

visits to the poet's garret and concluded that two lines of Verlaine were worth more than the whole of *Paradise Lost*.

Fearing the onslaught of war, Grierson returned to New York City in 1913. The New York *Evening Post* sent a reporter to interview him, who later wrote, "I had never seen a man with lips and cheeks rouged and eyes darkened. His hair was arranged in careful disorder over his brow, his hands elaborately manicured and with many rings on his fingers; he wore a softly tinted, flowing cravat." Grierson's writings on the German menace and the "yellow peril" show him at his weakest: *The Invincible Alliance, and Other Essays, Political, Social, and Literary* (London, 1913) and *Illusions and Realities of the War* (New York, 1918).

Grierson's fame in the United States faded with the years; he remained known only among spiritualist circles. His last two books were *Abraham Lincoln, The Practical Mystic* (New York, 1918) and *Psycho-Phone Messages* (Los Angeles, 1921); his lover never found a publisher for a poetry anthology and Grierson's autobiography, which were left in manuscript. Tonner and Grierson moved to Los Angeles in 1920 and soon took up with a Hungarian count, Michael Albert Teleki, and his mother; they all ran a dry-cleaning business together. In 1927, Tonner arranged a concert for Grierson; at the end of the performance, when he did not turn to the audience, Tonner checked and found his lover dead.

Having observed Queen Victoria's funeral, Grierson was no sexual liberationist. While he was flamboyant and enjoyed the airs of the aristocracy, he deeply loved and shared his life with a tailor. He lived his entire life like the grasshopper enjoying whatever prosperity showered upon him. When his funds ran low, he pawned his fur coat or ruby ring. More truly than his contemporary Oscar Wilde, Grierson could have said that he put his genius into his life and only his talent into his books.

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## GRIFFES, CHARLES TOMLINSON (1884-1920)

American composer. Growing up in a middle-class home in Elmira, New York, the young Griffes early became aware of his musical talent as well as his "difference"—his lack of attraction to girls and dislike of contact sports. His ability as a pianist attracted the attention of an eccentric patron, Mary Selma Broughton, who arranged for him to go to Berlin to study (1903). There his acquaintance with the city's thriving gay subculture must have given him an insight into his own nature far richer than the hints that he been able to piece together in Elmira. He also acquired a "special friend" in an older student, Konrad Wölcke, who helped him to become acclimated in Germany. The two remained devoted to one another for a number of years. On the advice of his teacher, Engelbert Humperdinck, Griffes' professional goal shifted from piano performance to composing. His first compositions reflected the heavy, Germanic taste that he had learned; later, however, under the influence of French and Russian music, he acquired the lighter, more colorful accents that are characteristic of his mature work.

In 1907 Griffes returned to the United States, and the following year he accepted an appointment at the Hackley School for boys in Tarrytown, NY. Frequently complaining of overwork, he was to remain there until his death. During his trips to New York City he became a regular patron of the Lafayette Place Baths and the Produce Exchange Baths. Although he disliked some aspects of these establishments, he found them an indispensable resource for sexual contacts. Griffes' last years were illuminated by a deeply emotional friendship with a married New York policeman, Dan C. Martin, an arrange-

ment recalling one effected some years later by the English novelist E.M. Forster. Always of a delicate constitution, Charles Tomlinson Griffes died of pneumonia in 1920. His papers passed into the hands of his younger sister Marguerite, who destroyed many of them, apparently because she feared their "compromising" nature. In this way precious material for the understanding of his inner life has been lost.

Griffes was the first important American composer to be fully conversant with the avant-garde, as represented by such figures as Claude Debussy, Ferruccio Busoni, and Edgard Varèse. He was also influenced by Indonesian and Japanese music. His *Symphony in Yellow* of 1912 bears a dedication to Oscar Wilde. The choral work *These Things Shall Be* employs a text by another English homosexual writer, John Addington Symonds. One of his last works, the experimental *Salut au Monde*, uses texts from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The general public, however, knows Griffes best for his sensual short pieces, *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan* and *The White Peacock*.

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## GROSS INDECENCY

As a term of art for homosexual acts, "gross indecency" entered English law through the **Criminal Law Amendment Act** of 1885. An amendment, drafted by Henry Labouchère and retained as Section 11 of the Act, has the following language: "Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. . . ." Earlier legislation, culminating in the 1861 Offenses Against the Person Act, directed against anal activ-

ity (buggery), required proof of penetration (down to 1828 the law was interpreted to require proof of penetration and emission). Ambitiously, the 1885 legislation enlarged the prohibition to include any homosexual contact whatsoever. As Havelock Ellis pointed out in 1897, it was illogical to include private acts, since no one would be present to record the indecency or be outraged by it. At all events, Oscar Wilde was convicted ten years later under the 1885 Act in a case that sent shock waves throughout the Western world.

"Indecency" has a broad connotation, suggesting anything held to be unseemly, offensive, or obscene. The 1861 Act had mentioned "indecent assault" against both females and males. Apparently wishing to leave no uncertainty that consensual acts, as well as coercive ones, fell within the scope of the prohibition, Labouchère seems to have deleted the noun "assault," adding the adjective "gross" by way of compensation. There is no crime of "petty indecency."

In 1921 a Scottish Conservative M.P. proposed to criminalize acts "of gross indecency between female persons." This legislation was not adopted, and in fact lesbian acts have never been against the law in the United Kingdom. The 1967 Criminal Offenses Act (England and Wales) removed private conduct between consenting adults from the scope of the criminal law, but left the expression "gross indecency" for public acts. If committed by members of the Armed Forces or Navy, even private acts remain a matter of gross indecency. It also remains illegal to "procure" an act of gross indecency; in a bizarre case, the director of a play, *The Romans in Britain*, was prosecuted in 1982 for a brief episode of simulated buggery.

Five New England states and Michigan imitated the British statute. As of 1988 Michigan still recognized "gross indecencies between males" and "gross indecencies among females." Generally, however, the expression has little currency in American law and is unlikely to