



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries
and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

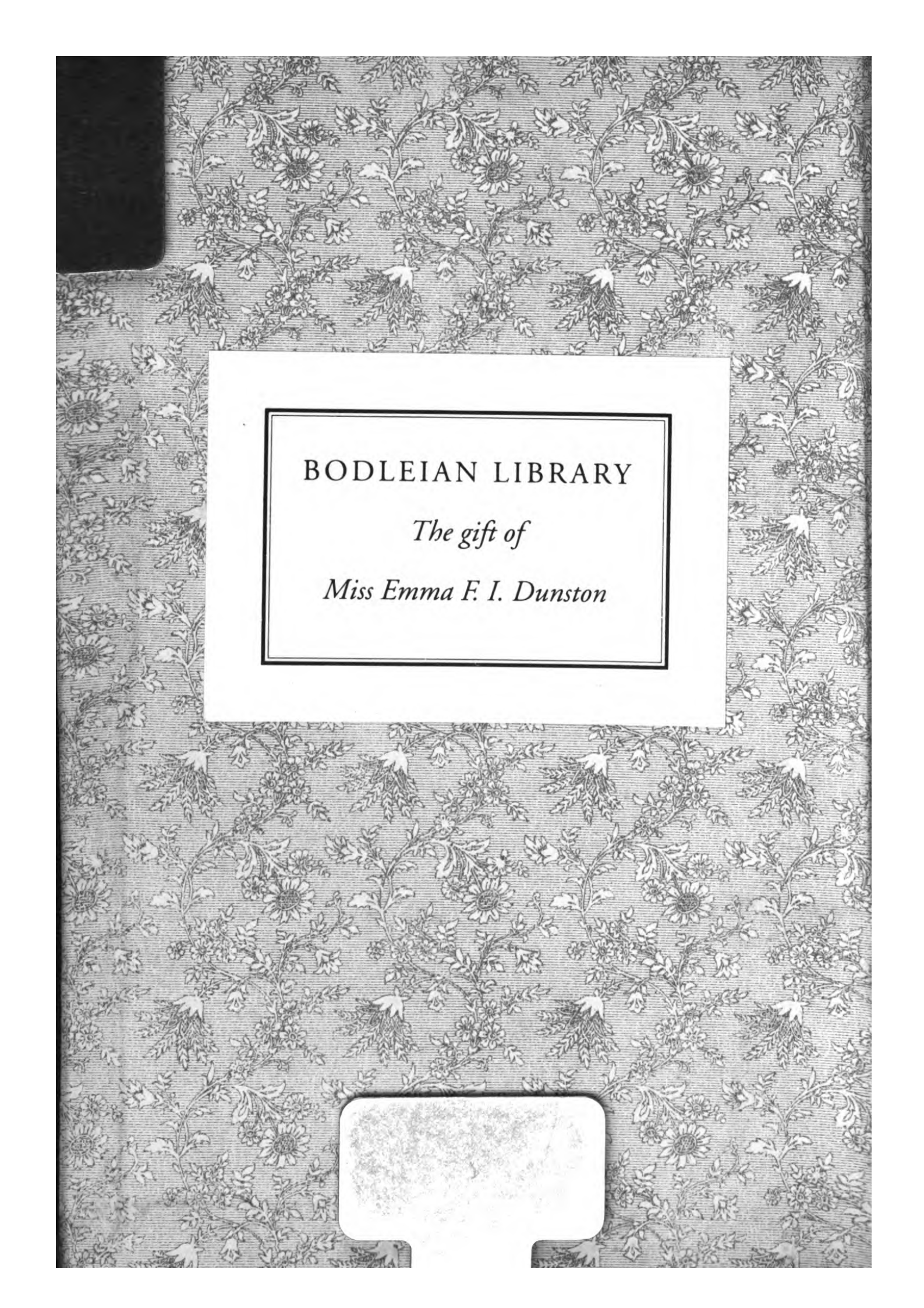
For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

