

# Planning For a Divorce

Many Methods Were Suggested, but None Found Satisfactory.

By WILLARD STOUTENBERG  
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I was a young law student twenty-three years old, studying in the office of Marbury & Slade. Mr. Marbury was an old friend of my father's, and I think he was quite fond of me. One day he sent for me to come into his private office, and I found him alone there.

"Frank," he said, "I can give you a chance to make \$500."  
Now, I was scraping along financially, trying to make ends meet till I could get my profession, and \$500 would be a great lift for me.

"How?" I asked eagerly.

"By taking a wife."

My delight vanished as quickly as it had come.

"There will be nothing to prevent your getting a divorce in time," he added, noticing my discomfiture.

"I don't think I would like to be tied up in such a matter at all. What does it mean?"

"It means that a client of ours, a girl of twenty-one, has inherited a fortune conditional upon her being married. Of course there is a time limit, and that time expires tomorrow at 12 o'clock noon. The young lady, Miss Irene Townsend, needs a man to marry her and, in consideration of an amount paid him, to leave her alone forever afterward. It wouldn't do to agree upon a divorce, because in that case I doubt if the marriage would be legal, but after the property is turned over to the heir I see no reason why one should not be obtained."

I thought awhile. There was a spice of romance in the matter that appealed to my youthful imagination.

"What kind of a looking thing is she?" I asked.

"On that score, my boy, you needn't trouble yourself. She is a very pretty woman and, moreover, of excellent birth and breeding, of which she is proud. She is the ward of an uncle who, I think, intends that she shall eventually marry some great catch, perhaps a British lord. All that's wanted of the first husband is that he may be relied upon after the marriage to keep out of the way and consent to a divorce when the time comes."

"How long have I to consider the matter?"

"You'll have to decide pretty soon. Miss Townsend must be married by tomorrow noon or lose a fortune. If you don't want the job some one else must be found to accept it. Think it over and let me know before I leave the office for the day."

I thought I would ask to see the girl I was to marry; but, considering that I was to be simply a husband to obviate a legal technicality, what need was there for me to see her? If she were attractive perhaps the less I saw of her the better. I waited till Mr. Marbury's hour for going home, and when he sent for me, before answering the summons, I flipped a coin to decide for me. "Heads I marry, tails I don't." Heads won.

I announced my decision to Mr. Marbury, and he told me the marriage would take place at the office the next day about 10 o'clock. Before going to my wedding I put on a frock coat and stuck a flower in my buttonhole; but, thinking this would appear as though I considered the affair a real wedding, I changed to my business suit and threw away the flower.

At 10 o'clock sharp I received a summons to go to Mr. Marbury's office. I found there besides Mr. Marbury a man in clerical dress, an aristocratic looking gentleman, very stiff, and reserved, who didn't deign to look at me, and my bride. It was all right for the others to treat the matter as a mere legal form, but the bride and bridegroom gave each other a quick look. I defy any man upon entering into such an arrangement to avoid beginning at once to play a game of hearts. At any rate, I did, and, always having found indifference to be the most powerful force to move a woman, I refrained from looking at Miss Townsend after the first glance. I cast my eye perfunctorily over the papers I was required to sign and, drawing my pen through the words "five hundred dollars," wrote "one."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" snarled the elderly gentleman.

"I have decided, somewhat late perhaps, that to accept money for such a service would demean me. I shall be happy to serve the young lady, but not for pay."

I was obliged to stand a good deal of abuse from the elderly gentleman, in which his ward took no part. But I remained firm, told them that there was still nearly two hours remaining in which to find a substitute, and since the person was to be simply a dummy it didn't matter who he was, provided he was not already married.

I also said that the one dollar paid me made the marriage a matter of bargain. There were reasons why a man who had been recommended as one to be relied on should be chosen. So after considerable discussion and a side conference between Mr. Marbury and the uncle it was decided to accept my conditions. Standing before the clergyman, Miss Townsend and I were made legal man and wife.

