

Handly, John.
Dorothy's divorce
ADQ 9098

DOROTHY'S DIVORCE



JOHN HANDLY



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DOROTHY'S DIVORCE

I

Letter from Miss Gladys Williams to Miss Jane Pritchard

DEAR JANE:

Dolly surely dropped a Big Bertha tonight when she came out for divorce. I find I am shell-shocked. I went to bed after I left you, but I couldn't get to sleep. When we were talking together, we were saying how shocking it was—you said, "Something ought to be done," and I said, "What?" Now I am beginning to think of a plan. I want you to help me. There is no use of our arguing with Dolly on this subject. When her mind is made up she will not listen to her old school chums. She must get opinions from others who command her respect. Here is my plan. Let's you and me write to several of Dorothy's old friends and sign her name to the letters, telling them about Dorothy's big idea. They will answer these letters direct to Dorothy and she will get what is coming to her. I know it will make her angry, but if we make her mad enough it will wake her up before it is too late.

Burn this letter. I do not want Dorothy to know I had anything to do with it and, of course, you will not want her to know about your part in it, if you go in with me on this. I would not even put it down on paper if there was any chance of seeing you before



next Saturday. I would not dare to talk to you over the phone about it; but we must get busy right away—if we wait until next week it may be too late.

Do you get the idea? If you do, begin writing letters to some of Dorothy's friends. I am going to start off with Miss Chapman and old Browney and Father Riley and, oh yes! I believe I can get a good letter from Judge Stauffer. I will try him anyhow. You need not write to any of these, but you can think of other names and notify me of the ones you choose.

Yours, for Dorothy's sake,

GLADYS.

II

Telegram from Miss Jane Pritchard to
Miss Gladys Williams

You are on. Will begin at once.

JANE.

III

Letter from Miss Lavinia Brown, Professor of
English Literature and China Painting in
the Beauchamp Academy

DEAR CHILD:

Dorothy, you poor, precious darling, how you flatter me by your appeal! I thought you had forgotten me. I am ashamed to say I did not know that you

were married. Doubtless, you sent me an invitation and it was lost in the mail, and now I am learning of it only at this terrible crisis when you are contemplating divorce. Oh, my child, how I wish that I could fly to you across the nine hundred miles that separate us tonight! I long to sit in your dear little home and pour out to you all that your letter has stirred up in my heart.

You girls never dream how much we really care for you. You are the big events of our lives, as you come and spend your happy, care-free years at school. You go out into the great world of action and hardly give us a thought, wrapped up in your dances and theater parties and sports and foreign travel, love-making, marriage and motherhood; but the girls at school are all we know of the world.

Do not think that this means ignorance. The very intensity of our interest helps us to see more than the actors themselves in life's drama. They are too busy living to consider the meaning of life; but I know life's lessons, for many a girl has taken me into her confidence.

Lizzie Hicks was here this afternoon. I was so excited by your letter that I told her about it and asked her to write to you. If you get a letter from her, do not blame her, but me. I have been advising Lizzie ever since she got her divorce. I want you to know how she feels about it now. I have been counting up—twenty-seven of my girls have been divorced and I have a pretty good insight into what it has meant for most of them. Dear child, read the letter Lizzie Hicks sends you, with an understanding heart.

She has paid an awful price for her liberty. Be warned by her, I beg you!

As you know, I have always been a devout church-woman. I have ardently desired that Convocation would adopt the standards which are so plain in the gospels. Our Blessed Lord forbids divorce. St. Paul declares that only death can free a woman from the bonds of matrimony. This is God's will. You will be offending Him if you take this step. I suppose my ideas belong to a past generation. I am glad I have kept the faith of better days.

In my town, when I was young, only one of our social set was guilty of divorce and remarriage. It was Judge Jackson Phillips, our most prominent lawyer. He divorced his wife because she was insane. He married Dimple Gray, the sweetest society bud of our State. My mother was too kind-hearted to express the indignation she felt, but she never could be cordial with them. I have seen Judge Phillips with Dimple on his arm pass before our house, forcing my mother to acknowledge his bow, and then go on down the street crestfallen because he knew he could not bridge the gulf that he had placed between himself and her. He can never regain my mother's sympathy.