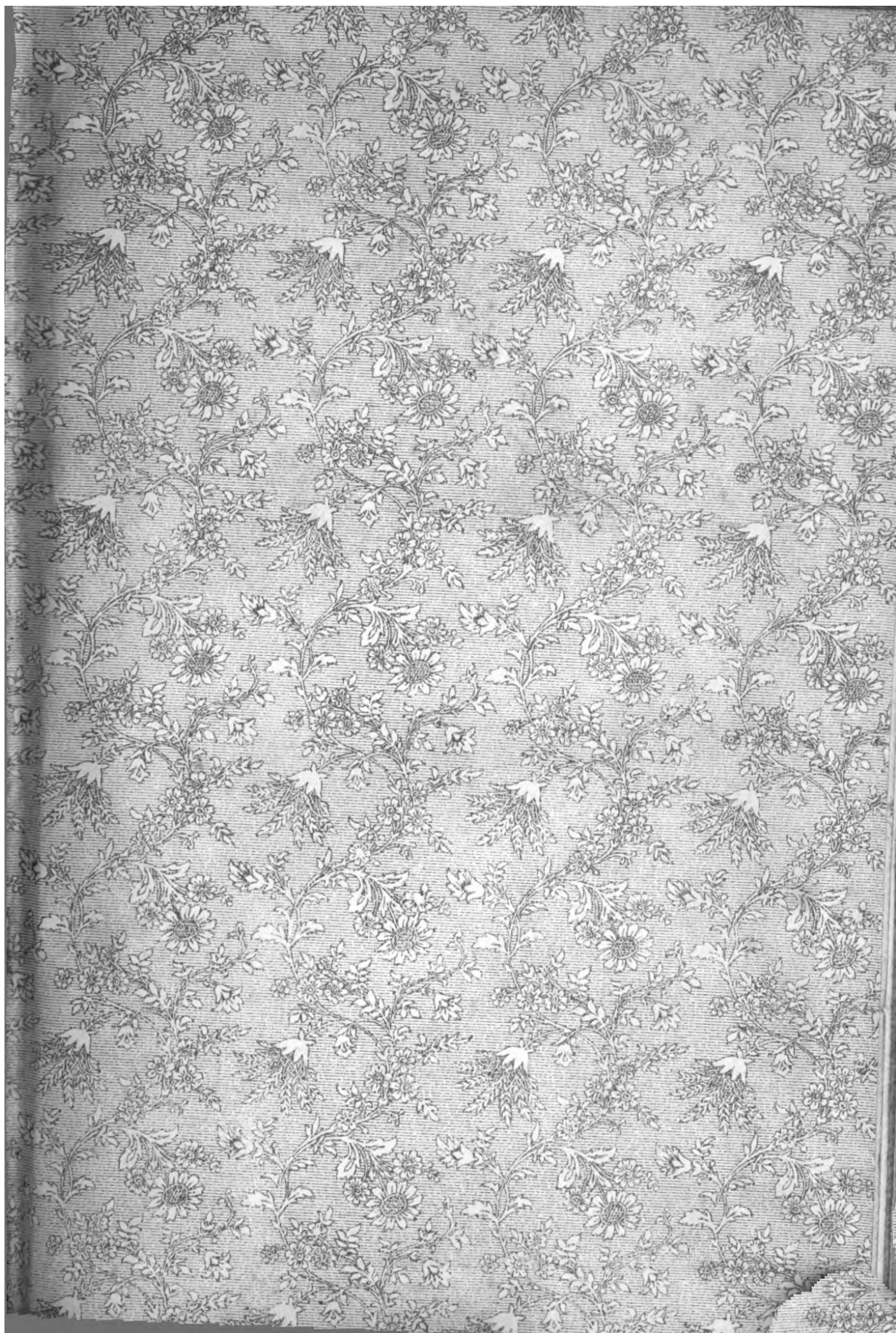




BODLEIAN LIBRARY

The gift of

Miss Emma F. I. Dunston



Dunster E 7976/8

1100000000

DANIEL DERONDA

BOOK VIII.

FRUIT AND SEED

11



BOOK VIII.

FRUIT AND SEED.

CHAPTER LVIII.

“ Much adoe there was, God wot ;
He wold love and she wold not.”

—NICHOLAS BRETON.

EXTENSION, we know, is a very imperfect measure of things ; and the length of the sun's journeying can no more tell us how far life has advanced than the acreage of a field can tell us what growths may be active within it. A man may go south, and, stumbling over a bone, may meditate upon it till he has found a new starting-point for anatomy ; or eastward, and discover a new key to language telling a new story of races ; or he may head an expedition that opens new continental pathways,

get himself maimed in body, and go through a whole heroic poem of resolve and endurance; and at the end of a few months he may come back to find his neighbours grumbling at the same parish grievance as before, or to see the same elderly gentleman treading the pavement in discourse with himself, shaking his head after the same percussive butcher's boy, and pausing at the same shop-window to look at the same prints. If the swiftest thinking has about the pace of a greyhound, the slowest must be supposed to move, like the limpet, by an apparent sticking, which after a good while is discerned to be a slight progression. Such differences are manifest in the variable intensity which we call human experience, from the revolutionary rush of change which makes a new inner and outer life, to that quiet recurrence of the familiar, which has no other epochs than those of hunger and the heavens.

Something of this contrast was seen in the year's experience which had turned the brilliant, self-confident Gwendolen Harleth of the Archery Meeting into the crushed penitent impelled to confess her unworthiness where it would have been her happiness to be held worthy; while it had left her family in Pennicote without deeper change than that of some outward habits, and

some adjustment of prospects and intentions to reduced income, fewer visits, and fainter compliments. The Rectory was as pleasant a home as before: the red and pink peonies on the lawn, the rows of hollyhocks by the hedges, had bloomed as well this year as last; the Rector maintained his cheerful confidence in the goodwill of patrons and his resolution to deserve it by diligence in the fulfilment of his duties, whether patrons were likely to hear of it or not; doing nothing solely with an eye to promotion except, perhaps, the writing of two ecclesiastical articles, which, having no signature, were attributed to some one else, except by the patrons who had a special copy sent them, and these certainly knew the author but did not read the articles. The Rector, however, chewed no poisonous cud of suspicion on this point: he made marginal notes on his own copies to render them a more interesting loan, and was gratified that the Archdeacon and other authorities had nothing to say against the general tenor of his argument. Peaceful authorship!—living in the air of the fields and downs, and not in the thrice-breathed breath of criticism—bringing no Dantesque leanness; rather, assisting nutrition by complacency, and perhaps giving a more suffusive sense of achievement than the production of a

