Kains-Jackson's article 'The New Chivalry', published in 1894 and included in this anthology (No. 68). Finally, Dr. Edwin Emmanuel Bradford made *The New Chivalry* the title of one of his books of homosexual poems in 1918.

Let us see a little more of what Canon Wilson had to say in 1881 upon what was, for him apparently, a terrifying subject. 'It must I believe be admitted as a fact,' he emphasized, with no more than rhetorical relish maybe, 'that immorality, used in a special sense, which I need not define, has been of late increasing among the upper classes in England, and specially in the great cities. Those who have the best opportunities of knowing, who can from personal knowledge compare the tone of society now with that of twenty, thirty, forty years ago, speak most positively of this deterioration. This is not the place to give details or evidence. There is amply sufficient ground for alarm that the nation may be on the eve of an age of voluptuousness and reckless immorality.'

Canon Wilson therefore bears out, in that estimate of his, my own suspicion that an increase in homosexuality was observable in England from about the middle of the nineteenth century onward – or if we work from 1841, that is forty years from 1881, from just before 1850. Less voluptuous forms of the menace he envisaged had for a long time been possible and accepted, as we can see from Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography* (No. 1), in which this author looked back from 1850 to his passionate feelings for a school friend in Regency days.

Means for the gratification of homosexual impulses in eighteenth-century England were not rare, and probably not much rarer in proportion to the size of the population than in the Victorian age. But literary references to homosexuality during that century and until the

beginning of our own period were generally satirical: Churchill in *The Times* and Smollett in *Roderick Random* refer to it for example with detachment as a vice, and not as an interesting phenomenon or as stimulus to aesthetic experience. It may be easy now to see, with the light of psychological analysis behind us, that many a passage in the writings of Beckford and Isaac Bickerstaffe suggests the background of a homosexual mental pattern – though this is not overtly disclosed by the words themselves. What is never felt in English literature since the seventeenth century up to about 1850 is that homosexual emotions were taken seriously, with the support of some aesthetic or some moral principle which might be a rationalization of an author's obsession, but which provided none the less an orientation affecting the whole tone (let alone the substance) of a literary production, helping thereby to set up a chain of cause and effect, of imitation and expansion, that turned what was motivated by one author into a cult expounded by his successors. Whatever we may discover about its vices, this process is not to be discovered in eighteenth-century England; but from 1850 onward it is notable in a growing spate of literary effusions, some long recognized as of merit (such as poems by Hopkins and Housman), some of historical interest chiefly, and some merely curious as laboured expressions of a wave in group psychology.

This wave broke in the Wilde trials of 1895, a climax due in part to the publicity which developments in popular journalism during the 1890s made feasible. Yet, assuming it can be discerned, how did the wave start moving in the first place? The purpose of the present anthology is to show that the existence of the wave can certainly be assumed, and that it had a high – as opposed to a vicious or pornographic – level of expression. How it came into being is a large question and one which lies beyond the scope of this introduction.

None the less I will try to summarize a few of the forces which appear to have nourished the growth of homosexuality in Victorian England. These were contingent on the changes in relations between the sexes. Among them was the presence of the sexually inhibitive matriarch as she prompted and controlled the behaviour of her young in a jealous world of unplanned families. Joined to this presence was an increase in the numbers of upper-middle-class people alongside the expansion of enterprise after the Industrial Revolution, and the desire of this class as a whole to give to its children the training that had been offered to the sons of prosperous gentry by schools like Winchester and Harrow, where homosexuality flourished because it was expedient. Then in alignment with sociological forces like these should be seen the aesthetic values inherited from eighteenth-century Neo-Classicism – those associated with the homosexual Winckelmann in fact – and the

contribution of all public and grammar schools to a growing familiarity with homosexual themes in classical literature. A dependent force at work was the alternating current in the Oxford Movement, the subsequent evolution of High Anglicanism, and its persistent temptation to conversion in a very English and psychosomatic form of Romanism.

It can be argued I think that the Roman Church had greater attractions than any Protestant Church for the homosexual – both male and female – in that its theology and teaching were not based on empirical studies of the Bible. In spite of former tirades by early Fathers against sodomy, and in spite of the Aristotelian growth of Schoolmen in the Middle Ages, this teaching embodied elements of Platonism, inherited as parts of the primitive philosophical structure. Such strains permitted on the one hand, the charitable classification of homosexual emotions as mental events, leading to celibacy and dedication to the monastery or nunnery (no one need be deceived about this, or about the opportunities provided in mediaeval times for the integration of what might now be called schizoid personalities); on the other hand as mental events extending, if they extended at all in physical expression, to venial sins. By the time the Jesuits were widely established all over the world, sins of this order were accounted easy to forgive. In the Protestant communities homosexuality was more hypocritically tolerated, more deceptively expressed and less obviously waylaid in the dedicated abstention from involvement with the opposite sex which a celibate priesthood and the monastic system provided. Herbert Horne struck a chord in this key in 1891 in his poem 'Non Delebo Propter Decem' (No. 48).

The year of the publication of Hunt's *Autobiography* was also the year when *In Memoriam* was published, a long poem in which Tennyson commemorated the death of his friend Arthur Hallam in 1833. Certain chapters of *In Memoriam* have been selected here and set in sequence, though they are separated in the poem, sometimes quite widely. From this it will be seen that Tennyson used the language of deprivation, both prophetic and unconscious – 'Something it is which thou hast lost, some pleasure from thine early years' – alongside references associated with, and henceforth to be associated repeatedly with, the Shakespeare of the *Sonnets* and with Arcady and its innocent pleasures. For John Addington Symonds the word Arcadian meant homosexual, and little more; and the Greek conditions of life, the old philosophy and so on, as mentioned by Tennyson, do not differ in kind from similar references by overt homosexuals later in the same century. If some of the better passages in the poem, and some of its best-known lines, have not been included in my quotations, that is because they do not help to bring out unequivocably the allegorical elements in it which made it a

vehicle for homosexual feeling. Even the figure of Urania gave a foothold to that association; while the consciousness of sin, together with such phrasing as 'loved deeplier, darklier understood', whatever they may have meant to Tennyson himself, contributed to the notion of a kind of attachment awkwardly close to the pederasty discussed in Plato's *Symposium* and familiar to undergraduates and even to schoolboys of the period. I say awkwardly close, because unless it were maintained at the Platonic or philosophic level (or, as earlier psychiatrists used to say, unless it were sublimated) it might have been the inspiration to a gust of unnatural vice – to use an expression even more outmoded. In this respect Tennyson, indignant though he would have been to be linked thus, might be classified as the author of *In Memoriam* with the hero of *Teleny*, in the context of erotic relationships between males.

We differ from him chiefly in this: that we believe it is a physical orientation which counts, not the degree of its expression. And the fact that Tennyson evolved an emphatically heterosexual image in later life does nothing to disqualify him as homosexual when he wrote *In Memoriam*, or in that part of his temperament he kept sensitive to the memory of Hallam; so that the love of his friend became greater than it had been when he was alive, and the object of this attachment became identified with the cosmos – not God – at the same time helping the author, in his sadness, to justify the inscrutable ways of God to Man.

A lot of the imagery of the poem is that of the conventional lover, as when Tennyson writes of the bereavement of the widower, or when the intimacy between himself and Hallam is illustrated by a reference to thought leaping out 'to wed with Thought e'er Thought could wed itself with speech'. The symbols of desire are conveyed archly in the 'secrets of the Spring (moving) in the chambers of the blood'; and in the possessive chant of 'Mine, mine for ever, ever mine'.

When the poem was published it was taken apparently at its face value, and so provided both a relief and a language of lament for those readers who were either committed to unrequited homosexual feeling in place of all other sexual instinct, or, while passing through a phase of such feeling, remained in ignorance of its true implications. *In Memoriam* was reviewed in *The Times* with a certain reserve; and the occasion was not let slip to point out that the undertones of the poem were, at least from the reviewer's standpoint, unconventional. But its popularity, which was not long in arriving, suggests that others besides Tennyson could be swayed by the author's unconventional symbolism, which either was, or soon became, the symbolism of unexplained emotions in numerous readers. Queen Victoria, who much admired the poem, presumably skated over the undertones and applied the general

sense to her own situation as a widow. *In Memoriam* was so frequently quoted in print during the years 1850–1900 that a pursuit of the references would be both easy and tiresome. This popularity was due not only to the length of the poem, to its skilful versification, or to the moralistic reflections it contained. It was due also, I have little doubt, to the relevance of the undertones to the condition of certain readers (No. 2).

