

played the role of **McCarthy**, accusing the authorities of being corrupted by "homosexual leagues." The campaign was in practice an attack on all homosexuals (and on homosexuality as such). But the RFSL succeeded in strengthening itself in the struggle, and in presenting its goals and aims in the press during a difficult period.

The sixties were politically a silent era for the homosexual movement. But they also meant a consolidation of RFSL and the new indoor subculture: the cafés and small dance halls that had emerged during the fifties.

When **gay liberation** swept in from the West at the beginning of the seventies, gay life in Sweden was vitalized and radicalized. At the end of the seventies, the first sizable gay demonstrations in Stockholm were held, organized by RFSL. They grew from 400 people in 1977 to several thousand in the eighties. The Stockholm Gay Liberation Week held in August every year during the eighties became one of the biggest social and political gay events in Europe.

One of the achievements in the gay struggle during this period was setting the same age of consent, 15 years, as for heterosexual relations (1978). This followed on a statement from the Swedish Parliament in 1973 that "cohabitation between two parties of the same sex is from the standpoint of society a totally acceptable form of relationship."

In 1987 Parliament passed two historic laws. The first forbids **discrimination** against homosexuals by authorities and private enterprises. The second grants homosexuals many of the same economic and legal privileges (and obligations) that unmarried heterosexual couples living together have in Sweden. Thus for the first time a positive homosexual status, *homosexuell sambo* ("homosexual cohabitant"), has been introduced into the Swedish language and Swedish society, after a struggle of more than a century.

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SYMONDS, JOHN ADDINGTON (1840–1893)

English scholar. John Addington Symonds was born into a prosperous London family; his father was a renowned physician and the young Symonds was educated at Harrow and at Oxford.

Symonds realized that he was homosexual at a very early age. Even as a child, he had vivid dreams of being in a room surrounded by naked sailors: odd dreams, since he had not seen a nude adult male, much less a nude sailor. According to his *Memoirs*, the central theme of Symonds' life was his ongoing attempt to deal with what he felt to be an inborn propensity to love the male sex. His innate timidity and romanticism caused him to be disgusted by the abundant homosexual activity available to students at Harrow. This puzzling rejection (of what he was later to value most highly) culminated in his first adult action on the scene of the wide world: he accused the Harrow headmaster, Dr. Vaughan, of loving one of his pupils, and with the cooperation of his father, procured Vaughan's removal from the headmastership and subsequent exile to obscurity. This malicious act caused several of his closest friends to cut him off for the rest of his life, and he was deeply troubled by the remembrance of it. What, after all, was the difference between him and Dr. Vaughan, except for Symonds' vague feeling of spiritual superiority?

He had already, by this time, read **Plato** and become enthusiastic about the ideals of Greek **pederasty**; he was, indeed, in love with an English choirboy named Willie Dyer, with whom he twice exchanged kisses which he would remember to the end of his days. This passionate friendship was terminated on the advice of his father, who pointed out that Symonds

might be accused of the same "crime" as his recent victim, Dr. Vaughan.

In his twenties, again at the advice of his father, Symonds married, and eventually fathered four daughters. He never had any passion for his wife. Fortunately, she loathed sex and pregnancy, and soon they were living in separate parts of the house, while Symonds continued to pursue young men as soul mates.

Serious illness made Symonds incapable of any real career, so he turned to literature as an avocation. He pursued another schoolboy named Norman Moor in an ardent Platonic fashion, which eventually culminated in their spending six nights in bed together, nude and kissing, but without doing anything which would offend the laws of the time.

Several things happened in a short space of time, which decisively altered Symonds' life. His father died, he moved to Switzerland for the sake of his health, he had his first "base" homosexual interaction with a nineteen-year-old soldier, his literary output increased substantially, and his health improved. This would perhaps indicate that the beloved father was in fact an obstacle to Symonds' self-actualization.

In any case, he quickly got the knack of making close and passionate friends among the Swiss peasants and Italian gondoliers, and discovered that it was quite possible for two men to share their sexuality, in moderation, without being immediately damned and thrown into jail.

Symonds became one of the foremost men of letters of his time, famed for his reviews, essays, books of art history, and expositions of poetry. He became a cultural arbiter for the Victorian era, and also published several volumes of bad poetry.

Unknown to most of his contemporaries, however, Symonds was pursuing a second career. As he grew more accustomed to his own homosexuality and discovered Walt Whitman, he produced the pioneering essay *A Problem in Greek Eth-*

ics (1883), published in an edition of 10 copies. As he grew older and read the works of such pioneers as Krafft-Ebing, he realized that he was not alone and wrote the larger essay *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891), issued in 50 copies. He also began a collaboration with Havelock Ellis, which resulted in the publication of *Sexual Inversion* after Symonds' death. (The family made trouble about the book, and demanded that Symonds' name and life history be removed from the English edition.)

Symonds also committed his memoirs to a distant posterity. The sealed memoirs were handed to his literary executor, H. F. Brown, and were willed to the London Library by Brown on his demise in 1926, with instructions to withhold them from publication for fifty years. They finally appeared in 1984.

As Symonds' respectable Victorian persona retires into obscurity (he is mostly remembered for his enormous *Renaissance in Italy*), his fame as a homosexual theorist and apologist takes up the failing torch and secures for him a new and perhaps more lasting reputation. He has certainly been a major influence in the cause of social and legal reform, and, with the sad exception of Dr. Vaughan, a valuable ally for homosexual men everywhere.

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SYMPOSIA

In ancient Greece, symposia were convivial meetings for drinking, conversation, and intellectual entertainment; they were all-male, upper-class drinking parties that beginning ca. 600 B.C. were held following the evening meal.

After pouring libations to the gods, the guests—usually ten or twelve—began to drink wine diluted with various amounts of water. Often garlanded and