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Crimes and Criminals, by William A. White

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BOOK REVIEWS

Crimes and Criminals. By William A. White. (Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. 1933. Pp. viii, 276.)

The criminal law necessarily includes the study of criminology and penology. These systems have as their objective the apprehension, conviction, and restraint of criminals. Their purpose is the protection of society, and their ideal, justice. This book has as its purpose the injection into the criminal law the thought that scientific treatment of the accused will promote the insurance of justice. The author, an able and experienced psychologist, presents an argument for the psycho-analysis of the individual criminal.

The early chapters of the book are dedicated to the study of psychology and its relation to crime, discussing the abnormalities which make it impossible for the afflicted to refrain from the commission of certain crimes. A chapter is devoted solely to "Insanity and Crime" These first chapters convey the idea that the standard of "responsibility for the act" should be extended so as to include all crimes and not restricted to the more infamous crimes. The author persists that one does not have to be insane (as the concept is commonly used) in order to be irresponsible. This is presented not as a defense for the act, but as a reason for a more scientific system of trial and punishment, favoring the curative rather than the retributive. The modern system of punishment, including capital punishment, is emphasized as obsolete and frustrative of its purpose (the protection of society). The author views the penological system as antique, suggests modifications, and indicates the tendencies and future possibilities. The concluding chapters are devoted to illustrations which tend to prove the author's argument for the consideration of individual differences in the administration of the criminal law.

To the lawyer, judge and student interested in the administration of justice this book, written in a style approaching the narrative, will be interesting and helpful.

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