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An Introduction to Criminal Justice, Text and Cases by Orvill C. Snyder

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This is a stout, solid, handsomely bound volume by a professor in the Brooklyn Law School, in a series of works on different phases of the law, all of some interest to public-minded citizens. It appeals largely to the practicing lawyer who delights in fine, even subtle distinctions in certain matters in the law—often distinctions that only a lawyer needs or wishes. The matters here considered are ones not often treated in a single textbook. This is particularly the case with the long chapters on Acts and Omissions and on Facts Negating Liability. Early chapters on punishment and crime take on more of a philosophical tinge; and though not easy reading, can be of profit to the general reader. The treatment of historical developments here is of no little value. There are thought-provoking chapters dealing with such matters as crime not essential for individual harm, liability for acts of another, acts on boundary lines, double jeopardy, and kindred topics. The remainder of the book is concerned with the discussion of half a dozen particular crimes—larceny, assault, robbery and extortion, burglary (and related crimes), homicide, and conspiracy. Wherever the trained lawyer turns in these chapters, he will find an endless variety of distinctions as between different matters.

The volume is fully documented, perhaps to an extent not desired by the general reader but of importance to the lawyer who insists upon the carrying of distinctions to the nth degree. This is mostly done in citations in footnotes; at the same time there are ample illustrative cases in the text, perhaps necessary food for the lawyer, but sometimes trying to the patience of the layman.

In the work in general there is careful reasoning to show how different details or aspects of given crimes are to be distinguished—reasoning that will be appreciated by the lawyer whose practice embraces the kinds of crimes considered. But lawyer or not, whoever will give his full attention to what is being treated will be rewarded by the discovery of how intimately crime in its various guises is linked up with human habits and emotions.

Possibly if the work were shorter, here and there a little more condensed, with fewer footnote citations and illustratives cases, it would have deeper interest for the man who is concerned with crime, but
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whose approach to the subject is not that of the lawyer—but it is just the lawyer who might not want it different.

The work is supplied with an index, perhaps the only part of the work that could well be enlarged.

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A dictionary for accountants is something new. It indicates that the business—or should we say profession—of accounting has acquired a language of its own. Four hundred and fifty pages are found necessary to define and explain terms that have acquired meanings peculiar to accounting during the rapid development of this field in recent years. Words taken from everyday language, the author points out, have acquired a technical usage at the hands of accountants. Since legislation and court decisions have been very much influenced by this language of accountants, these accounting concepts are of very great interest to lawyers and judges, as well as “economists, engineers, business executives, investors, government officials, and students of accounting and business.”

At the very beginning the reader is told that of the 2275 entries in the book, only 620 are single words. The remainder are phrases and word combinations. Among these 620 we find such words as break-even, carryover, cutoff, markon, and writery. Words that are usually hyphenated have dropped the hyphen in the language of the accountant. We find coinsurance, intercompany, oversubscription and preaudit used. We also see the hyphen used to join words that are ordinarily written separately. Thus we find here such terms as profit-and-loss, single-entry bookkeeping and long-term lease. Then there are single words as strange to us as many of those used in crossword puzzles. Take the word “abscissa”, for example. There are terms that may require two or three pages to explain, and even the use of illustrations. “Arithmetic mean”, “balance of trade”, “breakeven chart”, “coefficient”, “consolidation policy”, and “correlation table” may be cited as instances. Even six or more pages may be required to explain such terms as “depreciation”, “fund”, “logarithm”, “overhead”, and “standard cost”.