Whereas Tennyson's friendship with Hallam had been one between young men of approximate ages, the friendships of William Johnson, better known by the name he adopted, William Cory, were formed among pupils he taught at Eton where he became an assistant master in 1845. As author of the Eton Boating Song, Cory can scarcely be said to have been forgotten by his own school; and as author of the lines beginning 'They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead', he has been represented in anthologies, as he is represented here again. But as the author of a collection of verses, *Ionica*, containing some of the best examples of classical prosody in English, he is likely still to be underrated. The earliest group of these poems, first published in 1858, addressed to Charles Wood and reflecting his pederastic tastes, began to be disparaged around 1920; since when the discreet but sincere feelings expressed in them have been, all too crudely, dismissed as sentimental (Nos. 4, 5, 6).

While it would be difficult to come anywhere near gauging the extent of Cory's influence on his pupils at Eton, this was undoubtedly great, especially when he became emotionally involved with them; which he did on the analogy of the ancient Greek pupil-teacher relationship. Naturally he had his favourites. With such a system all his pupils could not be equally favoured, and complaints from a parent that Cory had gone too far with one of them caused his downfall in 1872. Cory left Eton under a cloud; but as time went by he discovered that he also could be involved with persons of the other sex. His later poems showed this. At length he married and had a son. Several generations of boys, remembering him with affection as a master, included Algernon Drummond, R. B. Brett (Lord Esher), Henry Scott Holland, Francis Eliot, W. O. Burrows, Charles Wood (Lord Halifax), Lord Rosebery, Lord Chichester, and many others – and some of these did little to restrain their pederastic habits in later years. The romantic, rather chauvinistic, Cory was commemorated in Henry Newbolt's poem 'Ionicus' (1898).

One Eton boy exceptionally impressed Cory, not as a budding statesman or as a noble ornament of society but as a poet simply; and that was Digby Mackworth Dolben (Plate 1), who proved in his short life how a passion for the Oxford Movement could be inlaid with a vital

passion for romantic friendships. And with Dolben this was indeed a passion, as anyone may feel in the verses he showed to Cory and to his senior at Eton, Robert Bridges. It was not until 1911 that Bridges published Dolben's poems.[5] But before that time many of them were known already to a limited circle at Oxford including Gerard Manley Hopkins and Canon Richard Watson Dixon. Cory went to the length of copying out some of these poems, and in other ways warmly encouraging the young Christian – whose emotionalism had a quality somewhere between Tennyson's idealism and Faber's effusiveness. Both Cory and Dolben were admirers of Tennyson: the Faber element in Dolben's verses was deplored by Bridges, however. At the same time, and unlike Henry Newman and Hurrell Froude, both of whom were repressed homosexuals, Faber counted as the popular poet of the Oxford Movement, and later of the Perverts (as converts to Rome were called in those days). He was the one who expressed almost blatantly in his poems and in his hymns a mixture of that homosexual sentiment and religiosity on which the Oxford Movement was to some extent nourished. With less facile accomplishments than Faber, Dolben – 'readier to turn symbols into flesh than flesh into symbols', as Bridges said – was moving in a similar direction when he was drowned in 1867 at the age of 19, just before going up as an undergraduate to Oxford. This tragedy affected the young Hopkins, who had met Dolben once in 1863 at Oxford and had been strongly attracted to him (No. 9).

Of the three sonnets by Hopkins included here, the earliest drafts date from 6–8 May in 1865; that is, at a time not very long after Hopkins had met Dolben in the previous February and following his religious crisis in March.[6] According to Gardner, a poem 'Where art thou, friend', dating from 25–27 April 1865, could have alluded to Dolben or to 'some fascinating stranger'. Anyhow, all four poems seem to allude to men and not to women, and Dolben's struggles with his own homosexual passions might well have had an effect of causing sympathetic vibrations in Hopkins. This probability is strengthened in the evidence of Robert Bridges, the first editor of Hopkins, noting in a later manuscript version of the first and third sonnets that they 'must *never* be printed'. It is difficult to believe his directive referred to the workmanship, because that is not inferior to the workmanship of certain other early poems edited by Bridges.

The sonnets concentrate on the pain of withdrawal from an infatuation, and there seem to be undercurrents of realization that this state was linked with the religious crisis, yet in conflict with that crisis.

[5] *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, edited with a Memoir by Robert Bridges, London, 1911.

[6] See *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by W. H. Gardner, London, 1948, pp. 214, 215, Nos. 8, 9.

It may have been the conflict rather than any literal rebuff to his approaches that induced Hopkins to see himself in the eyes of his friend as a despicable person; for it was unlikely that Dolben of all people would have encouraged him in such a belief.

At the end of the third sonnet a line was drawn in the 1865 manuscript and a new and incomplete sequence of verses was begun, apparently on a heterosexual theme.

Except for some pieces published in anthologies, Hopkins's poetry, as a body of work, was not presented to the public until 1918, and its hermetic character could have had small bearing in his lifetime on any but a few friends like Canon Dixon and Robert Bridges. The poems introduced into the present anthology are here mainly to indicate what links arise, or may have arisen then, between homosexual emotional crises and religious emotional crises. It is not hard to see how the difficulty of gratifying erotic emotions on one plane – the difficulty of *l'amour de l'impossible* – led by imaginative extensions to a vanishing point of safety in 'God'. For the 'love of God', a predominantly Christian conception, can only be communicated in figures of speech inspired originally by erotic sensations; and this spiritual love on the part of men for a masculine force can thus be rendered backwards into homosexual emotion which has taken refuge in the clouds of intellect. However religious we may be, we should recognize that the idea of God is arrived at by argument supported by feeling, and not by demonstration. The word 'God' may well stand for an idea based on, or emanating from, an awareness of a superior or 'supernatural' force. But whether our emotions reveal it to us or not, the existence of such a force is irrelevant to the verbal convenience of 'God'. This idea of 'God' is the fruit of intellectual acts which rationalize the experience of inhibiting erotic emotions from human (or animal) objectives, and the equally curious experience of attempting to anthropomorphize the unknown, or what we do not understand. As it is, we have to describe and discuss not the emotions of God in regard to us, of which we can know nothing, but our emotions in respect of God, which have to be framed in words of all too human limitation.

When Hopkins composed his poem on 'The Bugler's First Communion' (No. 21), therefore, he gave a description of his excitement at the prospect of a youth willing to enter by means of the ritual act into quasi-tangible relationship with God. This relationship is sanctioned as one of love; and Hopkins's excitement is partly, indeed largely, one of discovering that the bugler and he are both involved in an emotional triangle; but also that the bugler happens to be a young male 'breathing bloom of chastity in mansex fine'. The erotic nature of the poet's excitement may be left to extrude itself if we imagine him

faced with the task of writing a comparable piece on the first communion of some hideous, some delinquent, butcher. As it was, Hopkins accounted disingenuously for the feelings inspired in him by the bugler in transferring them to an orthodox excitement at the bugler's awakening piety.

Concealed or indirect homosexual emotion was behind several more of Hopkins's poems; 'The Brothers', for instance and 'Epithalamion' (No. 39), the second of which hinges upon a vision of boys in the same region of experience as Corvo's 'Ballade of Boys Bathing' (No. 43) and numerous other pederastic bathing verses of the 1890s. For in this poem a peak of excitement is reached in describing the natural beauties of a place in 'the loins of hills', where a bevy of boys 'with downdolphinry and bellbright bodies' are seen to plunge into a river. In order to extend this excitement, Hopkins introduces a stranger who observes the boys, and is inspired thereby to take off his clothes and imitate them by plunging into a neighbouring pool. And if the symbolism of this were not enough, Hopkins ends the passage by asking what is water; and concluding that it is spousal love. The poem was intended as an ode on the occasion of his brother's marriage in 1888. But the symbol of the water in this case – water that is shared and entered by boys and stranger – is the symbol of a current which links the bellbright bodies of all concerned. And only by courtesy can we allow it to be, in any sense, either feminine or asexual.

Literary influences, it will be agreed, are not simply stylistic, but also psychological, moral and sentimental (in the sense of suggesting sentiments). Important factors in the establishing of a homosexual climate in our period were those of the poetry, and, also in some degree, the personality of Algernon Swinburne. One feature that readers took from his poetry – by which I mean one that impressed them, one they remembered sometimes unconsciously and reproduced sometimes in their verses – was the concentration of his own peculiar mental erethism in vivid imagery. This vividness was not so much the vividness of precision as the vivid quality of verbal intoxication; and those who let themselves be partly intoxicated by it found themselves introduced sideways, as it were, to various deviations from routine eroticism.

