Antoinette Torrey Correspondence

Antoinette Walker Torrey 1899-

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Mrs. Torrey was born in Bangor Maine, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George P. Gould. She was graduated from the University of Maine where she majored in economics and a year later she married Norman Torrey. Two years after her marriage she was left a widow. She has two children, a son and a daughter and is at present a resident of Bangor.

Adapted from:
BANGOR DAILY COMMERCIAL
February 13, 1941

TONI TORREY
February 20, 1941

Mrs. Norman E. Torrey
9 Poplar Street
Bangor, Maine

Dear Mrs. Torrey:

When we observed the recent notice in the Bangor Commercial about WISDOM FOR WIDOWS, we were delighted -- not only for the interest inherent in your book, but also because we may welcome the addition of another name to Maine's literary roster.

Please add our congratulations to those of your many friends, and be assured that we wish WISDOM FOR WIDOWS a most gratifying reception. Our policy is to purchase all non-fiction by Maine authors, and we shall include this title on our next order from our bookseller. Its unusual title and subject matter we feel certain will fill a need in the ranks of books of a similar nature; and it will doubtless be read with eagerness by many.

At present we write regarding the Maine Author Collection, which, it is possible that you already know, is an exhibit of about a thousand volumes, comprised mainly of inscribed presentation copies. These books are written by Maine people, and are for display purposes only.

The value of such a collection is immediately apparent, for present interest and future worth. It represents an impressive contribution to the literature of our country by Maine people, and we are proud to add your name to the ever-increasing list of writers of this state.
We also gather all available biographical, critical and photographic material about our authors. Inasmuch as we lack this sort of data about you, we shall have to appeal to you for assistance. Perhaps you will be so kind as to use the enclosed return envelope to send us information for our files, at your convenience.

We hope that the Maine Author Collection may be privileged to include an inscribed copy of WISDOM FOR WIDOWS on its shelves. You have our good wishes for a most successful continuation of a literary career so auspiciously launched.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj
Encl--1
Feb. 27, 1941

Dear Miss Jacobs,

Your very nice letter was forwarded to me. I am on a little trip — continuing business with pleasure. I shall be very glad to send you an uncompiled copy of my book — and I will also send some duplicated biographical publicity.
Please extend to Miss Stuart my sincere congratulations on her appointment.
I do not know her personally but I have heard a great deal concerning her qualifications. I am extremely interested in women's activities and am always so delighted when their work is recognized.

Sincerely yours,

Antoinette Towne
9 Blair St.
Bangor, Maine
April 16, 1941

Mrs. Antoinette G. Torrey
9 Poplar Street
Bangor, Maine

Dear Mrs. Torrey:

When WISDOM FOR WIDOWS, simply and effectively inscribed for the Maine Author Collection, came to us this morning, we had not yet received the copy which we had ordered for lending purposes. It was therefore with great eagerness that we unwrapped the package and first enjoyed the opportunity of giving our attention to your arresting pages.

You are exceedingly kind to include the reviews, and we doubt that we can better the words of the approving critics. Certainly WISDOM FOR WIDOWS is an unusual book, and one which demanded writing by a woman thoroughly conversant with the subject and its complexities by reason of experience. You have accomplished this with tact, honesty and friendliness, and are to be congratulated.

Part of your reward will naturally come from the satisfaction of a difficult task well done, and also the knowledge that this wisdom must help other widows.
In connection with the Maine Author Collection, we maintain a file in which we gather all sorts of data about our authors. We have the reviews of your book; newspapers fortunately have yielded photographic material; the book jacket says you were born in Bangor, Maine, and if we ask you for a date we shall perhaps be considered unduly persistent. It is, however, only for the collection of complete information, and if you care to make this additional fact available, we shall be most appreciative.

