

inches into the abdomen. Dr. Quinton, in his interesting little book on Crime and Criminals, records an instance of a prisoner who, merely to spite his gaoler, smashed his own thumb by putting it into the hinge of a jointed table, and forcibly raising the flap. No one denies that criminals as a whole are characterized by an astonishing lack of sensibility, both physical and mental. Condemned men often spend their last night in comfortable sleep, and walk to the scaffold with no sign of trepidation. The fallacy of reading into others the same motives and feelings as animate ourselves is productive of endless mistakes in interpreting human character. The calmness of men on the point of execution has long bewildered the world, from the time of Plato onwards. We are, perhaps, less astonished at the coolness of Socrates, since we are apt to regard philosophers as somewhat inhuman. Montaigne was struck by the indifference of condemned men. I quote, with modernized spelling, from Florio's translation of the essay "That the taste of goods or evils doth greatly depend on the opinion we have of them:"—

One who was led to the gallows desired it might not be through such a street, for fear a merchant should set a sergeant on his back for an old debt. Another wished the hangman not to touch his throat, lest he should make him swoon with laughing, because he was so ticklish. Another answered his confessor, who promised him he should sup that night with our Saviour in heaven, "Go thither yourself to supper, for I am used to fast nights." Another upon the gibbet calling for drink, and the hangman drinking first, said he would not drink after him for fear he should take the pox of him. Every man hath heard the tale of the Piccard, who being upon the ladder ready to be thrown down, there was a wench presented unto him with this offer (as in some cases our law doth sometimes tolerate), that if he would marry her his life should be saved, who, after he had a while beheld her, and perceiving that she halted, said hastily, "*Away, away, good hangman, make an end of thy business: she limps.*" The like is reported of a man in Denmark, who, being adjudged to have his head cut off, and being upon