

tions induce Schaffer to think that the posterior median gyrus belongs rather to the association centres than to the sensory areas.

Cajal confirms the observations of Flechsig that the fibres of the association centres become mature later, and shows that these centres in the new-born child, as well as in some small mammalia (the mouse, the rabbit), have no exogenous terminal fibres; while, at the same time, the pyramidal cells and the nerve-cells of the zonal layer have a special appearance in the embryonic development. He largely agrees with Flechsig's views, and considers his anatomical and physiological dualism in the cortex as rational *a priori*, but he differs in regarding the association centres as wanting a specific terminal plexus, and not projection fibres. Cajal also holds, as against Flechsig, that the association centres occur not only in the anthropoid apes, but also in the smooth-brained animals.

WILLIAM W. IRELAND.

7. Sociology.

Judicial Condemnations of Unrecognised Lunatics [*Les aliénés devant les tribunaux*]. (*Rev. de Psychiat.*, March, 1902.) *Pactet*.

In this critical review the author, by reference to some of the recent literature on the subject, illustrates the frequency with which persons suffering from mental disease are committed to prison for criminal acts. A number of personal observations (referring chiefly to general paralytics) are quoted to the same effect. To prevent such miscarriages of justice the author suggests that all persons accused of criminal offences should be submitted to examination by an alienist; and he quotes the opinion of Dr. Paul Garnier—an exceptionally competent judge in the matter—as to the practicability of such a plan, at all events in large centres of population. The author also advocates the Belgian system of frequent examinations of prisoners by alienist inspectors, and recommends certain modifications in the French procedure of *expertise* in criminal cases.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

Criminal Asylums and Sections for the Insane in Prisons [*Manicomii criminali e sezioni per folli nelle case di pena*]. (*Riv. mens. di Psychiat. forense*, Feb., 1902.) *Penta*.

In Italy, as in most other countries where such institutions exist, the admissions to criminal lunatic asylums have increased enormously in recent years. Thus, in spite of the opening of two new asylums of the same class, the original criminal asylum of Aversa, which in 1876 contained nineteen patients, in 1898 contained 209. This increase Penta ascribes, in part, to a real increase in lunacy, but much more to wider knowledge of the nature of insanity, and more particularly of the close connection between mental disease and crime. In face of this condition of things, the future of the criminal lunatic asylum becomes an urgent problem. Penta's opinion is that a multiplication of these institutions is undesirable. He thinks that they should be reserved for incorrigible degenerates who, with or without co-existing insanity of

thought, are insanely criminal in conduct. Curable or less dangerous cases he would send to ordinary asylums, or would treat them in special annexes to prisons. The creation of such annexes, after the model of the section for insane criminals in the Moabit Prison at Berlin, he regards as the most effectual way of dealing with the problem.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

On Diminished Responsibility [Sulla responsabilità diminuita]. (Riv. mens. di Psichiat. forense, Jan., 1902.) Penta.

The doctrine of the partial responsibility of the insane for criminal acts is taken, Penta points out, in a different sense by lawyers and by alienists. The former interpret it as meaning that an insane person, no matter how insane he may be, is to be held in some measure accountable for his conduct unless it can be shown to depend logically on his delusions. The alienists, on the other hand, would apply the doctrine to cases of slight or early insanity, putting forward the mental condition as a plea in mitigation of punishment. In either sense the doctrine is fallacious. The mind is a unity, a synthesis, and not a mere aggregate, and the idea of spheres of mind, one sane and the other diseased, is quite untenable. And further, the fallacy is a very mischievous one. It would combine the maximum of harm to the insane person with the minimum of protection to society; the degree and not the nature of the social reaction would be changed, so that the insane culprit would be subjected to penal discipline instead of to medical treatment; and his time of restraint would be shortened so that he would have increased opportunities for wrongdoing. The doctrine is, in fact, a feeble and useless compromise in the struggle between tradition and science. In the present state of that struggle the proper attitude of the alienist is to confine himself to indicating the mental condition of the criminal without entering into the metaphysical question of "responsibility." If forced to deal with that question he will do wisely to hold fast to the choice between absolute responsibility and absolute irresponsibility.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

Abnormalities of the Circle of Willis in Criminals, in relation with Alterations in the Brain and Heart [Anomalie del poligono arterioso del Willis nei delinquenti in rapporto con alterazioni del cervello e del cuore]. (Arch. di Psichiat., vol. xxii, fasc. 1, 1902.) Parnisetti.

In a series of eighty-seven *post-mortem* examinations of criminals, the author found that the circle of Willis presented abnormalities of origin, development, or direction in 65.5 *per cent.* of the cases, the majority (32.18 *per cent.*) occurring on the left side. In 73.56 *per cent.* of the cases the weight of the brain was below the average, and the inferiority of weight coincided in 51.72 *per cent.* of the subjects with the existence of such vascular anomalies. Morbid changes in the vessels, membranes, and brain-substance were unusually abundant. The weight of the heart was below the average in 75.86 *per cent.* of the criminals examined, and in 49.42 *per cent.* this condition was associated with abnormalities of the circle of Willis. Among the cases with these latter abnormalities heart lesions were particularly frequent.

XLVIII.

40