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THE PHYSICIAN AND SEX

by HAVELOCK ELLIS

The subject of sex in its psychic and social bearings is so central, and of an importance now so widely recognized, if not indeed exaggerated, among the general public, that the medical man of today cannot fail to have it brought before him. He cannot, like his predecessors, conventionally ignore its existence, or feel that its recognition would be resented as impertinent or indecorous. Moreover, a knowledge confined to general anatomy, physiology, and pathology is now altogether inadequate.

My own opinion is in accord with these views. I have indeed long felt that medical education displays at this point a vacuum which is altogether lamentable. In my own medical training, which began half a century ago, the psychological aspects of

ing to do with morals or argue; he must consider good and advise him accordingly to moral and conventional, is a short-sighted consideration to many awkward positions, not seldom to a it is sought to cure. For it is the instinctive of the sexual impulsive nutritive impulse, that it involves another person. In the social sphere, into the sphere entitled to seek his own good, in any involves evil to other persons.

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Theodore Dreiser
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10¢

EDITORIAL

The American Spectator has no policy in the common sense of that word. It advocates no panaceas; it has no axes to grind; it has no private list of taboos. It offers an opportunity for the untrammelled expression of individual opinion, ignoring what is accepted and may be taken for granted in

misplaced reverence as the school-children of a century ago, whom it was sometimes considered indecent to instruct in so sexual a subject as botany.

Sexual psychology, normal and abnormal, as well as sexual hygiene, nowadays attracts a general interest and attention which before the present century were undreamed of. The young man of today is sometimes remarkably well informed in relation to the literature of sex, and the young woman of today often approaches these subjects in an inquiring spirit and with an absence of prudery which

the change in the moral standards of the modern physicians, with a full sense of responsibility, so openly publish advice in the public press, so very long ago they could give even in private. The large and splendid part of the work of the medical adviser in the present day, working for the welfare of the people, takes part in this

THE GENTEEL TRADITION IN SEX

by BRANCH CABELL

An author may have his hobby: and should the demented fellow elect (as Keats has approximately phrased it) to sway about upon his hobby-horse and think it Pegasus, there is no great harm done. I do not know that upon the whole he is much happier for having this sort of equestrianism observed and applauded by the cognoscenti who collect books and esteem especially those first editions wherefrom has been removed no one of the misprints. I am sure that an author is often thrust into a most delicate predicament when he finds his books valued not only for their typographical errors but for still other qualities wherein he does not desire pre-eminence.

For do you but observe his plight! All courtesy is a draft to be honored in its own coinage. He could prefer, certainly, some compliment of a more congenial and more rational nature. Even so, the applause has a pleasant ring; and the applauder seems sincere. Not every one of us is ready in such circumstances to snub adulation, as did Wellington so perfectly, with the crisp reply, "Don't be a fool!" In fact, to make just that reply to a dissertation upon one's own genius would appear uncivil; and yet one really is tempted to make it, now and again, to the undesired disciple.

I voice this plaint because when some years ago the Society for the Suppression of Vice first brought me before the public as the writer of "an obscene and lewd and lascivious book," its well-meant endeavors established me in far too wide estimation as an approved pundit of pornography. The legend lives on, in astounding tenaciousness, without requiring any least further nurture; and I still suffer from the admirers thus attracted. This very morning, for example, I received a letter from yet another "book collector." After the customary encomia of my writings, which ordinarily bespeak the asking of a more or less unreasonable favor by return post, he requests me to select from my complete works "the most lively passage of an erotic nature" from which a drawing could be made to serve as his book plate.

It is not in the least his fault that, about the corners, my mouth is still faintly frothing. The man honestly intends a compliment; he writes too as a person of fair culture; and yet, somehow, to find my books regarded as a thesaurus of all fornications does not seem to me utterly complimentary.

I have not ever learned to think of myself as a connoisseur of copulation: and when I receive, as I continue to receive, some dozen letters a month (the most of them from professed "book collectors") fiddling with this eternal stale theme, I do not love all my professed admirers. I love, rather, the first Duke of Wellington.

It would be well, I reflect, could these morons and young bitches take coition more quietly. I admit, though, that this task has always baffled Americans as a nation, and that American literature in especial has remained singularly unaffected by the persiflage of the drawing-room. That seems particularly true to-day when, under the lime-light of a perfervid and defiant "frankness," the genital organs are being put through their limited repertory in so very many quite inexplicably popular books. The shrill emphasis and the visible excitement of the author hereabouts (just as formerly did the abashed utterance and the virginally vague hints of the author hereabouts) really do lead you to surmise that his social advantages have, in either instance, been somewhat restricted. In neither instance, I mean, is it in the least the tone of the contemporaneous gentry, to whom these matters have always seemed merely amusing.

One encounters nowadays so many scathing dicta as to "the genteel tradition" in American letters that I rather hesitate to suggest that the true "genteel tradition" has at all times remained unrepresented there. I content myself with pointing out that the majority at any rate of our writers have been (to employ a quaintly old-fashioned term) not quite ladies and gentlemen. I say only that to speak of any sexual relationship has, I think, for this reason always flurried American writers, either to the extreme of regarding the matter as undiscussable, or to the other extreme of regarding coition as a very gravely important matter, such as well justified coarse speaking and a deal of heavy-handed sociology.

Yet all the while, I believe (but beyond doubt, during the last thirty-five years), their relatively civilized social betters, in unliterary drawing-rooms, have spoken of sex as a mildly pleasant joke and have continued to discuss its gymnastics in this particular aspect. Such, I can assure the literati, has for a long while been the attitude of the upper classes. That is the true "genteel tradition" as to all erotic matters; it is a tradition not yet represented in American letters; and it is also a tradition which causes me to fidget before those who gravely collect my books as erotica. I designed those books for quite other ends.