We were all united in these convictions and so, I suppose, it was easier for the people of our town to bear the burdens of married life. We stood shoulder to shoulder, upholding the highest ideals of womanhood, believing them to be revealed to us by the Son of God Himself.

I am an Episcopalian and you are a Catholic,

Dorothy. Your Church is more strict than mine has dared to be; but we worship the same God and I know you cannot take this awful step without displeasing Him. What are you living for? Yourself, or the true, the beautiful and the good? Once you obeyed me in the discipline of the school. I say to you now, in the name of Beauchamp Academy, desist from your proposition! If you resist, it will be at the penalty of forfeiting the friendship of

Your old teacher,

LAVINIA BROWN.

IV

Letter from Mrs. Elizabeth Walker-Ryan-Burgess-
Beekman-Hopkinson-Moore

DOT:

Lizzie Hicks passed me word you are thinking of stepping out. Congratulations! I have done it six times and am just waiting to take on another sucker. Beekman, dirty miser, did me out of alimony, but I am getting quite a comfortable living from the rest. It is the only way to get even with the world. I know you will strike a few snags among your "holier-than-thou" friends, especially the priests. Do not pay any attention to them! Those priests make up all these laws about divorce for the good of their own pocket-books. They are nothing but grafters. I am on to them. Get out into the middle of the road and strike a lively gait while the going is good!

Yours for happy days,

BETTY.

V

Letter from Mrs. Elizabeth Hicks

DEAREST DOROTHY:

Browney told me about your letter and asked me to write to you. I do so, willingly. I would be glad to crawl on my hands and feet from here to your door-step, if I could persuade you to think twice before you divorce your husband!

I read somewhere, before I was engaged, that a divorced woman is cut in two by a sword—half of her goes with the man to whom she was joined by Almighty God, as Christ said, "They twain shall be one flesh." Dorothy, it is true! I have been separated from my husband for seven years. The first three years were sheer agony. I thought at first it was simply my reaction to public opinion. How I hated them for looking down on me! Even when they smiled and said they approved of what I had done, I knew they despised me. For months I could not sleep. As soon as I lost consciousness, the nightmare of disgrace woke me again. It was excruciating pain. Now I know that the suffering did not come from what other people thought and said. It is the suffering of dismemberment.

My dad's leg was shot off in battle and always, even fifty years afterwards, he still had terrible pains in the foot which had been lost. I am just like that. Tom was horrible in his treatment of me. He deserved to be punished, but I love him, I long for him. Only last night, I woke and reached out in my bed to

see if he was there. I want to help him! I want to know whether he is catching cold the way he used to do when his feet got wet! And I need a protector! I want to feel I have a man standing between me and the world. I know no other man can take Tom's place in my life.

I was talking to Betty Moore about you and she said she would write you a letter. She has tried man after man; and, Dorothy, I want to tell you Betty has no heart! She has been brutalized. Money is her god. She is money mad. Every fine element of womanhood has been beaten down and is dead in her. I can never think of our dainty Dolly becoming the coarse opportunist Betty Moore is today!

Don't do it, Dolly; don't do it! I offer you the experience of seven years of agony. No pride can bolster a woman up to bear this awful burden of disappointment and regret.

Your friend,

'LIZBETH.

VI

Letter from Judge Archibald Stauffer

MY DEAR MADAM:

I consider it a compliment that you have addressed me in your search for enlightenment on the question of divorce. I apprehend that you are contemplating the step. It is a merit, a sign of intellectual uprightness and esteem for morality, that you

should hesitate and seek counsel before taking a step that is irreparable.

With this expression of my respect, I pass on to say that, in my firm conviction, divorce is legalized adultery. As Judge, I have witnessed the desolation of many hundred of families. From my records I am more and more convinced that divorce undermines the country, destroys self-respect and degrades womanhood as surely as open adultery.

