

a child, a boy, a youth, he grew, and free from care, he had all the beauty of his early years. Thus another year rolled away in childlike happiness.

Again it is early springtime, again the scenes upon the river are panoramic and beautiful. With some light work in hand, Magdalene sits in a low rocker beside the Captain as he smokes and dreams. He is uneasy and restless now. He rises, paces to and fro, and then seats himself and takes the strong womanly hand. He sighs.

"What is it Captain? Why this heavy sigh?" she asks.

He tries to form a sentence; then he casts away his cigar and says, brokenly:

"Why this day more than another?"

"What do you mean, Captain?" she says with a pale face.

"What is the matter to-day? Why do I feel so strangely?" and he looks eagerly into her face.

She nearly swoons with surprise. Then in a trembling voice she says:

"It is the anniversary of the day of your last wound."

He rests his head in his hands and tears flow down through his fingers. Magdalene gazes at him and freezes into stone. Then that which she has feared has come upon her. Memory is struggling with the thick curtains of disease, and, striving to rend them in order to get a glimpse of the past, Napoleon looks, and whispers: "How long?"

She whispers in answer, while her heart beats tumultuously:

"Seven years to a day!"

Then his head sinks lower and tears flow in a copious stream. Is it true that in seven years the entire person of man is entirely made anew? That every bone and sinew, every cord and muscle, every drop of blood, every particle of the sensitive brain and nerve is created anew in seven years? That is a question that no moralist, no physiologist, no theologian can ever reconcile with the existence of a soul and memory in man. Where, then, are stored the pictures of our mother's face as we looked up to it in our babyhood? Where are kept the memories of a musical voice that has been silent in the grave a score of years? Where were the pictures of the village green and shouting school-mates which now rise in the memory of the octogenarian as he dreams in his chair, resting his wrinkled face upon his staff. Avaunt, ye howling, superficial materialists! Ten times the brain has cast its slough to mingle with the dust. Ten times the heart has rebuilt its stout walls, and yet the old man in his death babbles as he feels with trembling hands the pattern on the bed-covering, and he babbles, too, of a mother he knew only in infancy. What then? Disease is the fog only that shuts out the landscape for a time—disease is the cloud that shuts out the sun. Back of fog and cloud are the clear sky and the sun, and behind the raving of delirium and the babble of idiocy is the immortal soul—a prisoner in a tenement of clay, a watcher for the lifting of the curtain, a waiter for the coming of the turnkey health or the freedom of eternity. Sad comforters are ye all who weigh, dissect, and analyze man, and then tell him he is an earthly vessel, veriest clay! Napoleon Smith looks up again, and again he asks:

"How long?"

She clutches her breast as if to choke the struggling heart within, and whispers in a choking voice:

"Seven years."

The curtain is lifted now. What will he see behind it? He broods with downcast eyes, while great sobs heave his breast. What does he see behind the curtain? Does he see a sweet, girlish face with a wealth of shining hair? Yes. What else? He sees an angel of pity standing a tireless sentinel beside a tomb where a noble manhood is buried. He sees long nights, with dim, low-burning lamps, waiting for the day. He sees and feels now a soft hand laid on a throbbing head and a soul looking out of loving eyes to watch the helpless sleep of an infant. He sees more than this; he sees a weak and trembling form led through a mist of fancies, led over rough ground by a strong hand, and at last standing in the sunlight of life. He speaks:

"How long did you say?"

It is coming now. The curse, the rejection, the bitter upbraiding, and the search for the doll-faced girl, but she will turn to God and prayer. The voice is low and resigned now as she answers:

"Seven years."

He gets up slowly. He looks upon her, then he drops upon his knees and creeps to her. He takes that strong right hand and kisses it and sobs.

"I am a soldier. I will relieve the guard. You may come off duty and rest. Now, my love, this hind of mine shall lead you over the rough places of life. My eyes shall watch while yours close in sleep. Oh, my love, my angel! I have been dreaming for seven long years, but in my dreams an angel-face beat above me and an angel kissed my brow. I have had a troubled sleep, but in my feverish sleep a cool hand pressed my head back upon my pillow. I kiss that hand. I have been buried in a tomb, but an angel sung at its door and rolled away the stone of death. Will my life be long enough to prove to you that this is the real life and the real love? When you doubt lay your head upon this bosom and see if every heart throb is not yours and yours alone. I offer you a love as deep and true as your own. Do you believe me, my darling, my angel?"

"It is too much. God is very, very good to me. Will you kneel and pray with me, my Captain, my brave, once more?" she said; and they knelt down together.

We leave them there where asylums for the weak and erring rear their walls to fold in to a new life the waste of society, you may see their work where the once slave cons his book with laborious utterance, or the weary

sailor finds a calm harbor in age—in every good work the vast fortune of this loving couple is expended.

They showed me a letter from France a short time ago. It read like this:

BRINVILLIES, FRANCE,

DEAR CAPTAIN AND MADAM SMITH:

Our boy, Napoleon Smith Backford, is growing to look so much like his namesake that we write to ask when he shall come on that tour to the United States. You will be astonished at his wonderful similarity. He has the chestnut curls and the aquiline nose, and, I believe he will have the carriage and physique of the Captain. You will love him! Will your yacht stop at Marseilles, or shall we expect you at Paris? We shall make the tour of the United States next year, and if it will be pleasant to you we would like our boy to remain until then. Travel will do him good. Colonel Boh has been promoted, he is in good health, and sends the enclosed flower from his button-hole. Cable us about the yacht. Aimee is so large and fat you would not know her. Love to all!

CHARLES BICKFORD, General.

When they laid down the letter Magdalene said:

"If her boy looks any more like you, my Captain, than does Washburne, our eldest, I shall be astonished. Aimee, our baby, looks enough like you to have been a boy. Well, and Aimee is large and fat! Ah, my Captain, are you not sometimes sorry you lost the beautiful girl?"

"Never say it again, Magdalene. I weep when I think that a doubt can enter your mind."

And he seized her, drawing her to his knee and kissing her.

"What a scene this is for a married couple of middle age to be presenting!" said the blushing wife. I think so myself, so I leave them. You asked me who was my friend three hours ago. He stood at my desk, a tall, handsome man, with a sidewise droop to his head, and a badge on his breast. That was Napoleon Smith. That was my friend's story.

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"After suffering for about twenty-five years from scrofulous sores on the legs and arms, trying various medical courses without benefit, I began to use Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and a wonderful cure was the result. Five bottles sufficed to restore me to health."—Bonifacio Lopez, 347 E. Commerce St., San Antonio, Texas.

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"My daughter was afflicted for nearly a year with catarrh. The physicians being unable to help her, my pastor recommended Ayer's Sarsaparilla. I followed his advice. Three months of regular treatment with Ayer's Sarsaparilla and Ayer's Pills completely restored my daughter's health."—Mrs. Louise Rielle, Little Canada, Ware, Mass.

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"For several years, I was troubled with inflammatory rheumatism, being so bad at times as to be entirely helpless. For the last two years, whenever I felt the effects of the disease, I began to take Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and have not had a spell for a long time."—E. T. Hansbrough, Elk Run, Va.

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