whole *Divina Commedia*. Then there was the father's recovered delight in his favourite son, which was a happiness outweighing the loss of eighteen hundred a-year. Of whatever nature might be the hidden change wrought in Rex by the disappointment of his first love, it was apparently quite secondary to that evidence of more serious ambition which dated from the family misfortune; indeed, Mr Gascoigne was inclined to regard the little affair which had caused him so much anxiety the year before as an evaporation of superfluous moisture, a kind of finish to the baking process which the human dough demands. Rex had lately come down for a summer visit to the Rectory, bringing Anna home, and while he showed nearly the old liveliness with his brothers and sisters, he continued in his holiday the habits of the eager student, rising early in the morning and shutting himself up early in the evenings to carry on a fixed course of study.

"You don't repent the choice of the law as a profession, Rex?" said his father.

"There is no profession I would choose before it," said Rex. "I should like to end my life as a first-rate judge, and help to draw up a code. I reverse the famous dictum—I should say, 'Give

me something to do with making the laws, and let who will make the songs.’”

“You will have to stow in an immense amount of rubbish, I suppose—that’s the worst of it,” said the Rector.

“I don’t see that law-rubbish is worse than any other sort. It is not so bad as the rubbishy literature that people choke their minds with. It doesn’t make one so dull. Our wittiest men have often been lawyers. Any orderly way of looking at things as cases and evidence seems to me better than a perpetual wash of odds and ends bearing on nothing in particular. And then, from a higher point of view, the foundations and the growth of law make the most interesting aspects of philosophy and history. Of course there will be a good deal that is troublesome, drudging, perhaps exasperating. But the great prizes in life can’t be won easily—I see that.”

“Well, my boy, the best augury of a man’s success in his profession is that he thinks it the finest in the world. But I fancy it is so with most work when a man goes into it with a will. Brewitt, the blacksmith, said to me the other day that his ’prentice had no mind to his trade; ‘and yet, sir,’ said Brewitt, ‘what would a young fellow have if he doesn’t like the blacksmithing?’”

The Rector cherished a fatherly delight, which he allowed to escape him only in moderation. Warham, who had gone to India, he had easily borne parting with, but Rex was that romance of later life which a man sometimes finds in a son whom he recognises as superior to himself, picturing a future eminence for him according to a variety of famous examples. It was only to his wife that he said with decision, "Rex will be a distinguished man, Nancy, I am sure of it—as sure as Paley's father was about his son."

"Was Paley an old bachelor?" said Mrs Gascoigne.

"That is hardly to the point, my dear," said the Rector, who did not remember that irrelevant detail. And Mrs Gascoigne felt that she had spoken rather weakly.

This quiet trotting of time at the Rectory was shared by the group who had exchanged the faded dignity of Offendene for the low white house not a mile off, well enclosed with evergreens, and known to the villagers as "Jodson's." Mrs Davilow's delicate face showed only a slight deepening of its mild melancholy, her hair only a few more silver lines, in consequence of the last year's trials; the four girls had bloomed out a little from being less in the shade; and the good

Jocosa preserved her serviceable neutrality towards the pleasures and glories of the world as things made for those who were not "in a situation."

The low narrow drawing-room, enlarged by two quaint projecting windows, with lattices wide open on a July afternoon to the scent of monthly roses, the faint murmurs of the garden, and the occasional rare sound of hoofs and wheels seeming to clarify the succeeding silence, made rather a crowded lively scene, Rex and Anna being added to the usual group of six. Anna, always a favourite with her younger cousins, had much to tell of her new experience, and the acquaintances she had made in London; and when on her first visit she came alone, many questions were asked her about Gwendolen's house in Grosvenor Square, what Gwendolen herself had said, and what any one else had said about Gwendolen. Had Anna been to see Gwendolen after she had known about the yacht? No:—an answer which left speculation free concerning everything connected with that interesting unknown vessel beyond the fact that Gwendolen had written just before she set out to say that Mr Grandcourt and she were going yachting in the Mediterranean, and again from Marseilles

to say that she was sure to like the yachting, the cabins were very elegant, and she would probably not send another letter till she had written quite a long diary filled with *dittos*. Also, this movement of Mr and Mrs Grandcourt had been mentioned in 'the newspaper;' so that altogether this new phase of Gwendolen's exalted life made a striking part of the sisters' romance, the book-devouring Isabel throwing in a Corsair or two to make an adventure that might end well.

But when Rex was present, the girls, according to instructions, never started this fascinating topic; and to-day there had only been animated descriptions of the Meyricks and their extraordinary Jewish friends, which caused some astonished questioning from minds to which the idea of live Jews, out of a book, suggested a difference deep enough to be almost zoological, as of a strange race in Pliny's Natural History that might sleep under the shade of its own ears. Bertha could not imagine what Jews believed now; and had a dim idea that they rejected the Old Testament since it proved the New; Miss Merry thought that Mirah and her brother could "never have been properly argued with," and the amiable Alice did not mind what the Jews believed, she was sure she "couldn't bear them."

