

5-1933

## American Family Law, by Chester G. Vernier

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### Recommended Citation

Wallace, Leon H. (1933) "American Family Law, by Chester G. Vernier," *Indiana Law Journal*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 8 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ilj/vol8/iss8/13>

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*American Family Laws.* By Chester G. Vernier. Stanford University; Stanford University Press, 1931. Vol. I, pp. xxi, 311; Vol. II, Divorce and Separation, 1932, pp. xxvii, 523. \$5.00 each.

For a lawyer or scholar desirous of studying the statute law of persons or family law, outside of that of his own jurisdiction, there was little help except by a search through the codes of each state. For the subjects treated in his first volume, Mr. Vernier has largely eliminated the necessity of extended search.

In attacking each phase of the law Mr. Vernier makes a brief, general statement of the common law without any extensive review of cases, a survey of the statutory law, showing by tables the variations between and within jurisdictions, a short critical comment pertinent to the facts disclosed, and an excellently selected list of references to other authorities, both legal and sociological.

The first volume is really an introductory survey of the entire problem. It discusses the marriage contract, breach of promise, licenses, witnesses, fees, annulment proceedings and other topics pertinent to such a study.

The author's comparative tables as to the state of the authority are excellently done, although, at times, it seems that his zeal for statistical tabulation outruns his judgment; an instance of this is a tabulation of the opinion of text writers concerning whether or not common law marriages are valid in the several jurisdictions.

In the second volume of his series, Mr. Vernier does for divorce legislation what he had accomplished in the first volume for the marriage laws of the various jurisdictions.

A study of the information tabulated reveals the diversity of the divorce laws and the rather disgraceful competition between certain jurisdictions to attract marital migrants to their divorce courts.

This compilation of data is invaluable to the lawyer faced with a conflict of laws problem. For instance, we find that there is only one ground for divorce common to all jurisdictions, adultery, that there are thirty-nine grounds for divorce, and that fifteen jurisdictions allow alimony to the husband.

From the facts made obvious by his tabulations, Mr. Vernier makes recommendations for reforms, pointing out, however, the religious and sociological difficulties to such reform. The work is valuable not only as a guide to the present law, but also in indicating the need and possibility of reform.

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