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A Study of The Divorce Theme As Used In The Novels of Major And Minor Authors During The Period 1920-1945

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A STUDY OF THE DIVORCE THEME AS USED IN THE NOVELS OF
MAJOR AND MINOR AUTHORS DURING THE PERIOD 1920-1945

being

A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Fort Hays Kansas State College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science

by

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Ethel Lee Simpson

9-1-47

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PREFACE

The scientific study of divorce is still in its initial stages. Sociologists have studied the problem and have made great progress in understanding it. Fiction writers, in presenting the problem through the more easily accessible method of the novel have reached and have influenced a greater number of people than have the long and difficult treatises of the scientists.

As a wife and mother I became interested in this most vital problem which has tragically broken so many homes. My purpose in making this study has been to ascertain the degree to which the authors are reflecting in the novels written during the years 1920-1945 the current social problem of divorce. I have evaluated the material in relation to first, the underlying causes of the divorce, second, the effect of the divorce upon the members of the family, and third, the attitude of the authors toward divorce.

Here we must differentiate between the real and legal reasons for divorce. Many sociologists have discussed this at some length and have found in their research that the real reasons for divorce are those tensions and irritations which make it impossible for a man and woman to "get along" within the bonds of matrimony. When a couple attempts to get a divorce, however, their pleas frequently bear little relation to the marital problems involved. If the only legal ground for absolute divorce is adultery, that charge will be made whether or not the defendant has in reality been guilty of adultery.

Because of the impossibility of reading all the fiction written in these years the total period was divided into five parts and representative novels were picked from each part. Those in which the divorce theme was discussed were kept for further study.

CHAPTER I

CLASSIFICATIONS OF STORIES READ ACCORDING
TO CAUSE AND DISCUSSION OF CAUSES

Divorce and separation are not new problems. There has always been difficulty in making the adjustments necessary when two people of different sexes and with different training attempt to live together under the conditions involved in marriage. Sociologists have studied the problem of divorce in an attempt to understand it and to find methods of preventing it. Novelists have also dealt with the problem.

In this chapter we shall discuss the novels of the last two decades by analyzing the divorce cases presented therein to ascertain the cause of the divorces.

Hutchinson in If Winter Comes,¹ 1921, portrays quite successfully the suspicious, jealous wife, who wrongfully accuses her husband of adultery. She acquired a divorce and the husband almost went insane with shock and worry. This type of woman is often seen in the divorce courts today.

In analyzing the divorce case in Sorrell and Son,² 1926, we find that not only sexual maladjustment but also the economic problem was given as a cause for the separation. It is a story about a veteran

1. Arthur Stuart-Menteth Hutchinson, If Winter Comes (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1921.)

2. Warwick Deeping, Sorrell and Son (New York, Grosset and Dunlap, [c 1926] .)

of the first World War who returned home to find that his wife had deserted him for a wealthier man. The separation of Sorrell and his wife during the long years of the war had been a factor in causing his wife to seek companionship elsewhere and, with all the younger men at the front, she came in contact with older and more successful men. Feeling the insecurity which accompanies a great war, she deserted her husband for a man who offered her financial security. In explaining the other reason for the divorce, Deeping says, "She was not a bad woman, only a highly sexed one, and Sorrell had never satisfied her sex and its various desires."³ The author here is plainly moved by the disrupting effect caused by the war on marital life.

In Kathleen Norris's book, The Love of Julie Borel,⁴ 1930, we find the religious factor causing a conflict in the marital relation. In this instance, the husband would not come over to the wife's faith, the Roman Catholic. According to her church law she wasn't married, because the marriage was performed by civil authorities. As a result, she never felt she had been married. They were divorced and she married a man from her own church. The accompanying chart, Religion and Broken Homes, made from a study by Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage, indicates that the greater

3. Ibid., p. 124.

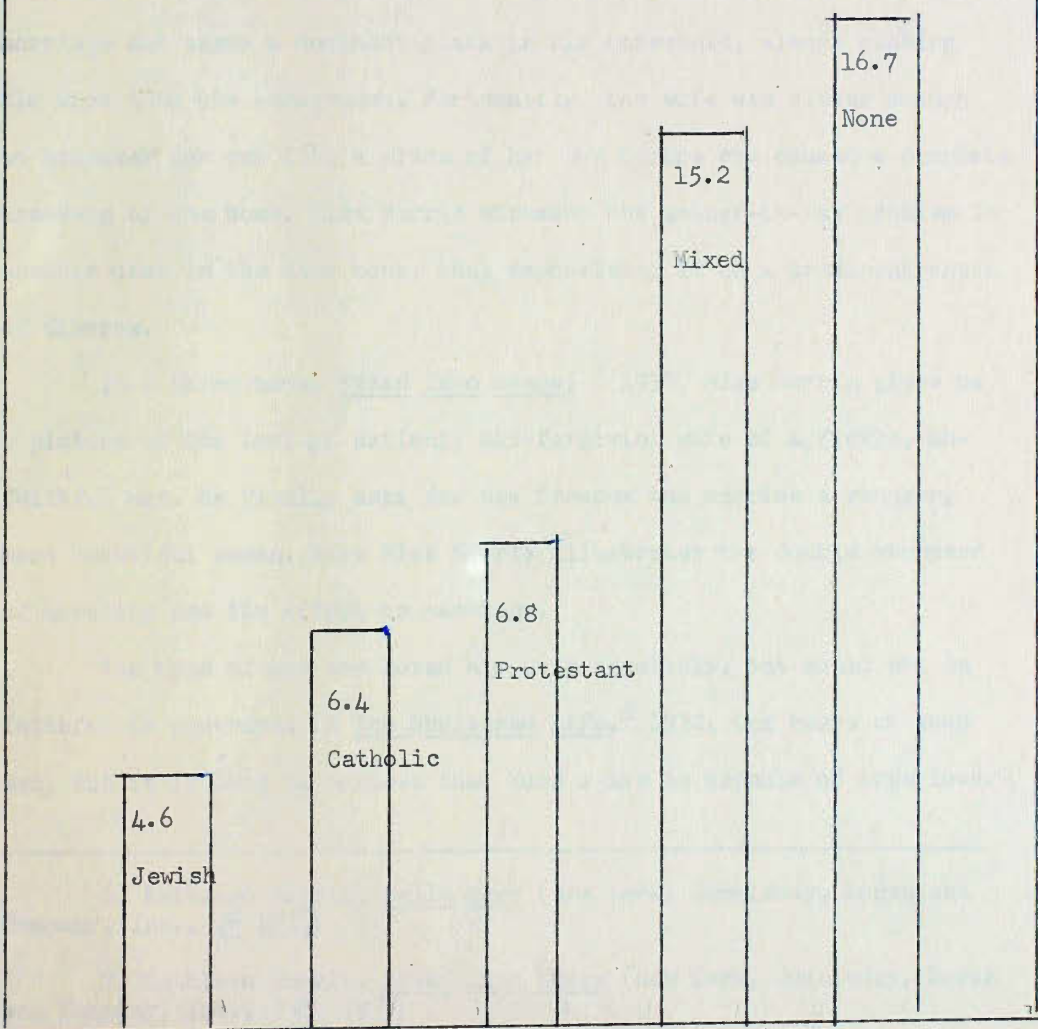
4. Kathleen Norris, The Love of Julie Borel (Chicago, A. L. Burt Co., [c 1930] .)