Mrs Davilow corrected her by saying that the great Jewish families who were in society were quite what they ought to be both in London and Paris, but admitted that the commoner unconverted Jews were objectionable; and Isabel asked whether Mirah talked just as they did, or whether you might be with her and not find out that she was a Jewess.

Rex, who had no partisanship with the Israelites, having made a troublesome acquaintance with the minutiae of their ancient history in the form of "cram," was amusing himself by playfully exaggerating the notion of each speaker, while Anna begged them all to understand that he was only joking, when the laughter was interrupted by the bringing in of a letter for Mrs Davilow. A messenger had run with it in great haste from the Rectory. It enclosed a telegram, and as Mrs Davilow read and re-read it in silence and agitation, all eyes were turned on her with anxiety, but no one dared to speak. Looking up at last and seeing the young faces "painted with fear," she remembered that they might be imagining something worse than the truth, something like her own first dread which made her unable to understand what was written, and she said, with a sob which was half relief—

// “My dears, Mr Grandcourt——” She paused an instant, and then began again, “Mr Grandcourt is drowned.”

Rex started up as if a missile had been suddenly thrown into the room. He could not help himself, and Anna’s first look was at him. But then, gathering some self-command while Mrs Davilow was reading what the Rector had written on the enclosing paper, he said—

“Can I do anything, aunt? Can I carry any word to my father from you?”

“Yes, dear. Tell him I will be ready—he is very good. He says he will go with me to Genoa—he will be here at half-past six. Jocosa and Alice, help me to get ready. She is safe—Gwendolen is safe—but she must be ill. I am sure she must be very ill. Rex, dear—Rex and Anna—go and tell your father I will be quite ready. I would not for the world lose another night. And bless him for being ready so soon. I can travel night and day till we get there.”

Rex and Anna hurried away through the sunshine which was suddenly solemn to them, without uttering a word to each other; she chiefly possessed by solicitude about any reopening of his wound, he struggling with a tumultuary crowd of thoughts that were an offence against his better

will. The oppression being undiminished when they were at the Rectory gate, he said—

“Nannie, I will leave you to say everything to my father. If he wants me immediately, let me know. I shall stay in the shrubbery for ten minutes—only ten minutes.”

Who has been quite free from egoistic escapes of the imagination picturing desirable consequences on his own future in the presence of another's misfortune, sorrow, or death? The expected promotion or legacy is the common type of a temptation which makes speech and even prayer a severe avoidance of the most insistent thoughts, and sometimes raises an inward shame, a self-distaste, that is worse than any other form of unpleasant companionship. In Rex's nature the shame was immediate, and overspread like an ugly light all the hurrying images of what might come, which thrust themselves in with the idea that Gwendolen was again free—overspread them, perhaps, the more persistently because every phantasm of a hope was quickly nullified by a more substantial obstacle. Before the vision of “Gwendolen free” rose the impassable vision of “Gwendolen rich, exalted, courted;” and if in the former time, when both their lives were fresh, she had turned from his love with repugnance, what ground

was there for supposing that her heart would be more open to him in the future?

These thoughts, which he wanted to master and suspend, were like a tumultuary ringing of opposing chimes that he could not escape from by running. During the last year he had brought himself into a state of calm resolve, and now it seemed that three words had been enough to undo all that difficult work, and cast him back into the wretched fluctuations of a longing which he recognised as simply perturbing and hopeless. And at this moment the activity of such longing had an untimeliness that made it repulsive to his better self. Excuse poor Rex: it was not much more than eighteen months since he had been laid low by an archer who sometimes touches his arrow with a subtle, lingering poison. The disappointment of a youthful passion has effects as incalculable as those of small-pox, which may make one person plain and a genius, another less plain and more foolish, another plain without detriment to his folly, and leave perhaps the majority without obvious change. Everything depends—not on the mere fact of disappointment, but—on the nature affected and the force that stirs it. In Rex's well-endowed nature, brief as the hope had been, the passionate stirring had gone deep, and

the effect of disappointment was revolutionary, though fraught with a beneficent new order which retained most of the old virtues in certain respects he believed that it had finally determined the bias and colour of his life. Now, however, it seemed that his inward peace was hardly more stable than that of republican Florence, and his heart no better than the alarm-bell that made work slack and tumult busy.

Rex's love had been of that sudden, penetrating, clinging sort which the ancients knew and sung, and in singing made a fashion of talk for many moderns whose experience has been by no means of a fiery, dæmonic character. To have the consciousness suddenly steeped with another's personality, to have the strongest inclinations possessed by an image which retains its dominance in spite of change and apart from worthiness—nay, to feel a passion which clings the faster for the tragic pangs inflicted by a cruel, recognised unworthiness—is a phase of love which in the feeble and common-minded has a repulsive likeness to a blind animalism insensible to the higher sway of moral affinity or heaven-lit admiration. But when this attaching force is present in a nature not of brutish unmodifiableness, but of a human dignity that can risk itself safely, it may

even result in a devotedness not unfit to be called divine in a higher sense than the ancient. Phlegmatic rationality stares and shakes its head at these unaccountable prepossessions, but they exist as undeniably as the winds and waves, determining here a wreck and there a triumphant voyage.

