

An Open Window and What Became of It.

By W. T. James, in the Canadian Magazine.

One day, the Montreal express of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, bound for Toronto came to a sudden stop in a wild part of the country, about fifty miles west of Smith's Falls. A young widow, with her only child, a boy of three years old, were the solitary occupants of one of the cars. The boy was standing on his mother's lap, looking out of the open window, when a crow, winging its flight across his line of vision, attracted his notice, and caused him to shake his cap off, which fell through the aperture and rolled down a low embankment. Thinking she would have time to recover it before the engine started, the woman left the child alone on the seat and got off the train; but just as she stooped to pick up the cap, the engine—which had stopped while the fireman cleared the track of a stray cow—with a loud whistle, steamed away before she could reach the train, leaving the poor mother behind, a crazed spectator of her child leaning far out of the window and screaming lustily for her, with no one near to snatch him from what she feared would be certain death.

Struck dumb with terror, she stood awhile in a speechless agony of suspense, expecting momentarily to see her darling's form mingled for an instant in the cloud of dust whirled up by the wheels, and, afterwards, to find his mangled body beside the track.

Would nobody see and rescue the child? "Help! help! help! Oh! my darling! my darling! Help! help!" and a succession of hysterical shrieks sounded in the wake of the thundering train, and echoed among the pine trees that grew in clumps on either side of the track. But the train kept on, going faster and faster, with a little human life—a widowed mother's boy—trembling in the balance between fate and fortune.

In the delirious tension of her excitement, she flew down the track, shrieking and gesticulating wildly, while the train sped farther and farther into the distance, and finally disappeared round a curve in the road.

The darkness of a moonless night, which had been lurking in the east until the setting sun should go down before the horizon, now began to steal athwart the weird stretch of uncultivated landscape. Sombre shadows, like huge, black bats, spread their ebony wings over the lonesome scene and enveloped the woman with gloom, as she followed with fruitless haste in the direction in which she had seen the last of her child. Onward and onward she ran, until even the rails were invisible, knowing not what might be the result of the next step. How she escaped destruction by falling head-long through a trestle bridge when she approached it is surprising, so heedlessly did she come upon it, thinking only of the danger of her child and naught of her own.

Beyond this she could go no farther. What could she do now? True, she could walk back to the first station and telegraph, and then take the next train going west—if she only had enough presence of mind to think of the first thing that reason would be likely to suggest. But she was distracted and wholly incapable of reflection or deliberate action. Her maternal feelings were aroused to a pitch of intense frenzy which, now she could no longer pursue the one idea that possessed her mind, increased her perturbation to such a degree that she lost all control of herself and was on the verge of insanity. Only to follow, slowly as she might, the rushing train, perchance to find a dying boy and kiss him before he breathed his last, would be some relief. Anything but inaction—anything but that unadvised struggle which was now being waged between the demon, insanity, and a woman's reason. And what a struggle! the throes of it—the exquisite tension of nerve and feeling! Could she endure it and not die? Could that woman, now raving, with dishevelled hair and eyes too hot to weep—knowing the deadly peril of her heart's idol—continue through the long watches of the night a prey to a consuming emotion? To and fro, up the track and back to the bridge she fain would cross, wailing incessantly she went, and shrieking aloud with the energy of despair, that she might be seen by the men on the trains that swept past her like a hurricane, their dazzling headlights illuminating her surroundings for a brief space, gleaming on the water that flowed beneath the bridge, and then vanishing in the darkness on the further side?

Yet midnight, and then daybreak, found her still striving for her desire; and it was not until the rosy-hued hour that follows sunrise, that she succumbed to the opiate of unconsciousness that Nature so kindly imparts when a troubled spirit can no longer resist her ministrations.

In the broad daylight a freight train stopped to pick up a woman, found in a swoon upon the track, and then, with a raving maniac in the caboose, continued its journey to Toronto.

II.

In the smoking-car of the train on which was the child, a gentleman of fortune, not yet in the prime of life, was seated. Returning from a fishing excursion, he was going to make a call in Toronto, after which it was his intention to proceed thence to his home in a Southern city.

Throwing aside the remains of his cigar, he left the car and passed into that in which the child was crying. A brakeman had closed the window, and was now vainly trying to soothe the little fellow. In answer to a question put by the passenger to the brakeman, the latter explained how he had discovered the child, alone, leaning out of the window and crying for his mother. During a short conversation on the matter, they agreed in the opinion that the boy had been put on the train at some station along the line, and there abandoned by somebody—probably his mother—who wished to get rid of him for a sinister reason. Promising to take charge of him, the gentleman, Mr. Seacombe, sat beside the child and bought him some candy, and by this means succeeded in making him quiet. Soon after he ceased crying and fell asleep, and did not awaken until he was being taken from a cab into the police station at Toronto.