Great is the force of example. Toleration of one divorce opens the sewer-gates for passion. The step you contemplate will not merely wreck your own happiness, it will embitter the life of your husband, pushing him into excesses of a criminal nature; if you have children, they cannot survive the shock of broken family ties; and your action will make it easier for others to overcome their repugnance to divorce. Your example will spread, seizing on the minds of others like a violent contagious disease. You are helping to establish an epidemic, which will not only be fatal to hundreds of thousands of souls, but will, in time, change the whole course of civilization.

Christianity received from ancient Rome the remnants of a society ruined by the degradation of woman. On woman, as maiden, wife and mother, the Christian home, Church and State are reared. Every woman who helps to make divorce popular, is helping to destroy Christianity.

In my opinion, my dear Madam, the course you contemplate is not worthy of a decent woman. The laws of this country may sanction your divorce, but

there is a right above the law of the land. If you go against it, you will not escape the punishment you richly deserve.

Sincerely,

ARCHIBALD STAUFFER.

VII

Letter from Miss Pinky Dean

MY DEAR MISS ROBERTS:

May I slip in a word with the Judge's letter, which I have just typed? I think he is too severe. I get a chance to give the once-over to these poor sufferers who come to his court for divorce, and I am here to tell you I cannot believe that God ever intended for a man and woman to live together when love is dead.

Is not love the very life of marriage?

What would we think of a Doctor who compelled a woman to sleep in the same bed with her husband's corpse, or, worse yet, to carry it around with her wherever she goes? I think when love is dead the husband is worse than a corpse. It is ghastly horror to put up with the cold flesh and staring eyes of a man you cannot love.

I have seen women sitting in the court, frozen with dread and loathing. I have seen them tripping down the front steps, after divorce has been granted, as light hearted as little girls. Don't you believe the Judge, honey. Look out for A No. 1! Love yourself and give yourself a treat in this life! If you don't, nobody will.

P. D.

VIII

Letter from Reverend Hugh Riley, D.D.,
Rome, Italy

MY DEAR DOROTHY:

I have just received your letter. My illness has necessitated absence from my parish for three years. Most of the time has been spent here, where I have been trying to write a book about the catacombs.

Let's see, you left home two years before that. It is five years since I saw you. I suppose this accounts for the fact that I did not know of your marriage. I am grieved beyond words by the news your letter contains, but I thank you for giving me the opportunity to appeal to your better self before you take the step.

If you had waited for your old pastor to marry you, instead of getting married in some Eastern State without letting me know anything about it; if, I say, you had let your old pastor marry you, as you should have done, I would have impressed on you, Dorothy, that marriage is not merely a bilateral contract. Marriage is a sacrament, uniting husband and wife with Jesus Christ in a new and holy relationship.

Just as the priest mounts the hill of Calvary to be united with the Great Priest on His altar of sacrifice, so man and woman are lifted up by the sacrament of matrimony closer to the cross, making them partners with the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

If you married your husband only for what he can give you, it is not surprising then that you have al-

ready reached disappointment and despair. No creature can satisfy a human soul. Weak and mean and ugly as we are, in every other respect, in this one thing we are truly divine: our appetite for happiness can be satisfied only by the Infinite Good. We were never expected to find peace and happiness elsewhere. Every creature that comes into our lives is a blessing to us only in so far as we accept it as an expression of the divine Love Who sends it.

If you enter into matrimony, in love with love, loyally giving yourself, body and soul, to the service of God, in this higher and holier career, which is only second in dignity to the priesthood itself, then, my dear child, no hardship, or pain, or disappointment in your help-mate, can mar your happiness! You will accept every burden that weighs you down, as a sharing of the cross with the Savior, Whose comradeship has permeated you, soul and body, in this high adventure. The eager soldier accepts fatigue and weariness, and even rejoices in them, because they express his passionate devotion to the King. The best marriages that I have ever known were between mismatched couples.