The poems of Swinburne which deal most consistently with homosexual subjects are 'Anactoria', 'Fragoletta' and 'Hermaphroditus'.[7] As regards 'Hermaphroditus', a point of interest, especially to homosexually-inclined readers, was that it stood alone in being the first openly published English *poem* on such a subject since the seventeenth

[7] These three poems by Swinburne appeared in *Poems and Ballads*, London, 1866.

century in which the 'argument' was sensual and not satirical nor, as in Cory's poems, sentimental. The effect on such a reader in 1866 when the poem was published must have been one in which thoughts, visions, feelings were aroused and fused into a mood having a primary aesthetic justification – not, as in the eighteenth century, an aesthetically satirical justification. In the opinion of Alice Meynell the poem was one of Swinburne's worst: in the view of John D. Rosenburg, in a recent paper on the poet, it is called 'one of his earliest and finest poems'.[8] It consists of a four-sonnet sequence, ostensibly inspired by a statue in the Louvre in 1863. But the Louvre inspiration was itself suggested by a stream of French literature dealing with hermaphroditism – clearly well-known to Swinburne (No. 8).

Chronological priority in this stream must be given to Henri de Latouche's *Fragoletta*, which became also the title of one of Swinburne's poems in the particular group. Latouche's *Fragoletta* had less of the female than the male in her make-up; and since this is true as well of Swinburne's 'Fragoletta', the balance of sense seems to be toward male homosexuality rather than toward lesbianism. The second example known to Swinburne of an epicene character in French literature was Balzac's Séraphita in his romance of the same name. According to Randolph Hughes,[9] Swinburne had read *Séraphita* before he left Oxford, because the title appears in a list of books borrowed by him from the library of the Taylorian Institute in 1859–60. Balzac also wrote one straightforward lesbian story *La Fille aux Yeux d'Or*, and one novel *Sarrasine*, which is the story of Zambinella, a castrated male: and with both of these works Swinburne seems to have been well acquainted. But anxiety to combine certain aesthetic qualities of males with certain attributes of females found its best exponent in Théophile Gautier, who in the poem 'Contralto' provided a close antecedent to Swinburne's 'Hermaphroditus'. And in the romance *Mademoiselle de Maupin* Gautier wrote a source-book for homosexuals of either sex for many years afterwards.

The idea that a preoccupation with lesbianism proved the exclusively heterosexual nature of both Gautier and Swinburne, which Hughes maintained, seems altogether too simple to let pass. That they were at the same time horrified, or supposed to be horrified, at pederasty implied a state of guilt about this subject. And the fact that they sought hermaphrodite ideals suggests that femininity in any sort of excess was unsatisfactory for them. In so far as they were interested at all in

[8] Alice Meynell's opinion was given in *Hearts of Controversy*, London, 1917, p. 71. John D. Rosenberg's opinion is to be found in *Victorian Studies*, December 1967, Vol. XI, No. 2, 'Swinburne', p. 149.

[9] Randolph Hughes (ed.), Swinburne's *Lesbia Brandon*, London, 1952, p. 403.

combining various attributes of the sexes, we can infer that their orientations were not fixed but in transit, and, at least part of the time, still automatically registering the attractions of their own sex.

It is tempting therefore to see Swinburne as a bridge-builder for the cult of French 'hermaphroditism' as he knew it in the form of a literary obsession. And if something of French literary hermaphroditism was transmitted by Swinburne into England, it would perhaps have had small growth in this country, were it not that conditions for it thrived already. We discover two of these, as we might expect, in the boyish libertinism of the boarding schools, and in the pupil-teacher relationship glorified by Cory.

As most people know by this time, Swinburne was a masochist visiting a brothel in Regent's Park at intervals to get himself flagellated. Ever since he left Eton he seems to have indulged in visions of being beaten; and in his doggerel manuscripts *The Flogging Block, The Whippingham Papers* and other unpublished pieces, he left evidence of that side of his nature.[10] The poems deal with schoolmasters flogging schoolboys. It might be argued therefore that here was a transition in the objectives of his aberration, in its Etonian form within homosexual limits, to its Regent's Park form, which meant beatings by women. But on the many occasions Swinburne referred to this subject in letters to friends,[11] it will be noted that the preoccupation with schoolboy floggings persisted, and that he seemed to have carried the memory of early experiences in homosexual terms, at the same time extending his interest to the urbane fashion of gratifying masochism which, from the few records we have on such a subject, appears to have been heterosexual. Two planes of masochism in Swinburne are thus revealed: a homosexual one for retrospective verses on schoolboys, and a heterosexual one for being beaten by women in Regent's Park. As a poet with a wide acquaintance he acted as propagandist for tastes on both these planes.

Eton can scarcely be held accountable for making Swinburne what he was; otherwise his contemporaries who went to the same school would have shared his obsessions. Some shared them perhaps; but we can safely conclude the majority did not. And in any case his early life was not all passed at Eton. We cannot overlook factors contributing to what may be accepted as early masochistic conditioning. This is for somebody else to work out; here I am simply emphasizing Swinburne's awareness of homosexuality and the reflection of this awareness in what he wrote. Enlightenment could have sprung from his readings of

[10] The manuscripts of Swinburne's flogging pieces are in the British Museum, but do not appear in the published catalogues.

[11] See Swinburne's letters of the 1860s and 1870s in *The Swinburne Letters*, edited by Cecil Y. Lang, New Haven, 1959.

Gautier and Baudelaire, or from those passages in Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* describing the homosexual relationship between Vautrin and Rubempré. Yet hints emerge that Swinburne may have had glimmerings of some earlier enlightenment before he read any works by these authors. Indeed, nobody in considering him seems to have stressed the importance of the times spent as a guest of his grandfather, Sir John Swinburne, at Capheaton, near Newcastle. There it was that he visited for long periods during his holidays from school; and if his grandfather had anything in common with his father these visits would have had little significance. Sir John, however, was not at all like Algernon's father. For one thing, the old baronet undertook to fill the gaps in his grandson's education by teaching him French and Italian, and by preventing him from reading any fiction. In the article by Gosse in the *Dictionary of National Biography* we learn that the grandfather had a strong influence upon the grandson. Curiosity about this baronet becomes especially relevant.

So far as we are concerned, the chief point of interest about Sir John Swinburne was that, as a young man, he had spent an impressionable period in Paris during the last years of the *ancien régime*. Here he had got to know various radical thinkers and libertines of that time and place. Memories of his youth seemed to guide him through life, and even as an old man when his grandson knew him he still preserved views and prejudices of those long-dead *Encyclopédistes*, cultivating, as Gosse says, the memory of Mirabeau. It was not a far cry from cultivating the memory of Mirabeau to cultivating the sexual licence of that republican voluptuary, if not in practice, for which we have no evidence, then perhaps in theory – which possibility we have nothing to contradict. Around the time when his grandson was staying with him, Sir John was still friendly with William Mulready the painter, whose pederastic activities appear to have wrecked his marriage in the 1820s.[12] That a particle of Sir John's devotion to Mirabeau, or of his friendship with Mulready, should have brushed off on Algernon Swinburne as a youth is, of course, conjecture. But to this conjecture we join the known facts: that Swinburne took shape later as a radical in politics, somewhat in the manner of certain French eighteenth-century nobles; and that his obsession with the Marquis de Sade, whose works he had read by the end of 1861, fitted loosely into the background presented by his grandfather, who died in 1860. Was there a chain of association running from Mirabeau to Algernon Swinburne? Was the near-impotent erethism of the poet a thriving development alongside his memory of the punishments at school?

[12] A letter dated 1827 from Mulready's wife complaining of his pederastic activities is in the Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

In 1865 Swinburne went to Oxford, and in the following year he met Rossetti and the other Pre-Raphaelite artists engaged on painting the walls of the Union there. It was in these Pre-Raphaelite circles that he made the acquaintance of the young Jewish painter Simeon Solomon. With Solomon he was on terms of friendship by the early 1860s. During his stay with Rossetti in Cheyne Walk he and his new friend were supposed to have chased each other naked down the staircase at Number 16, much to Rossetti's annoyance. In these years too he seems to have introduced Solomon to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* which had appeared in 1855: the attractions of the section 'Calamus' in this bookful of poems lay precisely in its marked homosexual character.