Here, to the officer in charge, Mr. Seacombe related what little he knew of the case, and offered to formally adopt the child if neither of his parents could be found. To this the sergeant said that he thought the magistrate would assent, pro-

vided no legal impediment should occur. Mr. Seacombe gave the name of the hotel where he and the child might be found, and entering the cab, he and his ward were driven there.

That night, as he sat in one of his suite of rooms, fondling the child on his knee—for he was exceedingly attached to children and was particularly struck with the little fellow's artless ways and delight with the many playthings he had provided, he mused upon what he considered the heartless cruelty of a parent who could so ruthlessly abandon one of such tender age and affectionate traits. Putting the boy gently upon the carpet among his toys, he walked up and down the room in much agitation for a considerable time. Then he stooped to caress him, and, after many similar overtures of affection to assure an assent, he asked him if he would like him to be his papa. The boy nodded his head emphatically, kissed him without being bidden, and soon got him as much interested as himself in a woolly effigy of a dog that would bark when it was squeezed.

After the child had been put to bed by one of the chambermaids, Mr. Seacombe sat in an easy chair far into the night smoking and deep in thought; and when he rose to retire, he muttered to himself:

"Before the little chap shall be restored to a parent who abandoned him to the mercy of strangers, if he did not succeed in killing himself by falling out of the train, I'll—"

But the conclusion of the sentence, whatever it was, he did not utter.

The next morning, when the police sergeant enquired at the hotel for Mr. Seacombe, he was told that that gentleman had left the city on an early train, and had taken the child with him.

III.

Several years had elapsed, when an American family, living in a fashionable suburb of Toronto, received as their guests a wealthy compatriot and his young son. A few days after their arrival, the head of the household accompanied his guests in his carriage on a drive through the city, for the purpose of seeing the sights. Naming every public institution as it was passed, he at last indicated the Lunatic Asylum, saying that he was acquainted with the medical superintendent, and that, if his friend cared to go through the building, they would do so. His friend assented, and they alighted from the carriage and were shewn through the various wards.

Pausing at a door, the superintendent said:

"In this ward we have a very pathetic case. A woman, who was brought here a few years ago, violently insane, and for a time unrestrainable, is now in appearance a study of subdued melancholy that an artist, capable of reproducing her on canvas, would give his left hand to behold. She hasn't spoken a word for over a year; looks utterly dejected; recognizes nobody; her mind is in an inanity; won't eat unless she's forced to. Don't know exactly what the trouble was—something to do with a child, I fancy, as that was the burden of her ravings when she came in. Nobody comes to visit her, and nobody could be found who knows anything about her. Don't even know her name. She was picked up somewhere on the railroad, but I forget where. She had quite a large sum of money on her person and was well dressed when she became an inmate. She seems, from my observation, to be well bred, as though she came of a respectable, if not well-to-do, family. Don't speak to her, as she will try to hide from us."

With that, he opened the door and there before them stood the subject of the sketch. Stood, did I say? That is scarcely the word to describe her attitude. She seemed fixed to the spot, like a marble statue; but her features, unlike those of a statue and altogether different from the superintendent's description of them, expressed a variety of emotions in rapid succession. At first there was an unmistakable look of surprise on her face, then sorrow, which instantly changed to intelligence—to recognition of somebody—to unbounded rapture.

The superintendent was dumbfounded, and his visitors were not a little perplexed at seeing in her mien something so contrary to what they had been told to anticipate. Evidently the troubled dream of years was being dispelled from her mind and she was quickly regaining her natural condition. What could have caused this apparently unaccountable metamorphosis?

There are well-authenticated cases of persons having lost their reason owing to some domestic calamity, whose minds have been recalled to a normal condition by hearing a favorite tune or seeing a familiar face. The result in this instance is no more ex-

traordinary than that of many others of a similar nature. Temperamental and other constitutional influences would doubtless affect the patient and largely determine the possibility of a cure by such means. But the fact rather than the rationale of the phenomenon is what chiefly concerns this narrative. So to the story:

Before anyone was aware that the supposed lunatic was no longer eligible to remain where she was, the woman, with a cry of joy, had darted forward, thrown her arms about the boy's neck and burst into hysterical sobs.

While this affecting scene was being enacted, Mr. Seacombe, for it was he, was struck with something in the woman's countenance that seemed very familiar to him and awakened in his own mind memories of a pathetic past, of what was the cause of his celibacy. He was reminded of the face of one whom he had met and loved as a young man while on his first visit to Canada. That he had left the country before he had the courage to make a proposal of marriage to her had been to him ever since a source of regret. Had they met again at last? And was the resemblance which the boy bore to his mother the reason why he had become so strongly and so fondly attached to him?

"Are you my mother who left me on the train?" the boy asked in reproachful tones, when she released him from that affectionate embrace to gratify her sight with another look at his face.

