

you she asked again. i gave him striking reasons for doing so, he replied quickly. but he will return he has learned enough up here for to day. we have now to think of your journey to alexandria. but it seems to me, replied sirona, blushing, that i am safely hidden in your cave, and just now you yourself said i warned you against the dangers of the expedition, interrupted paulus. but since that it has occurred to me that i know of a shelter, and of a safe protector for you. there, we are at home again. now go into the cave, for very probably some one may have heard you calling, and if other anchorites were to discover you here, they would compel me to take you back to your husband. i will go directly, sighed sirona, but first explain to me for i heard all that you said to each other and she colored, how it happened that phoebicius took hermas sheepskin for yours, and why you let him beat you without giving any explanation. because my back is even broader than that great fellows, replied the alexandrian quickly. i will tell you all about it in some quiet hour, perhaps on our journey to klyma. now go into the cave, or you may spoil everything. i know too what you lack most since you heard the fair words of the senators son. well what asked sirona. a mirror laughed paulus. how much you are mistaken said sirona; and she thought to herself, the woman that polykarp looks at as he does at me, does not need a mirror. an old jewish merchant lived in the fishing town on the western declivity of the mountain; he shipped the charcoal for egypt, which was made in the valleys of the peninsula by burning the sajal acacia, and he had formerly supplied fuel for the drying room of the papyrus factory of paulus father. he now had a business connection with his brother, and paulus himself had had much more intimate knowledge of his sentiments than the generality, and they easily work on the minds of the credulous and the ignorant. these imposters obtain great consideration, and their counsel and advice is most anxiously sought after by those about to undertake any important business; but, like ancient astrologers and modern gypsies, they speak only in ambiguous terms; so that whatever may be the result, their prediction may still correspond with it. like all rude and ignorant people, the new zealanders seem more to fear the wrath of their god than to love his attributes; and constant sacrifices too often human ones are offered up to appease his anger. they imagine that the just and glorious deity is ever ready to destroy, and that his hand is always stretched forth to execute vengeance. these sacred, or, more correctly speaking, these cunning men and women, who pretend to see into futurity, and to hold an intercourse with the great spirit, are here in one way, at least turned to a good and useful account. as they themselves are held sacred, everything they wish to have taken particular care of, they can render sacred also. all the chiefs find these people of the greatest use in protecting their property, for they possess the power of tabooing, and when once this ceremony is performed over any person or thing, no one dares to touch either; and for a sufficiently good bribe they will impart their sacred power to any chief, who, by means of this device, thus can protect a field of potatoes or grain, at fifty miles distance from his settlement, more securely and effectually than by any fences, or number of persons he might place to guard it. this ceremony of taboo, which is common to the whole of the south sea islands, seems the principal part of their religion, and it is really difficult to walk without trespassing or infringing on some spot under this influence. all those who touch a corpse velvet lawn looked like a stable floor; the rare shrubs had been denuded of their flowers and branches. blackened patches on the mosaic pavement showed where fires had been kindled; the colonnades were turned into drying grounds for the soldiers linen, and a rope on which hung some newly washed clothes was wound at one end round the neck of a venus from the hand of praxiteles, and at the other round the lyre of an apollo fashioned in marble by bryaxis. some indian shrubs, of which his father in law had been very proud, were trampled underfoot; and in the great banqueting hall, which had served as sleeping room for a hundred praetorians, costly cushions and draperies were strewn, torn from the couches and walls to make their beds more comfortable. used to the sights of war as he was, the soldier ground his teeth with wrath at this scene. as long as he could remember, he had looked upon everything here with reverence and awe; and to think that his comrades had destroyed it all made his