

EXCERPT FROM

# Sex and Culture

J. D. Irwin 1830-1917

The history of these societies consists of a series of monotonous repetitions; and it is difficult to decide which aspect of the story is the more significant: the lamentable lack of original thought which in each case the reformers displayed, or the amazing alacrity with which, after a period of intense compulsory continence (sexual restraint), the human organism seizes the earliest opportunity to satisfy its innate desires in a direct or perverted manner. Sometimes a man has been heard to declare that he wishes both to enjoy the advantages of high culture and to abolish compulsory continence. The inherent nature of the human organism, however, seems to be such that these desires are incompatible, even contradictory. The reformer may be likened to the foolish boy who desires both to keep his cake and to consume it. Any human society is free to choose either to display great energy or to enjoy sexual freedom; the evidence is that it cannot do both for more than one generation.

Irwin, J.D. *Sex and Culture*. London: Oxford University Press. 1934.