the similarity of religious background, the greater the possibilities of success, the greater the difference, the greater the risk of failure.⁵

5. Evelyn Miller Duvall and Reuben Hill, When You Marry (Boston, D. C. Heath and Company, 1945.) pp. 342-343.

RELIGION AND BROKEN HOMES

Percentage of homes broken by divorce, desertion, or separation in relation to religious affiliation of parents.



WHY THE LOWER RATE? COMMON BACKGROUND? RELIGION

From poster arranged by The National Forum
Source: "Youth Tell Their Story", American Youth Commission.

In Belle Mere,⁶ 1931, Miss Norris portrays the interfering mother-in-law as a cause for marital conflict. The mother of the husband is unwilling to relinquish her place in her son's life. Because of her selfishness, she continues to live with him after his marriage and takes a dominant place in his household, almost pushing his wife into the background. Fortunately, the wife was clever enough to maneuver her out into a place of her own before she caused a complete break-up of the home. Miss Norris stressed the mother-in-law problem in another case in the same book, thus emphasizing it as a prominent cause of divorce.

In a third book, Bread Into Roses,⁷ 1937, Miss Norris gives us a picture of the loving, patient, all-forgiving wife of a fickle, unfaithful man. He finally asks for his freedom and marries a younger, more beautiful woman. Here Miss Norris illustrates the double standard of morality and its effect on marriage.

The type of man who loved his wife devotedly, but could not be faithful is portrayed in The Sheltered Life,⁸ 1932. One hears of such men, but it is hard to believe that such a man is capable of true love.

6. Kathleen Norris, Belle Mere (New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., [c 1931]).

7. Kathleen Norris, Bread Into Roses (New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., [c 1937]).

8. Ellen Glasgow, The Sheltered Life (New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., [c 1932]).

This is another instance in which the author portrays the double standard of morality.

Desertion is the cause of divorce in Girlpower,⁹ 1946, and One Man Woman,¹⁰ 1932. The husband returns and asks forgiveness in the former and they are eventually reconciled. In the latter, the husband marries someone else and the wife attempts an unsuccessful suicide and becomes attracted to the doctor who saved her life. These are two typical cases taken from American life today.

Tomorrow's Promise,¹¹ 1938, by Temple Bailey is a picture of modern marriage as portrayed in the scandal sheet of newspapers today. Both parties lived only for the sensations and excitements of the moment, not thinking of the consequences. This couple separated after a period of sordid promiscuousness of both husband and wife, with little regard for the conventions. They felt that life had to give them everything and that nothing was required of them. When the young woman who was their daughter was told of the impending divorce she was horror stricken and said "I thought when people married it was - - forever."¹²

Her mother answered, "That's old stuff. Modern people look at things differently."¹³

9. Vida Hurst, Girlpower (New York, Gramercy Publishing Company, [c 1946]).

10. Vida Hurst, One Man Woman (New York, Grosset and Dunlap, [c 1932]).

11. Temple Bailey, Tomorrow's Promise (Philadelphia, The Penn Publishing Company, [c 1938]).

12. Ibid., p. 108.

13. Loc. cit.

This lack of moral standards and ruthless rush to the divorce court, regardless of the effect on the child, is becoming more and more accepted by society.

In The Blue Cloak,¹⁴ 1941, Miss Bailey touches on the problem again in showing the effect that divorce had on the child. We shall discuss this in a chapter on the effect of divorce on members of the family.

Faith Baldwin stresses drunkenness of the husband as an outstanding cause of family tension in Station Wagon Set,¹⁵ 1939. The husband finally realizes that his home and family mean more to him than his craving for liquor, so he cured himself of it and averted a crisis in his marriage. The organization, "Alcoholics Anonymous" is sufficient evidence that drunkenness is a current problem in America.

Sylvia Chatfield Bates, in the Floor of Heaven,¹⁶ 1940, gives us a case in which the wife, hearing of the husband's mistress, loses her love for him and becomes attracted to another man. A divorce was not necessary since the husband committed suicide because of his guilty conscience as a result of murdering his mistress without

14. Temple Bailey, The Blue Cloak (Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1941).

15. Faith Baldwin, Station Wagon Set (New York, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., [c 1939]).

16. Sylvia Chatfield Bates, Floor of Heaven (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, [c 1940]).

detection. This author shows the intricate mess that can come about as a result of extra-martial relations.

Mr. Skeffington,¹⁷ 1940, by Mary Russell gives a picture of the habitual promiscuous man. The wife left him after the seventh affair.

In The Heart Remembers,¹⁸ 1941, Miss Baldwin tells a story of a second meeting of two divorced people after ten years and the realization by both that they are still in love and are now emotionally mature enough to make their second attempt at marriage a success. Miss Baldwin brings about a reconciliation of the marriage partners in these two books, when in real life it would almost have been impossible to do so. In Station Wagon Set the husband committed an almost unpardonable offense by kidnapping his son, as a result of which the child acquired typhoid fever and was at the point of death. Not many wives would forgive such a thing.

