

DR. ALVAREZ SAYS:

Kinsey Deserves Praise for Trying to Study Sex Problems Objectively

BY DR. W. C. ALVAREZ
Emeritus Consultant in
Medicine, Mayo Clinic

Perhaps some of you read the review of Dr. Kinsey's new book telling what he and his colleagues have learned about the vagaries of sex in women. Doubtless many persons will be angered at some of the things they read: they will say, "I don't believe" or "I am not like that" or "That is sinful" or "Such things should not be talked about."

Even we doctors may find much of the book hard to accept because many of us are a bit prissy and prudish and unwilling to face honestly and dispassionately some of the problems of sex. Few of us have ever read much about the subject and many of us do not even want to hear anything about it.

We doctors have usually refused to learn enough about the subject to help the poor, unhappy persons — men and women who were terribly gyped by some freak of nature. I remember a medical editor who once refused to let me even mention homosexuality in an article on serious neuroses. He said he was proud of the fact that he had never permitted the use of "that vile word" in his journal!

Essential Studies

I can tell from their writings that even most of the psychiatrists, who certainly ought to know about homosexuality, haven't read any of the books based on real studies of these people, and they have not read their very sad and moving autobiographies.

Actually, as Dr. Kinsey saw so clearly years ago, we physicians and psychiatrists, who are constantly being called upon to help people, puzzled and unhappy and all mixed up over sex, ought to know the facts about the subject. We may not like what we learn, but in science that is no matter; it should have nothing to do with the study. If a worker in science ever allows his emotions and his likes and dislikes and his religious ideas of what is disgusting or sinful to influ-

ence his study—that day he ceases to be a scientist.

You good people who soon will be reading the new volume, I won't blame you for being surprised or horrified or saddened or a bit frightened by what you learn, but I will very much blame you if you get angry at Dr. Kinsey and start impugning his motives or calling him names. You might just as well start reviling the great astronomers on Palomar for having seen with their new telescope a universe inconceivably larger than the one seen by the old prophets of Israel.

Scientist Praised

Years ago when I heard that a scientist was at last going to make a thorough study of sex in man I was so pleased that I did what I usually do under such circumstances: I made a pilgrimage to see him. In Bloomington, Ind., I found a fine, friendly, delightful and human person who invited me to stay in his hospitable home over the week end. I liked him from the moment I met him, and as I talked to him and learned how he got into this work, I came to respect him more and more: I felt grateful to him for having begun the exploration of a neglected field in science.

He told me how, after years of the study of insects, he had done some counseling of students, and had been distressed because he did not have the facts with which to answer the questions about sex that the young people asked him. He knew all about sex in lower forms of life, but in the books he could find very little on the sexual habits of men and women. Finally, after talking to many scientists and finding that nowhere in this land was there a university center for the study of human sex life, he went to work to gather the information himself.

Great Endeavor

All of us in America should take our hats off to the man who had the sense of consecration and the courage to brave the strong taboos of society, and to go ahead and study all aspects of this forbidden subject, just as dispassionately as,

for years, he had studied wasps and all their ways.

Disagree with Dr. Kinsey if you like, but never call him harsh names. All you can possibly say is that you wonder if the samples of men and women whom he studied are typical enough of the 160,000,000 of us in America. You may wonder if everyone whom he and his associates interviewed told the truth, but you should never question his reports of what they said.

After studying statistics for

years, and after reading carefully Dr. Kinsey's first book, I am satisfied that the conclusions at which he arrives are close enough. What is true for the thousands he has interviewed must be fairly typical of people all over the country. He has made a great effort to get a good "sampling" of humankind.

Vacation Schedule Announced by Doctor

I would much appreciate it if persons would not write me during the last week in August and during September because I hope to take a little vacation. I would hate to return to find on my desk some 1500 letters. I would never get caught up again.

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