

numbers. then suddenly, continued the soldier, the door of a house near the circus opened, and a young girl with long golden hair flew out, and drove the boys to flight, and released the victim, her brother, from his tormentors. she looked like a lioness, cried the narrator, sirona she is called, and of all the pretty girls of arelas, she is beyond a doubt the prettiest. this opinion was confirmed on all sides, and phoebicius, who at that time had just been admitted to the grade of lion among the worshippers of mithras, and liked very well to hear himself called the lion, exclaimed, i have long been seeking a lioness, and here it seems to me that i have found one. phoebicius and sirona the two names sound very finely together. on the following day he asked sirona of her father for his wife, and as he had to set out for rome in a few days the wedding was promptly celebrated. she had never before quitted arelas, and knew not what she was giving up, when she took leave of her fathers house perhaps for ever. in rome phoebicius and his young wife met again; there many admired the beautiful woman, and made every effort to obtain her favor, but to him she was only a lightly won, and therefore a lightly valued, possession; nay, ere long no more than a burden, ornamental no doubt but troublesome to guard. when presently his handsome wife attracted the notice of the legate, he endeavored to gain profit and advancement through her, but sirona had rebuffed quintillus with such insulting disrespect, that his superior officer became the centurions enemy, and contrived to procure his removal to the oasis, which was tantamount to banishment. from that time he had regarded her too as his enemy, and firmly believed that she designedly showed herself most friendly to those who seemed most abnoxious to him,

oude meid ging, hevig ontroerd, zuchtende naar haar keuken terug. toen ik alleen was, kwam ik op de gedachte om alles aan gräuben te gaan vertellen; maar hoe zou ik het huis uitkomen de professor kon ieder oogenblik terugkeeren. en als hij mij dan eens riep en als hij weer eens wilde beginnen met dat raadselachtige werk, dat men te vergeefs den ouden oedipus zou voorgelegd hebben antwoordde ik dan niet op zijn roep, wat zou er dan van komen blijven was dus het verstandigste. juist had een delfstofkundige uit besançon ons eene verzameling kiezelachtige adelaarsteenen gezonden, die gerangschikt moesten worden. ik ging aan het werk. ik schifte en schikte in hunne hokjes al die holle steenen, warrin kleine kristallen zweefden. maar die bezigheid gaf mij geene afleiding; de zaak van het oude document hield mij te zeer bezig. mijn hoofd gloeide en ik werd door eene naamlooze onrust bedangen. ik had een voorgevoel van een naderend onheil. na verloop van een uur waren de adelaarsteenen ordelijk geschikt. ik liet mij toen met slingerende armen en achteroverhangend hoofd in den grooten utrechtischen armstoel neervallen. ik stak mijn groote duitsche pijp aan, welker gebeeldhouwde kop eene achteloos uitgestrekte stroomninf voorstelde; daarna vermaakte ik mij met den voortgang der verbranding te volgen, die van mijne stroomninf langzamerhand een volslagen negerin maakte. van tijd tot tijd luisterde ik, of er geen schreden op de trap klonken. maar neen. waar mocht mijn oom op dat oogenblik toch zijn ik verbeeldde mij hem te zien loopen onder de schoone boomen op den weg naar altona, met zijn stok zwaaiende en blind pareerende, met geweld op het gras slaande, de

roughly snatched her hand away from her face and thereby achieved his end, for her indignation at being thus touched by a mans brutal hand gave melissa strength to suppress her sobs. only her wet cheeks showed what a flood of tears she had shed, as, almost beside herself with anger, she exclaimed: let my hand go shame on the man who insults a defenseless girl you swear then i, too, may take an oath, and, by the head of my mother, you shall never see me again excepting as a corpse, if you ever attempt violence you are caesar you are the stronger. who ever doubted it but you will never compel me to a vile action, not if you could inflict a thousand deaths on me instead of one caracalla, without a word, had released her hand and was staring at her in amazement. a woman, and so gentle a woman, defying him as no man would have dared to do she stood before him, her hand raised, her bosom heaving; a flame of anger sparkled in her eyes through their tears, and he had never before thought her so fair. what majesty there was in this girl, whose simple grace had made him more than once address her as child she was like a queen, an empress; perhaps she might become one. the idea struck