Emile Loring in Stars in Your Eyes,¹⁹ 1941, brings out the financial independence of the wife as a cause of divorce. The bulk of the income was possessed by a selfish wife who craved adulation and when her husband became engrossed in his work to such an extent that she did not get all the attention she wanted from him, she left

17. Mary Russell, Mr. Skeffington (New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1940).

18. Faith Baldwin, The Heart Remembers (New York, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., [C 1941]).

19. Emile Loring, Stars in Your Eyes (Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1941).

him for a man with a title, who gave her the attention she desired. The author states through a leading character that, if the wife had been dependent upon her husband's salary, she would not have deserted family and home so indifferently. This is the typical rich man's divorce as illustrated in the newspapers today.

Fannie Hurst has said divorce is "sordid and ugly"²⁰ and in her book Lonely Parade,²¹ 1942, she gives a particularly sordid picture of it in which a woman left her husband to marry her stepson by a former husband. This is an unusual case but no less realistic because of it.

Lilian Van Ness in Again in October,²² 1944, has the husband analyze their marital problems in a letter to his wife. He believes that their tensions were caused by the exacting criticism of the husband by his wife as a result of which the husband was unable to be himself. The wife's vanity, in that she desired to be a wife of a man of distinguished caliber and unimpeachable moral integrity, was also a contributing factor. The cause of friction here is undoubtedly the too great expectations by a wife of what a husband should be. When he didn't come up to the standards she had set, she resorted to nagging until the husband became what is known as a "justifiable deserter." The wife had the romantic concept of marriage and could not face reality, a concept that has caused many divorces in the past two decades.

20. Fannie Hurst, Divorce as I See It (London, Noel Douglas, 1930).

21. Fannie Hurst, Lonely Parade (New York, Harpers and Brothers, [c 1942]).

22. Lilian Van Ness, Again in October (New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1944).

Sinclair Lewis gives us a complete case history of all the stages of bereavement that a divorced man went through when his wife left him for another man, in Dodsworth,²³ 1929. We shall discuss the effect of the divorce on the man in a later chapter. The wife's lover tires of her and she asks her husband if she may come back. They meet on a steamer and the husband, seeing that his wife still craves beaux and attention, tells her he's through with her. Here is another case of the rich man's divorce.

Cass Timberlane,²⁴ a novel of husbands and wives, published fifteen years later in 1945, is written in a more satiric, or cynical vein. The author seems to find something wrong with almost every marriage he discusses. The leading character is a Judge, whose wife left him for a wealthier man, and the divorce seems to have had an effect on his general outlook on life.

Lewis portrays the universality of the husband's taking "business" trips to Minneapolis, renting suites to which he brought women of thirty "who understood hard liquor and liked men" by saying that this was a part of the culture of Grand Republic, a city which in different dialects, has also been called Grand Rapids, Bangor, Phoenix, Wichita, Hartford, etc.

He gives an interesting character sketch of one Sabine Grossewahn, who "as soon as she had succeeded in the new feminine career of

23. Sinclair Lewis, Dodsworth (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, [c 1929]).

24. Sinclair Lewis, Cass Timberlane (New York, Random House, [c 1945]).

lucratively divorcing her husband, she returned to Grand Republic, where her wavy hair, delicate as a sea-shell, her sables, and her fifteen-hundred-a-month alimony were greater rarities than in Manhattan".²⁵ She built a house known as "Alimony Hall." It was said of Sabine that "so long as they did not attack her current young man, she was almost as willing to provide secluded rooms for her women friends and their affairs as for her own."²⁶

In describing Petal, wife of Benjamin Hearth, Lewis says she was "a slight, spectacled, prim-looking woman. She was also a dipsomaniac, a drunk and a dirty drunk, but to the end Benjamin never acknowledged this."²⁷

When the Judge hears that his second wife is unfaithful, he explains in a discussion with a friend two attitudes concerning adultery: "to believe that adultery is the only form of disloyalty that matters and she ought to be smashed for it; or to have this new-fangled idea that it doesn't matter at all, that infidelity is all good fun between friends."²⁸ These attitudes are indicative of the hypocritical society of today and Lewis certainly does a good job of putting it into words.

A frustrated wife goes to her doctor and asks him "Are there-

25. Ibid., p. 170.

26. Ibid., p. 172.

27. Ibid., p. 203.

28. Ibid., p. 203.

uh-places where women can go, as there are places where men go?"²⁹ The doctor very virtuously answered in the negative and said that was a problem she'd have to work out by herself. In this case, Lewis was showing another cause of divorce, sexual incapability. This book has painted a graphic picture of our changing culture in relation to marriage and its many problems. Lewis seems to have greater insight into marital problems of the present day than most writers and his descriptions of characters are written very cleverly.

John Marquand gives us a typical case from World War II in Repent in Haste,³⁰ 1945. Daisy becomes engaged to a former sweetheart while her husband is overseas. Her first child is just a few months old when she becomes pregnant again by her former sweetheart. A friend of the family is chosen to tell the husband the news of the divorce. The boy takes it indifferently for he hadn't been home for such a long time that it seemed just as though it had happened to some one else. In this book Marquand portrays one of the many domestic tragedies which occurred as a result of the war.

The Glass Crutch,³¹ 1945, paints a picture of alcoholism and its disintegrating effect on the home and business life of a man. After his separation from his wife, the husband finally found a man who

29. Ibid., p. 307.

30. John Marquand, Repent in Haste (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1945).

31. Jim Bishop, The Glass Crutch (New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945).

helped effect a cure of his drink habit. By this time, both the husband and wife were interested in other people and did not wish to try marital life together again. In this novel, as in Miss Baldwin's Station Wagon Set, the alcoholic problem and its accompanying disorganization is stressed.

The husband in The Red-Haired Lady,³² 1945, is a psychopathic case, in that he did things by impulse and wearied of an undertaking before he had achieved any solid result. He eventually became indifferent and deserted his wife. The added responsibility of the coming of a baby resulted in the husband's break for freedom. This is illustrated in the reports of deserters, in that the husband invariably deserts after the wife becomes pregnant.

