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BOOK REVIEWS

MANUAL OF PREVENTIVE LAW. Louis M. Brown. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950. Pp. xix, 346.

Practicing lawyers and legally-trained book reviewers are prone to express adverse criticism over the publication of books designed to inform laymen, particularly the public at large, on how to cope with legal problems or to act as lawyers. Honest criticism of books bearing title such as "How to Draft Your Own Will," "How to Close a Real Estate Deal," or "How to be Your Own Lawyer," is not predicated on any selfish desire to garner fees for the members of the legal profession but rather rests on the fact that the ill, or partly, informed layman may, because of inadequate guidance, involve himself or his affairs in far more costly blunders and losses than any amount he would save by purchasing such books and acting on the basis of the contents thereof. The net effect of such reliance, as the author of this book aptly illustrates, more nearly tends to enhance the income of the legal profession for the cost of extricating a person from a deplorable mess is known, to the legal profession at least, to be higher than the cost of preventing the trouble from ever occurring. The day when the lawyer waited, with anticipation of fat fees, for the chance to probate the estate of the testator who drew his own will is passing. Every reputable lawyer today, just as every doctor or dentist, would rather serve society by preventing the rise of difficulties, than by acting to solve or cure them after they have arisen.

It is for this last reason that the book here considered deserves the notice of the practicing lawyer but, even more, deserves a widespread circulation among the members of the general public. The latter form the very class of people who prejudice their legal rights, who make the unnecessary mistakes, because they lack warning as to the precise moment when it would be appropriate to seek legal advice. By pointing out the risks involved in blundering into action in a wide variety of common legal transactions without competent advice, by illustrating the possible alternative courses of action a lawyer might have recommended, by depicting the relative cost of seeking that competent advice against the cost of passing up the opportunity of gaining it, and by re-inforcing these points through the use of a selection of actual cases, the author drives home the age-old lesson that a single ounce of prevention is worth many, many pounds of cure.

Do not mistake this book by believing it to be one which suggests that the client should live virtually in the lap of his lawyer; should not dare to move a finger without consulting him. It is far too realistic to take that approach, and no lawyer would want it otherwise. Doctors have long stressed the desirability of preventive medicine and have educated some patients, at least, to seek consultation when first symptoms of ailments occur. Radio broadcasts hammer home the fact that one should see a dentist at least twice a year. Here is a lawyer's effective exposition of how preventive law can be developed, how the client can come to recognize the need for securing competent legal advice, and how that advice, if followed, can prevent trouble by heading it off before it starts.

SELECTED ESSAYS ON FAMILY LAW. Compiled by a Committee of the Association of American Law Schools, Paul Sayre, Editor. Brooklyn, New York: The Foundation Press, Inc., 1950. Pp. xv, 1122.

Since the original authorization in 1941, three successive committees of the Association of American Law Schools have labored toward the publication of a volume of essays on Family Law which would not only be found to contain the best of materials already published but would also give adequate coverage to the many sub-areas in this broad field. To say that these committees have brought the effort to a successful culmination with the publication of this volume is but little praise for the hours of time and deep thought that have gone into its preparation. As it stands, the volume now provides the reader, be he layman, lawyer, or law teacher with an accurate exposition of the subject matter in a most convenient and understandable form. Designed with the thought in mind that these essays should complement a satisfactory casebook, the student will also find this work to be of inestimable value as it gives a larger insight into not only the legal but also the social aspects of the field.

It would not be desirable to list either the authors or the essays included in this selection, but the breadth of coverage may be indicated by noting the topical order of the arrangement. Four grand divisions deal with the place of the family in civilization, with the creation of the family unit, with the family as a going concern, and with family disorganization and its attendant consequences. Within each division, the essays reproduced are arranged without comment, critical or otherwise. Tables of additional articles, however, appear at the end of each unit pursuant to an effort to indicate that the selected materials are not the only, nor necessarily even the best, product of those who have written in the general field. Since the criterion for selection was based on a desired in-

terdependence of the several parts of the finished volume, the possibility of pointing direct criticism at what might be considered sins of omission is nullified. Measured in terms of the result sought to be achieved, the compilation is not simply effective, it is impressive.

THE LAW OF CADAVERS: Second Edition. Percival E. Jackson. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1950. Pp. lxxxvii, 734.

At the time of the publication of the first edition of this work in 1936, the author expressed the belief that the law relating to cadavers, to burials, and to burial places should be dealt with as an independent topic inasmuch as the subject matter did not respond to development along conventional legal lines. That failure in systematic organization was attributed not only to lack of adequate precedent in the field but more directly to the fact that such matters of sentiment as are involved in the process of burying the dead do not respond readily to the application of legal principles developed in other fields of law as, for example, those of tort and property. He had found, in fact, that decisions which squared with social conscience in such matters did not square with common law rules, while those that did do the latter were inconsistent with enlightened thought. In the interim that has elapsed since that belief was justifiably expressed, there has been sufficient development, both judicial and legislative, to warrant bringing the topic up to date, hence the reason for the second edition. In format and arrangement, it builds upon the first but, as should be the case, the content of the new edition has been considerably enlarged by the addition of many new cases and by suitable reference to the wide variety of statutory developments made in recent years. If separate and specialized treatment is to be given to a topic such as this, the author's second edition properly becomes the starting point for any attempt to synthesize existing materials into a model system.