

Every year as Capping comes around the inevitable happens; a greater or lesser controversy arises in the University and in the city about the state of student humour. This year even the police were called upon to make a study of our annual version of "Laughs." which, we may take it they did with dutiful thoroughness. It is true that throughout the world students are traditionally the objects of a certain amount of public disfavor for activities which fail to conform strictly to the standards of the average citizen. These activities, more often than not are of a radical nature and fly in the face of social and political norms. As such they are to be welcomed as signs that students are thinking independently, if perhaps a little wildly, and willing to act accordingly. Usually a synthesis is arrived at. Society gradually comes to accept what was once considered heresy, and students, as they grow older, become the conservative opponents of the next generation.

However at the present moment no such process is evident in our universities. We are a singularly conservative body of students, in politico as in almost everything else. We tire proving most Infertile mound for new and progressive ideas. Our conformity to generally accepted norms is strikingly evident We are placidly satisfied with society which has little need to brand our non-existent reforming zeal as rebellion And so the bourgeois content themselves with maligning our annual Capping orgies.

In fact they have no real right to do so because in keeping with our conscious or unconscious desire to conform we are modeling our humour on the standards of the people. Same 18,000 of them buy Capping Book and find in it what they expect and want to find namely what they already find in "Humour." "Man." "Burlesque." and countless other such "edifying" journals.

(The reference in this as in the first paragraph is to the Otago University "Capping Book" which was this year made the subject of a police enquiry.)

It starts even at the children's level with comes that appeal to the same sentiments. "Honi Soit." the student newspaper of Sydney University calls all this "seemed hand prostitution."

Second-Hand Prostitution.

"I go down to a magazine stall. What do I see? Sixty-seven varieties of Love and Romance comics I pick one up and flick it open a young girl is in the wirle arms of her man I drop the come a Young couple walk up buy a few shillings worth and wander off arm in arm.

"I'm waiting for my tram in front of me is a hording advertising an electric razer what do! see A half-clad woman appealing to me to buy it.

"I pick up paper again. Turn to the news section. Record number of rapes this week. Shocking rise in sex crimes All high in prostitution.

"What is this prostitution? The selling of your body to another We all know what that means. But are there grades of prostituion? is there such a thing as prostitution at second hand?

"When our social elite visit night-clubs what do they go to see? The costumes?... When those kids bought the comics what were they learning to look for? The moral at the end? . . . What has a beautiful woman to do with an electric razer?

[unclear: K Mervyn Taylor Crestion Wood Engraving]

We are pleased to publish this thought-provoking article originally written for "Critic" of Otago University by Paul Oestreicher, an honours Political Science student born in Germany in dignity emended form the article has now been reprinted for "Salient" at Otago. He join the author in inviting critical comment but ask correspondents to keep to the issues raised with reasonable brevity.

—Ed.

"Sure we have second hand prostitution. Everywhere cheap sex is on sale "And how does it the up with first hand prostitution rape and sex crimes? The answer is in *conditioning*. Thrust any idea long enough at people ant they will come to accept It. The idea being thrust: at us is that womankind is only an instrument for the satisfaction of men's appetiles. Woman's dignity the dignity of motherhood has been ignored and her other qualities kept well in the background.

"And what has happended? We have accepted these standards women included and our behaviour has

suffered accordingly."

No Worse, No Better

So much for the opinions of "Honi Soit." let "Salient" continue the story Sex, in the world around us has become thoroughly degraded. Our own attitude to it is, by and large, an accurate cross section of the attitude of society. We can assure Mr. Citizen when he becomes indignant that we are no worse than he is. We can suberly assure ourselves that we are no better.

What then is wring with our attitude to sex and our resulation; behaviour? There is no one simple answer. But that makes a solution no less worth striving for. Let it be and first of all that to each of us as individuals on will analys be to a certain extent a personal problem calling for a personal solution. But whether we become frustrated neurotics or not in seeking this solution is of great consequence to us and to society. Our own attitude will largely determine our emotional health (our physical mental and spiritual health no less) and ultimately it will determine the health of society. This is not true only of our attitude to sex, but it is with this that we are here mainly concerned. Let us never accept the all too prevalent attitude that "what I do is my personal affair and nobody else's business."