Some authors do not say more than a sentence or two about the divorce. Louise Baker, in 1946, gives her story a humorous twist in talking about her divorce from a British professor of English in an American University in Out On A Limb. She said, "I'd worn a ring on my finger and a ring in my nose so long, freedom didn't feel comfortable."³³

Brideshead Revisited,³⁴ 1946, stresses the age-old conflict of religious differences - the Catholic marrying a non-Catholic. In this story as in The Love of Julie Borel the wife gives up her chance

32. Elizabeth Corbett, The Red-Haired Lady (New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945).

33. Louise Baker, Out On A Limb (New York, London, Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., [c 1946]), p. 164.

34. Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1946).

for marital happiness for her religious belief. Julie, the Catholic, said that she could not shut herself out from His mercy (meaning God's mercy), and that she could not live without God in her life.

Cristine Weston in The Dark Wood,³⁵ 1946, relates a story of a marriage ending in divorce as a result of the second World War. The wife could not remain faithful while her husband was overseas, but she slept with him the first night he returned because she didn't want it on her conscience that she had refused him. This is another example of a war being a contributing factor in divorce.

Thus we find that these novelists have given as causes of marital tensions and conflict, the same as those that sociologists have found to be the causes of divorce in case histories of actual people.³⁶ A list of the causes are: religion, interference of mother-in-law, financial tension, unfaithful husband or wife, financial independence of the wife, both partners unstable, alcoholism, psychopathic husband, jealous wife, sexual incapability, and the romantic concept of marriage.

Elliott and Merrill³⁷ list as causes of family tensions or marital conflict: psychopathic personalities, economic, economic independence of the wife, interference of in-laws, sex incompatibility, and vicious habits.

35. Cristine Weston, The Dark Wood (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946).

36. Joanna C. Colcord, Broken Homes (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1919).

37. Elliott and Merrill, Social Disorganization, (Revised Edition, New York, London, Harper and Brothers [c 1934, 1941]). pp. 710-754.

Why would these novelists devote their time to stories of marital conflict? Is it because they are reflecting the conditions of society as they see it today? Literature is a reflection of life and these novelists are no exception. They, like Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, are portraying the conditions of society as these conditions occurred in their lifetime. Divorce has progressively become a greater problem of society and novelists have been using the divorce theme more frequently as a result.

Of the books written in 1921 only one was found to use the divorce theme. In 1926 another book on this subject was published. In the period from 1929-31, four books used this problem. From 1932 to 1941, nine books, concerning the divorce problem were written and from 1942-46, ten more books were written. Thus, in the five year period from 1942-46, the same number of books were written as in the previous ten year period from 1932-1941, inclusive.

Statistics on the marriage and divorce rate from 1921-45 are as follows:

TABLE I

| Year | Marriages | | Divorces | |
|------|-----------|----------------|----------|----------------|
| | Number | Per 1,000 pop. | Number | Per 1,000 pop. |
| 1921 | 1,163,863 | 10.7 | 159,580 | 1.5 |
| 1922 | 1,134,151 | 10.3 | 148,815 | 1.4 |
| 1923 | 1,229,784 | 11.0 | 165,096 | 1.5 |
| 1924 | 1,184,574 | 10.4 | 170,952 | 1.5 |

Year Marriages Divorces

| | Number | Per 1,000 pop. | Number | Per 1,000 pop. |
|------|-----------|----------------|---------|----------------|
| 1925 | 1,188,334 | 10.3 | 175,449 | 1.5 |
| 1926 | 1,202,574 | 10.2 | 180,853 | 1.5 |
| 1927 | 1,201,053 | 10.1 | 192,037 | 1.6 |
| 1928 | 1,182,497 | 9.8 | 195,939 | 1.6 |
| 1929 | 1,232,559 | 10.1 | 201,468 | 1.7 |
| 1930 | 1,126,856 | 9.2 | 191,591 | 1.6 |
| 1931 | 1,060,914 | 8.6 | 183,664 | 1.5 |
| 1932 | 981,903 | 7.9 | 160,338 | 1.3 |
| 1933 | 1,098,000 | 8.7 | 165,000 | 1.3 |
| 1934 | 1,302,000 | 10.3 | 204,000 | 1.6 |
| 1935 | 1,327,000 | 10.4 | 218,000 | 1.7 |
| 1936 | 1,369,000 | 10.7 | 236,000 | 1.8 |
| 1937 | 1,451,000 | 11.3 | 249,000 | 1.9 |
| 1938 | 1,330,780 | 10.3 | 244,000 | 1.9 |
| 1939 | 1,403,633 | 10.7 | 251,000 | 1.9 |
| 1940 | 1,595,879 | 12.1 | 264,000 | 2.0 |
| 1941 | 1,695,999 | 12.7 | 293,000 | 2.2 |
| 1942 | 1,772,132 | 13.2 | 321,000 | 2.4 |
| 1943 | 1,577,050 | 11.8 | 359,000 | 2.6 |
| 1944 | 1,452,394 | 11.0 | 400,000 | 2.9 |
| 1945 | 1,618,331 | 12.3 | 502,000 | 3.6 |

38. Statistical Abstract of U. S. 1944-45. (Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census.) Marriage and Divorce in the United States, 1937 to 1945. (Federal Security Agency, U. S. Public Health Service Nation Office of Vital Statistics).

In comparison, the number of novels written on the divorce theme remained stationary at one or two a year from 1929 to 1939, then it rose steadily until in 1942-1946, when there were ten written. As the divorces increased noticeably, the books written on the problem increased also.

CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION OF THE EFFECT OF THE DIVORCE
ON MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

An analysis shows that the disorganization subsequent to divorce contains two main categories. The first is the estranged husband and wife; the second includes the children, the innocent victims of this unhappy process. The children's maladjustment is sometimes less readily recognized than that of their parents for they are obviously less articulate. But the resulting disorganization is nevertheless far reaching in its effects.

