

about him for some time, and taking pains to study the various masters in his art, he made a respectful application to one who stood among the highest in repute, and whose works had pleased his own taste and fancy better than any he had seen. After much earnest pleading, and offering very nearly all the little wealth he possessed, he was accepted as a pupil, to receive a course of ten lessons. With great assiduity he followed the instructions of the master, and learned the mysteries of colouring, and a great number of artistic novelties, all tending to advance him towards perfection of execution. He was really possessed of natural talents of a high order, and in the development of these he now evinced great acuteness, as well as industry. His master, an artist who had made a reputation years before, and who had won high patronage, and earned for himself a large fortune, thus being beyond the reach of any feelings of professional jealousy, was much delighted with Conrad's progress, was proud to have discovered and taught an artist of really superior talent; and generously returning to him the money he had lately received with so much mistrust and even nausea,—for a raw pupil is the honor of *cognoscenti*—he forthwith established him as his protegee. Thanks to his introduction, Conrad shortly received a commission of importance, and had the honour of painting the portrait of one of the most distinguished members of the British aristocracy. He exerted all his powers in the work, and was rewarded with success; the portrait caused some sensation, and was regarded as a *chef-d'œuvre*. Thus auspiciously wooed, Fortune opened her arms, and gave him a place among her own favoured children. The first success was succeeded by others, commissions followed commission; and, to be brief, after four years of incessant engagements and unwearying industry, he found himself owner of a high reputation and a moderate independence.

During all this time, and throughout the dazzling progress of his fortunes, the crayon sketch of poor Miss Harrenburn was preserved and prized, and carried wherever he went with never-failing care and solicitude. Sanctified by indelible associations, it was to him a sacred amulet—a charm against evil thoughts, a stimulant to virtue and purity—his picture of the young lady lying dead, gone gently to the last account in the midst of her beauty and untainted goodness. His reflections made him a pure-minded, humble, kind, and charitable man. Living quietly and frugally, he constantly devoted a large proportion of his extensive earnings to the relief of the miseries of the unfortunate: and such traits did not pass without due recognition: few who knew him spoke of his great talents without bearing testimony to the beauty of his moral character.

But every thing may be carried to excess; even the best *teemings* may be cherished to an immoderate degree. Many of the noblest characters the world has produced have overreached their intentions, and sunk into fanaticism. Conrad, in the fourth year of his success, was fast merging from a purist into an ascetic; he began to weary of the world, and to desire to live apart from it, employing his life, and the fortune he had already accumulated, solely in works of charity and beneficence. While in this state of mind, he determined to proceed on a continental tour. After spending some time in France, where many an Hotel Dieu was benefitted by his bounty, he travelled into Switzerland. At Chamouni, he made a stay of some days, residing in the cottage of an herbalist named Weguer, in preference to visiting the hotels so well known to tourists.

One evening, he had walked some distance

along the road towards Mont Blanc, and in a tranquil and contemplative mood, had paused to watch the various effects of sunset. He leaned against a tree by the roadside, at the corner of a path which led from the highway to a private residence. Again it was August, exactly four years since he had quitted C——, exactly four years since the most singular event of his life had occurred. He took from his breast the little crayon sketch, carefully preserved in a black morocco case, and, amid the most beautiful scenery in the world, gave way to a reverie in which the past blended with the future—his thoughts roaming from the heavenly beauty of the death-bed scene to the austere sanctity of St Bernard or La Trappo. Strange fancies for one who had barely completed his twenty-seventh year, and who was in the heyday of fame and fortune! Suddenly, the sound of approaching footsteps was heard. Conrad hastily closed the morocco-case, replaced it in his breast, and was preparing to continue his walk, when an elegant female figure abruptly emerged from the by-path; and the features, turned fully towards him—O, Heavens!—who could mistake? The very game he had painted!—the same which had dwelt in his heart for years! The shock was too tremendous: without a sigh or exclamation, Conrad fell senseless to the ground.