This sort of passion had nested in the sweet-natured, strong Rex, and he had made up his mind to its companionship, as if it had been an object supremely dear, stricken dumb and helpless, and turning all the future of tenderness into a shadow of the past. But he had also made up his mind that his life was not to be pauperised because he had had to renounce one sort of joy; rather, he had begun life again with a new counting-up of the treasures that remained to him, and he had even felt a release of power such as may come from ceasing to be afraid of your own neck.

And now, here he was pacing the shrubbery, angry with himself that the sense of irrevocableness in his lot, which ought in reason to have been as strong as ever, had been shaken by a change of circumstances that could make no change in relation to him. He told himself the truth quite roughly:

“She would never love me; and that is not the question—I could never approach her as a

✓ lover in her present position. I am exactly of no consequence at all, and am not likely to be of much consequence till my head is turning grey. But what has that to do with it? She would not have me on any terms, and I would not ask her. It is a meanness to be thinking about it now—no better than lurking about the battle-field to strip the dead; but there never was more gratuitous sinning. I have nothing to gain there—absolutely nothing. . . Then why can't I face the facts, and behave as they demand, instead of leaving my father to suppose that there are matters he can't speak to me about, though I might be useful in them?"

That last thought made one wave with the impulse that sent Rex walking firmly into the house and through the open door of the study, where he saw his father packing a travelling-desk.

"Can I be of any use, sir?" said Rex, with rallied courage, as his father looked up at him.

"Yes, my boy; when I am gone, just see to my letters, and answer where necessary, and send me word of everything. Dymock will manage the parish very well, and you will stay with your mother, or, at least, go up and down again, till I come back, whenever that may be."

"You will hardly be very long, sir, I suppose,"

said Rex, beginning to strap a railway rug. "You will perhaps bring my cousin back to England?" He forced himself to speak of Gwendolen for the first time, and the Rector noticed the epoch with satisfaction.

"That depends," he answered, taking the subject as a matter of course between them. "Perhaps her mother may stay there with her, and I may come back very soon. This telegram leaves us in an ignorance which is rather anxious. But no doubt the arrangements of the will lately made are satisfactory, and there may possibly be an heir yet to be born. In any case, I feel confident that Gwendolen will be liberally—I should expect, splendidly—provided for."

"It must have been a great shock for her," said Rex, getting more resolute after the first twinge had been borne. "I suppose he was a devoted husband."

"No doubt of it," said the Rector, in his most decided manner. "Few men of his position would have come forward as he did under the circumstances."

Rex had never seen Grandcourt, had never been spoken to about him by any one of the family, and knew nothing of Gwendolen's flight from her suitor to Leubronn. He only knew that Grand-

court, being very much in love with her, had made her an offer in the first weeks of her sudden poverty, and had behaved very handsomely in providing for her mother and sisters. That was all very natural, and what Rex himself would have liked to do. Grandcourt had been a lucky fellow, and had had some happiness before he got drowned. Yet Rex wondered much whether Gwendolen had been in love with the successful suitor, or had only forborne to tell him that she hated being made love to.

CHAPTER LIX.

"I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul remembering my good friends."
—SHAKESPEARE.

SIR HUGO MALLINGER was not so prompt in starting for Genoa as Mr Gascoigne had been, and Deronda on all accounts would not take his departure till he had seen the baronet. There was not only Grandcourt's death, but also the late crisis in his own life to make reasons why his oldest friend would desire to have the unrestrained communication of speech with him, for in writing he had not felt able to give any details concerning the mother who had come and gone like an apparition. It was not till the fifth evening that Deronda, according to telegram, waited for Sir Hugo at the station, where he was to arrive between eight and nine ; and while he was looking forward to the sight of the kind, familiar face, which was part of his earliest memories, something

like a smile, in spite of his late tragic experience, might have been detected in his eyes and the curve of his lips at the idea of Sir Hugo's pleasure in being now master of his estates, able to leave them to his daughters, or at least—according to a view of inheritance which had just been strongly impressed on Deronda's imagination—to take make-shift feminine offspring as intermediate to a satisfactory heir in a grandson. We should be churlish creatures if we could have no joy in our fellow-mortals' joy, unless it were in agreement with our theory of righteous distribution and our highest ideal of human good: what sour corners our mouths would get—our eyes, what frozen glances! and all the while our own possessions and desires would not exactly adjust themselves to our ideal. We must have some comradeship with imperfection; and it is, happily, possible to feel gratitude even where we discern a mistake that may have been injurious, the vehicle of the mistake being an affectionate intention prosecuted through a lifetime of kindly offices. Deronda's feeling and judgment were strongly against the action of Sir Hugo in making himself the agent of a falsity—yes, a falsity: he could give no milder name to the concealment under which he had been reared. But the baronet had probably

had no clear knowledge concerning the mother's breach of trust, and with his light, easy way of taking life, had held it a reasonable preference in her that her son should be made an English gentleman, seeing that she had the eccentricity of not caring to part from her child, and be to him as if she were not. Daniel's affectionate gratitude towards Sir Hugo made him wish to find grounds of excuse rather than blame; for it is as possible to be rigid in principle and tender in blame, as it is to suffer from the sight of things hung awry, and yet to be patient with the hanger who sees amiss. If Sir Hugo in his bachelorhood had been beguiled into regarding children chiefly as a product intended to make life more agreeable to the full-grown, whose convenience alone was to be consulted in the disposal of them—why, he had shared an assumption which, if not formally avowed, was massively acted on at that date of the world's history; and Deronda, with all his keen memory of the painful inward struggle he had gone through in his boyhood, was able also to remember the many signs that his experience had been entirely shut out from Sir Hugo's conception. Ignorant kindness may have the effect of cruelty; but to be angry with it as if it were direct cruelty