Elliott and Merrill ¹ in a chapter called "After Divorce" discuss the effect of the divorce on the divorcee. They trace the period of the most dramatic shock from the moment of final separation and believe that this situation has a much higher traumatic content than the divorce itself, which often occurs months or even years later. In many respects this shock is very similar to that of bereavement. Elliott and Merrill list the primary effects of bereavement as follows: "(1) abandon, (2) refusal or rejection of the facts, (3) preternatural or detached calm, (4) neurological shock, (5) exaltation, (6) self-injury, (7) repression, (8) self-blame or blame of others, (9) intense grief."²

1. Elliott and Merrill, Social Disorganization (New York, London, Harper and Brothers, Publishers, revised edition [c 1934, 1941]), pp.755-784.

2. Ibid., pp. 759-760.

These authors give the later effects of bereavement as follows:

"(1) escape from the conflict by some unnatural means as drink, drugs, etc., (2) defense and repression, (3) compensation, (4) masochism, or frantic and exhibitionary expressions of grief, (5) identification with the deceased, "stepping into his role," (6) transference and substitution of affection to some new love object."³

These pathological symptoms of bereavement are not necessarily exhibited following divorce. The marriage relationship is obviously severed in an entirely different way by the two crises. Hence the divorced husband or wife may attempt to escape by the use of drink or drugs; he or she may erect elaborate defense mechanisms and compensatory devices to restore his or her shattered self-respect. On the other hand, it is scarcely probable that the divorcee will assume the role of the estranged mate or attempt any identification with him or her. The nature of the mental conflict determines the character of the subsequent emotional reaction.

. . . In at least one respect, the after-effects of divorce may be even more demoralizing than those following the death of a loved one. In most communities the "sod" widow or widower is an object of solicitude; after a "decent" interval either may remarry with the complete sanction of the mores. But in many rural areas and even in some urban communities the unqualified carte blanche to remarry is denied the divorcee. No moral turpitude is attached to death, an "act of God". Divorce, on the other hand, is a deliberate act of a perverse free will which denies the fundamental admonition - "Whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder." Hence the divorced person is still anathema to many righteous citizens, and his or her readjustment problems are immeasurably complicated, by that fact.⁴

While ~~children~~ children are not always involved in divorce cases, where there are children the effects on them are very often disastrous.

3. Ibid., pp. 760.

4. Loc. cit.

The personality of the child, developing normally in a typical American environment adopts into itself in a vital way both the father and the mother. The emotional development of the child links him normally in close bonds with the parents. Moreover, the idea-pattern of a family which is accepted among the child's playmates, teachers and other associates takes for granted having a father and a mother of whom one is proud, with whom one maintains relationships of love, trust and intimacy, and on whom one can depend for advice, economic support, and moral backing.⁵

"The tragic effects of marital conflict on children constitute powerful arguments for preventing and curing the conflict itself, rather than merely attempting to forbid the final legal recognition of the family disruption."⁶

Temple Bailey gives us an illustration in The Blue Cloak⁷ of the demoralizing effect of her father's divorces on a young girl. She says to her young lover,

Nothing lasts. Not love, or marriage - or anything. Look at my father. He's been divorced twice since my mother died. That was my childhood - adjusting myself to one woman and then another until Aunt Di rescued me. I only go to Daddy and his new wife when I need money. I wouldn't go then, but Aunt Di isn't rich and can't pay my expenses.⁸

Miss Bailey again stresses the effect of the divorce on the child in her book Tomorrow's Promise. The child is a young girl and

5. Hornell Hart and Ella B. Personality and the Family (New York [etc.] ; D. C. Heath and Company, [c 1941]), p. 276.

6. Ibid., p. 278

7. Temple Bailey, The Blue Cloak (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941).

8. Ibid., p. 147.

she is completely disorganized by the shock when her parents tell her about the divorce, and she refused to live with either parent. One day she said, "I shall never marry. I'd be afraid. Even if I should want it, don't ever let me marry, Vicky."⁹ The young girl viewed the Hewitts, a normal family with no neuroses or complexes. She told herself "It would be wonderful to be a mother like Mrs. Hewitt."¹⁰ She had never thought it would be wonderful to be like Elinor, her own mother.

In The Glass Crutch the effect on the child was that of shock and intense grief. He ran screaming to the nurse, "It's all over now! It's too late! Daddy is never coming home. Never -- never -- -- never!"¹¹

In The Red-Haired Lady¹² the child became very badly spoiled by too much attention from its mother, who substituted the child for its father and loved it almost to the point of abnormality. When the mother's brother pointed out to her the permanent disastrous effect that this abnormal situation might have upon the child, the mother consented to her brother's making a home for the child by rearing the boy with his children in a normal family group. Thus the mother was deprived of her child because of the divorce.

9. Temple Bailey, Tomorrow's Promise (Philadelphia, The Penn Publishing Company, [c 1938]), p. 115.

10. Ibid., p. 162.

11. Jim Bishop, The Glass Crutch (Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945). p. 240.

12. Elizabeth Corbett, The Red-Haired Lady (Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945).

In Sorrell and Son the child meets his mother, who had deserted him when he was a child, for the first time at the age of sixteen, and tells his father, "I want her to know - what sort of friends you and I are. It's fair to her in a way, isn't it, pater? I don't look upon her as my mother. I never shall." ¹³ Thus Christopher went to visit his mother only because he wished to tell her that his father came first in his life and the resulting emotional scene with his mother coloured his experience with other women. Thereafter he avoided women who showed signs of trying to submerge him in an emotional storm.

In Stars in Your Eyes ¹⁴ the child was unhappy because her brilliant and beautiful mother had given her an inferiority complex. Her mother firmly implanted in her daughter's mind, the belief that she was plain and uninteresting. The child's mother deserted both her husband and child just as the child was reaching adolescence, a time when she needed the companionship and guidance of a mother.

In Belle Mere, ¹⁵ in the second divorce case, the divorced woman neglected her child after the divorce, and not only discussed the father's faults in the child's presence, but also said he was his father's double. She scolded and raved at the child saying, "That's

13. Warwick Deeping, Sorrell and Son (New York, Grossett and Dunlap, [c 1929]). p. 215.

14. Emile Loring, Stars in Your Eyes (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1941).

15. Kathleen Norris, Belle Mere (Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., [c 1931]).

your father's sulks in you, sir, and they're going to be whipped out of you, if it kills me."¹⁶ This had the effect of making the child over anxious and apologetic, which would eventually develop into a neurosis.