Solomon was perhaps destined to be homosexual whether he met Swinburne or not; but his deference in correspondence and his indebtedness to the poet for all kinds of sexual lore leave one with the impression that Swinburne acted towards him as an agent provocateur, as we shall note. Meanwhile Solomon was subjected to another sophisticated influence, from Oscar Browning, a pupil of William Cory at Eton and a master there, who met the young Jewish painter as a guest at Fryston, Lord Houghton's country house in Yorkshire. Lord Houghton, with his library of erotica, was a formative influence on all these men: it was from him that Swinburne borrowed the works of the Marquis de Sade in 1861. Moreover, Houghton's collected poems – many written in the pre-Victorian years – were published in 1859 and included one or two with sufficiently ambiguous undertones to suggest the likelihood of a homosexual phase in their author. Swinburne had been introduced to Houghton in 1861; and he fostered the affair between Browning and Solomon to which Houghton provided a background at Fryston. Another person whose orbit for a time crossed that of Solomon was Edward Poynter, the artist, for whom in 1865 Solomon made a series of allegorical drawings with homosexual insinuations, one of which showed schoolboys embracing (Plate 2). In the following year Solomon went with Browning for a tour in Italy, an experience which may have disinhibited the young painter profoundly.

Surviving correspondence between Swinburne and Solomon shows them to have been mutually excited by a variety of sexual subjects, mostly deviant, the poet for example making his by this time facetious comments about Sade, and with Solomon sharing great excitement over the transvestites Boulton and Park who were brought to trial and acquitted in 1870. As yet Swinburne had shown no repugnance for homosexual themes: his first series of *Poems and Ballads* had appeared in 1866 and included the one lesbian and two hermaphrodite vignettes already mentioned – all tributes to French pioneers. At some date before 1865 he had got to know George Powell, a fellow ex-Etonian,

with whom he stayed in Wales and in France during the later 1860s and 1870. The Goncourt brothers recorded in 1875 that Guy de Maupassant told them he had met the poet and his friend Powell in 1870 at Étretat, where the two men were living in a hired cottage. In the course of several visits to this romantic hideout Maupassant was shown erotic photographs of youthful males; and also he noticed that Powell had fourteen-year-old boys as servants from England. There was a monkey as well, which slept in Powell's bed. Maupassant assumed both Englishmen to be pederasts. Even if this were untrue of Swinburne, his obvious enjoyment of Powell's way of living supports a belief that, as Sade's disciple, he was willing to foster the homosexual spirit in others, before 1873. Indeed it was during this period, in the late 1860s probably, that he asked Solomon especially to provide him with drawings of boys being flogged by schoolmasters.

Solomon had visited Italy again with Browning in 1868 and 1869, and according to Edmund Gosse he was threatened with legal proceedings for sexual acts at some time in the following year, when he went off once more to Italy, this time presumably to avoid unpleasant consequences.[13] His one literary adventure, the allegorical prose poem *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (No. 15), had been written in Rome in 1869 and was published in 1871. It was shot through with homosexual masochism, reflecting perhaps in its serious way something of Swinburne's flippant obsessions at the time. Anyhow, Swinburne gave it a long puff in *The Dark Blue* magazine, not without critical comments which annoyed its author. The first signs of estrangement began to show. A period of indiscretions was at hand. Early in 1873 Solomon was caught with a man called Roberts in a public urinal north of Oxford Street, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment in Clerkenwell House of Correction.[14] The sentence was suspended and police supervision was imposed. In due course, after hearing of this, Swinburne went to Oxford about 23 May, Gosse recalled, largely to discuss Solomon with his friend Walter Pater. His attitude to the young artist changed very quickly.[15] He began to think of Solomon with horror; but this did not prevent him from viewing George Powell as before with approval, and continuing to pester, or to amuse, his friends with jokes about whipping and the Eton Block. Indignation against Solomon rose to screaming point when the poet discovered his former companion was selling his letters.[16] It is possible that Solomon would

[13] See Margery Ross, *Robert Ross, Friend of Friends*, London, 1952. Letter to Robert Ross from Edmund Gosse, 20 August 1917, p. 315.

[14] Detailed information on this subject was kindly sent to me by Mr. Lionel Lambourne, who has made a close study of the life and art of Simeon Solomon.

[15] See Margery Ross, op. cit., p. 315.

[16] See Cecil Y. Lang (ed.), op. cit., pp. 253, 261, 264 etc.

never have sunk to expedients like this had Swinburne behaved to him with ordinary charity, instead of what was extraordinary and hysterical inconsistency.

Meanwhile Swinburne's natural afflatus had fanned another spark, this time in the mysterious heart of Walter Pater.

Pater had first met Swinburne at Oxford as a member of the Old Mortality club in 1858. From the date of the poet's first published work in 1860, *The Queen Mother and Rosamund*, he was vulnerable to a combined fascination of style and eroticism in Swinburne's writings. The next stage, in the 1860s, was for Solomon, through Swinburne, to make friends with Pater and to stay with him in Oxford; and moreover to draw his portrait, which he gave to him.

Now Pater was a grey sheep from another flock. In his earlier years his ambition had been to take orders, and through life he retained an interest in ecclesiastical ritual. From the paths of the Oxford Movement he strayed, or rather crossed over, to the Renaissance – to what, for comparison's sake, we might nickname Vanity Fair. Influenced by Swinburne's style and the strange moods conveyed in the poet's manner of writing and also by Jahn's life of the German antiquary Winckelmann, Pater came forward in 1867 with an article in *The Westminster Review* about this eighteenth-century scholar (No. 12), and in November 1869 with another one in *The Fortnightly Review* on Leonardo da Vinci. Yet another appeared in November 1871, again in *The Fortnightly Review*, on Michelangelo. It can be supposed that his interest in the slant of these subjects was markedly buttressed by Swinburne, both as a writer and as a character, and by the friendship which Pater enjoyed, through Swinburne, with the young Solomon. Pater also became an admirer of Solomon's drawings and paintings of youths, conceived at this date somewhat in the manner of Rossetti's paintings of idealized women.

Hearing that Solomon had been charged in London, Swinburne wrote to Powell to say that Pater knew something about it. Whatever Pater may have known about it, he must have felt it was unfortunate to be associated with a classified deviant, even if the senior dons, other than Swinburne's friend Benjamin Jowett, were unaware of Solomon's existence. In which case it was equally unfortunate that hard on the heels of the London scandal there should arrive by the autumn of 1873 the first copies of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, containing the above articles collected between covers, with some other essays of Pater's on contingent matters. He seems to have been affected by a sense of guilt; or maybe by the caricature of himself as Mr. Rose in W. H. Mallock's *New Republic*, which came out soon afterwards in the magazine *Belgravia*. Or perhaps Oxford innuendos were too much for

him. The fact remains that in the second edition of *Studies*, published in 1877, he cut out the famous 'Conclusion' to the essays. He conceived, so he said in a note in the third edition (1888), 'it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall . . . (and) I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by it' (No. 29).

By doing that, of course, Pater dissociated himself a little from the parlour hedonism of the Aesthetic movement. And it was true that much of what he wrote in the 'Conclusion', as far back as 1868, was echoed and amplified in this later book *Marius the Epicurean* (1885). In that novel it will be noted how male friendships were among the more powerful emotions described; and not only were these dependent on physical attractiveness and therefore strictly erotic, but they were linked dramatically to religious crises. Pater's personal crisis, however, occurred in an opposite sense to that of almost everybody else who had then encountered the Oxford Movement; whereas their conflicts drove them on – in Faber's case to a fulsome Catholicism – Pater's drove him out, to become the apostle of a form of aestheticism in which religion had a secondary, if not a subordinate, place. He became, it appears, an addictive cigarette-smoker.[17]

The most difficult passage in the 'Conclusion', from Pater's viewpoint, was this: 'While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems, by a lifted horizon, to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange flowers, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend'.

It was not much. But whatever it was, it was a significant gesture in the Victorian moral continuum.

I would advocate here that the influence of Cory's *Ionica* on Pater, which has, so far as I know, never been considered, is hinted at in the even more famous passage on the Gioconda, by the reference there to her 'fallen day'. The image is striking, since after all there would occur to most of us certain other conditions which might be 'about her'; while at the same time the use of the phrase 'fallen day' provides a very particular and mysterious effect. Yet, as we can see in No. 5, the phrase was used by Cory in 1858 before Pater used it, and this may be the only evidence which remains to suggest that Pater read *Ionica*, or was clearly, if quietly, impressed by this book of poems. John Addington Symonds noted that it was making a stir in Oxford in 1859. So Cory's importance as a coach, so to say, in the cult of Victorian pederasty had at least one side-effect – that is in matters of style, often no doubt in the works of those very persons whose

[17] See Louise Jopling, *Twenty Years of My Life*, London, 1925, p. 273.

enthusiasm for *Ionica* sprang from some emotional coincidence: like Pater perhaps.

