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D. H. Lawrence and the Homosexual Love

We moved across to the standing corn. The sun being mild, George had thrown off his hat, and his black hair was moist and twisted into confused half-curls. Firmly planted, he swung with a beautiful rhythm from the waist. On the hip of his belted breeches hung the scythestone; his shirt, faded almost white, was torn just above the belt, and showed the muscles of his back playing like lights upon the white sand of a brook. There was something exceedingly attractive in the rhythmic body. He was remarkably handsome. (*The White Peacock*, p. 72.)

I heard Trip barking, so I ran towards the pond. The punt was at the island, where from behind the bushes I could hear George whistling. I called to him, and he came to the water's edge half dressed. «Fetch a towel,» he called, «and come on.» I was back in a few moments, and there stood my Charon fluttering in the cool air. One good push sent us to the islet. I made haste to undress, for he was ready for the water, Trip dancing round, barking with excitement at his new appearance.

«He wonders what's happened to me,» he said, laughing, pushing the dog playfully away with his bare foot. Trip bounded back, and came leaping up, licking him with little caressing licks. He began to play with the dog, and directly they were rolling on the fine turf, the laughing, expostulating, naked man, and the excited dog, who thrust his great head on to the man's face, licking, and, when flung away, rushed forward again, snapping playfully at the naked arms and breasts. At last George lay back, laughing and panting, holding Trip by the two fore feet which were planted on his breast, while the dog, also panting, reached forward his head for a flickering lick at the throat pressed back on the grass, and the mouth thrown back out of reach. When the man had thus lain still for a few moments, and the dog was just laying his head against his master's neck to rest too, I called, and George jumped up, and plunged into the pond with me, Trip after us.

The water was icily cold, and for a moment deprived me of my senses. When I began to swim, soon the water was buoyant, and I was sensible of nothing but the vigorous poetry of action. I saw George swimming on his back laughing at me, and in an instant I had flung myself like an impulse after him. The laughing face vanished as he swung over and fled, and I pursued the dark head and the ruddy neck. Trip, the wretch, came paddling towards me, interrupting me; then all bewildered with excitement, he scudded to the bank. I chuckled to myself as I saw him run along, then plunge in and go plodding to George (p. 338).

George was floating just beside me, looking up and laughing.

We stood and looked at each other as we rubbed ourselves dry. He was well proportioned, and naturally of handsome physique, heavily limbed. He laughed at me, telling me I was like one of Aubrey Beardsley's long, lean ugly fellows. I referred him to many classic examples of slenderness, declaring myself more exquisite than his grossness, which amused him.

But I had to give in, and bow to him, and he took on an indulgent, gentle manner. I laughed and submitted. For he knew how I admired the noble,

white fruitfulness of his form. As I watched him, he stood in white relief against the mass of green. He polished his arm, holding it out straight and solid; he rubbed his hair into curls, while I watched the deep muscles of his shoulders, and the bands stand out in his neck as he held it firm.

He saw I had forgotten to continue my rubbing, and laughing he took hold of me and began to rub me briskly, as if I were a child, or rather, a woman he loved and did not fear. I left myself quite limply in his hands, and, to get a better grip of me, he put his arm round me and pressed me against him, and the sweetness of the touch of our naked bodies one against the other was superb. It satisfied in some measure the vague, indecipherable yearning of my soul; and it was the same with him. When he had rubbed me all warm, he let me go, and we looked at each other with eyes of still laughter, and our love was perfect for a moment, more perfect than any love I have known since, either for man or woman (p. 340).

«Well, that is a quotation from a novel, so must not be taken too literally as personal experience; yet nobody acquainted with Lawrence's methods will doubt that it was a personal experience any more than he would think it written by a man with no homosexual tendency.»

« . . . the publishing project (a new private edition of The Rainbow) was dropped, including that of Lawrence's strangely-titled essay on homosexuality, «The Goat and Compasses». which Heseltine unpardonably destroyed.»

From Richard Aldington: PORTRAIT OF A GENIUS, BUT . . . (The Life of D. H. Lawrence 1885—1930) (Pages 51 and 177/78).

Enquiry into Homosexual Offences in England

The names of the persons who have accepted invitations to serve on the committee of enquiry into homosexual offences have at last been announced, after a delay which suggests that there must have been many refusals. Responsible public opinion will mark the names of Mr. J. F. Wolfenden and others who have agreed to serve with him; they are men and women with a high sense of public duty. It is not their fault if the list contains no single name of a great influence in public life; collectively they are a good team, and they have it in their own power to be a strong one. Indeed they will need to be strong, for they are entering a field of enquiry in which prejudice is bitter; which is riddled with feelings—conscious and unconscious—of fear, hate and lust; and which abounds in all the obstacles of deceit and self-deceit. Accounts of the lives of homosexuals suggest that they are at best unhappy, and many people now question whether the law, in making them more miserable still, serves its basic purpose of protecting the young. If the committee can recommend changes which will, first, increase this protection—and so decrease the number of persons who in their turn instigate further