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Book Reviews

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FOR BETTER OR WORSE. By Morris L. Ernst and David Loth. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942. Pp. 245. \$3.00.

For Better or Worse is a study of divorce through the case method. Excerpts from letters from divorced couples setting forth the supposed cause for the divorce and the effect of the divorce on the couple or their children comprise the major part of the book. The self-analysis contained in these letters is, in turn, analysed by the authors.

The authors, both of whom are prolific writers, discuss the various factors which lead to divorce, such as sexual maladjustment, frustration, or money trouble. They are most concerned, however, with what happens after the divorce. And in the case analyses, they attempt to bring out the answers to such questions as, was the divorce really necessary, what effect has the divorce had on the children, is the second marriage working out better, and other such problems.

The role of the lawyer is stressed as merely the agent through which the couple wishing a divorce may circumvent what the authors feel is an archaic legal system for divorce. It is suggested that lawyers could play a counseling role in aiding couples to either retain their marriage or, if this proves impossible, to aid them, through consultation with marriage counselors, to better plan their life after divorce.

A revision of marriage laws is called for and, in their final chapter, the authors present their plan. For couples with no children who, after consultation with their lawyer, marriage counselor, and judge, and a sizable cooling-off period, still are determined to be divorced, an honest, untrumped-up divorce proceeding. For couples with children, since it is the family relationship the state is most interested in maintaining, a more complete counseling service with special emphasis on the children's future life would be required.

In summary, the authors have demonstrated, in what often seems a Dorothy Dix style, what everyone knows—that the inadequate divorce system in America has contributed more to the public's lack of respect for their legal system than most any other cause. Other than this, and some half-hearted thinking, on the part of the authors, little insight into the problem is to be gained from reading this book.

AUSTIN F. SHUTE*

STATE'S LAWS ON RACE AND COLOR. Compiled by Pauli Murray. Cincinnati: Woman's Division of Christian Service, The Methodist Church, 1951. Pp. 746. \$4.00.

For the first time, within the confines of one book, lawyers and laymen now have access to all the laws of the forty-eight states and the District of Columbia dealing with racial discrimination. Each state's legislation is set forth, whether discriminatory, along with excerpts from pertinent judicial decisions wherever it was

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thought necessary. For quicker reference, charts are provided showing how states have legislated on any particular aspect of race or color.

This compilation is the result of the work of many people and was instigated by the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church. Their main idea is to aid lawyers and legislators who may come into contact with civil liberty problems. Certainly, such a book as this, in which the laws of the many states are readily accessible, is invaluable to such persons.

The compilation appears to be the result of careful and painstaking research and analysis. It is to be hoped that such work will be rewarded by more intelligent legislation on race and color. In any event, the book would seem to be a necessity for anyone dealing with the problem.

AUSTIN F. SHUTE*

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