The effect of the divorce on Louise Baker was one of great emotional upheaval, because she was still in love with her husband. Her sense of humor came to the rescue, and she remarked that as a result of this marital problem she had discovered that no one dies of a broken heart. "Put together and given a reasonable rest cure, an old ticker will get you into almost as much fascinating trouble as a brand new one."¹⁷ Louise had the additional handicap of a physical handicap; she had lost a leg in an accident in her childhood. Her parents had trained her to consider this handicap as a normal development in her life, and, as a result, her emotional balance was better equipped to handle a personal crisis than the average person.

The second divorce case in Tomorrow's Promise¹⁸ stresses the influence of the divorce on the husband. His wife had charged him with mental cruelty. This had the effect of humiliating the husband. She had called it that because he would not give up his career as a

16. Ibid., p. 248.

17. Louise Baker, Out On a Limb (New York, London, Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., [c 1946]), p. 61.

18. Bailey, op. cit.

writer to go on a continuous social merry-go-round. The husband could have brought counter-suit, with plenty of damaging evidence, but he was glad to be rid of her.

The shock of the news that her husband was leaving her just a few months before her baby was to be born left the woman in The Red-Haired Lady¹⁹ in a highly emotional state. He said he would always love her, but that they were never meant to marry. All this, when he had been the one who had insisted so strongly on marriage in the first place. When she heard from him that he had acquired a divorce in Paris, she still had not recovered enough to take the news calmly.

Deeping portrays a disillusioned man in Sorrell and Son, who felt that his wife's desertion labelled him a shabby failure. He felt bewilderment and a sense of bitter wrong. As for his attitude toward women, I think Deeping put it very aptly: "Women! How through he was with woman! " ²⁰

Girlpower²¹ is an example of the wife who had put all her life into her home and husband, and when he left her she had no substitutes or other interests to help her over the crisis. She moped and mourned until a girl friend told her she should grow up and realize that there were other things in life besides love. She got the divorce as her husband requested and attempted to find new interests. She heard of a British refugee child whose parents had been killed in the

19. Elizabeth Corbett, The Red Haired Lady (Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945).

20. Deeping, op. cit. p. 5.

21. Vida Hurst, Girlpower (New York, Gramercy Publishing Company, [c 1932]).

war and adopted him. By thinking of someone less fortunate than herself, she forgot her own troubles and found that life still had potentialities of happiness for her.

In One Man Woman²² the wife nourishes a hope that her husband will return, and they can still keep the marriage intact. He still took her out occasionally to some night club to dine and dance. Then one night he told her that he was marrying someone else, and she attempted suicide. The doctor, who saved her life, was a handsome young man to whom she transferred her affections.

Hutchinson in If Winter Comes²³ shows a man so overcome by the fact that his jealous wife was suing him for divorce on the ground of adultery, that he became very ill. He had not committed adultery, but circumstantial evidence was so incriminating that his wife was granted the divorce. His best friend's widow helped him over the crisis and he later married her.

Dodsworth²⁴ by Sinclair Lewis is an illustration of our previous statement that the shock after divorce is very similar to that of bereavement. First there is the shock and disbelief. Then he grieved so intensely and went through such agony for the loss of

22. Vida Hurst, One Man Woman (New York, Gossett and Dunlap Publishers, [c 1932]).

23. Arthur Stuart-Menteth Hutchinson, If Winter Comes (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1921).

24. Sinclair Lewis, Dodsworth (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, [c 1929]).

his wife, that he wandered for months with utter abandonment and at last sought escape through drink. In the end he transferred his affection to a new love object and was restored to normal as a result.

Emilie Loring in Stars In Your Eyes²⁵ gives only a small portion of a paragraph to a description of the effect of the divorce on the deserted husband. She says, "He's roaring like a lion this morning. The Missus' lawyer has served notice that the divorce is final." Here is evidence of great emotional turmoil as a result of the divorce.

The divorce in Repent in Haste²⁶ is important in its utter lack of effect on the husband. He had been overseas for such a long time that his marriage didn't seem real to him. "You see, it doesn't get me," Boyden said again. "It's just as though it had happened to some other kid. It was so long ago, do you see? Some other kid, not me. So much keeps happening. They really run you ragged in this war."²⁷

In Belle Mere a divorcee is described: "She seemed strangely changed, strangely shrunken, from the old, lovely gracious Florence Jackson."²⁸ She says in discussing her divorce: "I want to tell you;

25. Loring, op. cit.

26. John Marquand, Repent in Haste (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1945).

27. Ibid., p. 151.

28. Kathleen Norris, Belle Mere (Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc, [c 1931]). p. 248.

divorce is hell for a woman! I fainted, fainted twice, the day I applied for mine. They had to help me out of court " "I cried - - literally I cried for days. My divorce was no joke to me. . . . " 29

The divorcee advises her friend: ". . . No matter what happens, don't get a divorce. You think it's revenge - - it's nothing. You're nowhere." 30 In this case, the adverse effect of the divorce caused the divorcee to wish she hadn't sued for a divorce.

In Bread Into Roses 31 Miss Norris describes a woman who was shaken with the most violent grief she had ever known when her husband left her.

Miss Weston 32 illustrates a case in which the child is used as a pawn to get the divorce. The husband consents to give his wife grounds for divorce, if in return, his wife's lover will insist that she return the child to its father. What a tragic situation this is!

Why would these authors emphasize the intense grief of the partners, and the tragic effect upon the children, if it was not for a definite purpose? It is my contention that these authors are convinced that the conflicts of marital life should be prevented or cured.

29. Ibid., p. 249.

30. Ibid., p. 252.

31. Kathleen Norris, Bread Into Roses (Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1937).

32. Christine Weston, The Dark Wood (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946.)

As philosophers on life, they are presenting the ill effects of marital conflict and divorce in an attempt to show people what they will have to face when they start divorce proceedings.