Only last week I said Mass in the home of Anna Taigi, that saint of married happiness. Her husband was unfitted for her—uncouth, domineering, jealous, but he never knew how he wounded her. In his old age he wondered at the perfection of her love for him. She was not loving and serving that man. She was loving and serving Jesus in him, and it was this fidelity to her Divine Lover, in her docility and tenderness for her husband, that made her the great saint she

is. St. Rita, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, oh, how many others have been shining examples of this same truth!

There is no such thing as disappointment and disaster in any marriage which is based on sacramental union with the Son of God. God made you to love Him and, therefore, He made you free. He veils His awful majesty and comes to you as a suppliant lover. He asks you to choose to love Him. You may turn your back on Him if you will, but to what will you turn? To yourself! To self-love, pride and self-seeking! Examine all your advisers who tell you that it is a good thing for you to be divorced! One thing stands out clear and plain in the character of every one of them—they are selfish. They are seeking their own ease and comfort. They are feeding their own pride. Isn't it true?

Now, my dear child, I ask you to imagine what it will mean to go on for a whole life, loving and worshipping yourself as they do? What it will mean to go into eternity with no other interest than your own self? Are you so high, so noble, so beautiful, so pure and good, that you alone can satisfy your hungry heart for all eternity? Look in your heart now—was this letter, which I have just received from you, inspired by happiness? Are you as happy today as you were when I gave you your first Holy Communion? I know the answer, even though you hang your head and refuse to answer me! You are not happy, Dorothy! You will never be happy until you come back to love God more than you love yourself. God made you for Himself. You will never be at rest until you rest in Him.

What is necessary to patch up the trouble between you and your husband? You must forgive him some faults? You must ask his pardon? You must satisfy yourself with less of this world's goods than you crave? Think how Jesus forgave! Think how the Son of God atoned, not for His own sins, but for the sins of the world! Think how poor He was, and how contented in His poverty! A Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief! Are you better than Jesus, Dorothy?

"Dorothy," that means "Gift of God." Be true to your name! For God's sake, do and say all that is needed to regain your husband's good will! Bear the yoke of matrimony as Jesus bore His cross. No matter how weary you are, no matter how heavily laden, you will find that His yoke is easy and His burden light. There is no other happiness in time or eternity. If you embrace the cross, Dorothy, you will have no need for divorce. I will say a novena of Masses for you at the shrine of Blessed Anna Taigi. Please write to me and tell me that my prayers are not in vain!

Affectionately your father in Christ,
HUGH RILEY.

IX

Letter from Miss Ruth Chapman, Principal of Beauchamp Academy

MY DEAR DOROTHY:

I suppose from your letter, which was received last week, that you are interested in a debate on mar-

riage and divorce. I have asked our Professor Robertson to supply you with a few facts, which may be of service to you. I enclose his notes herewith.*

Hoping that they may help you to win the debate, I am,

Sincerely,

RUTH CHAPMAN, *Principal.*

X

Letter from Mrs. Bridget Moynihan, Cook at Beauchamp Academy

MY DARLING:

Sure, my ears deceive me! Miss Brown says you are going to get a divorce. I don't believe it, Dolly, my child! I always loved you because you are a good Catholic girl. Many's the time I prayed to the Blessed Virgin for you! My heart feels that you are true to your holy religion and God's Blessed Mother. I cannot believe you would break the laws of your Church and get a divorce. What put it in that Miss Brown's head, alanna?

In your big city of New York, I hear women have got so far along they do not change their names when they get married. Miss Brown says she does not know your husband's name. I said he had the same name that you had, so you did not have to change your name. I know you will not be one of those forward girls! They say your husband does not love

*See Appendix.

you any more. Don't give ear to such talk, my Dolly! How anybody can miss loving you, is more than I can figure out.

Well I remember how I loved Moynihan when he was courting me! I used to get cold all over and my hands trembled whenever he came anear me. I loved him so I could not lift my eyes to his. He used to tease me about it.

