

Years however rolled on, and fortune continued to smile upon Sir Benjamin's tenant, and probably but for that one incident just alluded to, his mind would seldom have reverted to the prime cause of his altered circumstances. But that one fact was a worm gnawing at the root of the gourd which had so speedily surrounded him with its ample shade. One day he set off with Mr. Matlock, a friend of his, to see a fair which was held annually in a village a few miles distant, and in their perambulations through the motley crowd they fell in with some gentlemen of their acquaintance, with whom they tarried to enjoy themselves, and any one who has ever seen Greenwich fair, or any similar celebration, will know well that few can leave such a scene without having partaken freely of the inebriating cup. When drawing near dusk, Mr. Laiton and his friend started for home, and having driven down in a gig, in the morning, they had the same conveyance by which to return. They drove homewards very spiritedly, till they came to the village, where they encountered a crowd of boys who were amusing themselves in a way not at all uncommon in small villages, but a singularly unfortunate amusement for the moment. They had got hold of an old pistol and were enjoying themselves over a few halfpence worth of powder, and just as the gig was passing, one of the boys very mischievously fired off the pistol close by the horse's head. The animal was startled, and sprang violently forward, the reins were forcibly jerked from Mr. Laiton's hand, and the horse being left without control, dashed along the streets with great fury. Unfortunately at that moment there was a van at Mr. Laiton's shop door delivering some goods, and the affrighted horse crossed the road to make sure of passing, when one of the wheels came in contact with the pile of road metal which still stood at the corner of the street. The gig was upset and its two inmates were thrown with violence on the ground. Mr. Laiton was lifted up almost insensible, his right shoulder was dislocated and his skull severely fractured. Mr. Matlock was severely stunned, but falling partly upon his companion he was comparatively little injured, and in a few weeks was again able to make his appearance out of doors.

Not so the unfortunate Laiton. He lingered on in great agony for a considerable time, and his cheeks once more resumed their thin and sallow appearance. His mind wandered night and day, and often in his aberrations did he mention the poor butler whose last moments were so singularly brought under his notice. All the sympathy of his wife and children and his numerous friends could not relieve his mind from the load which dragged it down to earth. Moroseness and gloom settled down upon his mind, and he required to be constantly watched to prevent him putting an end to his existence. But constant watching began to wear out the energies of his friends, and he was left more at liberty. One day when left alone with one of his little boys, he unloosed the handkerchief from his child's neck, and fastening one end of it to one of the bed posts, he twisted the other round his neck so tightly that he speedily ceased to live. The terrified boy, in amazement immediately gave the alarm, medical aid was promptly procured, but the brittle thread of life was snapped.

This terrible catastrophe aided by long and wearisome previous watching threw Mrs. Laiton into violent hysterics, and on the following day she was stretched beside her lifeless husband, and one grave opened to receive the remains of both.

The family were not of age to keep up the business, and the Baronet again interred. The effects were sold off, and the proceeds that remained, after meeting all just claims, was deposited in one of the banks, in the name of a worthy individual to whom the training of the children was entrusted.

From what has been said, the reader may already have formed a pretty correct idea as to the

fate of the butler, but our sketch would not be complete without a more pointed allusion to the termination of his hapless career.

We had accompanied him to the Lunatic Asylum, where, under a kind and humane attendance, he soon began to exhibit favourable signs of recovery. His raving soon became less frequent, and even then, there was a greater coherence in his sentiments. His eye occasionally rolled and glared wildly; but there was a mildness in his demeanour, which gave his attendant the faintest hopes of a perfect return to reason.

He was allowed more freely to wander at liberty and latterly began to take a delight in trimming the walks, and doing any light work in the garden connected with the asylum a kind of work to which he had devoted much of his spare time in early life. Time thus passed on, and although not so far recovered as to be liberated altogether, he was qualified to go out of doors to work, a system which was practised to a certain extent to aid the funds of the Institution. One morning having got the necessary instructions from the governor, he walked out in silence after his guide, who led him to the neighbouring village to break some road metal to repair some of the streets. He was led to the corner of one of the principal streets, where a quantity of stones had been laid, a circumstance trivial in itself,—but tending rapidly to consummate the work which shortly before had been so strangely begun.—Mackenzie viewed rather sullenly the pile upon which his future labour was to be expended, and his very excitable nervous temperament, was somewhat affected. But he stripped his coat and kerchief and was about to apply the hammer, when he turned round as if to take a cursory glance at the street, into the end of which he had been brought. All at once his eye rested on a large signboard, with the name "John Laiton" in large and flashy characters painted on it, and turning his eye to the shop window—Good Heavens! he exclaimed, can this be the shop of John Laiton, who once called upon me, when he was in distress. His eye wandered again and again over the letters, with a view to elicit from the silent objects, whether or no they were the representatives of that same individual. In a few seconds, a chuffy looking figure appeared in the door and though changed wonderfully in external appearance, Mackenzie traced in his countenance the lineaments of his treacherous companion. The hammer dropped among the stones, and clasping his hands, he raised his eyes to the blue ambient vault, through which the sun was riding in effulgent majesty, and ejaculated, O thou incomprehensible, Jehovah—Thou Inexpressible God—Supremest Majesty—who hast caused the beautiful beams from the fountain of light to dispel the shades of morning. Is it so! O Lord thy will be done. Having uttered these incoherent sentiments with great energy, his head swelled, he reeled and fell.