Certainly Cory had an influence, and a more direct influence, on John Addington Symonds. Indeed Symonds took the trouble to write specially to the Eton poet, whose *Ionica* had been given to him by Professor Conington at Oxford.[18] In his letter he frankly admitted his pederastic inclinations, and asked to be advised. The reply he received from Cory included 'a long and passionate defence of pederasty'. 'I used to dote on that book (*Ionica*) when I was a lad at Oxford', wrote Symonds to his daughter Madge in 1892. His early years had been distressed by a powerful struggle between duty and inclination, between his father's morality and his own fixations on choirboys and male genitals. *Ionica* gave him the encouragement he needed first of all to write poetry, and second of all to externalize in this poetry his constantly accumulating sexual urges. An early example of this is 'What Cannot Be' (No. 7), written in 1861 about a Bristol choirboy named Alfred Brooke. In republishing this poem for ordinary distribution in later years, Symonds altered the word 'he' in line 12 to 'she'.[19]

In what Symonds called the 'peccant pamphlets' of his verses, often limited to ten or twenty copies, which he distributed among such friends as Arthur and Henry Sidgwick, F. W. H. Myers and Graham Dakyns – like himself all repressed pederasts – there is, in the earlier ones, some imitation of Cory's Grecian manner, on a different plane of accomplishment. Symonds's virtues as a poet, like Cory's usually ignored by modern commentators, were none the less dissimilar from Cory's own: he was less resigned, less careful of the texture of his verse, more determined to have out with it, that he possessed all the secrets of Arcadian or Greek love, as he called the homosexual emotions in general. In 1878 his poem 'Eudiades', inspired ten years earlier by Norman Moor, a boy at Clifton College (near which Symonds lived), was printed in one of these pamphlets entited *Tales of Ancient Greece, No. 1.* The poem expressed Symonds's worries around 1868, and tells of an affair between a young man and a boy, the boy becoming so anxious to please that he offers himself for copulation. But the man resists, and later the two die in battle having never sullied their ideal of love by 'shame' (No. 13).

Mrs. Grosskurth, in her life of Symonds, leaves us with the impression that he restrained himself from physical intimacy with the boys he knew until he met Roden Noel the poet, when he threw off his timidity and let himself go, first with the uninhibited Noel, and later

[18] Phyllis Grosskurth, *John Addington Symonds*, London, 1964, p. 48.

[19] 'What Cannot be' appeared on p. 32 of *Crocuses and Soldanellas* by John Addington Symonds, privately printed, Clifton, c. 1879.

in London with male prostitutes. Symonds's own account of his sexual life which appears as Case XVIII in Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* (1897) implies that his first collaborative orgasm was shared with a soldier; while Noel himself, in the contribution he made to the same book under Case XXVII, insists that he was not particularly keen on the consummation of aggressive drives, but mainly on courting the admiration of younger people, male or female. 'Eudiades' shows Symonds advancing from the 'platonic' verses of the early 1860s to more physiological themes; and by 1875 when he printed 'Midnight at Baiae' in *Lyra Viginti Cordarum*[20] he had come to the point of being able to imagine sadistic lusts (No. 18). In the 1870s however his objectives changed, and as he grew older he became less interested in boys and more interested in young men, and receptive also to the idea of 'adhesiveness' recommended by Whitman as a binding medium of democracy. It was then that Symonds turned his attention to Swiss peasants and, in the following decade, to Venetian gondoliers. The long poem 'Stella Maris', though addressed to a female (even in the peccant pamphlets before reprinting), was really inspired by his Venetian experiences (No. 25).[21] It shows that he had come a long way from the position maintained by Cory. Like Swinburne before he began to disparage Whitman, Symonds was an admirer of the American poet, to whom he paid tribute in his long poem 'The Song of Love and Death: A Symphony'.[22] But when he corresponded with Whitman about the implications of 'Calamus' the other refused to admit that he had condoned any kind of eroticism in his references to friendship between males.[23] At the end of 'Stella Maris' Symonds revealed that by this time he was prepared to get what he wanted on any terms, however sordid such terms might have seemed to him in younger days. As he struggled with religious precepts, not to speak of conventional mores, he contradicted himself time and again; yet in his determination to share himself with the world he showed courage.

Roden Noel on the other hand, credited though he is with having helped Symonds towards homosexual self-expression, had a patrician indifference to self-justification, believing, according to his own account of himself, that he had inherited from his mother's family a tendency

[20] 'Midnight at Baiae' was first printed privately by J. A. Symonds in *Lyra Viginti Cordarum*, Clifton, c. 1875. Another version was printed in *The Artist*, March 1893, with the first ten lines of the 1875 version omitted and certain tactful amendments introduced. Symonds claimed the poem recorded an actual dream of his (see *The Artist*, March 1893, p. 70).

[21] 'Stella Maris' was a sonnet sequence originally printed privately in *The Sea Calls*,(?) London, c. 1884, and in the same year in *Vagabunduli Libellis*. The poem was inspired between September 1881 and April 1882 by the gondolier Angelo Fusato (see Grosskurth, op. cit., p. 242).

[22] 'Love and Death – A Symphony'. See Note 4 to the introduction.

[23] Grosskurth, op. cit., pp. 233–5, 272–4.

to homosexuality.[24] His great-uncle had been the famous Percy Jocelyn, Bishop of Clogher, who in 1822 was caught with a soldier in a tavern in St. Alban's Place, and then broke bail to fly to Scotland. Noel's amativeness was almost an inverted parody of Whitman's adhesiveness, since he confessed to being somewhat vain. What he enjoyed most was for young men or women to express admiration for him physically; and if he was bold in pursuing this pleasure he may not have been otherwise sexually aggressive. Walt Whitman's creed of democracy through adhesiveness suited him well, and he was among the earliest of Englishmen to write at any length on *Leaves of Grass*, which he did in *The Dark Blue* in 1871. In spite of his background he prided himself on being an unaffected disciple of the American poet.

While the shape of versification in the 'Ganymede' of 1868 links Noel clearly with eighteenth-century poems in the Miltonic tradition, the visual imagery of the subject has a parallel and a pretext in the vogue for nude boy-children associated with Raphael and his school. In Noel's 'Water Nymph' of 1872 pederastic images were presented through the fictional thoughts of a mermaid. An odd, apparently deliberate, omission of commas, an occasionally remarkable phrase – these two features together distinguish the works of this now forgotten poet. In a large part of his published work there seems to be a consistent ambivalent glow, suggesting that here was a man, happily married and with a family, who throughout adult life was beset strongly by both homosexual and heterosexual feelings (Nos. 14, 47).

After 1855, when *Leaves of Grass* was published, Walt Whitman counted as the most influential of the poets who brought forms of homosexual sentiment prominently into their writings. In America the effect of Whitman's message on younger generations was evident enough during the last half of the nineteenth century. In England he had staunch supporters from Roden Noel to Richard Le Gallienne, while some of the pioneers of socialism, who were also homosexual, found in 'Calamus' the arguments for expressing libidos alongside political doctrines.

If Edward Carpenter (Plate 3) gave priority to his emotions of love over his political feelings, none the less his gospel of brotherliness could be said, in his eyes, to have been the essence of a true democracy. In this of course he was guided by Whitman, whose *Leaves of Grass* fell into his hands some years before he published *Narcissus and Other Poems*, after a visit to Italy in 1873. In 1874 he gave up a curateship of St. Edwards in Cambridge and his Fellowship at Trinity Hall, and in the same year became a University Extension Lecturer. But within four

[24] Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Sexual Inversion*, London, 1897, Case XXVII, pp. 75–6.

years after meeting Whitman in 1877 in the United States, Carpenter broke with his former background, and turned to market-gardening, then to sandal-making, and to working-class companionship in the North of England. Among these 'comrades' of his were Albert Fearnehough and George Merrill; while a poetic disciple emerged in the 1880s in James Morgan Brown of Glasgow (No. 62), of whom he wrote an account.

Carpenter's lecture on homosexuality, which he called *Homogenic Love*, given in Manchester in 1894, was printed for wider distribution than Symonds's *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891), and, indebted to the former work though it was, it deserves to be reprinted here because it was the third of the pioneering essays on the subject to be delivered in English (No. 70). Like Symonds and the Prussian writer Ulrichs in the 1860s, Carpenter tended to glorify overt homosexual behaviour among Urnings (Ulrichs' word) or congenital inverts as if they were a race apart. Symonds's notion of a third sex, even as a convenient classification of the sexually intermediate, has long been rejected since Freud, among others, pointed out its untenability in the face of psychological and biological advances. Since then the notion of a third sex, privileged to live and to behave like some in-group of hermaphrodites, never regained the attraction that it had for Urnings at the close of the nineteenth century (No. 51).

