American Family Law, by Chester G. Vernier

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Anglo-American law has never recognized a definite property right in a wholly scientific discovery. Heretofore a scientific discovery, which did not fall within the category of rights protected by patent and copyright laws, have been common property; and the discoverer could exact no compensation, legally, for the later use of such discovery, even tho it became the source of great profit to another.

The author has seen fit to approach the subject by first discussing the meaning and purpose of the term "scientific property," and then lay the historical foundation by referring to the discussions of the problem in the different nations, the League of Nations, quasi-intranational groups, and in books, including the original draft by the Experts Convention and the Debate in the League.

The second part of the work may be classed as the author's treatment of the topic including his solution. Here are set out the proposed principles of the proposition: the foundation and theoretic possibility of such a property right; definition of a discovery as here used; designation of the owner of the right (discoverer); person responsible to the owner; extent, nature and amount of the responsibility; a model procedure for the acquisition and control of the right. The latter is interesting in that it proposes a corporation to be maintained entirely for the purpose of acting as a go-between to the owner and the person responsible for the use of the discovery in affecting proper settlements as to the compensation. The discoverer's entire property right is based on the proper registration with the corporation, after publication. There is included also a discussion on the validity of the many objections that have been proffered by those opposing the recognition of property right in a discovery, and the elements of an international convention for the purpose of establishing this right.

There are three appendices devoted to articles and reports, by individuals and committees, on the problem.

The author, a member of Gray's Inn, London, has made an extensive study of the topic in the United States, England and on the Continent in producing this work, for which he was awarded the Charles C. Linthicum Foundation Prize by Northwestern University.

Indianapolis.

ALVIN C. JOHNSON.


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.

Of the Terre Haute Bar.

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