His guide who had watched in the distance, to see how he would proceed with his work, observed the hammer fall from his hands, and seeing his eyes raised to heaven, he rushed to the spot, and heard his ejaculatory remarks; but before he had reached him he had fallen among the dust.

All was now over, his eyes were again as if bathed in blood, his hair was dragged in the dust; his forehead burned like an oven, and the poor butler was more furious and frantic than ever.

Mr. Laiton saw from his shop door the wonderful affair, and crossing the road, he enquired of the guide who the sufferer was, the guide very briefly replied that it was the old butler of Sir Benjamin Hooper, who was discharged for stealing a bottle of wine; and the spirit stricken Laiton shrank back instinctively, and he slunk away quietly across the road.

No reason can be assigned for Mackenzie having been led to that particular spot, further, than that a quantity of stones had been laid there, as the streets required to be repaired. The coincidence was as striking as the result was fatal. No blame can be attached to the Governor

of the Asylum, as it was not likely that he could have any apprehension of danger from the fulfilment of his order—How strange and inscrutable are the dealings of Providence.

Mackenzie was immediately conveyed to the Asylum, and in a few hours death came to his relief. The vital spark which had so long flickered in its socket was suddenly quenched, and the recollection of the sad event was only recalled, as a few years ago, along with some friends, I passed along the street, and gazed upon the shop, towards which, Mackenzie's eyes were rivetted within a few hours of the termination of his death.

PATERSON.

TO OUR READERS—The Canadian Family Herald will in future be published by Mr. Charles Fletcher, Bookseller, No. 51, Yonge Street. It is kindly requested therefore that all communications intended for the Herald be addressed to the publisher, in order to prevent confusion, or delay in attending to them.

## CANADIAN FAMILY HERALD.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, MAR. 27, 1852.

### OCEAN PENNY POSTAGE.

A few weeks ago, in replying to one of our correspondents, who was desirous to be informed as to the origin of Post Offices, we hinted briefly at the necessity of an Ocean Penny Postage, in order that the bonds of friendship that stretch across the Atlantic might be drawn more closely together, and that the overflowings of hearts widely separated may be sweetly reciprocated in an unceasing and unbroken stream of holiest sympathy. That the fond associations which live in hearts once closely united, may still well forth in liveliest affection, reviving the hallowed memories and endearments which are so tenderly wreathed around the recollections of the past. On this subject we have received the following address from Elihu Burritt. We have not met Mr. Burritt for several years, but still remember with delight many interesting circumstances in connection with his North British tour. We trust that his labors will meet a due reward.—Mr. Burritt says, Permit me to call your attention, and that of your readers, to a movement in England, the aim and end of which must deeply and peculiarly interest all the colonial populations of the British Empire. This is the establishment of a universal OCEAN PENNY POSTAGE, by which a letter, under half an ounce in weight, shall be merely conveyed from any port of the United Kingdom to any port beyond the sea, at which the British mail packets may touch, for *One Penny*. Thus the whole charge on a letter from any town in Great Britain to any port in the British colonies or dependencies, would be 2d.; or 1d for the British inland, and 1d. for the ocean transit. If an inland Penny Post were adopted in all the colonies, then the entire charge on a letter from any town in Great Britain or Ireland to any town in the British provinces, colonies, or dependencies, in America, Africa, Asia, and Australia, would be 3d. Vigorous steps are now being taken in England to induce the Government to adopt this measure during the approaching session of Parliament. The Right Hon. T. M. Gibson, M. P., has engaged to bring it before the House of Commons in a distinct motion. A series of public meetings have already been held, and will be continued for several months, until the subject has been presented in all the principal towns in the kingdom. It is expected that 1,000 petitions to Parliament in favor of the measure will be obtained, and many of the most influential members of that body enlisted in behalf of the project. Several Chambers of