

sexually segregated environment for considerable periods during adolescence, we do not all automatically and permanently develop homosexual pair-bonds. If we were like the colonial nesting birds, then no young male could emerge from an all-male boarding school (or other similar unisexual organisation with the slightest hope of ever making a heterosexual pairbond. As it is, the process is not too damaging. The imprinting canvas is only lightly sketched in in most cases and can easily be erased by later, more powerful impressions.

In a minority of cases, however, the damage is more permanent. Powerful associative features will have become firmly linked with sexual expression and will always be required in later bond-forming situations. The inferiority of the basic sexual signals given by a partner of the same sex will not be sufficient to outweigh the positive imprinting associations. It is a fair question to ask why a society should expose itself to such dangers. The answer seems to be that it is caused by a need to prolong the educational phase as much as possible to cope with the enormously elaborated and complicated technological demands of the culture. If young males and females established family units as soon as they were biologically equipped to do so, a great deal of training potential would be wasted. Strong pressures are therefore put upon them to prevent this. Unfortunately, no amount of cultural restriction is going to prevent the development of the sexual system, and if it cannot take the usual route it will find some other.

There is another separate but important factor that can influence homosexual trends. If, in the parental situation, the offspring are exposed to an unduly masculine and dominant mother, or an unduly weak and effeminate father, then this will give rise to considerable confusion. Behavioural characters will point one way, anatomical ones the other. If, when they become sexually mature, the sons seek mates with the behavioural (rather than the anatomical) qualities of the mother, they are liable to take male mates rather than females. For the daughters there is a similar risk, in reverse. The trouble with sexual problems of -this sort 86