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## Harper: Problems of the Family

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## RECENT BOOKS

This department undertakes to note or review briefly current books on law and matters closely related thereto. Periodicals, court reports, and other publications that appear at frequent intervals are not included. The information given in the notes is derived from inspection of the books, publishers' literature, and the ordinary library sources.

## BRIEF REVIEWS

*PROBLEMS OF THE FAMILY.* By *Fowler V. Harper*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. 1952. Pp. x, 806. \$9.

This is a work intended for teaching purposes in the field variously denominated Domestic Relations, Persons, Family Law, or Family Relations. The author explains in his preface that the book is an experiment in integration of the various disciplines which deal with problems of the family. He states that "the contents of this volume consist of cases and text notes on law and readings from the literature of anthropology, sociology, and psychiatry. Quantitatively, the material divides roughly to about half and half."

Material is grouped under the following main chapter headings: Patterns and Theories of Family Organization; Premarital Problems; Creation of Marriage; Problems of Marital Adjustment; Intra-Family Relationships; Relations of Family Members with Others; Problems of Family Disorganization. Included is a bibliography of carefully selected articles in periodicals which should be of the greatest help to all teachers of the subject. A unique feature of the book is a glossary of technical terms which will help the reader over such words as *Susu*, *dyspareunia*, and *cathexis*. This glossary feature might well be adopted by other compilers of teaching materials.

Most law professors who have taught Domestic Relations will agree that there is more to the subject than is likely to be found in the statutes and decisions which make up the orthodox collection of teaching materials. The professor, the lawyer, and the judge, when dealing with problems of the family, need to know more than rules of law. They need to know something of psychiatry, religion, anthropology, sociology, and some other things as well. Indeed, the more they know about human nature and the well-springs of human conduct, the better. Professors will differ as to whether these things may be taught to any extent in a two hour course and still leave time for teaching the law. That the primary duty of a law school is to teach law would, I assume, be pretty generally admitted.

When I first got hold of Harper's book I was enthusiastic about it. It seemed, somehow, the answer to a prayer. After reading and re-reading it I am not so sure. It strikes me that students in a class using Harper's book would have an interesting time and would learn a great deal about many things, but I fear they would be a little short-changed when it came to the law. Maybe the idea is to give the student the necessary background and then let him dig out the law for himself at a later time, as the occasion demands. Carried over into other fields this would mean that law schools would cease to be law schools and would

be given over to political science, economics, sociology, etc. Maybe law professors would do a better job at handling those subjects than the faculties which have been charged with this responsibility in the past. Then again, perhaps they wouldn't.

I suspect that Harper's book will be rather widely adopted, and that some—perhaps many—professors will find that the book works out well in the classroom. It will be interesting to hear from these users of the book after they have had a chance to test it over a period of two or three years.

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