HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE?

one

AUGUST 1953

TWENTY FIVE CENTS

THE MATTACHINE SOCIETY

For information on forming and conducting discussion groups or organizing chapters in your city write:

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
AREA COUNCIL
(From Fresno Northward)
Post Office Box 851
Oakland 4, California

San Francisco Chapter
Post Office Box 259
San Francisco 1, California

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
AREA COUNCIL
(San Luis Obispo to Mexican Border)
Post Office Box 1925
Los Angeles 53, California

From other sections of the United States and Canada, address:
Secretary, The Mattachine Foundation, Post Office Box 1925
Los Angeles 53, California

(Paid Advertisement)

one

". . . a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one." Carlyle

Volume One Number Eight
August 1953

CONTENTS

Your Little Magazine Won't Last		*page 2*
I Can Spot One A Mile Off	*Ben Greer*	*page 6*
For Men Only?	*J. P.*	*page 9*
Reformer's Choice	*E. B. Saunders*	*page 10*
The Fay and Free Will	*Walter B.*	*page 13*
Dissentient	*W. K. N.*	*page 14*
Books	*Martin Block*	*page 15*
". . . without altering society."	*J. B. S.*	*page 18*
Hm?	*Pady Deux*	*page 19*
Letters		*page 20*

ONE, Incorporated, a non-profit corporation, is published monthly at twenty-five cents per copy, annual subscription two dollars in the United States and Canada, all other countries three dollars, for sealed first class in the United States three dollars. Publication Office: Post Office Box 5716, Los Angeles, 55, California. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts unless stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Copyright 1953 by ONE, Inc., Los Angeles, California.

REFORMER'S CHOICE:
Marriage License or Just License?

The following paper is, in the opinion of the editorial board, one of the most important which ONE has published. Its implications are staggering. The author(ess?) was little short of staggering, too, in the mild letter which accompanied this historic essay: "I hope the enclosed will not seem an impertinence." But on second thought, Writer Saunders, it is impertinent and exactly the type of impertinence all thinking persons and this magazine vitally need!

There is something terribly wrong in the reasoning behind the organization which calls itself the Mattachine Society. This applies also to the magazine ONE. It is true that in both the reader sees commendable unification, excellent anger and astonishing enthusiasm—yet a person comes away from them feeling uneasy. Can it really be as simple as all this? Does the answer lie in merely "all of us getting together"? A person wants to withdraw a bit from all this bouncing energy and mull over what he or she has heard. You review the prospectus of the Society and go through the back issues of the magazine and this uneasiness increases. Then you sit back and try to visualize our society as these well-meaning enthusiasts would have it. And suddenly you realize that their plans are impossible! They have missed one of their most essential points and committed a basic and staggering error.

It has to do with acceptance. The Society desires to win from society acceptance for the deviate. On the surface, this aim is certainly fine. Yet look at the tremendous change it implies! Nor is this reference to the change in the general prejudice. That is simple compared to the huge problem which acceptance for the deviate proposes.

Imagine that the year were 2053 and homosexuality were accepted to the point of being of no importance. Now, is the deviate allowed to continue his pursuit of physical happiness without restraint as he attempts to do today? Or is he, in this Utopia, subject to marriage laws? It is a pertinent question. For why should he be permitted permiscuity when those heterosexuals who people the earth must be married to enjoy sexual intercourse? The answer does not lie in the fact that the deviate cannot reproduce; this is irrelevant to

the effect upon society of his acceptance as a valuable citizen.

This effect would be one of immense consternation for it would be a legalizing of promiscuity for a special section of the population—which, incidentally, now begs for its rights on the very grounds that it desires the respectability and dignity of all other citizens. It is not likely that either of these would be attained by a lifting of legal sex restraints for this group alone. Actually such a change would loosen heterosexual marriage ties, too, and make even shallower the meaning of marriage as we know it. It cannot be seriously claimed that this would be a good thing. The problem of marriage versus promiscuity is an old one, still moot and fondly dwelt upon by the dissatisfied. Yet for heterosexuals, at least, there yet has not been found a better arrangement on which to base the family unit. Heterosexual marriage must be protected. The acceptance of homosexuality without homosexual marriage ties would be an attack upon it.