Miss Townsend was apparently well pleased with me so far as appearance goes and was decidedly preju-

diced in my favor by my firmness in refusing to take any pay for the service I was doing her. When the ceremony was over I resolved upon a bold stroke.

"There is one reward," I said to her, "that I would accept for becoming your provisional husband if you can find it in your heart to grant it to me."

The uncle knit his brow, and my wife waited to hear more.

"I have taken upon myself," I said, "a condition that will doubtless prevent me from marrying a real wife for a long while to come, and few girls care to marry a divorced man. I have done this to assure to you a fortune. It seems to me that the reward I ask, though to me it will serve as a pleasant memory connected with this episode, will not be much for you to grant. I ask one kiss from my provisional bride."

Her uncle made a step forward to interfere. My wife stood for a moment irresolute, with her eyes fixed on the floor, then slowly turned her face toward me. The movement was all I asked for. I bent forward and barely touched her lips with mine.

I turned my eyes from my bride to Mr. Marbury and saw on his face an expression of satisfaction. Then for the first time it occurred to me that in his mind there had been something more than making me a mere legal husband and that he was well pleased with the manner in which I had acquitted myself. Without another word to any one, without a glance at my wife, I went out of the room and, seating myself at my desk, dived again into my law books.

A year passed, at the end of which I received a letter from my wife. It began "Dear Sir" and ended "Yours truly." It said that in the matter of our bargain marriage she had placed herself in the hands of others, since she knew nothing of law or the fulfillment of it, with a view to inheriting an estate. She was now in possession of her property and was of age. She intended to manage the rest of the matter connecting her with me herself. There was now nothing in the way of getting the divorce, and she would be pleased to see me with regard to the obtaining of a decree. Above all things, she desired to work in harmony with me, since she had been informed that the matter could be thus far more satisfactorily handled. From what little she had seen of me she felt assured that I was a gentleman and would not stand in her way in becoming a free woman.

However we define love, its beginning is indefinable. A man, fancy free, may propose to a girl who is fancy free on the ground that she is not displeasing to him and their marriage will be an advantage. If she is accepted his feelings will go out to her as naturally as the tendrils of a vine and hers will advance to meet them.

I attribute to this fact my coming to love the girl I had married, and I reasoned that if she had been at the time of our marriage and had remained fancy free it was quite possible that something more than an ordinary interest in me might have been growing up in her. But I realized that our parts were reversed. I must be courted; she must do the courting. Any indication that I hoped to make our marriage a real one would be fatal to hopes I might have of doing so.

I replied to her letter that she was at liberty to take any steps her lawyers might advise to secure a decree. All I asked was that I might be put to as little inconvenience as possible, for my time was taken up in preparing for my examination for admission to the bar. I did not refer to her suggestion for a meeting.

She replied that, considering the fact that she was under an obligation to me for a favor, she desired an opportunity of thanking me personally therefor and on no account would she take steps for the divorce without my approval of the plan to be adopted. To hit upon a plan to which I would give my willing assent would require an interview.

So I called to see her. One thing I noticed especially. She was dressed in a very becoming costume. Since I could not make myself look beautiful, whatever I might wear, I concluded to put on something besides clothes, something that finds great favor with women. I displayed all the deference I could assume.

She could not conceal from me the fact that I stood in the position of something more than a mere legal dummy. Nevertheless she tried to. She outlined several plans her lawyers had sketched out for her by which the divorce might be obtained, but I objected to all of them on the ground that they might reflect upon her. I insisted upon assuming all the obloquy myself. But when it came to pointing out exactly how I was to do this I failed. I knew enough law to suggest the different methods that might be used, but I had not been studying my profession for the purpose of enabling a woman to divorce me, especially one from whom I had no desire to be divorced. The consequence was that after a conference lasting two hours I left her without our having made any headway.