Please accept our very sincere thanks for your generosity and interest, and our unfailing good wishes for what seems to be a success already assured to WISDOM FOR WIDOWS.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

BY

SECRETARY

hmj
Encl--8¢ postal refund
Dear Mrs. Jacob,

Thank you for your very gracious praise of my book, Wisdom to Widows.
I am sincere in my desire to have it.

Toni Torrey
a help to all women — as well as widows. And the men seem to be just as enthusiastic — claiming that it can be most valuable as a reference book — as naturally I am delighted that it is being so well received.

I was born in Bangor, Maine, July 12, 1889. George and Lydia Sturtevant are my parents. The former is Clerk of the Courts in Penobscot County. I attended the local school and was graduated from the University of Maine.
1923, I was uncertain how you wanted the ink searched - to the library or the Author's Collection. I expect to see in the library sometime this summer and will gladly make any desired alterations.

Cordially yours, Toni Torrey
How Widow Can Become a "New Woman"

BOSTON SUNDAY HERALD—February 16, 1941

By Herbert Allen

Widow was a woeful little woman. She obscured herself in clouds of black tulle long after the first edge of her grief had dulled. She turned her life from left and right to her affairs to be had in her bereavement. She insisted on keeping her husband's favorite chair in the middle of the living room but would not allow anyone to use it. She made the worst of her sudden disability and dramatic role instead of the best of it.

She was very "dated" about it all.

If she had consulted Tom Torrey—and many widows do not have shed her widow's weeds so soon as presently possible; she would have submerged her emotions by the busiest of straightening out her affairs; she would have got a little armchair to the attic—or started an antique shop with it.

Mrs. Antoine T. Torrey of Bangor, Me., was left a widow herself 25 years ago, when she was examining the position of widowhood in America. She decided that something had to be done about it.

So she did it herself.

This is not a success story—quite yet—but an anecdoteful of discoveries of one widow who will have a mind to a neglected problem and found that she could help bereaved women as well as herself.

NOT UTTERR CALAMITY

"Widowhood is not utter calamity," she says. "It can be made the open door to development. A widow can become a new woman."

Her advice starts with that of the family physician or clergyman leaves off with the need of some activity that will occupy the unhappiness of the mind. The possibilities which she suggests inspire only widows but other women who are married.

"Every year there are 400,000 women plunged into grief in the United States," says Mrs. Torrey, "if only our cultural and benevolent suggestions do not encourage more."

Mrs. Torrey was fortunate, when she faced a lonely future, to have the confidence of encouragement when they need never overlook the encouragement of genuine research. She sought out what was naturally in store for widows—and discovered that it was last enough.

There has been or less tum with her in this country in the position of working women generally. In many cases married women have not been on the ground of employment. The opportunities for widows have been as nearly as possible, the same. They were to be plied but not placed.

"I wanted to find out the ability of the individual woman to learn and keep on learning after going through marriage and bereavement. At first it was to solve my own problem, and the first people I read up on psychology and other subjects which seemed pertinent and consulted other widows."

But something was wrong. Widowhood seemed to be accepted as an end of everything instead of a beginning.

To tap the subconscious attitude of men and women toward these problems that tap the subconscious desire for a word game to be suggested at every favorable opportunity. It would go something like this:

"Everybody write down the first attitude that comes to you when you read a word, Mrs. Torrey would say, and as the party pence scribbled she would slip the word in to the other suggestive words she dictated."

Most of the time the first response was a mere cerebral expression, from it was not black' it was 'money' or some other suggestion of financial troubles.

Never, certainly hardly ever, did the word "widowhood" get anything remotely connected with happiness. Not a very encouraging indication is that the word "widow" suggests anything particularly must prepare for a change.

WIDOW MUST PLAN

She surveyed the situation deeper and framed her first finding.

"You'll find widowhood a lot different from your grandmother's. If your grandmother remained a widow for one day or more in one of America's cities, you would not find a mere recipient for the sympathetic gestures of the public. If you remain a definite factor in the domestic life you are one of many. When you have a home and a place to speak of widows and past, American widows have seldom been weaklings, even when it was not black' it was 'money' or some other suggestion of financial troubles.