We were so happy those first weeks of our married life! He treated me like a queen. I wondered whether I could live through it all, I was so happy. Then it changed. Well do I remember! The time came when he never kissed me, hardly said a word, except to answer questions with a short "Yes" or "No." There were days when I cried when I was alone, wishing the sunshine of the first happiness back again. But I didn't complain. I learned my lesson.

Moynihan has been dead now these twenty-five years. I know he always loved me. Men are like that. Love comes to be deeper like a little brook, at the start, all dancing and singing and throwing up white sprays in the sun; when it gets down in the meadows it hardly seems to move, but it is deeper now. There is more to it, and it is more use to men.

Dolly, do not be put out if he is not as sweet on you as he was when he was courting, just wait! You know as well as I do, a man's love is there for keeps even when he is taking a little to drink, or carrying on with other girls. He don't mean to hurt you. Trust him in spite of everything! I know that is best.

Oh, Dorothy, child, how well I love you! I am saying my beads for you a dozen times a day. God keep you! Mary guard you!

Your loving old

BRIDGET.

XI

Letter from Dr. J. Mitchell Walton

DEAR MADAM:

During my football days at Dartmouth, I was nicknamed "Mitty." I received a typewritten letter yesterday addressed to "Dear old Mitty." I read it through, puzzling at its contents, but still under the impression that it was directed to me. Only when I could not recall the signature as the name of any of my acquaintances, did it dawn on me that I was reading a letter addressed to someone else. It is possible that your secretary placed this typewritten letter in the wrong envelope and that some other correspondence of a business nature was intended for me.

I am taking pains to explain the situation, because I desire to answer this letter, which I have so unaccountably received.

I infer that you are a married woman, a Catholic, attempting to seek a divorce. I wish to say to you that I am also a Catholic, a convert to the Church. I am unmarried. My devotion to my profession has, to this time, kept me from all thought of marriage. But I have a very deep and loyal appreciation of the

Catholic ideals of married life and, as a fellow-Catholic, I beg you to permit me to appeal to you against the temptation which besets you now.

Three times, in the gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke, Our Blessed Savior forbids divorce. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another commits adultery against her, and if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she commits adultery." Commenting on these words, St. Paul says to us, "the Lord commands that the wife depart not from the husband, and if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife." "The woman is bound by the law as long as her husband lives, but if her husband dies she is at liberty. Let her marry to whom she will, only in the law." I beg you to read that seventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians and then read the beginning of the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where St. Paul repeats, "The woman who has a husband is bound to the law while her husband lives, but if her husband is dead she is loosed from the law and her husband. However, while her husband lives, she shall be called an adulteress if she be with another man. But if her husband be dead she is delivered from the law of her husband. So that she is not an adulteress if she be with another man."

St. Paul does not hesitate to compare the marriage state to the union which exists between Christ and His Church. By giving Himself to the Church, Christ

sanctifies it. Man and woman, giving themselves to one another, mutually sanctify each other. A man should love his wife as Christ loves the Church.

Divorce and remarriage are fatal to the high ideals of this comparison. "Adultery" is a foul word. One shrinks from pronouncing it, but it is none too foul to characterize divorce.

Respectfully yours,

J. MITCHELL WALTON, M.D.

XII

Letter from Miss Dorothy Roberts to Dr. J. Mitchell Walton

DR. WALTON,

SIR:

Patience has ceased to be a virtue. I have been bombarded with letters accusing me of intending to seek divorce, piling on me every sort of insinuation and saying I am an enemy of Christian civilization.

I have a suspicion that these letters originated in a practical joke played on me by one of my dearest friends. I have said rosary after rosary to keep from hating her for it.

I have borne all in patience, and foreborne to answer any of the letters I have received, until this letter came to me from you.

I can bear no more.

I protest against the liberty you took in writing to me, when you discovered that my letter was not intended for you at all. My grievance is all the greater, because your letter beautifully expresses ideals that are dearer to me than my own life. Severe and grand as you are in your indignation, I cannot help admiring you. Though it hurts all the same, I want to tell you that I have no intention of getting a divorce, for a very good reason, and that is—I have never yet been married! I am a young girl, working for my living here in New York.