CHAPTER III

THE ATTITUDE OF VARIOUS AUTHORS TOWARD DIVORCE

Warwick Deeping, an English novelist, said in 1930, "It is just because marriage transcends mere physical contact and the sex spasm - and is at its best a contact of minds and temperaments and ideals - that it presents to those who have preserved in comradeship a permanency that is far more beautiful and satisfying than any come-and-go-as-you-please arrangement."¹ By this statement, Deeping has made clear to us his belief in the sanctity of marriage as a lasting and permanent institution.

Warwick Deeping tells us that Sorrell and Son² was a product of the war. He said that Sorrell was a real person, and the manner in which he presents the divorce situation leaves no doubt in our mind that he dislikes divorce. Sorrell and Son is Mr. Deeping's most successful and widely read novel. The significant problem of the book is the relations between father and son, and the divorce is therefore not high-lighted. It is a part of his life that Sorrell wishes to put behind him.

Mr. Deeping says that he has had some success and a good deal of happiness, and can charge it to his parents and especially to his

1. Warwick Deeping, Divorce As I See It. (London, Noel Douglas, 1930). p. 54.

2. Deeping, Sorrell and Son (Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1921).

wife, who has been the sort of comrade a man dreams of and so rarely finds.³ We can see by this statement that Deeping had a happy marriage and that his purpose in writing about divorce was to show its evils to the world.

Temple Bailey, an American popular novelist and writer of short stories, was born in Petersburg, Virginia, of Massachusetts ancestry. Miss Bailey is unmarried, a Republican, a Presbyterian, and a member of the Chevy Chase and Arts Clubs in Washington, as well as the Authors Club in Boston. There is a probability that Miss Temple, too, saw in actual life the characters she portrays in The Blue Cloak⁴ and Tomorrow's Promise.⁵ She has said at one time that she was afraid that stories of young married people, which is the idealistic presentation of young love, were out of her metier.⁶ Her portrayal of marital conflict certainly shows the worst consequences of divorce, which seems to say for her that she does not condone divorce.

Faith Baldwin in Station Wagon Set⁷ and The Heart Remembers⁸ has both the marital partners reconciled, even though it seems very

3. Stanley J. Junitz and Howard Haycraft, Twentieth Century Authors, a Biographical Dictionary of Mod. Lit. (New York, H. G. Wilson Company, 1942). p. 361.

4. Bailey, op. cit.

5. Bailey, op. cit.

6. Junitz and Haycraft, op. cit., p. 61.

7. Baldwin, op. cit.

8. Baldwin, op. cit.

improbable that they would have done so. In the latter case, the divorced couple had been separated for ten years when suddenly, miraculously, they were both working for the same business concern and had business contracts which brought them together and they remarried. In Station Wagon Set the drunk estranged husband kidnapped his child, and it became ill with typhoid fever, almost dying, but still the wife forgave her husband and they faced life together again. This is indicative that Miss Baldwin is definitely against divorce.

Jim Bishop wrote a biographical novel, The Glass Crutch,⁹ of William Wister solely to help persons addicted to alcohol overcome this dreadful habit. If it had not have been for this habit, acquired at an early age, there would have been no divorce in William Wister's life. It seems that this book would have a tremendous response from confirmed alcoholics who see no solution to their problem. The divorce is incidental in the story, except for the emphasis that is put on its effect on the child.

Elizabeth, author of Mr. Skeffington,¹⁰ was the pseudonym under which Countess Mary Annette (Beauchamp) Russell wrote. Her first husband, Count Von Arnim, a grandson of Prince Augustus of Prussia, nephew of Frederick the Great, died when the youngest of her five children was only six. Later in life she married John Francis

9. Bishop, op. cit.

10. Russell, op. cit.

Stanley Russell, second Earl Russell, but they were separated three years later and she returned to Switzerland. Elizabeth referred to this period as "years of deep sorrow, of acute misery". They are reflected to some extent in her novel Vera (1921), one of her most brilliant and acidulous performances. She said, "Perhaps husbands have never altogether agreed with me. It did in fact take the Great War, and a second husband to make me really grow up."¹¹ This unhappy second marriage perhaps had some bearing on the fact that she portrayed the divorce problem in some of her books. She might have had a bitter feeling on divorce as a result of her own experience with it, but she seemingly lays the blame for her marital conflict at her own door.

Sinclair Lewis has been divorced twice. His first wife was Grace Hegger. They were divorced in 1925. In 1928, he married Dorothy Thompson who divorced him in 1942. Miss Thompson received custody of their son, Michael. Mr. Lewis is not at heart a reformer; he is only presenting a picture of American life as he sees it, and appears to be surprised when it outrages the people it portrays.¹² He portrays the divorce problem accurately as a result of his own experiences and his cynical approach to divorce may be a result of these experiences. He shows the evils of divorce, though seemingly approves of divorce in his own life.

11. Junitz and Haycraft, op. cit., p. 61.

12. Junitz and Haycraft, op. cit., pp. 821-822.

Evelyn Waugh, English novelist, satirist, biographer and writer of travel books was born Evelyn Arthur St. John Waugh in London. In 1928, Waugh married the Honorable Evelyn Gardner, daughter of Lord Burghclere. They were divorced in 1930, the same year he was received into the Catholic Church.¹³ Since Brideshead Revisited¹⁴ stresses the religious conflict in a marriage, he may be writing of his own experience in that book. He seemingly condones divorce and remarriage, because he married Laura Herbert, youngest daughter of the late Colonel Hon. Aubrey Herbert, M. P. in 1937, seven years after his divorce was final.

John Phillips Marquand married Christina Davenport Sedgwick of Stockbridge, Mass., in 1922, and they had a son and daughter. They were divorced in 1935; two years later Marquand married Adelaide F. Hooker, and they have a daughter, born in 1940. Constance M. Fiske says of J. P. Marquand, "he can sum up any situation or personal equation with incisiveness, with tenderness, and always with a strong flavor of that disturbingly amusing cynicism that is Yankee humor."¹⁵ It was probably the sardonic side of his humor that led him to remark on one occasion that he had only three friends in the world - - and two of them didn't like him! It is with this

13. Ibid., p. 1483.

14. Waugh, op. cit.

15. Junitz and Haycraft, op. cit., pp. 912-913.

amusing cynicism that he writes the book, Repent In Haste.¹⁶ It seems shocking to us to have a character say that she became engaged to some one else while her husband was overseas. We are prepared to sympathize with the husband, but he surprises us by taking the news of his wife's unfaithfulness calmly and indifferently. Marquand thus seems to approve of divorce as an accepted method of dissolving unsatisfactory marriage contracts, not only in his personal life, but also in the lives of his fictional characters.

