Epitome of Current Literature.

1. Anthropology.

The Median Occipital Fossa [*Intorno alla fossetta occipitale mediana o vermiana*]. (*L'Anomalo, anno ix, Nos.* 2—6, *Febr.*, 1903.) *Zuccarelli.*

In the earlier discussions of the doctrines of Professor Lombroso a good deal was heard of the median occipital fossa, which the new school regarded as one of the unequivocal stigmata of the *reo nato*, as an atavistic character connecting the criminal with primitive and savage man and with the anthropoid apes. Some difficulty was, however, experienced in making clear the relationship of the condition to crime, and even so friendly a critic as Professor Benedikt had to confess that to his mind a large vermian fossa suggested mainly a marked development of the occipital sinuses, and should therefore imply, if anything, a tendency to piles rather than to homicide. Subsequently this stigma seems to have been a little under a cloud, but latterly there are signs of its again coming to the front. Lombroso himself dealt with it in a recent number of his *Archivio*, and in this paper one of his most zealous disciples contributes further to its reinstatement.

Zuccarelli has looked for the fossa in a series of twenty-one skulls of criminals, and has found it well marked in four (19·04 *per cent.*). He has also examined 472 other skulls classed as normal (322), slightly abnormal (101), and very abnormal (49), and finds that the fossa exists in only 0·31 *per cent.* of the normal as against 2·04 *per cent.* and 2·97 *per cent.* respectively in the other groups. Incomplete development of the fossa was noted in the same proportion (0·31 *per cent.*) of the normal skulls, while in the abnormal it was found in 5·33 *per cent.* These results are, therefore, in general agreement with the figures given by other Italian anthropologists, of whose statistics the author gives a summary in tabular form. He takes it as established that the vermian fossa is most frequently met with in criminals, that it is not uncommon in the insane, and that it is very rare in the normal. He regards it as a sign of reversion to a pre-human type, and considers that its frequent association with an enlarged middle lobe of the cerebellum is specially significant in view of recent experiments alleged to show that disorders of this part of the brain are connected with peculiar emotional symptoms.

W. C. Sullivan.

2. Neurology.

Increase of Cortical Excitability and Epileptic Phenomena produced by Decalcifying Agents [*Aumento dell' eccitabilità corticale e fenomeni di epilessia provocati da reattivi decalcificanti*]. (*Arch. di Psichiat., vol. xxiv, fasc.* 4, 1903.) *Roncoroni.*

Sabbatani, in an important series of researches, showed that calcium had a special moderating influence on cellular activity, and that its

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