"Having been spoiled by fate dodge your feet to keep you going. If you can find a prospect for a time, you're not a day's work is going to keep you going. If you can find something to which you are attracted, it adheres to a purpose. The one thing you want is within your reach, even if for the moment you are not satisfied."

When the nation appears to be floundering beneath an unwieldy load, its leaders must tap every bountiful suggestion which they term a 'plan.' To think of a woman who has just written a book on every type of work and is looking for a nursing home."

Modern widows must begin to keep them from thinking about the idea of a year's work or "settle" for something else. Accepting the inevitable, not as defeat, but as only a part of her life; to work; to plan a life alone.

"In the beginning it was part of a volume of detailed advice which was published yesterday by E. H. Dutton and Company under the title, 'Widowhood.' In the Bangor widow has combined advice on how to make the most of one's personality, how to make contacts by which to build a new circle of friends, how to face it, must, to marry again.

"I wish a book like that had been written 14 years ago," says Mrs. Torrey, "and I hope it will do as much for other widows as it might have done for me. I had to write it. Not because I am a authority, but because my mind has bubbled and boiled with suggestions of widows long enough.

"One of my sisters in bereavement, when she custom to write them a letter of sympathy, I wrote a book about it, expressed her feelings this way, 'Thank you so much for reminding me of the human side of widowshood,'"

Mrs. Torrey, who hedge and dodge the question, "What's the future?"

"Widowhood is not utter calamity," she says. "It can be made the open door to development. A widow can become a new woman."

ANTOINETTE TORREY was left a widow at 26 but did not let her sorrow keep her from developing her talents until she becomes an adviser consulted by other bereaved women.

"Some, like Mary O'Sullivan, reach the top. She was left a widow with three children and began her career as a floor housekeeper in a New York hotel. Now she is in the executive position in one of the city's largest hotels."

Mrs. Torrey does not scoff at the common expedients of taking runners or "selling." But she says, "I really make the most of any occupation one ought to study it. A landlady, for instance, would do well to learn whom she can mother and whom she can't—success in selling requires that one know her good."

A comfortable little antique shop has started in the living room when a restless widow tired of dusting grandpa's whale oil lamps.

The initiative which she urges all widows to develop served Mrs. Torrey well 14 years ago, when her husband died suddenly leaving her with one child and about to have another. When a combination of pneumonia and other ailments threatened, the young widow closed her apartment and tackled the job herself. "Now that you are a widow, money will be no problem. You can make money. A eal planner will have a new meaning. While you're married you'll find it futile to develop. You can develop interests."

Every woman, she declares, can add to her new meaning. While you're married you'll find it futile to develop. You can develop interests outside her home. Not only is she a better wife—more interested in the home—she knows the value of making money. A real planner will have a new meaning. While you're married you'll find it futile to develop. You can develop interests.

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Bangor Woman’s Book To Be Released Friday

“Wisdom for Widows” by Toni Torrey Contains Sound Advice Written in Practical Manner Which Should Be of Interest to All Women; New Avenues Open for Woman With Courage

Courage, caution, and resourcefulness should be the back-log of widowhood according to advice of Mrs. Antoinette Torrey of Bangor in her book, “Wisdom for Widows,” which will be released by E. P. Dutton and company on Friday. This first book by Mrs. Torrey is written in a friendly manner with a background of actual experience which equips her to discuss the intimate question of widowhood.

The book, which deals primarily with the problems that confront widowhood, is one that should appeal to all women as it contains frank advice which women in general could use with profit to themselves, their family and friends. Mrs. Torrey has been a wife and is the mother of two children, and her observations on these two estates of woman are worthy of consideration.

Mrs. Torrey writes under the name of Toni Torrey.