Sex and Sin.

Those of us who are Christians will agree that all our troubles began with the fall, or original sin. For reasons that we have no time to discuss our Victorian grout-grandparents got horribly mixed up between sex and sin until the two became practically synonymous. And so there came about a social system in which sex became tabu and children were imported from stork-land. The human body became an object not to be gazed upon, and beauty something not to be sought after, not merely physical beauty, but all beauty, in art architecture and the daily objects of living. Repression was considered virtuous and just as female bodies were strangled with whale-bone, so male and female emotions were strangled by the demands of society. The founders of modern psychology, at the beginning of this century, and writers of European fiction who began to understand them, made known the disastrous effects of Victorianism. However in that puritanical attitude of one hundred (and less) years ago there was much that we must admire, strength, self-discipline, hard work and courage . . . the qualities that our pioneers brought to these shores and with which they built the nation we live in. Their virtues they put to good use; even the faults of their age they, turned to good ends by establishing a stable and economically sound society. That society we have inherited its virtues and its faults. However, in the process of inheritance we have largely lost the virtues. For the faults the pioneers ore hardly to blame. Their Victorian background stood them in good stead in creating a society necessarily based on utility. They had no understanding of aesthetic ideals nor would they have had time to cultivate them. They built houses to live in not avenues of villas to stroll through in the moon-light, utility structures to worship in, not cathedrals to glorify God in the beauty of holiness. Their morals stood them in good stend they had little time to entertain their feelings.

" not to be gazed upon"

However no society can remain a pioneer society. Nor did ours. Yet the standards of a pioneering community were the only ones we had to fall back upon. Europeans have been able to build on Victorianism by going back to a history" rich in culture-patterns and "Weltan-schauungen" (ways of life). Even their success in recreating harmonious social living is very dubious, and in the light of that, our failure is hardly surprising. As a community we have practically no aesthetic standards or artistic feeling. Our rows of wooden box-houses or brick (government) doll-houses stand as ample testimony. Our ghastly monotonous drawing rooms are rivaled only by our stolid social conformity to what our neighbour does. Our barbarous attitude to alcohol is rivaled by only one thing . . our attitude to sex. All this constitutes our Victorian hangover.

Tabu Complex.

Before we consider any remedy to this alleged sex-barbarism let us first try to define it as best we can in our definition several words come to mind, all springing from the Victorian "tabu complex." I am of course

fully aware that this idea goes as far back as Eve's fig-leaf (original sin) and that our forefathers took their religion very seriously indeed and based their morality upon it. So of course should we. However we have no grounds, those of us who endeavour to implement Christian ethics, to believe that puritanism is inherent in them. True Christianity in no way implies that sex is sinful, what it does claim is that it can be and very often is sinfully abused. Again what it does not teach is that sexual sin is worse than any other sort of sin. What Christianity does regard as sexual sin we shall return to later. Suffice to say at this point that Society as a whole neither accepts Christian standards nor does it any longer hold to Victorian ethical standards. The result is the aforementioned hangover. We have no very specific ideals of moral conduct, but only a vague acceptance of a social pattern established in the 19th century, a pattern that is now an anachronism based on no convictions, religious or otherwise. Inherent in it is a state of complete moral anarchy. Our generation has no clearly defined direction and so its moral base is non-existent.

Segregation.

