

in manner. A good deal of courage was shown. But while the reception of this pamphlet in official circles was not altogether kind, the hostility was less than might have been expected. It is as if a forbidden door, long left ajar but studiously ignored, had at last been thrown boldly open.

To dismiss the categorical imperatives in sexual ethics, as the Quakers point out, raises up a whole range of new problems. If we say that it is not necessarily wrong to engage in sexual relations with an individual to whom one is not married, who may indeed be married to someone else, or who may even be someone of the same sex, then the question arises by what principles should such relationships be governed? Here the Quakers do not take us very far, hardly further than to say that intercourse should not take place until the partners have come to know each other so well "that the sexual contact becomes a consummation, a deeply meaningful total expression of a friendship in which each has accepted the other's reality and shared the other's interests".

This is not definite enough. It seems to imply that, however physically mature, psychologically immature individuals should not engage in love affairs. Perhaps the Quakers did not intend to go so far, since they also consider that the amatory explorations of the young help to prepare them for an adult relationship.

There is a place for the categorical imperative in even the most liberal societies, and that is in bringing up young children. The child needs to know what he may do and what he must not do, long before he is capable of understanding the reasons for a prohibition. What society owes the child is an explanation and a rational justification of the prohibitions once he is old enough to question them. Unfortunately we do not know what modes of conduct in the sex life of the young should be discouraged. It seems probable, for instance, that promiscuity has a destructive effect on human relations and a deteriorative effect on the personality. But if this is what we believe, we should try to find the objective data which would support or rebut the belief. By the usual methods of scientific enquiry it should be possible to find out which are the modes of behaviour which conduce to health and social harmony, and which do not. It should be possible to go further, to the formulation of natural laws, based on the nature of human personality and human society, as the laws of physics are based on the nature of the physical world. The insights of religion are, perhaps, glimpses of these laws, which science may in time validate in part and in part rebut.

ELIOT SLATER.

The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana. Translated by SIR RICHARD BURTON and F. F. ARBUTHNOT. George Allen and Unwin. Pp. 295. 1963. Price 42s.

Almost everyone has heard a good deal about the Kama Sutra and has preconceived notions about its contents before he comes across a copy; almost everyone is ready with moral judgments derived from the accepted ethics of the society to which he belongs. These attitudes must be discarded if the book is to be enjoyed. We must attempt to travel in imagination through time and space to visit India between the first and fourth centuries A.D. There is a flourishing civilization. We see it first from the point of view of the prosperous private citizen. Part I outlines his domestic establishment and his social engagements. But sex was evidently as important in India then as it is in Western civilization now. The rest of the book is occupied with one aspect of it after another; and the uninhibited sensual enjoyment of it is kept always in the foreground. Vatsyayana enumerates the various kinds of women with whom intercourse is permissible and of those who are not to be enjoyed. The lists are precise in detail and Rabelaisian in scale. Then he reviews the varieties of intercourse encyclopaedically.

The element of pornography, if any, is in the mind of the reader. In concentrating on the sensual component in relationships between men and women Vatsyayana keeps to a well-established tradition of Hindu philosophy. The important pursuits of life are Dharma, Artha and Kama. For most men Dharma, the spiritual pursuits are the most important; Artha, the administrative and commercial pursuits come next; Kama ranks third. But none are to be neglected. "A man should cultivate all three in such a way that they harmonize together and do not clash in any way." Kama, he goes on to explain, "is the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the five senses, assisted by the mind and the soul. The ingredient in this is a peculiar contact between the organ of sense and its object, and the consciousness of pleasure which arises from that contact is called Kama. Kama is to be learned from the Kama Sutra" (the aphorisms on Kama) "and from the practice of citizens".

The formal use of precise numbers is another traditional convention. "Sixty-four" recurs in the text like "forty days and forty nights" in the Old Testament. Usually Vatsyayana's treatment of it is rather casual. After discussing why the part of the Kama Shastra of his predecessors, relating to varieties of intercourse is called the "Sixty-four" he concludes, "The name is given to it only accidentally as we say that this tree is Saptaparna or seven-

leaved, although it has not seven leaves . . . When the wheel of love is once set in motion, there is then no Shastra and no order." But when he discusses the sixty-four accomplishments (singing, dancing, adornment, literary composition, culinary art and the rest) proper for a young lady entering this society he does in fact enumerate exactly sixty-four.