Sunday afternoon, from 3 to 5 o’clock, Mrs. Arno C. Savage and Mrs. James P. Quine will entertain at the home of the former, 92 Norfolk street, at a tea honoring Mrs. Torrey, invitations to the affair having been issued.

The book contains 12 chapters in which the problems of widowhood are discussed from an intelligent viewpoint and suggestions made as to how to overcome the obstacles which follow woman when her life is suddenly changed from that of a, in most cases, sheltered wife to that of being alone with financial, social and personal adjustments to be made.

Mrs. Torrey advocates facing the facts and proceeding with caution, but points out that “widowhood need not be an end but a beginning of a life of greater usefulness and service.” The author writes in an easy-to-read style that is coupled with subtle humor and her advice is not veiled—she advocates a “backbone” instead of a wishbone, 3, or 6 o’clock is to flower into a richer life instead of one marked by self-pity. The writer advocates a plan of life and admonishes that one must look forward, not backward, and “keep busy.” She devotes one chapter to the management of when comes to many widows for the first time in their lives. The probation of the widow, the procedure when there is no will, investments and so on are discussed in an interesting and informing manner by one who has traveled the road herself. At this point, she warns against discussing one’s financial status, even with friends. “Just because people want to know how much you have inherited, don’t be too revealing with your income. You’ll never regret those things which you do not divulge,” she says.

Another chapter is devoted to every which widows may earn their livelihood—excellent suggestions which could be followed by any woman regardless of her marital station in life. “The door of opportunity is rarely closed to those who want to turn the knob and force their way in. Opportunities will vary with the years, but as some fade into oblivion, others will be made for and by you,” Mrs. Torrey points out.

The relationship between the widow’s mother and her children is analyzed from a broad viewpoint by Mrs. Torrey and much of this information could be utilized by any mother regardless of their marital station in life. “The door of opportunity is rarely closed to those who want to turn the knob and force their way in. Opportunities will vary with the years, but as some fade into oblivion, others will be made for and by you,” Mrs. Torrey points out.

The establishment of a home, interest in community affairs and politics, self-improvement, companionship, hobbies, and yes, love, again are all considered in this worthwhile book, which all will be able to utilize by any mother, especially those mothers who are prone to suffocate their children with too much love. The author advises discipline but also points to the need of understanding and sympathy for the child’s emotions. Guidance of the child, and his education are discussed in a straightforward manner.

Advice to the widow is given. She is told to launch out on some venture or other with a definite need for marriage as such. In appealing to widows Mrs. Torrey says, “The past, whatever it held, is behind you, the present is upon you, but the future is yours to do with as you will. Why not meet it with a heart more understanding, more sympathetic and a will more determined because of your adventure in widowhood?”

The book is filled with sane advice which should appeal to all women as it might have done for me,” says Mrs. Torrey in discussing her book. "I had to write it, not because I am an authority but because my mind has bubbled and boiled and personal adjustments to be made, coupled with personality is personal appearance, a capacity for love, and Mrs. Torrey feels that interest every woman.

"You’re in the marriage market again. You’re foot-loose and free and ready for love—maybe. It’s up to you,” explains Mrs. Torrey as she goes on to explain that re-marriage does not mean that one has forgotten a husband removed by death, but rather that she has a definite need for marriage as such.

The book has many incidents drawn from personal experiences and those of widowed friends. Because the facts are laboratory tested as it were, the author knows the pitfalls which lie ahead for the young widow, the things which she is prone to do and should not do, and the avenues which lie ahead for her in the making of a richer life—hers for the asking.

Mrs. Torrey dedicates her book to her father and mother, Mrs. and Mrs. George P. Gould of Bangor, and to her husband’s parents.

"I wish a book like this had been written 13 years ago. Perhaps it will do as much good to other women as it might have done for me,” says Mrs. Torrey in discussing her book. "I had to write it, not because I am an authority but because my mind has bubbled and boiled and immediately her life goes on trial. Will it make or break her? She alone can decide. I married the year after I left college. It was fun starting together. "We both loved people—we lived being with them. But it was over for him in two short years. I felt it was over for me, too. My son was a little over a year old; my daughter was born six months later,” she explains.

