

affectation or impulsive insanity, nor a slowly progressing form of general paralysis of the insane. He denounces the readiness with which *hereditary predisposition* is dragged into court as presumptive evidence of insanity. He says: "I must however add that, in my own opinion, the argument in favor of insanity founded upon the supposed transmission of an hereditary tendency to mental disease has of late been used in most absurd and unjustifiable excess, and I do not know that the interests of justice would be damaged if it were to be excluded altogether in judicial inquiries; for if it could be clearly shown that both a man's parents, and all four, of his grandparents, and all his uncles and aunts had been unquestionably insane, it would afford no proof whatever that the man himself had been insane. Such evidence would at most strengthen the presumption that he had been so under circumstances which would otherwise be more doubtful. Such evidence can never be a satisfactory substitute for more direct evidence as to the issue, and the small worth it possesses must at once be felt when we consider that only a moderate proportion of the children of insane forefathers ever do become insane." In concluding his very interesting and well-written article Dr. Bucknill discusses the inspiration theory as follows: "It is surprising that the influence of this curious sect or community, the perfectionists of Oneida, was made so little of at the trial, either by the prosecution or by the defence. Probably it was felt to be a double-edged argument, dangerous to handle. It would be difficult however, to over-estimate this influence, and probably it would not be too much to say that the assassination of President Garfield was the outcome of Oneida, for we must not forget that Guiteau's father was an enthusiastic believer in the doctrines of Father Noyes, and diligently impressed them upon his son, indeed upon his sons, for Guiteau's brother expounded in Court the Creed, which sounds so strange in modern ears, of the real battle between God and the devil, and the part we take in it. 'That was my father's, theological view, it was my brother's, it is mine.' When Guiteau actually entered the community he must necessarily have believed in the main doctrine of his co-religionists, that all actions are divinely inspired by God or by the devil; and after he left the community it is plain from his letters and papers that he retained and acted upon that belief. It was by divine inspiration

that he believed himself destined to establish a great theocratic newspaper. If he had been attacked by bodily disease he would have trusted to the faith cure, as it is used at Oneida, that is to say, its cure by the direct personal intervention of God in answer to prayer. And it is unreasonable to suppose that in the most grave and serious action beyond all comparison in his life, he would cease to entertain his most habitual thought. But was this belief an insane delusion? If so, all the world is mad outside each man's little circle of fellow-believers. The inconsistency involved in the belief that God can inspire a wicked act does not make the belief an insane one, for we know that the devil can quote scripture to his purpose, and that more devilment has been done in God's name than in any other. That the belief was not a delusion is evident from the fact that it was derived from the teaching of others; that it was not the result of disease; and that Guiteau attempted to make others believe that it was a delusion as an excuse for his crime, which no one under the insane delusion of inspiration would have done. It was a sane belief, probably as sincere as many other religious beliefs; a belief which may do good or evil in the world, as it is entertained and acted upon, with purposes more or less consistent, by good or by wicked men. The answer when such a belief is urged as an excuse for crime, is that other men may entertain and act upon it more consistently than the criminal. The judge and jury may say, we also believe in the inspiration of the Almighty, and we have prayed to Him that He will enable us to give a just judgment upon you, and our judgment inspired by Him who is the source of all justice; is that you are guilty, as indicated, and that you must suffer the penalty of your crime."

This excellent article of Dr. Bucknill's will prove an antidote to much of the sentimental bosh which has lately appeared on this subject.

#### AMPUTATION IN SENILE GANGRENE.

Most surgical authorities condemn amputation in cases of senile gangrene. Mr. Dobson of Bristol has recently reported in the *British Medical Journal* two cases in which amputation was successfully performed for the cure of spreading senile gangrene. In the first case, the patient was a farm laborer, sixty-two years of age, thin, shrunken and feeble, with a weak heart and