"Don't speak so reproachfully to me, my darling. I feel that I am hardly myself at present. Something terrible has happened to me which I cannot recall. Give me time to recollect my thoughts, and I will—But where am I, and who is this gentleman?" Mr. Seacombe exclaimed, recognizing him before he could speak. "Pray excuse me, I am utterly bewildered, and know not what these unusual appearances mean. Surely, surely, I have not been—"

She had guessed the truth from her surroundings, but could not say the word most significant of it. While her feelings found vent in a fresh outburst of tears, Mr. Seacombe took her by the hand, and said that although he had the pleasure of recognizing her, he had not the privilege of addressing her by the name which she had acquired by marriage since they had last met. Then, turning to the superintendent, he whispered a question into his ear, to which that gentleman replied:

"Certainly, certainly. This is no time for formalities; we will comply with those later."

When the carriage left the asylum it contained one more occupant than when it stopped at the door, and that was Mrs. Palgrave, the boy's mother.

On the way back an exchange of confidences took place between her and her former lover, whose demeanor toward her seemed to imply that his heart was still true to its first attachment, and that love had in no wise diminished by absence, lapse of time or altered circumstances. He confessed to having kidnapped the young boy to prevent his being restored to a parent, who, he had supposed, had put him on the train and there left him to his fate; while she, recollecting first one fragment and then another by the association of circumstances, described the unfortunate episode which had well nigh cost her life as it had for some years her reason.

Here Mr. Seacombe's host interposed to press Mrs. Palgrave to make his house her home, to which offer she assented, saying she would gratefully accept his kind hospitality until she could make other arrangements.

A few days later, after they had renewed their former intimacy and Mr. Seacombe had learned that his friend was a widow, they were together talking in private about the future of young Harry Palgrave (but his adopted father would have it to be Seacombe, and the boy himself held to that side of the contention). Harry left the room to order the carriage for three o'clock that afternoon. While he was away, other conversation of a private nature ensued, and, as a result of it, he returned to find them looking very happy, and to be informed that not only was his mother now willing that he should retain the name of his adoptive father, but that she, too, had consented to change her own name to that by which her son had been known for some time. Harry was delighted to hear this, but he did not infer all that it meant until he had disseminated the news among the other members of the household, and had it interpreted to him by the exclamatory comments with which it was received.

The few spectators of the nuptials of Mr. Seacombe and Mrs. Palgrave in St. James' Cathedral, which took place as soon afterwards as the ceremony could be lawfully performed, little knew that they beheld the

sequel to a romance in real life, the like of which is rarely heard of even in fiction.

Canada and Australia.

The establishment of a monthly steamship service to Australia between the points of Vancouver, B. C., and Sydney, N. S. W., is a matter of great importance to Canada. By this arrangement, which is made for one year and is renewable thereafter if desired, a prominent Australian firm of high financial standing, receives the subsidy of \$125,000 offered by the Canadian Government some years ago, and agrees to start the service at once—the first steamer to leave Sydney for Canada before May 10. Two fine steamers will be placed on the route, and will call at Hawaii and the port of Victoria, B. C. Commenting on this matter the Empire says:—It would be interesting in this connection to know if the utterances of Sir George Dibbs when in New York and Canada a few months were more than merely prophetic. Our despatch yesterday indicated that much was due in the matter to the patriotic conversations of a Canadian traveller in Australia, who drew attention to the subsidy offered by Canada for the establishment of such a line and suggested the advantages which would accrue from it to the countries concerned, or, as the Yankee would put it, "the money there was in the scheme." But there may be more in the arrangement than appears upon the surface. It will be remembered that Sir George, speaking as Premier of New South Wales, from whose capital city the new line is to run, said in very plain-spoken words to a New York reporter: "I am going to Canada to-day and I am certainly not going there in the interests of America. One of the reasons I am going is to try and make arrangements for the running of steamers direct from there to Sydney, and thus San Francisco merchants will suffer." Accident prevented him from seeing the Ministers at Ottawa, but, in a speech at Vancouver, Sir George Dibbs reiterated his desire for steamship communication and cable connection as well. The probability is therefore that the new line indicates a strong desire upon the part of New South Wales to establish closer trade relations with Canada. We know from the reception accorded to Mr. G. R. Parkin some years ago when speaking in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, that these colonies also desire to trade with us, so that it would appear as if no better and more timely response to a general wish could have been afforded than is furnished by the new line of steamers.