would be an ignorant *unkindness*, the most remote from Deronda's large imaginative lenience towards others. And perhaps now, after the searching scenes of the last ten days, in which the curtain had been lifted for him from the secrets of lives unlike his own, he was more than ever disposed to check that rashness of indignation or resentment which has an unpleasant likeness to the love of punishing. When he saw Sir Hugo's familiar figure descending from the railway carriage, the life-long affection, which had been well accustomed to make excuses, flowed in and submerged all newer knowledge that might have seemed fresh ground for blame.

"Well, Dan," said Sir Hugo, with a serious fervour, grasping Deronda's hand. He uttered no other words of greeting; there was too strong a rush of mutual consciousness. The next thing was to give orders to the courier, and then to propose walking slowly in the mild evening, there being no hurry to get to the hotel.

"I have taken my journey easily, and am in excellent condition," he said, as he and Deronda came out under the starlight, which was still faint with the lingering sheen of day. "I didn't hurry in setting off, because I wanted to inquire into

things a little, and so I got sight of your letter to Lady Mallinger before I started. But now, how is the widow?"

"Getting calmer," said Deronda. "She seems to be escaping the bodily illness that one might have feared for her, after her plunge and terrible excitement. Her uncle and mother came two days ago, and she is being well taken care of."

"Any prospect of an heir being born?"

"From what Mr Gascoigne said to me, I conclude not. He spoke as if it were a question whether the widow would have the estates for her life."

"It will not be much of a wrench to her affections, I fancy, this loss of the husband?" said Sir Hugo, looking round at Deronda.

"The suddenness of the death has been a great blow to her," said Deronda, quietly evading the question.

"I wonder whether Grandcourt gave her any notion what were the provisions of his will?" said Sir Hugo.

"Do you know what they are, sir?" parried Deronda.

"Yes, I do," said the baronet, quickly. "Gad! if there is no prospect of a legitimate heir, he has left everything to a boy he had by a Mrs Glasher;

you know nothing about the affair, I suppose, but she was a sort of wife to him for a good many years, and there are three older children—girls. The boy is to take his father's name; he is Henleigh already, and he is to be Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt. The Mallinger will be of no use to him, I am happy to say; but the young dog will have more than enough with his fourteen years' minority—no need to have had holes filled up with my fifty thousand for Diploew that he had no right to; and meanwhile my beauty, the young widow, is to put up with a poor two thousand a-year and the house at Gadsmere—a nice kind of banishment for her if she chose to shut herself up there, which I don't think she will. The boy's mother has been living there of late years. I'm perfectly disgusted with Grandcourt. I don't know that I'm obliged to think the better of him because he's drowned, though, so far as my affairs are concerned, nothing in his life became him like the leaving it."

"In my opinion he did wrong when he married this wife—not in leaving his estates to the son," said Deronda, rather drily.

"I say nothing against his leaving the land to the lad," said Sir Hugo; "but since he had married this girl he ought to have given her a

handsome provision, such as she could live on in a style fitted to the rank he had raised her to. She ought to have had four or five thousand a-year and the London house for her life; that's what I should have done for her. I suppose, as she was penniless, her friends couldn't stand out for a settlement, else it's ill trusting to the will a man may make after he's married. Even a wise man generally lets some folly ooze out of him in his will—my father did, I know; and if a fellow has any spite or tyranny in him, he's likely to bottle off a good deal for keeping in that sort of document. It's quite clear Grandcourt meant that his death should put an extinguisher on his wife, if she bore him no heir."

"And, in the other case, I suppose everything would have been reversed—illegitimacy would have had the extinguisher?" said Deronda, with some scorn.

"Precisely—Gadsmere and the two thousand. It's queer. One nuisance is that Grandcourt has made me an executor; but seeing he was the son of my only brother, I can't refuse to act. And I shall mind it less, if I can be of any use to the widow. Lush thinks she was not in ignorance about the family under the rose, and the purport of the will. He hints that there was no very

good understanding between the couple. But I fancy you are the man who knew most about what Mrs Grandcourt felt or did not feel—eh, Dan?” Sir Hugo did not put this question with his usual jocoseness, but rather with a lowered tone of interested inquiry; and Deronda felt that any evasion would be misinterpreted. He answered gravely—

“She was certainly not happy. They were unsuited to each other. But as to the disposal of the property—from all I have seen of her, I should predict that she will be quite contented with it.”

“Then she is not much like the rest of her sex; that’s all I can say,” said Sir Hugo, with a slight shrug. “However, she ought to be something extraordinary, for there must be an entanglement between your horoscope and hers—eh? When that tremendous telegram came, the first thing Lady Mallinger said was, ‘How very strange that it should be Daniel who sends it!’” But I have had something of the same sort in my own life. I was once at a foreign hotel where a lady had been left by her husband without money. When I heard of it, and came forward to help her, who should she be but an early flame of mine, who had been fool enough to marry an Austrian baron

7 with a long moustache and short affection? But it was an affair of my own that called me there—nothing to do with knight-errantry, any more than your coming to Genoa had to do with the Grandcourts.”

