

for my Master. I think he is in my heart to-day. I thank you for not giving me up long ago; I thank you for your prayers and close questions. They always made me feel, if I did not show it."

Tears of joy filled my eyes as I read this note, and again thought of the promise, "in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not."

INSANITY AS RETRIBUTIVE.

In the December number of *Hours at Home* is an article by Dr. Bushnell on Insanity, in which he takes the ground that insanity in many cases, though not in all, is *retributive*. Of course he admits that sometimes good men, those who are of saintly life, have been afflicted with this terrible malady. But these are exceptions, and do not destroy the general rule. I think he sustains his position. But his treatment of the subject contemplates only the facts and philosophy of insanity as witnessed in *this life*. May we not go one step further, and regard insanity, with its almost endless variety of manifestations, as one of the chief instruments or elements of retributive suffering in the life to come?

This idea was first suggested to me some six years ago, by a very intelligent physician (a member of my congregation), asking me if I had ever thought of mental derangement as an element of torture in the world of woe? In illustration of his meaning, he related a case which came under his observation (I need not repeat it here), but I can never forget his comment upon it. Said he: "It was the only time in my whole life that the hair of my head actually arose bristling with horror, and from that time the phrase 'lost soul' has borne a new significance to me."

What is insanity? In answering this question I shall not aim at scientific or technical precision; but at a general and comprehensive definition. Insanity embraces all those states of mental derangement which result from a *loss of proper control* over one's mental faculties and actions,—intellectual, emotional, or voluntary. I am aware that this definition is open to criticism. So is every definition of insanity that has been given.

I suppose it is safe to assert that the severest sufferings ever experienced by men in this world, are those which accompany, and seem to result from, these states of mental derangement. It is doubtful whether the wall of the torture rooms of the Spanish Inquisition ever echoed to such heart-rending shrieks and groans as may often be heard in the insane asylum, though that asylum be conducted upon the most humane principles. No amount of mere physical agony can wring from the sufferer such yells of horror and groans of anguish as come from the bosom of the victim of delirium tremens. Such mental anguish far surpasses all that we know of physical pain and suffering.

The sufferings of the victim of delirium tremens are plainly retributive. I am strongly inclined to think that they are also truly and in a high degree typical. Did you ever know a fully developed case of this disease in which the victim did not imagine (?) that he saw serpents and devils. The question often arises in my mind, Why do we find such marked uniformity in the experience of this class of sufferers? Does it, or does it not, mean anything? Is it a mere fancy, an idle conjecture, to suppose that this may point to the direct agency of one who, according to the Scriptures, has much to do with man's sins here, and who will have to do with his punishment hereafter—even "The Dragon—that Old Serpent which is the Devil and