This wretched joke started in a debate we had in our Sodality. The girls took my argument for my own opinion, while I was simply trying to win a debate. It has been a lesson to me. I will never again argue for a thing I do not believe.

We cannot play with truth, Dr. Walton. It must be treated with the respect it deserves, for God is true.

Sincerely yours,

DOROTHY ROBERTS.

XIII

Telegram from Dr. J. Mitchell Walton to Miss Dorothy Roberts

Will you kindly permit me to call? Will start for New York as soon as your answer arrives.

J. MITCHELL WALTON.

XIV

Letter from Miss Dorothy Roberts to Reverend
Hugh Riley, Rome, Italy

DEAREST FATHER:

I have been a long time thanking you for that lovely letter you wrote to me about marriage. Many things have happened since it came, including another letter which cut me to the quick. It was from a splendid Catholic, a convert, a football hero and one of the dearest men who ever devoted himself to the relief of pain. He has been a good doctor to me. All my hurts are cured and I am now planning to marry him. This is my first marriage, Father. I was never married before; and I have no love for divorce. I would not think of it for a moment. But I do want to be married and married right by my old pastor. How can we arrange it? Can you come to America for the wedding? Dr. Walton begs me to assure you that he will gladly pay all the expenses of the trip. Please let us hear from you by cable if possible.

Affectionately,

DOROTHY.

XV

Cablegram from Reverend Hugh Riley to
Miss Dorothy Roberts

Invitation accepted.

HUGH RILEY.

APPENDIX

Notes of Professor Alexander Robertson, Chair of Mathematics, Beauchamp Academy

In France, despite the fact that the population remained almost stationary, divorce increased from 5,797 in 1887 to 16,335 in 1913. This was before the World War. In Germany, during the same period of a quarter of a century, while the population increased one-third, the divorces were almost three times as many—6,357 in 1887; 17,835 in 1913. Holland presented an almost identical figure. If anything, somewhat greater. Belgium was the counterpart of Holland. But the most striking example of easy divorce comes from the United States. There were 22,919 divorces in 1887 and 112,036 in 1916, 175,495 in 1925, an average increase of 5,000 a year. In the United States there is one divorce for every six or seven marriages. Much worse in some States than in others. Oregon has one divorce in every $2\frac{3}{10}$ marriages. Wyoming, one in every $3\frac{7}{10}$. Missouri, one in every $4\frac{3}{10}$. Massachusetts, one in 10. New York, less than one in 20. South Carolina, none at all. But it appears that in the State of Nevada in 1923 there were more divorces than marriages—1,029 divorces and 1,012 marriages.

Since the war, divorces have increased in Europe. There are three times as many divorces in Germany than there were at the beginning of the century. In France, in 1921, there were 32,557 divorces; in 1925, 20,002. In England and Wales in 1913 there were only 577 divorces, in 1925 there were 2,605. This is an increase of more than 300% in a dozen years.

Since there is a considerable proportion of Catholic inhabitants in all of these countries, the divorce figures would be much greater if the Church were to raise her ban against it.

In country places, when people have chosen their mate in life, they settle down, for better or worse, and, as a rule, do not think of change. The craving for divorce is rampant in the towns. In Sweden the total number of divorces in the urban district is very nearly twice that of the rural areas. Considering Swedish cities alone, there is one divorce for every 12 $\frac{2}{10}$ marriages, which exceeds the highest ratio of divorce in either Germany or France. In individual cities, such as Berlin, things are worse. In 1924, one out of every 517 people were divorced; 15% of infants born were illegitimate.

It seems that the more liberal the laws permitting divorce, the greater is the proportion of illegitimate children. In Uruguay divorce by consent is allowed. Residence is a sufficient test of jurisdiction. Five years after this law was established, 23% of the children were illegitimate. Six years later 28% were illegitimate. The ever increasing number of divorces shows corruption of the ideal of marriage as a life-long engagement. Marriage is now a mere experiment, a contract voidable upon the non-fulfillment of certain conditions, and terminable at will. The old-fashioned marriage ceremony, "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, until death do us part," seems little more than a mockery in the mouths of men and women who regard divorce as a legal permission to multiply sex experiences.