Then let us look at homosexual marriage. Here indeed is a dubious proposition. Available statistics do not indicate that most or even a large percentage of deviates want a binding and legal marriage. Undoubtedly if it were possible there would be more who attempted it and many who might make it work. Yet today, even among the most stable and respectable of homosexuals, there are very few who have lived together an appreciable time. It is true that social pressure makes success in such marriages highly unlikely. Yet one would think that in a movement demanding acceptance for this group, legalized marriage would be one of its primary issues. What a logical and convincing means of assuring society that they are sincere in wanting respect and dignity! But nowhere do we see this idea prominently displayed in either Society publications or the magazine ONE. It is dealt with in passing and dismissed as all-right-for-those-who-want-it. But it is not incorporated as a keystone in Society aims—which it must be before such a movement can hope for any success.

Yet even were homosexuals generally eager for legalized marriage there would appear many, many very human problems which only generations of living would effectively resolve. For instance, should the Mr. and Mrs. idea be retained? If so, what legal developments would come of the objection by the "Mr." that "Mrs." doesn't contribute equally? In heterosexual marriage, the wife has the general drop on the husband in that she bears children hence needn't punch a timeclock as nature apparently decrees he must. Will there be a new law forbidding one person to be "kept" by another then? And what of adoptions? Must the State be forced to give over a child to a pair of Lesbians merely because they are a legally married couple and have identical rights to childless heterosexual couples? What effect would a home with both parents of the same sex have upon masses of children? Or would the time

come when homosexuals would be forced to care for children as part of their social duties? How many homosexuals would actually want to bring up a child?

But perhaps most important is the fact that the concept of homosexual marriage cannot come into being without a companion idea: homosexual adultery. To those living adulterous lives since discovering themselves to be deviates, this comes as a ludicrous suggestion. Yet to heterosexuals it is of great moment and quite to the point. Equal rights mean equal responsibilities: equal freedoms mean equal limitations.

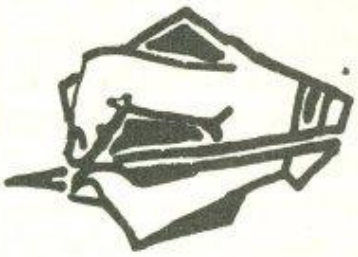
Then this acceptance will cause as great a change in homosexual thinking as in heterosexual—perhaps greater. No more sexual abandon: imagine! **Me, married?** Yes, a great change in the deviate himself, yet nothing in the literature of the Mattachine Society and little of ONE is devoted to initiating and exploring this idea of **necessary homosexual monogamy.** The idea seems stuffy and hide-bound. We simply don't join movements to limit ourselves! Rebels such as we, demand freedom! But actually we have a greater freedom now (sub rosa as it may be) than do heterosexuals and any change will be to lose some of it in return for respectability. Are we willing to make the trade? From the silence of the Society on the subject, perhaps not.

It is unfortunate that enthusiasm demands more action than thought, and that necessity often makes us run wildly before we've decided exactly where we're running (although we may be quite sure of what we're running from). Commendable as the Society is, it appears that there is yet to be conceived in its prospectus a concrete plan for the homosexual's place in society. Until we know exactly where we're going, and the stuffy and hide-bound—who can help us exceedingly—might not be willing to run along just for the exercise. When one digs, it must be to make a ditch, a well, a trench: **something!** Otherwise all of this energetic work merely produces a hole. Any bomb can do that.

E. B. Saunders

ONE, by its very nature often discusses illegal sexual practices as well as the legal rights of those who commit them. Being mutually connotative, it is nigh impossible to separate the two. This, however, is not to be construed as an implicit approval of criminal acts, nor as an incitement of others to such behavior. If ONE had such an anti-social attitude, it would not devote most of its pages to demands for legal reform. It is true that precise definition of terms like "criminal sex act" are debatable not only over coffee but in the highest courts in the world. Yet, until the nature of a sex crime is so defined as to most benefit society, ONE wishes to clearly state that its aims do not include converting any man, woman or child to ways alien to their natures nor does is condone any behavior which is actually "against nature" and not to the best interests of society.