There was silence for a little while. Sir Hugo had begun to talk of the Grandcourts as the less difficult subject between himself and Deronda; but they were both wishing to overcome a reluctance to perfect frankness on the events which touched their relation to each other. Deronda felt that his letter, after the first interview with his mother, had been rather a thickening than a breaking of the ice, and that he ought to wait for the first opening to come from Sir Hugo. Just when they were about to lose sight of the port, the baronet turned, and pausing as if to get a last view, said in a tone of more serious feeling—

“And about the main business of your coming to Genoa, Dan? You have not been deeply pained by anything you have learned, I hope? There is nothing that you feel need change your position in any way? You know, whatever happens to you must always be of importance to me.”

“I desire to meet your goodness by perfect confidence, sir,” said Deronda. “But I can’t answer those questions truly by a simple yes or no.

Much that I have heard about the past has pained me. And it has been a pain to meet and part with my mother, in her suffering state, as I have been compelled to do. But it is no pain—it is rather a clearing up of doubts for which I am thankful, to know my parentage. As to the effect on my position, there will be no change in my gratitude to you, sir, for the fatherly care and affection you have always shown me. But to know that I was born a Jew, may have a momentous influence on my life, which I am hardly able to tell you of at present.”

Deronda spoke the last sentence with a resolve that overcame some diffidence. He felt that the difference between Sir Hugo's nature and his own would have, by-and-by, to disclose themselves more markedly than had ever yet been needful. The baronet gave him a quick glance, and turned to walk on. After a few moments' silence, in which he had reviewed all the material in his memory which would enable him to interpret Deronda's words, he said—

“I have long expected something remarkable from you, Dan; but, for God's sake, don't go into any eccentricities! I can tolerate any man's difference of opinion, but let him tell it me without getting himself up as a lunatic. At this stage

of the world, if a man wants to be taken seriously he must keep clear of melodrama. Don't misunderstand me. I am not suspecting you of setting up any lunacy on your own account. I only think you might easily be led arm in arm with a lunatic, especially if he wanted defending. You have a passion for people who are pelted, Dan. I'm sorry for them too; but so far as company goes, it's a bad ground of selection. However, I don't ask you to anticipate your inclination in anything you have to tell me. When you make up your mind to a course that requires money, I have some sixteen thousand pounds that have been accumulating for you over and above what you have been having the interest of as income. And now I am come, I suppose you want to get back to England as soon as you can?"

"I must go first to Mainz to get away a chest of my grandfather's, and perhaps to see a friend of his," said Deronda. "Although the chest has been lying there these twenty years, I have an unreasonable sort of nervous eagerness to get it away under my care, as if it were more likely now than before that something might happen to it. And perhaps I am the more uneasy, because I lingered after my mother left, instead of setting out immediately. Yet I can't regret that I was

here—else Mrs Grandcourt would have had none but servants to act for her.”

“ Yes, yes,” said Sir Hugo, with a flippancy which was an escape of some vexation hidden under his more serious speech ; “ I hope you are not going to set a dead Jew above a living Christian.”

Deronda coloured, and repressed a retort. They were just turning into the *Italia*.

CHAPTER LX.

"But I shall say no more of this at this time ; for this is to be felt and not to be talked of ; and they who never touched it with their fingers may secretly perhaps laugh at it in their hearts and be never the wiser."—
JEREMY TAYLOR.

The Roman Emperor in the legend put to death ten learned Israelites to avenge the sale of Joseph by his brethren. And there have always been enough of his kidney, whose piety lies in punishing, who can see the justice of grudges but not of gratitude. For you shall never convince the stronger feeling that it hath not the stronger reason, or incline him who hath no love to believe that there is good ground for loving. As we may learn from the order of word-making, wherein *love* precedeth *lovable*.

WHEN Deronda presented his letter at the banking-house in the *Schuster Strasse* at Mainz, and asked for Joseph Kalonymos, he was presently shown into an inner room where, seated at a table arranging open letters, was the white-bearded man whom he had seen the year before in the synagogue at Frankfort. He wore his hat—it seemed to be the same old felt hat as before—and near him was a packed portmanteau with a wrap and overcoat upon it. On seeing Deronda enter he rose, but did not advance or put out

his hand. Looking at him with small penetrating eyes which glittered like black gems in the midst of his yellowish face and white hair, he said in German—

“Good! It is now you who seek me, young man.”

“Yes; I seek you with gratitude, as a friend of my grandfather’s,” said Deronda, “and I am under an obligation to you for giving yourself much trouble on my account.” He spoke without difficulty in that liberal language which takes many strange accents to its maternal bosom.

Kalonymos now put out his hand and said cordially, “So—you are no longer angry at being something more than an Englishman?”

“On the contrary. I thank you heartily for helping to save me from remaining in ignorance of my parentage, and for taking care of the chest that my grandfather left in trust for me.”