The most clearly definable feature of our sex patterns I have decided to call "sex apartheid" (with no apology to Dr. Malan). This condition is not always apparent to New Zealanders so much has it become engrained in New Zealand life. To the European coming to New Zealand it is most striking and depressing. The normal companionship between men and women in society which seems natural to them is singularly missing here. The symptoms are many: rooted fears of secondary co-education; the stag line (a boorish phenomenon); segregation in social life at parties and elsewhere, with women in one huddle and men in another; men in one part of a tram [*unclear*: car] women in another; segregation even in lecture-rooms: the examples are endless. All of them illustrate in part the attitude, generally (unconsciously) held, that only for sexual intercourse at some level (In its widest sense . . . not only a specific act) can men and women actually be together with propriety. This is, it is true, an over-simplification but in general it holds good. Never again after childhood are men and women quite at ease with one another in New Zealand society. It is not generally accepted that they are co-partners in the social activity of living together. This very evidently need not be so, for as soon as circumstances permit these artificial inhibitions are quickly jettisoned, sometimes in a spirit of rebellion (conscious or unconscious) . . . (the result being for example what is found back-stage at capping) and at other times with a sober realisation that men and women can easily get on together without strain or emotional complications when the environment does not militate against this, as it usually does in our student community. Examples of how things ought to be are not uncommon, and are usually the result of men and women being brought together by their work, in laboratories, in (some) clubs and societies and on and behind stage in dramatic productions, which are perhaps more conducive than anything else to the dropping of false prudery.

Those students who have been to Congress or similar student conferences are perhaps the only ones who realise fully what the dropping of meaningless conventions really achieves and how much more valuable social intercourse can become. No longer is a woman merely an object of sexual interest to be cultivated in polite society with nothing much more in mind than the anticipated evening's enjoyment when the polite society has dispersed or been left behind. She becomes a friend with similar interests and often with stimulating ideas, a friend whose companionship can be shared within a large like-thinking social group. There is nothing exclusive about such friendship; it is a community friendship as well as a personal one in the whole of life, not only in its sexual aspect, are men and women complementary. Within such companionship there is plenty of room for romance and Love-making (of which more later).

Yes, You May Laugh!

Most of us will not admit that one can behave naturally (I acknowledge the ambiguity of this word) and yet keep within the bounds of propriety. Capping excesses are witness to this, for in these, propriety is most certainly abandoned, usually with the help of alcohol. Yet it is clear to some of us that this need not be so in the completely free atmosphere of Congress where there are literally no social or moral restrictions, the result is not moral collapse, but the exact reverse. I do not mean that people's morals suddenly improve, but rather that honesty replaces social hypocrisy. No longer is sex a subject not fit to be discussed in mixed society, or even in polite un-mixed society, as is elsewhere the case. Sex is not given any undue importance, but takes its rightful place beside politics, art, religion and any other subject. No longer are jokes which may contain some sexual allusion considered as dirty. Jokes which are really pornographic are not appreciated and are likely to meet with the sort of reception usually given to outrageous puns in fact on the one occasion during a recent Congress when, as a result of a small group's attitude the tone of a party's conversation did descend to a pornographic

level, more than half of the company, and they were by no means prudes, walked resolutely out. Filth has little chance of success when sex is the subject of frank and open discussion.

One of our tasks, then, is to create an atmosphere making a natural and harmonious social coexistence of the sexes possible. Society being prejudiced as it is, this will be no easy task. First of all we shall have to overcome our own prejudices. Once we learn to regard women (or men as the case may be) as not only attractive potential woo-mates but also as ordinary fellow beings in the process of living, we shall have got a long way. If we get to know each other at all levels, the sexual not excluded, we shall be much better fitted to make an ultimate choice of a marriage partner. Whatever sort of home we may come from, we must surely realise that married life consists of a lot more than sex in carrying through this desirable reformation we should not fear to be considered rebels.

Social Monasticism.

We can start with little things such as consciously abolishing class room segregation and conversing with those of the opposite sex around us; sitting down at a table with two strange girls (I speak as a man; the converse applies) eating in the cafeteria and presuming that they can make intelligent conversation, not necessarily, to start off with, about the ethics of contraception; I advocate good taste evolution, not revolution! We can aim to persuade college authorities in our monistic hostels to allow much more freedom. After all why cannot students bring their girl-friends home to supper at colleges after an evening out? Mixed supper parties of from two to any number, and not controlled by the clock, would greatly help to civilize college life and raise the tone of conversation and individual behaviour, which in general is still at an adolescent level, Female gossip circles and male slag parties will not die out but they most certainly do not help to develop social graces or individual personality. Female intrusion into male college dining-halls would be looked upon to-day as sacrilege . . . custom dies hard, even when "has no sound foundation in the present. There are many such written and unwritten rules which do more harm than good.