Letters to the Editor, October 1953



Gentlemen:

E. B. Saunders has managed to drag an eye-catching red herring across the pages of ONE. I refer, of course, to the verbage on Homosexual Marriages.

His entire argument rests upon this statement culled from the second paragraph, second column, page 10 August issue of ONE. ". . . why should he (the homosexual) be permitted promiscuity when those heterosexuals who people the earth must be married to enjoy sexual intercourse?"

Ignoring the misunderstanding of who people the earth, let us look at two things: what are we trying to do in Mattachine and is marriage our answer?

What are we trying to do in Mattachine? At the risk of prolonging this foolishness I will try to answer. The American homosexual should be working for acceptance of social valuable sex deviates, not only his sex pattern. In short, the Mattachine should be eager to secure at first a sex law fair to all people. France, Switzerland and Scandinavia have done this.

The Kinsey studies are not alone in showing that sexual matters — inside or outside the marriage institution — are personal matters, one which can not be solved by a pragmatic approach alone. There is no sexual right, wrong or normal. There are, of course, unsocial sex acts.

Under the present legal sex restrictions homosexuals are not the only criminals. Even man and wife, in many instances, violate the sex code. Under sensible sex laws which protect the young, the unwilling, and the public sense of decency, personal sex matters will be placed in their proper place. At that time the deviate may be able to evolve institutions which suit his needs. I doubt if marriage will do that.

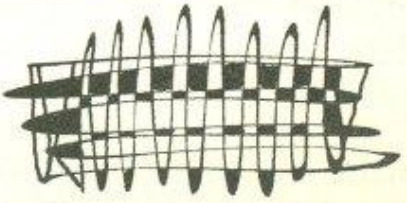
What is marriage? It is an heterosexual concept buttressed and blessed by the Church and State since man emerged out of the miasma of pre-history. It is based on protection of the young and the mate; it is based on the necessities of property inheritance; and it is founded in a mass of taboo which no one fully understands. Additional concepts of home, family, and mother support it.

In those countries where sex laws are sane, marriage still exists, home is sacred, and mother is honored. It is believed that sex deviates must be protected. Nothing could be more honorable, more sacred than the preservation of integrity.

One more matter before I close. The acts of promiscuity and adultery involve broken vows of faithfulness or celibacy. Here the crime is not against society necessarily. It is self failure. Strict marriage laws do not contain the answer. Help and understanding are needed in this matter.

Berkeley, Calif.

Letters to the Editor,
October 1953



Gentlemen:

Brother! E. B. Saunders certainly reached when he wrote "Reformer's Choice: Marriage License or Just License." Why must somebody always be looking for even worse complications than are inherent in a situation?

The questions raised by legalized status of "married" homosexuals are rather like the speculations which arise in supposing that, tomorrow, all humans will suddenly become giants, growing to heights of thirty feet or more. Will we then be required to tear down all our houses and build new ones, or can we

simply raise the roof? In the year 2053, he asks, are we to be allowed to continue our pursuit of physical happiness without restraint as we attempt to do today? Well, why the hell not? What is this tendency on the part of some people to seek more and more restrictions?

In the first place, Mr. Saunders assumes that homosexuals are fighting for acceptance as "normals." I, for one, am not. I consider myself **abnormal** in **one** respect; namely, a misdirected sex-drive. (Here let me assure you that I consider myself a well-adjusted one. I like being what I am.

As an abnormal whose subnormality seems permanent, I do not seek acceptance as a "normal," but rather, simple justice as what I am. We do not legislate prison terms for persons with only one leg, or who wear glasses, or who have freckles. But for heaven's sake, neither do we hope to "accept" them by legislating two-legged ability for one-legged men, or perfect vision for the weak-eyed, or clear skins for the freckled!

