

idea; yet, if she tried to fly from him, all she loved would be lost. no, this must not be thought of she must remain. she threw herself on a divan, lost in thought, and as she realized the confidence of which the unapproachable, proud emperor had thought her worthy, a secret voice whispered to her that it was certainly a delightful thing to share the overwhelming agitations of the highest and greatest. and was he then really bad, he who felt the necessity of vindicating himself before a simple girl, and to whom it appeared so intolerable to be misjudged and condemned even by her besides being the emperor and a suffering man, caracalla had also become her wooer. it never once entered her mind to accept him; but still it flattered her extremely that the greatest of men should declare his love for her. why, then, need she fear him she was so important to him, she could do so much for him, that he would surely take care not to insult or offend her. this modest child, who till quite lately had trembled before her own fathers temper, now, in the consciousness of caesars favor, felt herself strong to triumph over the wrath and passions of the most powerful and most terrible of men. in the mean time she dared not risk confessing to him that she was anothers bride, for that might determine him to let diodoros feel his power. the thought that the emperor could care about her good opinion greatly pleased her; it even had the effect of raising the hope in her inexperienced mind that caracalla would moderate his passion for her sake when old adventus came into the room. he was in a hurry; for preparations had to be made in enthusiasm to the sound of lutes and pipes, and joining their voices in the chorus then light will shine once more on the world, then life will once more mean joy, and death a departure from a scene of bliss. aye, and thus shall it be cried olympius, fired by this eager exposition of his own excitement, and he wrung the musicians hand. we will restore life to the greeks and teach them to scorn death as of yore. let the christians, the barbarians, make life miserable and seek joy in death, if they list but the girls have ceased singing. there is still much to be done to day, and first of all i must confute the objections of your recalcitrant pupil. you will not find it an easy task, said karnis. reason is a feeble weapon in contending with a woman. not always, replied the philosopher. but you must know how to use it. leave me to deal with the child. there are really no singing women left here; we have tried three, but they were all vulgar and ill taught. this girl, when she sings with gorgo, has a voice that will go to the heart of the audience. what we want is to fire the crowd with enthusiasm, and she will help us to do it. well, well. but you, olympius, you who are the very soul of the revulsion we hope for, you must not be present at the festival. indeed, sheltered as you are under porphyrius roof, there is a price on your head, and this house swarms with slaves, who all know you; if one of them, tempted by filthy lucre they will not betray me, smiled the philosopher. they know that their aged mistress, damia, and i myself command the daemons of the upper and lower spheres, and that at a sign from her or from me and many other considerations, had been thrown into the scale. love out balanced them all; and, obedient to its impulse, she had resolved to fling all the rest behind her. it was nearing the hour of midnight, and the mansion of don ambrosio was dark and silent. its master was not at home. a grand banquet had been provided at the presidio by vizcarra and roblado, to which all the grandees of the settlement had been invited. don ambrosio was among the number. at this hour he was at the presidio, feasting and making merry. it was not a ladies festival, therefore catalina was not there. it was, indeed, rather an extemporised affair a sort of jubilee to wind up the performances of the day. the officers and priests were in high spirits, and had put their heads together in getting up the improvised banquet. the town had become silent, and the mansion of don ambrosio showed not a sign of life. the portero still lingered by the great gate, waiting his masters return; but he sat inside upon the banquetta of the zaguan, and seemed to be asleep. he was watched by those who wished him to sleep on. the large door of the caballeriza was open. within the framework of the posts and lintels the form of a man could be distinguished. it was the groom andres. there was no light in the stable. had there been so, four horses might have been seen standing in their stalls, saddled and bridled. a still stranger circumstance might have been observed around the hoofs of each horse were wrapped pieces of coarse