When he revived, he found himself lying upon a sofa in a well-furnished chamber, with the well-remembered form and features of Mr. Harrenburn bending over him. It seemed as if the whole course of the last four years had been a long dream—that Mr. Harrenburn, in fact, was rousing him to perforce the task for which he had sought him out at C——. For awhile, Conrad was dreadfully bewildered.

'I can readily comprehend this alarm and amazement,' said his host, holding Conrad's hand, and shaking it as if it were that of an old friend, newly and unexpectedly met. 'But be comforted; you have not seen a spirit, but a living being, who, after undergoing a terrible and perilous crisis four years ago, awoke from her death-sleep to heal her father's breaking heart, and has since been his pride and joy as of yore—her health completely restored, and her heart and mind as light and as bright as ever.'

'Indeed!—indeed!' gasped Conrad.

'Yes,' continued Mr. Harrenburn, whose countenance, Conrad observed, wore an appearance very different from that which affliction had imparted to it four years previously. 'The form on the bed which you pencil imitated so well, remained so completely unchanged, that my heart began to tremble with a new agony. I summoned an eminent physician the very day on which you completed the sad portrait, and, detaching the particulars of her case, besought him to study it, hoping—I hardly dared to confess what. God bless him! he did study the case: he warned me to delay interment; and, three days after, my daughter opened her eyes and spoke. She had been entranced, cataplexed, no more—though, had it not been for this stubborn unbent of a father's heart, she had been entombed! But it harrows me to think of this! Are you better now, and quite reassured as to the object of your alarm? I have watched your career with strong interest since that time, my young friend, and let me congratulate you on your success—a success which has by no means surprised me, although I never beheld more than one of your performances.'

Mr. Harrenburn had passed the summer, with his daughter, at Chamouni, in a small but convenient and beautifully-situated chateau. He intended to return to England in a few weeks,

and invited Conrad to spend the interim with him, an invitation which the latter accepted with much internal agitation. For three weeks he lived in the same house, walked in the same paths, with the youthful saint of his memories—heard her voice, marked her thoughts, observed her conduct, and found with rapture that his ideal was living indeed!

After a sequence, which the reader may easily picture to himself, Conrad Melius and John Harrenburn were married. Among the prized relics at Harrenburn House, in Wiltshire, where he and his wife are living, are the 'posthumous' portrait and the crayon sketch; and these, I suppose, will be preserved as heirlooms in the family archives.

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THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

The Committee of the Mechanics' Institute have issued an Address to the public in reference to the erection of a new Hall, for the more successful prosecution of their varied pursuits. Two weeks ago we stated that they had purchased a piece of ground on which to raise this proposed structure, and they now ask an extension of public sympathy to the amount of £7,000, to be enabled to erect an edifice suitable to the requirements of the Institute, and at the same time, an adornment to the city. We have no doubt that their call will be cheerfully responded to, because the Institute has hitherto proved a public good. The lectures have been well attended, and have unquestionably been profitable, alike for the valuable information they communicated, the ideas they broached for future contemplation, the principles of curiosity they excited towards new and varied and interesting studies, and the most unspeakable advantage to the minds of the lecturers themselves. In this way the public have benefitted in a moral and intellectual point of view, and it is evident that the city has grown so rapidly within these few years that the same Hall which afforded ample accommodation at the origin of the association, is now exceedingly hampered with the halt of those who crave admission. It is not, therefore, because it is out of the way and has an awkward unpleasant entrance that the city needs a new Hall, but because the Institute has outgrown its bounds; because upon natural principles a new building has become necessary, and now is the time the effort should be made to supply the deficiency. We believe that all Mechanics' Institutes in Britain have failed of success, in consequence of their not having been supported by those parties for whom they were mainly projected, with that warmth of feeling necessary to secure their maintenance. This arose partly from two causes, but the name chosen for the Institute, and the limited sphere of usefulness marked out for its operations. In the Athenæum now so widely scattered over the same ground, we find a revised and corrected edition of the Mechanics' Institute, more happily adapted to the end in view, and the more nearly all mechanics' Institutes assimilate to that model, the more likelihood is there of complete success. The classes in our Institute have never somehow succeeded; but we think that many a young mechanic would willingly spend a few hours each week at Writing, or Composition, or English Grammar, or