A glance at the trade returns will reveal the condition of affairs very clearly. In 1891, the United States exported \$13,017,132 worth of goods to Australasia; Canada exported \$589,100 worth. In the same year the Republic imported from Australasia \$6,239,021 worth of products; Canada imported almost nothing. This, of course, was to be expected, but it does not follow that with a Canadian-Australian line of steamships such results will continue. Much of what the United States sends to the Pacific Colonies can be, and will be, furnished by Canada if our merchants, manufacturers and exporters are sufficiently wide awake. The following table of selected American exports in 1888 to New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South and Western Australia and Tasmania speaks for itself in this connection:

Exports	Value
Agricultural implements.....	\$127,649
Beer and ale.....	139,050
Carriages, etc.....	137,187
Fish.....	316,033
Furniture.....	122,673
Barley.....	157,927
Musical instruments.....	118,543
Leather.....	239,875
Machinery.....	1,113,003
Kerosene oil.....	1,367,530
Timber (all kinds).....	3,241,384

Total.....\$7,066,854

In agricultural implements, pianos and organs, furniture, carriages and machinery, our manufacturers are deeply interested and should be able to take considerable and profitable advantage of the new steamers. The most rigid temperance advocate will be patriotic enough to admit that if the Australians are bound to drink beer and ale they cannot get a better quality than the Canadian brands. Of fish and timber we can supply any quantity required, and in almost every conceivable variety, and there is no reason why Canadian oil cannot be exported to Australia as largely as American has been. The same principle applies to leather, and to barley, which we can grow in many parts of the country to as great advantage as can California. But care must be taken

by our exporters in trying to deal with a new market such as this will prove to be. The Australian merchants carry immense stocks, buy in great quantities, and store their purchases away in warehouses which would astonish Canadians as they have done Americans. Buying is reduced to a system, each line being bought months before the goods are needed. It therefore requires experts to select goods for the market, but when once a footing is obtained the trade is fairly secure. So profitable is it, indeed, that Germany has gone to great expense in establishing steamship lines to compete with Britain, and has succeeded fairly well, while France, Belgium and Italy are reaching out for a share of the trade. British Columbia will especially benefit by the new line in its exports of fruit and fish, lumber and coal, while the import of raw wool should in time become of great value. The United States now imports \$1,923,000 worth of this product via San Francisco, besides nearly half a million worth of tin snags, a large amount of coal for use along the Pacific coast, and some \$300,000 worth of kangaroo skins. And there is no reason why the immense importation of Australian wool to this continent, now coming through Great Britain to New York, might not some day be brought via Vancouver and the C.P.R., if railway rates could be made sufficiently low to admit of shortening the journey by water. Altogether the new arrangement by the Government is one which opens up wide possibilities in trade and entitles our Administration to the renewed thanks of the people for their far seeing subsidy policy of some years ago.

A Dangerous Policy.

Referring to the recent additions of a fast cruiser and an armoured battle ship to the United States navy, the Week says: Columns are filled with descriptions of the new vessels and careful estimates of their destructive power as compared with those of other nations, particularly England. The United States, it is affirmed, will soon rank with the great naval powers and become formidable on sea as well as on land. Scarcely a voice is raised to suggest that there may be reason for the patriotic American to view the navy he is taxed to build with alarm rather than with complacency. None the less, ability to bully Chili and overawe Hawaii will be dearly bought if it serves to foster or strengthen the military spirit among the American people. The great armies and navies that curse Europe serve no useful purpose that could not be served by far smaller and less powerful armaments. Without them war, with its multifarious horrors, would be impossible, while in times of peace they bolster thrones which should long since have fallen, keep alive the fires of international hatred, perpetuate the spirit of caste, impoverish the land, and reduce hundreds of thousands to a position scarcely to be preferred to slavery. Such a characterization of militarism in Europe is trite enough in the United States. And yet, with this object lesson before her, America, secure from attack and unmolested for eighty years, must needs build a navy and in it copy faithfully the regulations of European countries regarding rank and discipline. Perhaps this new navy of the United States may serve useful purposes, but the cultivation of a warlike spirit will not be one of these. The sentiment that, in Canada as well as the United States, finds expression in the drilling of school-boys with wooden guns, and that in Canada has given us a Royal Military College, should have no harm on the American continent. For this reason we are by no means sure that the growing distrust felt by workmen for the militia so largely recruited from their own ranks, and the disposition to look upon it as the sure ally and engine of capital in every dispute, is all bad. Anything that opens the eyes of the people to the antagonism between the spirit of militarism and that of true democracy serves a good purpose.

Buckingham Palace lies low in the valley along which flows the Serpentine river. As a result it is an extremely unpopular residence in Royal eyes.

Diving for pearls off the coast of Ceylon is a dangerous profession. The diver plunges into the dangerous depths swarming with sharks, and after three or four minutes' absence from air re-appears, half strangled with blood rushing from ears and nostrils.

A French company's plan for lighting the Atlantic route from Ireland to Newfoundland consists in mooring ten powerful floating lights two hundred miles apart and connecting them by electric cables.



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