The first phase of the movement outlined here may be said to have been punctuated by the indiscretions of the 1870s. Thus we have Cory's resignation from Eton in 1872; Oscar Browning's resignation from the same school in 1875; Solomon's encounter with the law in 1873; Pater's publication of *Studies in the History of the Rennaissance* later in the same year; Swinburne's collapse and his reform undertaken by Watts Dunton in 1879. All these men were stimulated by views and literature of the 1860s or earlier. The second phase, or what for convenience we may understand as a second phase, appeared during the 1880s, in the wake of the Aesthetic cult; and it had behind it the force of the writings and personalities of those who had been mentioned in the first phase.

The second phase opened neatly with the publicity accorded to Oscar Wilde, during and after his visit to America; and it closed with the noise of a trial amplified to extremes by publicity again, and prejudicial to its victim in the events of 1895.

A belief that Wilde was first seriously initiated in homosexual practices only as late as 1886, when he met Robert Ross, then an undergraduate at King's College, Cambridge – this belief asserted by Arthur Ransome in his critical study of 1912 – is no longer held. It seems more likely that Wilde's initiation took place during his Oxford period,

about the time when he made friends with Francis Miles, a young dilettante artist of ambisexual tastes; and also with Miles's friend Lord Ronald Gower, a notorious homosexual, one of the models for Lord Henry Wotton in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. When Wilde began to live in London he took rooms with Miles in Salisbury Street near to the Embankment at Charing Cross, and it might be guessed it was then that he came to know Henry Marillier, a boy friend of Miles's, with whom he may have had some kind of connection.[25] What concerns us here is that a similar kind of connection may have linked Wilde and Rennell Rodd, the young poet who had taken a lead in the production of the Oxford magazine *Waifs and Strays*, and the winner of the Newdigate Prize two years after Wilde himself. Some of Wilde's earliest poems appeared in *Waifs and Strays* during 1879 and 1880, and in 1880 Rodd was his companion in a tour along the river Loire in France.

James Rennell Rodd (1858–1941), later knighted and given a peerage, went to Balliol College, Oxford, at the same time as Wilde was at Magdalen.[26] When he published his first collection of poems, entitled *Songs in the South*, he sent a copy to Wilde, retrospectively dated July 1880 (the publication date was November 1881), having inscribed the paper-covered pamphlet with a significant prophecy. This inscription consisted of verses in Italian which have been translated to read: 'At thy Martyrdom the greedy and cruel crowd to which thou speakest will assemble; all will come to see thee on thy cross, and not one will have pity on thee!'

Now why should Rodd have written such ominous lines? Clearly Wilde had impressed him in the role of prophet – in his assumed role of Aesthetic prophet perhaps, though this is doubtful. Had he also impressed him as an advocate of *l'amour de l'impossible*? Writing in November 1880, Wilde recalled the Loire holiday, spent with 'a delightful Oxford friend'.

Early in 1882, while on his American tour, Wilde arranged with J. M. Stoddart of Philadelphia to re-issue the bulk of the contents of *Songs in the South* as *Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf*, with a new dedication to himself, which (it has been suggested) he copied from the dedication inscribed by Rodd, either in the copy with the prophetic verses, or in another copy Wilde brought with him to the United States. The dedication ran: 'To Oscar Wilde – "Heart's Brother" – These Few Songs

[25] See Rupert Hart-Davis, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*, London, 1962, pp. 180–1, pp. 184–6.

[26] These observations on Rennell Rodd are based upon references to him in Hart-Davis, *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*, 1962; the Bibliographical Note by T. B. Mosher in his edition of *Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf*, Portland, Maine, 1906; and Stuart Mason's *Bibliography of Oscar Wilde*, edited by Timothy d'Arch Smith, London, 1967.

and Many Songs to Come'. Wilde's plan was a generous one, and a letter survives in which he asked Stoddart for an advance of £25 to be sent to Rodd through him; while to encourage his Oxford friend, whom he described as 'a young fellow of . . . great poetical promise', he wrote an essay, which he called 'L'Envoi', to precede the poems.

About the time all this was being planned on Rodd's behalf, Rodd himself was putting his name to a letter written by Whistler, along with two other acquaintances of Wilde's, Lady Archibald Campbell and Mat Elden.

> 4 February, 1882.
>
> Oscar! We of Tite Street and Beaufort Gardens joy in your triumphs, and delight in your success, but – we think that, with the exception of your epigrams, you talk like Sidney Colvin in the Provinces, and that, with the exception of your knee-breeches, you dress like 'Arry Quilter.
>
> Signed J. McNeil Whistler, Janey Campbell,
> Mat Elden, Rennell Rodd.
>
> New York papers please copy.

This letter, over Whistler's signature alone, was soon afterwards published in *The World*, provoking Wilde to reply in a telegram: 'I admit knee-breeches, and acknowledge epigrams, but reject Quilter and repudiate Colvin'.

Already by then, therefore, the relationship between Rodd and Wilde had declined sufficiently for Rodd to join with Whistler in poking fun at the 'Aesthete'.

Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf was published in an ornate Aesthetic style in both an ordinary edition and in an edition *de luxe* during the autumn of 1882; and Rodd complained to Stoddart of the way in which he had been identified, so he felt, with Wilde's Aesthetic philosophy in 'L'Envoi', and also of the effusive dedication, which 'annoyed [him] excessively'. He wanted the dedication removed from all copies sold thereafter, but it was too late for this to be done: the edition was a small one and no reprint was required.

Writing to Stoddart on 7 August 1882, when he had received advance copies of the book, Wilde still spoke enthusiastically of Rodd – which was strange, considering that often he took offence at much less than the aforesaid unpleasant letter. However, by April in the following year the friendship between them had been scuttled; even then, in a letter to R. H. Sherard accompanying *Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf*, Wilde

was still able to discriminate between Rodd as a 'true poet' and as a 'false friend'.

Of the two poems by Rodd included here, the first (No. 23) was included in Part III of 'Ave Atque Vale' in *Poems in Many Lands* in 1883. Part I dated from 1882–3, Part II from 1879, and Part III from 1881. Part III was originally entitled 'Requiescat' and had possible affinities with Wilde's poem of the same name, written in memory of his sister who died in 1867 – affinities not of prosody but of imagery, towards the end. Wilde's poem was published for the first time in his collection issued in June 1881; Rodd's poem appeared, dated 1881, first as 'Requiescat' in *Songs in the South,* issued in November 1881; and then again in *Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf,* issued in 1882; and in *Poems in Many Lands,* issued in 1883, in the last of which the title 'Requiescat' was omitted. Wilde's poem may well have been written in 1877 since it is annotated as written at Avignon that is, during Wilde's journey to Rome and to Greece with Mahaffy. His next trip abroad was down the Loire with Rodd, and if they went to Avignon together this is not recorded. The connection seems more likely to be Wilde–Rodd than Rodd–Wilde, which again lends weight to the possibility of Wilde inveigling Rodd into some sort of emotional state, which the younger man disacknowledged later. The relationship broke up because of Rodd's unilateral hostility; and this suggests the kind of revulsion that follows sometimes after a state of emotional dependence.

There is a chronological support at least for the possibility of Rodd's two poems included here deriving something of their homosexual signature from his association with Wilde. In other respects they owe little or nothing to Wilde as a poet, and this would apply to all subsequent verse published by Rodd until he settled for being a diplomat. In Wilde's own verse, and indeed in his literary remains as a whole, we seem to be aware of homosexuality like something radio-active, invisible except when the diction is loaded with Mediterranean patinae from ancient Greece. That he himself was aware of this quality is shown probably by his alteration of the sex of the subject of 'Wasted Days', first printed in 1877,[27] when in 1881 the sonnet was republished with

[27] Stuart Mason's *Bibliography of Oscar Wilde,* edited by Timothy d'Arch Smith, London, 1967, the page facing p. 96. On this page is reproduced the 'picture' that occasioned the poem, which consisted of a tile six inches square and painted by Miss V.T., who is not identified. A line divides the design of the decoration of the tile into two panels, one on the right showing a fair-haired youth wearing hose, smock and peaked hat, leaning against a tree trunk, while in the distance reapers are at work in a cornfield; the other panel on the left showing the same youth wearing a jerkin and torn hose, sitting on the steps outside the window of a house through which are seen people feasting within. On the left panel is inscribed, over the bricks of the house, 'He must hunger in frost,' and on the right panel, over the stubble of the cornfield, 'That will not worke in heate'.

major amendments in his collected poems. The theme of this poem, as first conceived, is that the 'fair slim boy' (one is reminded of the famous letter produced at the trials in which he called Alfred Douglas a 'slim gilt soul'), who is still 'in fear of love', dreams away a summer afternoon instead of toiling with the reapers, and has never noticed that night is approaching – the night in which reaping, or gathering 'fruit', will be equally impracticable. Having descanted on the physical attractions of this youth, Wilde exclaims 'Alas! if all should be in vain.' Then, as the sun sinks, the boy still dreams; and 'in the night-time no man gathers fruit'. In calling the poem 'Wasted Days' and bringing in the subject of Love, its author showed he was not concerned so much with the youth's idleness as with his charm. This lay in his separateness and the inhibitions, the fear of love, which prevented him from enjoying life before the coming of night, here a negative symbol for a time when no *man* gathered fruit – that is, could enjoy the love of the youth, or the act of loving the youth, and so on. In default of a reference to any female, the 'waste' can be interpreted as waste of homosexual opportunity (No. 19).

