

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.

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