And part of the abnormality (or is this abnormal?) for most homosexuals is their seeking many companions. They would fight enforced monogamy tooth and nail; if not in the open against the proposed legislation. then simply by ignoring it (breaking the law) after it was passed.

Incidentally, listen to Saunders' references to promiscuousness: "For why should he (the homosexual) be **permitted** promiscuity when those heterosexuals who people the earth must be married to enjoy sexual intercourse?" (Oh, must they?) And again: "It would be a legalizing of promiscuity for a special section of the population." Is Mr. Saunders a "normal" married man? His references to "promiscuity" seem to contain more than a little envy. And if promiscuity is so universal and so desirable, it must be natural, and laws will not remove it; nor should we want it removed.

If marriage is desired by a man and woman, it is accessible. But no man or woman is really held to that marriage by the laws which sanction it, not if he or she really wants to escape it. The laws are a hand-me-down from ancient religious rites. And we have retained them for even gentler reasons. First, what we choose to call "civilization" is the direction we adhere to at the moment, and the basic unit of civilization is the family. So it is for the children that marriage seems really important. Basically, marriage is, at best, a "challenge to nature," as has been pointed out before my time.

Since no man has ever had a child by another man, and no woman conceived from another woman, I see no reason to try to legislate lasting mutual love on the part of any two homosexuals. If they are compatible enough to live together and that is their desire, they'll do it without attempts at legal enforcement. If they proved incompatible, or lost interest in each other, they would seek companions outside the law just as they do now without a law. Except that, with the proposed laws, it would then be called adultery, desertion and divorce. Mr. Saunders is simply proposing a means of naming the things we do now and would continue to do.

Mr. Saunders thinks that legalized marriage should be one of our primary issues as a group seeking acceptance. "What a convincing means of assuring society that we are sincere in wanting respect and dignity," he says. Balderdash! "Marriage" between

two men is, in the eyes of society, the ultimate manifestation of what it considers the "mental illness" in homosexuality. Indeed, when it is called "marriage," I agree with them.

As for children, the inability to have them is part of the price we pay for our abnormality. Most of us accept that. I have never heard a homosexual express any desire to adopt a child. How damn fool can you get?

Mr. Saunders' first premise is, I repeat, miles off. Namely, that we seek acceptance as normals. Aliens are excluded from the presidency of the U. S. because they are aliens. They accept that. On the other hand, they are not imprisoned for being aliens. They are accepted, **as such,** and allowed to do any other work of which they are capable. So should we be.

One of the fundamental complaints of some modern philosophers is that Western man is losing his individuality, and turning his soul over to Organizations, Institutions, Groups and Cliques. It is not my intention to further this process, as a homosexual or otherwise, by seeking new laws to govern me, nor even by seeking new tags and labels for more detailed categorizing. The only labels I will submit to are "human," "American," and "male." These are self-evident. Any tags beyond those are pure speculation. Simply "getting together" with other homosexuals is not my goal in following the Mattachine. I could do that by joining the American Legion. "Rebels such as we, demand freedom!" jibes Mr. Saunders. He's right. Furthermore, humanity would be better off if more people were rebellious enough to demand more freedm. How good **are** our beliefs and codes and morals and ethics if we must forever cry for laws to force us to keep faith with them?

Incidentally, if the efficacy of present marriage laws is any indication of the need for further ones, let me add here that I have been married for four years, now, to a normal girl. **She** has accepted me—no, even **loves** me—problem that I am, and I love her. Unfortunately there are certain basic difficulties involved which may even lead us to divorce, one day. If they do, it will not be because we do not love each other, and it will be tragic for both of us. Despite that fact, marriage laws cannot change a fact of nature.

R. H. Karcher

Must desire
Be divorced
From similar deeds;
Dreams
Be alien
To occurance?
And thinking thus—
Hoping and dreaming—
Wherefore not the deeds?
Is fantasy so clear
Of conscience
But fact so foul?

You expect much of love
To bless its birth
Yet deny it life.

—C.O.