References to, or hints at, homosexual entanglements can be found in *Salome* and in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; and these works are so well known I have not considered it necessary to include quotations from them. But Wilde's story 'The Portrait of Mr. W. H.', first appearing in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1889, has the distinction of being the first story in English published for ordinary and unlimited distribution which involved romantic pederasty, touched on with impeccable discretion. The problem of Shakespeare's sonnets and the theory that he was in love with a boy actor fascinated Wilde, and by 1895 he had another and longer version of the story ready for publication by John Lane at the Bodley Head. It missed being published by Lane however because of the scandal of the trials, and Wilde's manuscript was filched from his house in Tite Street when the sale of

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Wilde's poem appeared while he was at Oxford in Vol. III, No. 2 of *Kottabos*, the magazine of Trinity College, Dublin, during the Michaelmas Term, 1877. A corrigendum substituted the word 'glow', as here, for 'rays' in line 12. In copies issued later a printed slip of corrigenda was issued, dated 30 October, at Oxford; these amounted to an altered version of the last six lines as follows:

> Cornfields behind, and reapers all a-row
> In weariest labour toiling wearily,
> To no sweet sound of laughter, or of lute;
> And careless of the crimson sunset-glow
> The boy still dreams: nor knows that night is nigh:
> And in the night-time no man gathers fruit.

When, however, Wilde's collected poems appeared in Bogue's edition of 1881, the author had evidently thought fit to change the sex of its subject, and indeed the sense of the whole, which was now entitled 'Madonna Mia', omitting any reference to the painted tile and including at the end a comparison with Dante beholding the Seventh Crystal.

his effects took place on 24 April 1895. Years later it turned up again, to be published for the first time by Mitchell Kennerley in New York; and it is from this 1921 edition that the text has been reprinted here.

By 1870 two contrasted streams of homosexual sentiment were especially noteworthy: one from the Oxford Movement with its undercurrent of emotional friendship as expressed by Newman and Faber; the other from the muscular Christianity of Dr. Arnold at Rugby School, a somewhat inarticulate trend. Although these two streams were opposed, in fact they were joined at the point in a friendship where emphasis is placed on overtones of self-sacrifice, and not on the practical advantages accruing. At this point Dr. Arnold's athletic comradeships, with their socially cohesive values, could interweave with Faber's religious comradeships which justified a kind of promiscuous affection among males. And the relative unimportance of women in relation to these two streams of sentiment could be seen as sometimes the cause, sometimes the effect of the unisexual conditions in which they made any sense.

The disciples of Arnold were usually aware how easy it was for emotional friendships which they recommended as Christian to swerve into the conventional paths of schoolboy homosexuality. Readers were warned in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and in *Eric, or Little by Little*, and in other school stories of the period, about the unhealthiness of the beaten tracks. The authors of such books were frightened by vice, however. The clergyman Edward Cracroft Lefroy, who died young, seems to have been checked in his development precisely when 'platonic' homosexuality was a real temptation.[28] He was not frightened of vice in himself, so much as of morbid growths, of indulging emotions associated with pagan literature and incompatible with the Pauline Christian teaching. Antinous, he declared, could, 'on purely artistic grounds', bear away the palm from Helen; but doubtless he would

[28] Wilfrid Austin Gill, *Edward Cracroft Lefroy, His Life and Poems including a Reprint of 'Echoes of Theocritus,'* with a critical estimate of the Sonnets by the late John Addington Symonds, London, 1897.

A plagiarism by Beardsley (as often, probably unconscious) is suggested by the last lines in the first paragraph of his romance 'Under the Hill' (*The Savoy*, Vol. I et seq., 1896; reprinted 1904; in its unexpurgated version *The Story of Venus and Tannhäuser* 1907) '. . . from point to point . . . the fingers wandered, quelling the little mutinies of cravat and ruffle'.

Here is one of those striking passages which the reader may be tempted to remember. The same applied to Beardsley. It seems that he was tempted to remember a line in Lefroy's poem 'A Palaestral Study' which goes: 'Whisper of mutinies divinely quelled'. This poem had been published first in 1885 in *Echoes from Theocritus and Other Sonnets* by Lefroy. Would Beardsley have encountered such a work? Very likely not. But it was very likely indeed that he read John Addington Symonds's prestigious book *In the Key of Blue* (London, 1893) which contained his 'Critical Estimate' of Lefroy, reprinted with additions from an article in *The New Review*. In this essay Symonds quoted 'A Palaestral Study' in full.

have been annoyed to learn that the symbolism of his flute of Daphnis, which thinks of the lips that pressed it, might be interpreted as a symbol of fellatio. In spite of an essay of his directed against the questionable hedonism, as he saw it, of John Addington Symonds and of the Aesthetic movement, he succumbed to the one undeclared force in this Aesthetic hedonism that made it so deeply suspect. But although he was a parson he admired athletes, not choirboys (Nos. 26, 27).

Lefroy's *Echoes from Theocritus* (1885) brought him letters of praise from Tennyson, Sir Frederick Leighton, Frederick Myers and Edmund Gosse, all in differing ways familiar with some of his problems. And after his death Symonds forgave him the hostility and recognized in his poems the special merit of a fellow Arcadian.

'Damned impostor!' So thought an irate clubman giving his views on Sir Richard Burton, whom he had once known in India.[29] The old gentleman, in his way, was venting the kind of suspicion that comes naturally to any conformist, when he finds himself affronted by egocentric, provocative colleagues; or by acquaintances whose company at times, in the limited scope of an English colony, he has been obliged to endure. In his professional career Burton's impatience with conventions and red tape certainly made him a difficult man, either to contend with or to understand (Plate 6).

After a good start in the Indian Army Burton fell foul of officialdom, when his confidential report on various aspects of Indian life, including homosexuality, drawn up for Sir Charles Napier, his chief, fell into the hands of the Secretariat at Bombay. Promotion beyond the rank of captain in the Army in India evaded him, so from 1861 onward he found employment in the British consular service. But amid all his preoccupations with oriental religions and philosophies, the subject of homosexuality seems to have retained its appeal, for by 1885–8, during which time he was publishing his translation of the *Arabian Nights*, not only did he include previously omitted passages and even whole stories in which pederasty raised its head, but he took the opportunity of adding a 'Terminal Essay' on the history of pederasty all over the world up to the year of writing. Being the first account in English of any length or breadth devoted entirely to this matter, it has been included complete in the present anthology (No. 28).

Burton's craft as a translator has been highly praised: his literary style is none the less strangely informal. This style has been called macaronic, partly on account of the home-made neologisms; while his assurance has an exhibitionist quality justifying in some degree the old

[29] See *The Anti-Philistine*, No. II, 15 July, 1897: 'Romancing Lady Burton's Romances', p. 118.

gentleman's view of its author. For Burton was perhaps something of an impostor: he was also something of a pioneer. Though much of what he wrote on the nature of homosexuality is no longer acceptable, he had the merit of cutting no corners when it came to laying out what he had discovered, and at that date it took a mischievous and ruthless mind like his to discuss, and even to dwell upon, such a subject at all. His chief contention that male homosexuality was to be found, and had always flourished, in what he called the Sotadic Zones of the globe – which coincided roughly with the land between latitudes 43° and 30° – amounted to little more than the application of Taine's theory of climatic and geographical factors directly affecting the growth and character of races and civilizations; but it is of little guidance finally because the zones coincide also with the most populated places in the world.