Divorce is so prevalent that it is becoming accepted as one of the probabilities of life. It no longer has to be explained. One young woman, being remonstrated upon her choice of a husband remarked, "Well, after all, if I do make a mistake—you have to start marriage just like anything else."

In England at present, as in many parts of America, a new liberty is being taken in the spread of license. Frivolous divorces presuppose frivolous marriages. People who believe that they can be separated for no reason, find it all the easier to be united for no reason.

Our forty-eight legislatures, with their fifty-two causes for divorce from the bond of matrimony, permitting re-

marriage, have turned the once sacred place called home into a broad corridor, wide open at each end for entrance and exit. During the last thirty-five years they have refused, one after another, to amend their evil ways. In 1783-1789, when thirteen sovereign States made peace with Great Britain and immediately proceeded to break peace with their neighbor by separate tariffs and other laws, they found that they could not exist, and at last agreed to be one nation. During the past thirty-five years it has been proven that the regulation of marriages requires national legislation as much as national tariff or post office or army or navy. The demand grows for a nation-wide law, which will bring into line States whose laws are lax, but permit individual States to raise the bans against divorce still higher than the national standard if they desire.

The children of divorce are no longer rare exceptions. From the time that they first begin to repeat catch phrases of the older world, divorce enters their minds. They become familiar with the sound even before they seek to interpret to themselves its meaning. Divorce has entered into the serious problem of social evolution. Now generations are growing up educated to it. Children are isolated in their childhood, strangers in the new homes of their parents. It is such a hideous offense against the rights of children that love gives place to hatred. Another type runs to the other extreme of acceptance. Which type seems to predominate? Naturally, the latter, since conformity is the quality of youth. Nothing is so conservative as youth. In later life the individual tends to separate from the mass, but in youth the one fear is to seem different. For this reason the tendency is always the acceptance of divorce as an extension of the dominant note of individualism.

Prejudice against divorce has diminished in social circles. The children that formerly were left to drift, are forced to choose between mother and father. Sometimes they find one parent replaced by two. To the sensitive nature divorce is chaos. Many of the younger generation,

however, take divorce into consideration when they go into marriage. Two-thirds of the children brought to court in France are the children of divorced or separated parents. Divorce brings about a nation of children, nomadic and vagrant at worst, and lacking in home-bred character at best. No statistics are needed to prove this point. It cannot be otherwise.

It is hard to understand how men who really love their country can stand back and allow the tide of divorce to rise. If unstopped, it will destroy the nation. It caters to a very human desire, the desire for change. It allows men and women to make mistakes with impunity. It legalizes the insatiable quest of passion. It ministers to men's weakness. We are moving steadily and tragically forward to be a nation of disrupted homes and outcast children.

Unless modern men rouse themselves to prohibit divorce in the nation, the nation will, inevitably, fail.

The tide of divorce is rising insidiously. It is not a foreign invasion. It is a process of internal decomposition. It moves toward disaster. One couple, or a hundred couples, may get divorces and prove to be better off for it; but when everybody gets a divorce, when divorce is an almost universal practice, the old established reverence for law and order will be gone, and the United States will be well on that downward journey which other great civilizations have taken.

The future of the nation is now in the hands of its children. The character of its children depends almost entirely on the character of the home. Divorce is ruining the nation's homes. Unless it is checked it will ruin the nation.

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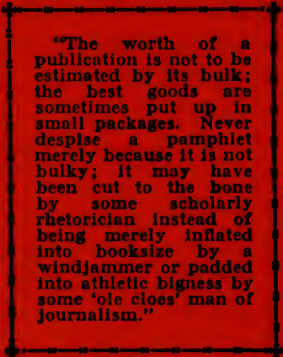
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