For the woman living alone was once required when she lived the life of a married woman. The author compares the difference as that of “from duet to solo.”

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Toni Torrey Gives Valuable Advice in "Wisdom for Widows"

BANGOR DAILY COMMERCIAL, Feb. 13, 1941

BANGOR Woman's Book to Be Released

By E. P. Dutton for Publication Friday; Already in Second Printing

"No one has written about what they talk enough about," says Toni Torrey, author of "Wisdom for Widows" which E. P. Dutton and Company will release for publication Friday. "The first one, intended for widows, the married or unmarried woman will find in it considerable material of value. It should "prove a boon to every woman who must stand alone." "Wisdom for Widows" is already in its second printing.

"Brain Child"

Mrs. Torrey has divided her "brain child" into a number of parts, each dealing with different aspects of a widow's life.

She writes on making the best of one's judgment. She urges the widow to look forward instead of backward and to keep busy. Discussing management of finances, a subject of which many women are totally ignorant, the author solves the many unpleasant situations with good common sense and warns of snares and deceptions.

"Pleasures of the Mind" Here the author expresses her opinion, which is an ageless one, of "new food for your mind;" something "on which it can develop." Learning is something, the author says, for which one is never too old. Widowhood offers more time for education, reading and many other intellectual improvements of the mind which give you the chance to do this.

Mrs. Torrey has also written of "Love Again—Perhaps." This the author has left more or less to the individual, but she divulges several bits of good philosophy, valuable even for the unmarried woman.

In closing the author has left a warm spot in the reader's heart, for here the future offers a challenge. "The past whatever it held is behind, the present is yours, but the future is yours to do with as you will."
How Courage and Common Sense Enabled Her to Write a Challenging Book

By Antoinette Torrey
Author of "Wisdom for Widows"

A Challenge to All Women

As my work progressed I realized that my book would be a challenge to all women as well as widows. I found that most of us use the same silly excuses for restricting our possible development, while we hide behind the same sagging props trusting to luck that they will hold us up with a minimum of effort. Of course all women who desire progress must expect to make adjustments. My eyes did not fail to scan the married contingent. They could gain so much if they would only peek at what might be around the corner for them. In most cases they were characters coupled with their more or less happy lives as married women have much to do with their own reaction to widowhood. In fact, the attitude of married couples toward each other is vitally important in preparing the women for the possible prospective state of bereavement toward which, willy-nilly, a large per cent of them are headed.

I worked day and night shaping ideas into written words hoping they could be of benefit to those who groped and fumbled unable to find the right route to richer living. Just because widowhood is a complex affair I saw no reason for treating it gravely. I much prefer a light touch whenever possible, so I applied it to my writing. I made no effort to defend widows or their sex. Why should I? It is opportunities they seek, not apologies. It was impossible to take either myself or my work too seriously—even if I had wanted to. Life throbbed impatiently about me. I worked in a whirlwind of activity. A mother of modern children can know little else, thank goodness! Amid such dynamic reality I created Wisdom for Widows, and when it was complete I recalled those words of Tennyson, "What was once to me mere matter of fancy now has grown the vast necessity of heart and life." (Wisdom for Widows, by Toni Torrey. $2.50.)
Antoinette G. Torrey Has Book Coming Out
BANGOR DAILY NEWS, Feb. 13, 1911
Publication Has to Do With Widows, Their Problems, How to Rise Above Them and Readjust Life to the New Situation; Bangor Author's First Book to Appear in February

"Widowhood is not a calamity; it can be made an open door to development," says Mrs. Antoinette G. Torrey, widow of Norman E. Torrey, who will have her first book out in February. E. P. Dutton and Company of New York publish Mrs. Torrey's book, which deals not only with widowhood but womanhood in general.