I am fully aware that many of us prefer things as they are because we fear any complications. Our boorish social monasticism is most convenient. We are too shortsighted to see that the sooner the sexes learn to understand one another, and to face up to the problems that may arise, the less serious will later complications, emotional, physical and social, be. It is easy to see why women are not allowed in men's colleges and vice versa (except at special times in an artificial atmosphere) The powers that be fear firstly possible sexual immorality and secondly what people might say. And yet men if they like, can stay out all night and women are given late leave. Rules preventing natural social intercourse in colleges will certainly not reduce immorality. No Wellington winter can cool young blood! Students are much less likely to go to bed together in their college rooms than to follow cupid into Kelburn Park. Our elders should realise that sound principles, not closed doors, are the only aids to moral behaviour.

Dating.

In our habits of "dating." If I may use an Americanism, and our attitudes to it we have also much to learn. We are apt to monopolise each other most unfairly. When a woman has been out a few times with one man she is frequently "stuck" and can look forward to few other invitations. The man will be landed "with her, and almost get a guilt complex in the process of shaking her off . . . and so a happy friendship is often spoilt. We cannot however really eliminate our dating tangles until we abolish "apartheid." Only then will we date naturally and just as we feel inclined within a large circle of good friends, and also outside it. There will be no sexual-undertone in every invitation, to be weighed and considered, and discussed ad nauseum by every girl with a dozen others in hostel bathrooms, bedrooms and dining-halls. I remind our readers again at this point, that I am not painting a Utopian scene, but aspiring for a state of affairs that is regarded as normal by European students. Of course all this would not work here at once. Attitudes are not easily eradicated . . . but they can be. As things are to-day the sexes have, very little chance of getting to know each other in a natural environment only children, who have spent their lives in occluded boarding or day either shun sex or dive in and hope for the best, with disastrous results.

Ignorance.

So far, I have spoken of sex in terms of social relations. I shall now briefly treat it as a branch of human

knowledge, in that knowledge we are, I believe, as a national society and as a student community, pitifully ignorant. This is not true of us all but of a large proportion, particularly women. I have this, apart from my own observation, on the authority of a lecturer teaching the rudiments of physiology to one of our faculties. We know much more of any number of abstract sciences and humanities than about the functioning and care of our own bodies and emotional make-ups. The reason is once more mainly our tabu complex. The adequate education we should have obtained at school we did not obtain. It has been left to our parents (often not more enlightened than general opinion and no less prudish) and finally to ourselves. How many of us would blush to be found reading Havelock Ellis, van der Veide or any other good author on sex? How many have such books on our shelves? Some of us it is true. How many would be prepared to discuss their contents as they would discuss any other scientific book? The ignorance we suffer under is one contributing factor to such sexual immorality as there is among us. Sound knowledge is at least one counter, if not a decisive one, to unsound behaviour.

Sex in Art

And now some words of our attitude to sex in art which boils down to our attitude to the human body. No longer do we believe that to gaze upon it is sinful, or rather we have concluded that it is a most desirable "naughtiness": one that is exploited by advertisers and producers of cheap literature to arouse our erotic senses. Bikini-culture is how I define it. The bathing costume, so named, is its ultimate symbol. The removal of everything . . . but is calculated to heighten a feeling of sexual strain and unnaturariness: to make sex appear as forbidden fruit (hidden behind two or is it three, triangles of cloth). Such immodest antics do nothing to beautify the body but a great deal to befoul the mind. An anecdote known by the author to be true will suffice to point the moral I have in mind. A Scandinavian girl, spending her holidays far south of her homeland, arrived at an open-air swimming pool, stripped nearby, and dived in as had been her custom at home. Scandalised bathers of her own sex (I take it the men were lapping it up) warned her that she would be arrested if she did not wear a bathing suit. So shocked was she by this, to her immoral attitude, that she never went swimming again during her whole holiday. I do not advocate nudism, but that Scandinavian morality on this point is sounder than ours I do not doubt. We have a long way to go before we reach that stage, in this we are not alone among the nations. However we would do well to cultivate a Scandinavian state of mind even though we cannot yet emulate Scandinavian customs, I have not said much directly of sex or the human body, in art. It is evident however that we should realise, that the artist, sculptor or photographer is not a pornographic polluter of morals but rather one helping society to regain a healthy aesthetic taste for beauty. Needless to say not all such art modern or otherwise, succeeds. When it does, we need not be ashamed to hang it on our walls.