Miss Norris has solved the marital problem of the most important character in Belle Mere¹⁷ and has described in an unfavorable light the two divorces. This seems to be proof enough that Miss Norris does not think that divorce is the solution of the problems arising out of the marriage situation. To make my point stronger, I find that the wife in Bread Into Roses¹⁸ gives her consent to a divorce only after much persuasion. When the divorce was found to be invalid and it was left up to her to secure the divorce, she refused to get it. In The Love of Julie Borel¹⁹ a divorce is acquired only because the wife did not believe that she was actually married according to the laws of her church. Thus, we seem to have sufficient evidence that Miss Norris disapproved of divorce. In addition, she attempted to portray it in as

16. Marquand, op. cit.

17. Norris, op. cit.

18. Norris, op. cit.

19. Norris, op. cit.

unfavorable a light as possible, so the world would see the unpleasant aspects of it, such as its effect on the child and other members of the family, and govern their lives accordingly.

Miss Loring also illustrates her disapproval of divorce by displaying the unpleasant results of divorce in Stars in Your Eyes.²⁰ Both the child and the husband were adversely affected.

Miss Bates shows causes for divorce, but makes it unnecessary by having the offending partner commit suicide. She illustrates the unpleasant aspects of extra-marital relations rather than of divorce. It is difficult to tell from this just what her attitude toward divorce is.

The fact that Louise Baker²¹ remarried after her divorce is sufficient argument for her approval of divorce.

Fannie Hurst has said that divorce is "sordid and ugly"²² and illustrates this in her book Lonely Parade.²³ This leaves us no doubt of her disapproval of divorce.

Miss Glasgow²⁴ causes the husband to commit suicide rather than go through the ordeal of divorce, when his wife learns of his infidelity. So we can safely say that Miss Glasgow disapproves of divorce.

20. Loring. op. cit.

21. Baker, op. cit.

22. Fannie Hurst, Divorce as I See It. (London, Noel Douglas, 1930)

23. Hurst, op. cit.

24. Glasgow, op. cit.

Vida Hurst is another author who seems to disapprove of divorce. The parents of the wife attempt to persuade her that she should take her husband back in Girlpower²⁵ and she becomes reconciled with him. In One Man Woman²⁶ she pictures a deserted wife who could not interest herself in anyone else, but lived from day to day on the hope that her husband would return to her, and even goes to the lengths of attempting suicide when she learns that he has remarried.

We can put Lilian Van Ness in this group also, because in Again in October,²⁷ she reunites the marriage partners after many years of separation.

It is difficult to say whether or not Miss Weston²⁸ approves of divorce. In her book, both parties remarry and are seemingly none the worse for the divorce, but the manner in which the child is used to acquire the divorce would ordinarily have a bad effect upon the child in real life. It also has a tendency to give us a feeling of revulsion that two adults could use a child for their own selfish desires. Miss Weston has perhaps drawn this from life to show what some people will do in a divorce situation, but it gives us no inkling of the attitude she has toward divorce.

Thus, we have the attitudes of some of the authors used in this study as reflected in their books, their personal lives, and personal comments.

25. Hurst, op. cit.

26. Hurst, op. cit.

27. Van Ness, op. cit.

28. Weston, op. cit.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The novel has long been an instrument of social purpose. In the beginning of prose fiction writing, the various aspects of the social, economic, political and religious life of the people were recorded. Some writers thought the picture of the contemporary life was important for its own sake. Others made the contemporary manners, dress, and customs subjects of satire or ridicule. However, to a great many novelists, the problems of their fellowmen were objects of study and the stories they wrote were preachments on a particular social, religious or economic problem. Dickens recorded London poverty and satirized a society that permitted its existence. Thackeray ridiculed the foibles of the early 19th century manners and customs. Others wrote of various phases of society and suggested reform or, at least, a new idealism.

When psychology and sociology were made separate fields of study in the late 19th century, novelists attempted to diagnose the social ills of society. The novels of James and Galsworthy were very exact studies of psychological and social problems. Others studied family progress through several generations to show a particular cause of social disintegration. By the end of World War I in 1918, novelists were ready to attack all problems with vigor. It is at that point that I started my study of divorce in the novel.

In this thesis, I have attempted to show family disorganization and the various factors and phases of it as caused by divorce. Furthermore, I have attempted to show how the novelists have reflected the rise of the divorce problem and have philosophized upon the seriousness of the divorce situation. The attitudes of the writers have reflected, seemingly, the general attitudes of the people and the changing culture of the nation.

Among the causes of divorce, I found that these novelists recorded most frequently infidelity, interference of the mother-in-law, alcoholism, psychopathic personalities, sexual maladjustment, and the financial independence of wife. These causes coincide with those found by social workers in case histories of actual people. These novelists have seen these marital conflicts and have recorded them in the hope that other people will be guided into finding a happier solution for their problems. They have shown especially the tragic effect of divorce upon children in order to warn parents that they should think seriously before ending their marriage. The children may be unhappy and maladjusted for the remainder of their lives as a result of their parents' inability to adjust to each other. These authors have shown the worst aspects of divorce, not only as seen in the lives of other people, but also as experienced by the authors in their personal lives. The attitudes of the authors vary according to the intensity with which divorce has affected their own lives. When a divorced person writes a story using the theme of divorce, he may treat it as a matter-of-fact situation, or as a great crisis affecting his or her whole life. Sinclair Lewis, twice divorced,

treats it as a serious problem in his book, Dodsworth, but fifteen years later in Cass Timberlane, he portrays it as a daily occurrence and as a situation to be accepted. Thus, we see the changing attitudes of authors in their lifetime.

As a whole, it would seem, that these writers are deeply affected by divorce as they have seen it and wish to influence the behavior of the masses against it.

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