Mrs. Torrey believes that adversity of any kind can be a stepping stone to a better life. In her book she offers information which will assist widows in adjusting themselves to their new status; information which will also help other women to rise above their particular adversity and make for themselves a richer existence.

Widowed when very young with one child, and another yet unborn, Mrs. Torrey finds herself as she terms it, "floundering" for time. From her own experiences and personal observations of other widows she writes, giving advice on how to meet the problem of widowhood and its challenges of aloneness, and, in many cases, self-support. "So many times when friends of mine have lost their husbands, they have written to me asking for advice—advice from me because I could understand their problems, having faced them myself. Because of these many letters I first began thinking about putting something of the things I had learned, many through mistakes, on paper and about three years ago I commenced work on the book," she explains.

Written with the human interest angle always in mind, Mrs. Torrey has woven a great deal of humor into her book. The sound advice is mingled with many amusing situations. It is the "helping" type of book. That is, it is written in the same vein as "Wake Up and Live," and "Live Alone and Like It." The publishers are most enthusiastic, as it is the type of book I wish I had when I was first widowed," says Mrs. Torrey, who believes that it can show others how to avoid some of the mistakes frequently made.

She believes that people are kinder when you need them and that for this reason widows are off-center of the great deal of assistance that is not always good for them because, unless they guard against it, they may find themselves wrapped in a garment of self-pity that is deadly.

She believes that widows have a distinct place in society. "They have had the experience of many—many—episodes which may have made them wish to keep to the needs of a husband, to be ready to receive him after a hard day's work and aid him in the direction of family life; but they have not experienced the adjustments which are part of married life; therefore widows are uniquely different. The married woman has the experience of association with other married couples and after the adjustments to the widow she finds herself near the extra woman and must make her own place. How can she do this gracefully and bumptiously and remain in the tapestry of her life is told in Mrs. Torrey's book.

Mrs. Torrey believes that people in general are never quite neutral in their thinking about widows—some look on them with a sort of despair while others always think of them in terms of the Merry Widow. A divorce can always mean she may have made a mistake but widowed is something you have nothing to do about, it is an experience in life that is taken out of your hands," she points out, as she explains the point of view in the strain of women without husbands.

In the opening of the book Mrs. Torrey declares the fact that widows must face facts. They have met with a loss and there is nothing they can do to change that fact. "How life looks to us when we are 60 years old depends much on what we make of life up to that time, and that is one reason why I believe it is essential for every woman to prepare herself for those later years."

She points to the importance of women friends and remarks that a married woman's friends must naturally be those which appeal to the heart of her husband. But the widow may choose friends because she herself likes them and is interested in the things they are interested in, talking about and doing. "Friend-
April 26, 1941

Mrs. Antoinette G. Torrey
9 Poplar Street
Bangor, Maine

Dear Mrs. Torrey:

Thank you very much indeed for sending us exactly the information which we needed to make our files complete. As for the inscription in WISDOM FOR WIDOWS: we have no requirements whatever about inscriptions. What delights us is the individuality of each author's inscription, and yours is quite fitting. Please do not think of making any alterations in it.

Of course you are pleased by the reception which the book is enjoying. It is a justifiable pleasure, and we are glad indeed that WISDOM FOR WIDOWS is having a measure of the praise it merits.

Our thanks again go to you for your generosity and cooperation, and our continuing good wishes for this and other books that should come from so able and discerning a pen.

Very truly yours

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY

hmj

SECRETARY
February 9, 1942

Mrs. Antoinette G. Torrey
9 Poplar Street
Bangor, Maine

Dear Mrs. Torrey:

This is simply a note of congratulations, because we have read a newspaper paragraph which says that your WISDOM FOR WIDOWS is to be translated into Portuguese. This is indeed good news, and we wish it continued success in its new form.

Very truly yours

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