"Le Baiser" —Rodin.

Personal Ethics.

I have spoken of sex in a social context and suggested some remedies. I now move on to discuss personal sexual ethics for until we get our ideas on that subject straight, no amount of social reform will do us any good. We each and every one of us ought to have standards on which to base our conduct. Through little fault of our own most of us lack such standards. Society does not and is in no condition to provide them. Watered down Victorian puritanism is no guide for any of us. The decision as to how to conduct our own sex relations falls on our own shoulders.

Marriage.

A minority among us can find standards, not ready made, but inherent in our religious principles. To this group I shall return later. Most of us are guided by little more than social convention, family background, personal inhibition and our innate sense of decency. How far do they get us? I don't know. I believe that, religious principles apart, nothing but sound common sense based on adequate knowledge of sex and of the needs of society will give any individual an adequate solution. The knowledge of sex required is more than technical physiological data, but involves an understanding of the physical, emotional and psychological effect

of sexual relationships on members of one's own and the other sex. Such knowledge will, I believe, confirm our instinctive belief, that puritanism, i.e. virtual abstention through repression, is likely to lead to more harm than good. It will also show us that complete license is disastrous from more than one point of view. There is a middle way we must determine for ourselves. Personal factors aside, a knowledge of social needs in our community will teach us to respect the institution of marriage. When we do consider personal factors, that respect will be strengthened. The Communists tried to abolish marriage after the revolution as un-natural, but soon learnt their error. And so in our personal conduct we must set in such a way that marriage is safeguarded; those of us who are married by making a success of our marriage (the "how" of which is not within the scope of this article) and those who are not by doing everything to prepare for a sound marriage, and nothing to disrupt its future basis, in society or between two people.

Sexual Intercourse.

This means to me among other things respecting the act of sexual intercourse as one to be entered into only in marriage, for that act does in fact constitute the central act of marriage and is of course, much more than something purely sexual. The argument that previous experience in intercourse will be of benefit in future marriage has been, I believe, clearly shown to be invalid.

How much sexual experience, short of intercourse, each of us is to regard as desirable and legitimate before marriage must be a matter entirely for the individual conscience. But conscience, if not firmly controlled by reasoned principles, is most pliable, very much like a rubber band, it will stretch. Our principles we must seek for ourselves, remembering always to respect (particularly if we are men) the principles of those who give us their friendship and trust in sexual relations two persons must always grant each other the power of veto. Human beings must always retain our respect and must never become mere instruments of our desire or of our experimentation in human relationships. Respect between the sexes, established in the normal course of social activity deepened by closer mutual understanding on matters other than sex will greatly help to make sexual relations what both partners feel they ought to be. Never should attitudes be hushed up until after sexual relations between two people are under way. A previous airing will by no means spoil the pleasure charm and great joy of the romance may follow.

Indiscriminate Wooing.

I condemn outright those many among us who observing superficial conventions only, are willing and desirous to engage in large scale indiscriminate wooing and petting. Sad to say there are many, and yet it is surprising that there are not more. The contemporary world is in a complete moral turmoil with no absolute standards in anything. Some of us are victims of this moral nihilism, which is not only a sign of a society without a universally accepted religion, but also of one that has abandoned reason, or natural law, and so thrown over what separates man from the animals. All the universe is governed by laws in respect to his conduct, man has the privilege to determine what his own laws shall be if he fails to do this, or makes his laws unwisely, he will inevitably come in conflict with the laws governing all matter, the natural laws, which Christians believe are augmented but never contradicted by the laws of God.

