

PREFACE.

THE final form of this monograph is the result of a conversion. My study of divorce was commenced when fresh from the reading of philosophy in Germany, and a month or more passed in turning the leaves of Trendelenburg, Bluntschli, Stahl and the whole line of "Naturrecht" theorizers. Nothing was found to shake the conviction with which I started, that the policy of the Catholic church, refusing remarriage in all cases, is the ideal one for a state to adopt. Then I stumbled upon Bertillon's *Étude Démographique du Divorce* and, underterred by the columns of figures, read and reread it. My eyes were opened and, deserting the high *a priori* road of laying down what marriage and divorce ought to be, I betook myself to a patient examination of Mr. Wright's Report in the effort to understand what they are. My conclusions are contained in the following pages. In their present form, therefore, they are based on two books; their method is derived from Bertillon their data from Wright, and a critic must have keen eyes to detect in them any influence of the first six weeks' reading. If a similar revolution should be started in the mind of any reader by the facts here recorded, I shall be most amply repaid.

It is a cause of regret that I have been compelled so often to differ from, or criticise the results of, the able statistician at the head of the Labor Department. No one can value more highly the work Mr. Wright has carried to success in the face of numerous difficulties. The proof of my admiration, however, must be found in the weeks of toil I have profitably spent over the book rather than in any words of empty praise.

Some errors would be almost inevitable in reviewing so complicated a subject as the divorce legislation of the various states and the changes it has undergone in the past twenty years. If any such have been made by Mr. Wright, and as these pages are going through the press I have received some reason to believe that in the case of Vermont (§ 27) they have been, they will indirectly affect my results. In such cases my criticism would apply to Mr. Wright's evidence for the influence of legislation, and not to the facts. There is no reason to doubt, however, the correctness of practically all the statements of fact in the Report. For this reason, and because their verification would have been in many cases impracticable, I have not attempted it in any case.

In conclusion, I desire to express thanks for their courteous assistance to Dr. S. W. Dike, Secretary of the National Divorce Reform League, to the Librarians of Columbia College and the Massachusetts State Library and, above all, for frequent and full replies to all letters of inquiry, to the Hon. Carroll D. Wright, U. S. Commissioner of Labor.

W. F. W.

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