

consolations these two are the best: the consciousness of wishing the right however much we may err and stumble through human weakness, and prayer. once more he embraced the departing youth, then he went across the sand of the shore back to the mountain without looking round. hermas looked after him for a long time greatly distressed, for his strong friend tottered like a drunken man, and often pressed his hand to his head which was no doubt as burning as his lips. the young warrior never again saw the holy mountain or paulus, but after he himself had won fame and distinction in the army he met again with petrus son, polykarp, whom the emperor had sent for to byzantium with great honor, and in whose house the gaulish woman sirona presided as a true and loving wife and mother. after his parting from hermas, paulus disappeared. the other anchorites long sought him in vain, as well as bishop agapitus, who had learned from petrus that the alexandrian had been punished and expelled in innocence, and who desired to offer him pardon and consolation in his own person. at last, ten days after, orion the saite found him in a remote cave. the angel of death had called him only a few hours before while in the act of prayer, for he was scarcely cold. he was kneeling with his forehead against the rocky wall and his emaciated hands were closely clasped over magdalenas ring. when his companions had laid him on his bier his noble, gentle features wore a pure and transfiguring smile. the news of his death flew with wonderful rapidity through the oasis and the fishing town, and far and wide to the caves of the anchorites, and even to the huts of the amalekite shepherds. the procession that followed him to his last resting place stretched to an invisible distance; in front of all walked suspicion that had haunted him these last days stared out of the darkness as a fact, and he sprung to his feet in a shiver of cold and lit a candle. an hour, two hours, three hours passed before he had written an answer to the letter that lay before him, and in the interval a fresh vicissitude of mind had befallen him. he, westray, had been singled out as the instrument of vengeance; the clue was in his hands; his was the mouth that must condemn. yet he would do nothing underhand, he would take no man unawares; he would tell lord blandamer of his discovery, and give him warning before he took any further steps. so he wrote: my lord, and of the many sheets that were begun and flung away before the letter was finished, two were spoiled because the familiar address dear lord blandamer came as it were automatically from westrays pen. he could no longer bring himself to use those words now, even as a formality, and so he began: my lord, i have just received your note about the picture bought by me of miss joliffe. i cannot say whether i should have been willing to part with it under ordinary circumstances. it had no apparent intrinsic value, but for me it was associated with my friend the late mr sharnall, organist of saint sepulchres. we shared in its purchase, and it was only on his death that i came into sole possession of it. you will not have forgotten the strange circumstances of his end, and i have not forgotten them either. my friend mr sharnall was well known among his acquaintances to be much interested in this picture. he believed it to be of more importance than appeared, and he expressed himself strongly to that effect in my presence, and once also, i remember, in yours. but for his these reasons, without spending time where nothing could be hoped for but revenge, proceeded for the ship, and arrived safe aboard before midnight. it is a little remarkable that captain furneaux had been several times up grass cove with captain cook, where they saw no inhabitants, and no other signs of any but a few deserted villages, which appeared as if they had not been occupied for many years, and yet, in mr. burneys opinion, when he entered the same cove, there could not be less than fifteen hundred or two thousand people. on thursday, the 10 of december, the adventure departed from, and made sail out of, the sound. she stood to the eastward, to clear the straits, which was happily effected the same evening; but the ship was baffled for two or three days with light winds before she could clear the coast. in this interval of time the chests and effects of the ten men who had been murdered were sold before the mast, according to an old sea custom. when captain cook was in the sound on his third voyage, he learned that the massacre arose over an unpremeditated quarrel. kahura, who had been active in the tragedy, told cook that a maori having brought a stone hatchet to barter, the man to