

ordered a second batch, because the first was still unpaid for; but anastasia kept by her half a dozen of these fateful envelopes. she had purloined them when she was a girl at school, and to her they were still a cherished remnant of gentility, that pallium under which so many of us would fain hide our rags. she had used one on this momentous occasion; it seemed a fitting cover for despatches to fording, and might divert attention from the straw paper on which her letter was written. lord blandamer had seen the bellerue lodge, had divined the genesis of the embossed inscription, had unravelled all anastasias thoughts in using it, yet let the letter lie till he had finished lunch. when he read it afterwards he criticised it as he might the composition of a stranger, as a document with which he had no very close concern. yet he appreciated the effort which it must have cost the girl to write it, was touched by her words, and felt a certain grave compassion for her. but it was the strange juggle of circumstance, the sophoclean irony of a position of which he alone held the key, that most impressed themselves upon his mood. he ordered his horse, and took the road to cullerne, but his agent met him before he had passed the first lodge, and asked some further instructions for the planting at the top of the park. so he turned and rode up to the great belt of beeches which was then being planted, and was so long engaged there that dusk forced him to abandon his journey to the town. he rode back to fording at a foot pace, choosing devious paths, and enjoying the sunset in the autumn woods. he would resolution, under command of captain cook, and the adventure, commanded by captain furneaux, sailed from plymouth on the 1th april., to continue the exploration of new zealand begun during captain cooks first voyage. the vessels became finally separated in a gale off cape palliser in october, and the two navigators did not meet again until after cooks return to england in july. captain furneaux reported that while his ship was refitting in queen charlotte sound the astronomers tent was robbed by a party of natives. one who was seen escaping was fired upon and wounded, when he and his confederates made for the woods, leaving their canoe with most of the stolen goods on the shore. this petty larceny, captain furneaux remarks, probably laid the foundation of that dreadful catastrophe which soon after happened, and which he thus describes: on friday, the 1th, we sent out our large cutter, manned with seven seamen, under the command of mr. john rowe, the first mate, accompanied by mr. woodhouse, midshipman, and james tobias swilley, the carpenters servant. they were to proceed up the sound to grass cove to gather greens and celery for the ships company, with orders to return that evening; for the tents had been struck at two in the afternoon, and the ship made ready for sailing the next day. night coming on, and no cutter appearing, the captain and others began to express great uneasiness. they sat up all night in expectation of their arrival, but to no purpose. at daybreak, therefore, the captain ordered the launch to be hoisted out. she was double manned, and under the command of our greater change than he. she was still sirona, and yet not sirona. when the anchorite had commanded her to retire into the cave she had obeyed him willingly, nay, she would have withdrawn even without his desire, and have sought for solitude; for she felt that something mighty, hitherto unknown to her, and incomprehensible even to herself, was passing in her soul, and that a nameless but potent something had grown up in her heart, had struggled free, and had found life and motion; a something that was strange, and yet precious to her, frightening, and yet sweet, a pain, and yet unspeakably delightful. an emotion such as she had never before known had mastered her, and she felt, since hearing polykarps speech, as if a new and purer blood was flowing rapidly through her veins. every nerve quivered like the leaves of the poplars in her former home when the wind blows down to meet the rhone, and she found it difficult to follow what paulus said, and still more so to find the right answer to his questions. as soon as she was alone she sat down on her bed, rested her elbows on her knees, and her head in her hand, and the growing and surging flood of her passion broke out in an abundant stream of warm tears. she had never wept so before; no anguish, no bitterness was infused into the sweet refreshing dew of those tears. fair flowers of never dreamed of splendor and beauty blossomed in the heart of the weeping woman, and when at length her tears ceased, there was a great silence, but