When recently Europeans requested Japanese authorities to segregate the sexes in a public bathing pool the proprietor complied by lying a string across the middle!

About These Christians.

So finally something about these Christians and their attitude to sex. Certain things they all have in common: others they do not share. They all believe that Christ demands certain standards of behaviour from his

followers, and furthermore that if these people are really determined to follow Him. He will enable them to do so. I count myself lucky to be one of them, and yet not for a moment can I deny that religion must take its share of the blame for the trouble society is in. Christianity, interpreted as it has been by fallible and sinful human beings, has often in fact, been misinterpreted. The suppressive imposition by Christians of puritanical standards on all alike, whether their faith called them to accept these standards or not has understandably made many enemies of religion which to them has come to mean not the freely accepted faith which it must be but a moral straight-jacket. Those of us who are Christians have no right to demand our standards from others. We can merely demonstrate their rightness by our own conduct and by reasoned arguments in their defence. God's laws are never in conflict with human common sense, with the rightful demands of society or with the physical and psychological laws governing our bodies and minds. If we follow God we are also acting as reasonable creatures, even though sometimes we must follow when we have not yet understood the reasonableness of God's demands in such cases particularly, it is preposterous to expect others to follow our standard because our God demands it of us. We must all carefully examine our own standards to discover whether they really do correspond to Christ's will for us as individuals and as a group. Those of us belonging to the Roman Catholic Church will be able to accept the precepts that the Church teaches us for we believe that the Church expresses the true will of God. Those of us not within the Roman Communion are thrown much more upon ourselves. Through prayer, Scripture and the opinions of our Christian cum we must determine what is God's will for us. Some of us still clinging to a narrow Victorian conception of ethics, to the extent that we even disapprove of will have to think again in terms of Christ's demands on us to-day as useful members of modern society. Others among us will have to realise that our freedom has been abused and that Christ demands self-discipline which we have failed hitherto to exercise. This discipline does not consist of suppression but of joyful obedience to His standards. Even the best of Christians are well aware of their inadequate conduct but once their standard is determined they can hold firmly to their convictions which are more binding than the conclusions of human reason alone and which provide an absolute standard.

Both Christians and non-Christians should realise that Christianity does not conflict with modern science and psychology and that properly understood. Its teaching has much to say on the subject of sex that is both wise and enlightened. Sex for from being taboo to Christians is for at least should be held by them to be one of God's finest gifts neither to be hidden under a bushel nor to be vulgarly abused.

Finally

I have considered some of our social habits and personal attitudes in relation to sex. Of necessity I have had to make broad *[unclear: generalisations]* and many oversimplifications, otherwise the length of the article would have made its publication impossible. I therefore ask my readers to forgive any apparent minor distortions of the situation as they see it for these could have been avoided only by discussion of the finer points arising from my various opinions, and by noting numerous exceptions to my suppositions. I also remind my readers if such a re-miner is necessary, that all opinions expressed in this article are simply these of one student who will gladly submit himself to criticism from any number of others. If these opinions stimulate thought on a very important subject they have achieved their purpose.

Remember finally these four pleas arising from what has gone before:—

- That there be less hypocrisy in society a society which for example tacitly condones abortion while it self-righteously rejects the unmarried mother often bravely facing the consequences of her actions.
- That we should promote a more harmonious healthy and natural social life in our student community.
- That there should be a greater exercise of informed reason in sexual conduct which must finally be governed by the disciplined conscience of every individual.
- That Christians while demanding the highest standards from themselves should constantly be tolerant of others and never self-righteous of aloof remembering that Christ befriended those whom respectable society had rejected. As He associated with the highest and lowest so should they and never be shocked at what they see and hear, while themselves resolutely following their Master.

I have called a spade a spade. I have reached for things not within easy reach. I have published those opinions at the kind invitation of the editor, because I believe that as students to-day and leaders of the community in the future we have a duty to society to each other, to ourselves and ultimately to God.

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