I had many conferences with my wife on the subject of our divorce without finding a satisfactory plan. At last one evening when we were debating the matter at the door, just before my departure, in a fit of absent-mindedness I kissed her. She must have been equally absent-minded, for she received the kiss as a matter of course, not stopping in what she was saying.

Suddenly it occurred to both of us that we had given and received a marital kiss.

That ended the talk about divorce. Since it was raining hard I concluded not to go home till the rain let up a bit. I never went home at all.

## RING OUT THE OLD.

Ring out old shapes of form disease!

Ring out the narrowness of gold!

Ring out the thousand wars of old!

Ring in the thousand years of peace!

Ring in the valiant man and free,

The eager heart, the kindlier hand!

Ring out the darkness of the land!

Ring in the Christ that is to be!

—Alfred Tennyson.

## PUBLICITY.

Anything that will promote the confidence of the investing public is a good thing for business institutions. I know of no other one thing which would trend more in this direction than for the corporations to deal frankly and fairly with their stockholders by revealing their actual financial and physical conditions. Shareholders have an unquestioned right to know how the company in which their money is invested is being conducted and how the business stands. There was a time, not long ago, when officers and directors of corporations treated such organizations almost as their personal property. That day has passed.—Secretary MacVeagh.

## OBEEDIENCE.

Obedience is the grandest thing in the world to begin with. I do not think the time will ever come when we shall not have something to do, because we are told to do it, without knowing why. . . . The one essential of chivalry was obedience.—George Macdonald.

## COURAGE.

The soul, seared in its existence, smiles at the drawn dagger and defies its point.—Addison.

Cowards die many times before their death; The valiant never taste of death but once.—Shakespeare.

Courage in danger is half the battle.—Plautus.

Write on your doors the saying, wise and old, "Be bold, be bold" and everywhere "Be bold; Be not too bold!" Yet better the excess.

Than the defect; better the more than less; Better like Hector in the field to die Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.—H. W. Longfellow.

## DANGEROUS LIES.

That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies; That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright.

But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.—Alfred Tennyson.

## BUSINESS.

A big business country must have big business, and ours is the biggest business country in the world. Business depends upon the ease and quickness with which people can mingle and trade together. To stop the growth of business organizations is to stop the growth of the country. Service is the test of theories. Shall we go backward or forward? The price of the raw materials that go into wagons and agricultural implements has increased, while the price of wagons and agricultural implements has gone down, and at the same time those wagons and agricultural implements today are guaranteed. Politicians denounce big business, but ask the farmer if he is willing to go back to the blacksmith shop for his plows, harrows, wagons and reapers.—Albert J. Beveridge.

## FRIENDSHIP.

True friendship's laws are by this rule expressed—Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.—Alexander Pope.

## TIME FLIES.

We pass this way but once. We cannot retrace our steps to any preceding milestone. Every time the clock strikes it is both the announcement of the hour which we are entering and the knell of the one which is gone.—Chauncey M. Depew.

# LEGALLY HANGED

By CHARLES LEWIS PHIPPS

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"Which one of all your cases," I asked Wilcox, the celebrated criminal lawyer, "has most excited your interest?"

"That of Mathews, who was accused of murder."

"Was he innocent or guilty?"

"Innocent."

"Did you secure his acquittal?"

"No."

"Hanged?"

"Yes; legally hanged."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I'll tell you. Mathews was in the employ of Henderson, the man who was murdered. I don't care to go into the details of the case; I will only say that there was so much circumstantial evidence against him that from the first I despaired of saving his neck. I knew he was innocent, though he could no more explain the circumstances that pointed to his guilt than I could."

"How did you know he was innocent?"

"By both experience and intuition. I defy any of my clients to deceive me in this regard. I simply look them in the eye, and that tells me the story."