At first it may seem surprising that this world could be so small that Burton should find himself in the same literary groove along with Swinburne, but so it was. He was also known to Lord Houghton and to most of the Pre-Raphaelites, who soon discovered his gifts as a raconteur, as well as that ruggedness, that flamboyance which graced a bohemianism more professional than theirs. Whether or not at some time in his adventurous life in the East he had enjoyed homosexual experiences, he certainly had more than a casual knowledge of the subject, and like Swinburne he should count, I believe, as one of the solvents acting on the oblique inhibitions of upper-class literary coteries.

We have now reached a position in our second phase when, in the mid-1880s, the pace established in the 1860s was beginning to alter its momentum. This was due mainly to the arrival of younger generations of literary men accepting homosexual sentiment as part of the whole range of feeling which waited to be explored. The next stage was when the admission of such sentiments, albeit only among a few people who were haunted by them, grew into a belief that the more acute sensibility of the 'artistic temperament' was often allied to the frustrated senses of the homosexual. To be homosexually inclined thus became one of the secondary qualifications for declaring oneself an 'artist', and the easiest way to show what an 'artist' one could be, as in Wilde's case, was to record one's feelings in some literary medium – which after all was the medium which came readily to hand at universities.

A connection between homosexuality and the supposed views of the Aesthetes in 1881 was possibly hinted at by W. S. Gilbert in his comic opera *Patience*, wherein the poet Bunthorne, modelled on Rossetti and others but later identified with Wilde, sings obscurely about 'an attachment *à la* Plato for a bashful young potato or a not too French, French bean!' An attachment *à la* Plato, to the Victorians, could of

course mean any kind of attachment that was not physical. From Gilbert's song the public might get an impression that poets could be sexually deviant; but equally the impression might capsize, so that deviants could be poets.

Here it should be emphasized that in considering popular notions like these we are not accepting anything precise or logical; only prejudices, coloured by one or other of those vast reservoirs of feeling which contain, for instance, aggression towards minorities. For those persons in the 1880s who were determined not to be taken for Aesthetes, the Aesthetes were stigmatized with – among other things – 'Platonic' habits. But the younger men who admitted to such ill-defined habits gravitated naturally towards the stigmatized group, and we can watch this process taking place throughout the 1880s. Wilde already in his private life was heading towards a final exposition of Gilbert's idea of the Aesthete. More quietly, in his well-appointed Mayfair house, a rich young dilettante of Russo-Jewish origin was courageously and laboriously exemplifying the new notion of the homosexual as poet. This was Mark André Raffalovich, of whom Wilde once said he had come to London to found a salon and succeeded in opening a saloon.

Some of the references to Raffalovich in memoirs and correspondence are unflattering, especially those of Violet Paget, who wrote under the name of Vernon Lee.[30] In reading Miss Paget's letters a suspicion arises that, after detecting what he was looking for in *Marius the Epicurean*, the young Raffalovich decided that friendship with the man whom George Moore called a 'Vicarage Verlaine' would bring him into contact with other disciples. And there, very probably, he was not much mistaken; even if those disciples were not perhaps so rich, nor so arriviste, as Raffalovich, that they could lay siege to Pater with dinner parties.

Before he was converted to Roman Catholocism in 1896 and renounced worldly and literary ambitions, Raffalovich had published five volumes of verse, two novels, a playlet and numerous articles – though some of these were intended for limited circulation only. But nobody seems to have taken much notice of them, or to have given him in printed reviews the recognition he deserved. In spite of English not being his native tongue, he acquired dexterity in the writing of it: his novels are cats' cradles of obsolete social nuances; his poems betray overtly the kinds of emotion that Symonds would have limited to twenty-five copies. And he had the added distinction of becoming by the 1890s an experimental craftsman: internal and feminine rhymes,

[30] *Vernon Lee's Letters*, edited by Irene Cooper Willis, London, 1937, pp. 147–8, 207, 221, 224.

bad rhymes, no rhymes, odd rhymes – he tried all such devices, with results that were occasionally marred by weakness of syntax. In 'Tulip of the Twilight', however, (No. 79), published in 1895, there comes a curious foretaste of the flavour of the 'Song of Lilli Marlene', with the salt of homosexual persecution and pride in place of the heterosexual stoicism of 1942.

Raffalovich has another claim to notice in our particular context; which was his long attachment to John Gray, the author of *Silverpoints* – that remarkable collection of 'Decadent' verses published by Elkin Mathews and John Lane in 1893 with letterpress and covers designed by Charles Ricketts. The son of a Woolwich carpenter and one of a large family, Gray's diligence had brought him a job in the Foreign Office Library when about 1890 he met Wilde at the Playgoers Club. But Gray had literary ambitions, and Wilde must take some credit for promoting these.

Meanwhile *The Picture of Dorian Gray* appeared in 1890 as a magazine story, and in book form in the following year. In 1892 its hero was rashly identified in *The Star* as Wilde's young protégé. As it happened Gray had facetiously called himself 'Dorian' in letters to Wilde, but he was scarcely comparable to the hero of the story. And the story being what it was, he threatened the paper with an action for libel. The affair was settled out of court. By that time Gray had encountered Raffalovich, who seems to have attracted him away from Wilde's entourage in which Lord Alfred Douglas was then the favoured member. In due course Gray became the intimate friend of Raffalovich, remaining so until his death in 1934.[31]

Gray converted to Catholicism in 1890. In 1892 he experienced some sort of psychological crisis. After being a candidate for holy orders in 1898 he entered the priesthood in 1901, settling in Edinburgh with Raffalovich for the rest of his life. The young decadent emerged as Father Gray; then as Canon Gray, his literary ambitions dwindling into the work of editing Beardsley's letters to André, publishing essays and verses, mainly pious, and ending in a short allegorical novel, *Park*, which came out in 1932. Raffalovich, who had followed Gray into the Catholic church in 1896, likewise ceased after 1897 to publish anything except minor articles. Thereafter he contented himself with his social life in Edinburgh and with his prolonged, and perhaps always platonic, relationship with John Gray – a relationship referred to during those years a little uneasily as 'inverted'. Like the friendship between Ricketts and Shannon, it enjoyed the fortune of success; which means it did

[31] Brocard Sewell (ed.) *Two Friends*, London, 1963, p. 10. A more recent account of these men will be found in Brocard Sewell's *A Footnote to the Nineties*, London, 1969.

not break down.[32] How in other ways it resembled the Shannon–Ricketts ménage it would be hard to discover. What is of special interest yet is the personality of John Gray in comparison with that of Raffalovich (Plates 7, 8 and 9).

Here we touch upon the old controversy of environment versus heredity. Are homosexual tendencies the result of influences to which the subject is sensitive; or are they congenital? These questions were debated exhaustively at the end of last century, when the idea of homosexuality as congenital was useful to men like Symonds who sought an apology for it. Various continental psychiatrists discounted this idea and Havelock Ellis in *Sexual Inversion* (1897), deferring to the views of his collaborator Symonds, gave it somewhat half-hearted recognition. Later sexologists have theorized on most of the possible queries that arise, from the exact meaning of the word *congenital* to the possibility of inheriting genetic patterns which at least pre-dispose the subject to homosexuality. The fact remains that, as far as we know, the majority of English male homosexuals have not been congenitally orientated so much as swayed in that direction by parental relationships in early childhood, or by habits formed at school, or in reaction from early heterosexual rebuffs – or by all three factors. From Raffalovich's monograph *Uranisme et Unisexualité*, published in French at Lyon in 1896, we might infer that he considered himself congenitally homosexual, along with numerous eminent men from Socrates to the poet August von Platen; and the likelihood is, if we disregard the semantic problem, that his condition was indeed one from which he was never consciously free; in other words that it dated back to very early childhood, to a stage in life well before he could have acquired homosexual tastes by imitation or emulation.

There is no evidence that the same could be said of John Gray, however. In the opinion of one who knew both men in their Edinburgh period, Gray's homosexual history was inseparable from his drive for self-betterment in the 1890s.[33] For an introverted literary aspirant, toying with luxurious French Decadent and Symbolist writings, the opportunities of acquaintance with Wilde and his friends were too tempting to reject. If Raffalovich spitefully removed Gray from proximity to Wilde, it was only to confirm any homosexual feelings Gray might have entertained; and that Gray was by no means inflexible in this matter we can judge by the poems in *Silverpoints*, some of which

[32] Charles de Sousy Ricketts, R.A. (1866–1931) and Charles Hazelwood Shannon, R.A. (1863–1937), painters and designers. No biographical records that I know shed much light on the friendship of these two men, which was none the less held to be a 'romantic friendship' during their life together and never openly criticized.

[33] Mr. Charles Ballantyne of Edinburgh communicated verbally to me many opinions on his friends John Gray and André Raffalovich in 1966.