

genic love—and upgraded philosophically as *uranismus*, the female soul in the male body. Oscar Wilde gloried in his succession of stable-boys and billiard-markers. His trial in 1895 shattered the illusion of a golden age for homosexuals. This prosecution was, declares Mr Croft-Cooke, 'more than a sordid little case under a discreditable law . . . in a few months, in three public hearings, it obliterated the kind of individualism he and his literary fellows had claimed as a right'.

Scholars will not be impressed by this book, nor by the author's delineation of the period. It is quippy and over-bright, and some of his assumptions are, to say the least of it, hazardous, i.e. that Walter Pater was homosexual. Some of the statements are disturbing ('the blackmailing gangs whom Wilde knew are as busy today as then'). Whether or not this book gives to homosexual behaviour a historical validity is up to the reader.

Homosexuality is now a drawing-room topic; because of the startling theological proposition

that Christ was homosexual it is now a vestry—if no more—topic. New laws and the permissive society must surely make many of the strictures in this book obsolete. *Feasting with Panthers* does lead one to make a deliberate statement: There is no definitive twentieth-century attitude towards homosexuality. The France of the Marquis de Sade had no doubt about it—sodomy was punished with 'the living fire' (death by burning). Until 1828 in this country death was also the penalty for sodomy (if penetration was seen). It is authoritatively stated that 90 per cent of all present-day blackmail devolves around accusations of homosexuality. Whatever one's attitude, one would surely like to see this unfortunate 90 per cent off the hook. The outsider, not committed either way, may well echo Henry James; if homosexuals gather 'a band of the emulous, we may look for some capital sport'. And he said it eighty years ago.

RONALD PEARSALL

THE STARVED AND THE SILENT, by Aloysius Schwartz. *Victor Gollancz*, 1967. 216 pp. 30s.

The author is an American priest, working in Pusan, Korea. The book describes briefly the author's vocation to the missionary priesthood, and then the living conditions of the people in Korea and his own work among them. It is a conversational, straight-forward, gripping account of a terribly poor society and of individuals whom Fr Schwartz has encountered. The last sixty pages of the book provide a theological meditation upon poverty in the gospels, in the Church and in the world.

The approach may be rather over-simple at times, but prophets tend to be that way—they put their fingers straight into the wound, and that is what Fr Schwartz does: the wound of the affluent world and the affluent Church so marginally concerned with the quite appalling poverty of a country like Korea. The Church (meaning here especially the clergy) is affluent not only in the West, it can be so even on Korea. Take the following: 'A group of Sisters here, living under the vow of poverty and dedicated to the service of the poor, discovered recently that their living quarters were too small and uncomfortable, and so decided to build a new convent. The new convent was designed by a Swiss architect, no less, which would be appropriate if it were located in Zurich or Geneva. Unfortunately it is located

in Pusan—in one of the most poverty-depressed cities in the world. There the convent sits today in all its splendour looking out over the sea, rising up layer upon layer like a rich wedding-cake. It boasts such de luxe items as a private verandah for each nun's private room. The convent is sometimes mistaken for a resort hotel; it is never taken to be a house for poor women dedicated to serving poor people' (p. 62). Neither Pusan, nor Korea, is the only place where such things are being built today.

The documents of Vatican II tell us that poverty is 'the authentication of Christ's Church': the world can see that it genuinely is Christ's Church because it is poor: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, to preach the gospel to the poor'. The Church of the poor. Today the institutional Church and its clerical leadership are by and large wealthier than they have ever been. Fifty million dollars may be spent in the U.S. this year refurbishing churches in the latest liturgical taste. In a world where the poor are more with us than ever, the Church is spending more upon herself than ever—smarter churches, de luxe presbyteries and monasteries, more drinks. Corrupt? Fr Schwartz appeals for a Church which would take poverty seriously: both the needs of the poor and her own lived image, as Francis

of Assisi once appealed before. It is the greatest of all challenges facing the Church today, and the most ignored.

Fr Schwartz has himself begun a new movement—the Vatican II International Mission Society, a society of priests upon mission, with no ‘vow of poverty’ but dedicated to live poverty and in the service of the poor. He has

thus joined the small group of modern founders, such as Père Loew and Père Voillaume, men who are trying to live an authentic evangelical vocation within the twentieth-century Church of affluence and world of poverty.

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