His scrupulous respect for the etiquette of the day appears in some surprising contexts: "Suvarnanabha says these different ways of lying down, sitting and standing should be practised in water, because it is easy to do so therein. But Vatsyayana is of opinion that congress in water is improper, because it is prohibited by the religious law."

Presently he shakes his kaleidoscope and transfers our attention from one member of this society to another. The chapter on the manner of living of a virtuous woman, and of her behaviour during the absence of her husband, extols a paragon of domestic virtues. Another shake, and he goes on to describe the proper conduct of a public woman with the same attention and discernment.

These women evidently occupied as important a position in Hindu society then as the hetairae did in the days of the glory of Greece. The profession was honourable and remunerative. Child marriages and a high death rate combined to produce a large number of young widows, including many virgin widows, who were eligible to enter it: and its most distinguished members were no doubt very talented young ladies, well able to manage their own affairs. It was quite usual to remain faithful to the same man for a considerable period, so they would be more akin to the much-married stage and screen stars of today than to the residents of Soho and the back-streets of Bayswater, who entertain their clients for only about a quarter of an hour at a time.

Every intimate predicament is treated in turn with the same candid impartiality. There is advice for the king, when he arises from his noon-day sleep, on how to choose the wife who is to spend the night with him; and for an elder wife, a younger one, or one disliked by her husband, on their conduct towards him and to one another. Then on to how the king should obtain the wives of other men without public scandal, how the ladies of the royal harem should get men into their apartments, and so on.

Listen to the advice to the elder wife on her conduct towards her husband's favourite: "She should associate with the one who is immediately next to her in rank and age, and should instigate the wife who has recently enjoyed her husband's favour to quarrel with the present favourite. After this she should sympathize with the former, and having

collected all the other wives together, should get them to denounce the favourite as a scheming and wicked woman, without however committing herself in any way. If the favourite wife happens to quarrel with the husband, then the elder wife should take her part and give her false encouragement, and thus cause the quarrel to be increased. If there be only a little quarrel between the two, the elder wife should do all she can to work it up into a large quarrel. But if after all this she finds the husband still continues to love his favourite wife she should then change her tactics, and endeavour to bring about a conciliation between them, so as to avoid her husband's displeasure."

There is a vivid brilliance in every phrase that reminds one of the Indian paintings in the Victoria and Albert museum, where every colour shines like a jewel. There is no chiaroscuro, practically no perspective, and yet the diagrammatic precision discloses depth beyond depth.

The long preface by W. G. Archer gives an interesting account of the original translation, of its authors, particularly that remarkable character Sir Richard Burton, and of the Victorian era which witnessed its publication. The introduction by K. M. Pannikar contained some important notes on Hindu history, literature and philosophy, explaining the position of the Kama Sutra in relation to them.

What an inexhaustibly fascinating book! No wonder it can make a mock of Time.

PATRICK SLATER.

4. CRIMINOLOGY

The Habitual Prisoner. By D. J. WEST. London: Macmillan and Co. Pp. 125+x. 1963. Price 25s.

This book is No. XIX in the *Cambridge Studies in Criminology*, edited by Dr. L. Radzinowicz; and the work on which it is based was carried out in the Cambridge Institute of Criminology, of which Dr. Radzinowicz is the Director. Dr. West chose for study two series of prisoners: a group of 50 men serving sentences of preventive detention; and another group of 50 men, all of them recidivists, but all with a crime-free intermission of several years in their criminal careers. It was the habitual prisoner, rather than the habitual offender, who was investigated; "in some cases the habit amounted to deliberately seeking arrest". The determined professional criminal was not caught up in the net. The methods of enquiry included psychiatric interviews, home visits, examination of social records, and the administration of psychological tests.