"There was everything about Mathews' case to interest me. He was a younger son of a British country gentleman and in love with the daughter of another British gentleman. His mother had no knowledge of his having been accused of crime, much less having been convicted, for I could do nothing to prove him innocent. He showed me his mother's letters, and it was distressing to read them. His betrothed was also writing him without any knowledge that he was under sentence of death. A week before he was to be hanged a letter from solicitors in England was handed him, informing him that a bachelor uncle had died and left him a large fortune."

"Upon my word! It was an interesting case, wasn't it?"

"I should say so. If ever there was a man who had everything to live for Mathews had. And to be judicially executed without ever having wronged any one in his life was simply awful. You have no idea how having a life on your hands wears on a man, and this case nearly drove me insane."

"But I braced myself for a gigantic effort. After conferring with Mathews I decided to cable the solicitors in England, giving them the situation and asking how much funds they could cable me within a few days. They placed £20,000 to my credit, and with this sum I went to work. There was no use in trying to secure delay or a new trial. What I must do was to interest the sheriff. I had a long secret conference with him, but could not move him to act for money, though I so far secured his judgment that he must do an official wrong in hanging Mathews that he consented to wink at any game I might practice, provided it could be kept secret."

"I got a friend of mine who was a professor in a medical college to apply for the body of Mathews as soon as he was dead. This enabled me to gain possession of the condemned man the moment the hanging was over. Then I 'fixed' every official who was to be present at the hanging. Mathews put in a request that there should be no spectators present. I could not even be present myself. But there was not one of the officials to whom I paid less than \$100,000, and the hangman got \$25,000. My friend the doctor was the only one present who got nothing. He had a coffin ready for the corpse as soon as it was taken from the gallows and a hearse to carry it to the hospital."

"Well, that night I went to the hospital and found Mathews locked in the doctor's room."

"But how was the hanging managed?"

"I don't know; I never asked. There were half a dozen men paid by the state to see that Mathews was hanged, and I paid every one of them—in all \$100,000—to go through the process without hanging him. All I know is that I paid the money and found Mathews alive in the doctor's room. Some burnt cork, a woolly wig and a suit of clothes procured from a Jew tailor fixed him so that no one would know him. I had a steering ticket for him in an outgoing steamer, and early the next morning he was on his way to England."

"He must have been very grateful to you."

"Grateful! I should say so. Before parting with me he made me promise that I would come over as soon as possible and see him. I couldn't go for a year, and then I found him in possession of £50,000 a year income and married to the woman he loved. He met me on the steamer, and the first thing he did was to impress it upon me that neither his mother nor his wife nor any one living except his solicitors knew that he was judicially dead in America. He had often tried to bring himself to unburden his secret to his wife, but had always failed."

"Mathews entertained me royally and begged me to suggest some way for him to pay the debt he owed me, even if it required every cent of his fortune. I assured him that I took more comfort in his case than in all the cases I had ever won, though I had lost it."

"After spending a month with him I left him to return. He could hardly bear to part with me and regretted that it wouldn't be safe for him to come to America or he would cross the ocean with me. He shed tears when I came away."

## MADE UP.



Miss Spite—There goes Kate Home-

ly. Miss Dig—Yes, she played the part of the heroine in the private theatricals at the church—

Miss Spite—Gracious! Did she have the face to play the heroine?

Miss Dig—No; but the costumer fixed one up for her.

## NATURAL DEDUCTION



Algy—What reason have you for thinking Miss De Wealth loves you, dear boy?

Freddy—Why, she called me a puppy the other day, doncherknow, and she's beastly fond of dawgs.

## IT DIDN'T GO



Freddy—Did you bet on the baseball game, Willie?

Willie—Why, I was going to, but when I offered to bet a husky fellow two ice cream sodas to a box of caramels he just gave me a rude stare.

## WIPE IT OUT



First Boarder—If there's such a thing as a towel trust, it ought to be crushed.

Second Boarder—Be better to wipe it out.

## PERSONAL QUESTION



"Say, Mister, ter decide a bet, how often does youse eat a day? I see sixteen times and Johnnie sez about ten!"

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