“Sit down, sit down,” said Kalonymos, in a quick under-tone, seating himself again, and pointing to a chair near him. Then deliberately laying aside his hat and showing a head thickly covered with white hair, he stroked and clutched his beard while he looked examiningly at the young face before him. The moment wrought strongly on Deronda’s imaginative susceptibility: in the

presence of one linked still in zealous friendship with the grandfather whose hope had yearned towards him when he was unborn, and who though dead was yet to speak with him in those written memorials which, says Milton, "contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are," he seemed to himself to be touching the electric chain of his own ancestry; and he bore the scrutinising look of Kalonymos with a delighted awe, something like what one feels in the solemn commemoration of acts done long ago but still telling markedly on the life of to-day. Impossible for men of duller fibre—men whose affection is not ready to diffuse itself through the wide travel of imagination, to comprehend, perhaps even to credit this sensibility of Deronda's; but it subsisted, like their own dulness, notwithstanding their lack of belief in it—and it gave his face an expression which seemed very satisfactory to the observer.

He said in Hebrew, quoting from one of the fine hymns in the Hebrew liturgy, "As thy goodness has been great to the former generations, even so may it be to the latter." Then after pausing a little he began, "Young man, I rejoice that I was not yet set off again on my travels, and that you are come in time for me to see the image of my

friend as he was in his youth—no longer perverted from the fellowship of your people—no longer shrinking in proud wrath from the touch of him who seemed to be claiming you as a Jew. You come with thankfulness yourself to claim the kindred and heritage that wicked contrivance would have robbed you of. You come with a willing soul to declare, ‘I am the grandson of Daniel Charisi.’ Is it not so?”

“Assuredly it is,” said Deronda. “But let me say that I should at no time have been inclined to treat a Jew with incivility simply because he was a Jew. You can understand that I shrank from saying to a stranger, ‘I know nothing of my mother.’”

“A sin, a sin!” said Kalonymos, putting up his hand and closing his eyes in disgust. “A robbery of our people—as when our youths and maidens were reared for the Roman Edom. But it is frustrated. I have frustrated it. When Daniel Charisi—may his Rock and his Redeemer guard him!—when Daniel Charisi was a stripling and I was a lad little above his shoulder, we made a solemn vow always to be friends. He said, ‘Let us bind ourselves with duty, as if we were sons of the same mother.’ That was his bent from first to last—as he said, to fortify his soul with

bonds. It was a saying of his, 'Let us bind love with duty; for duty is the love of law; and law is the nature of the Eternal.' So we bound ourselves. And though we were much apart in our later life, the bond has never been broken. When he was dead, they sought to rob him; but they could not rob him of me. I rescued that remainder of him which he had prized and preserved for his offspring. And I have restored to him the offspring they had robbed him of. I will bring you the chest forthwith."

Kalonymos left the room for a few minutes, and returned with a clerk who carried the chest, set it down on the floor, drew off a leather cover, and went out again. It was not very large, but was made heavy by ornamental bracers and handles of gilt iron. The wood was beautifully incised with Arabic lettering.

"So!" said Kalonymos, returning to his seat. "And here is the curious key," he added, taking it from a small leathern bag. "Bestow it carefully. I trust you are methodic and wary." He gave Deronda the monitory and slightly suspicious look with which age is apt to commit any object to the keeping of youth.

"I shall be more careful of this than of any other property," said Deronda, smiling and putting

the key in his breast-pocket. "I never before possessed anything that was a sign to me of so much cherished hope and effort. And I shall never forget that the effort was partly yours. Have you time to tell me more of my grandfather? Or shall I be trespassing in staying longer?"

"Stay yet a while. In an hour and eighteen minutes I start for Trieste," said Kalonymos, looking at his watch, "and presently my sons will expect my attention. Will you let me make you known to them, so that they may have the pleasure of showing hospitality to my friend's grandson? They dwell here in ease and luxury, though I choose to be a wanderer."

"I shall be glad if you will commend me to their acquaintance for some future opportunity," said Deronda. "There are pressing claims calling me to England—friends who may be much in need of my presence. I have been kept away from them too long by unexpected circumstances. But to know more of you and your family would be motive enough to bring me again to Mainz."

"Good! Me you will hardly find, for I am beyond my threescore years and ten, and I am a wanderer, carrying my shroud with me. But my sons and their children dwell here in wealth and unity. The days are changed for us in Mainz

since our people were slaughtered wholesale if they wouldn't be baptised wholesale: they are changed for us since Karl the Great fetched my ancestors from Italy to bring some tincture of knowledge to our rough German brethren. I and my contemporaries have had to fight for it too. Our youth fell on evil days; but this we have won: we increase our wealth in safety, and the learning of all Germany is fed and fattened by Jewish brains—though they keep not always their Jewish hearts. Have you been left altogether ignorant of your people's life, young man?"

"No," said Deronda, "I have lately, before I had any true suspicion of my parentage, been led to study everything belonging to their history with more interest than any other subject. It turns out that I have been making myself ready to understand my grandfather a little." He was anxious lest the time should be consumed before this circuitous course of talk could lead them back to the topic he most cared about. Age does not easily distinguish between what it needs to express and what youth needs to know—distance seeming to level the objects of memory; and keenly active as Joseph Kalonymos showed himself, an inkstand in the wrong place would have

hindered his imagination from getting to Beyrout: he had been used to unite restless travel with punctilious observation. But Deronda's last sentence answered its purpose.

"So — you would perhaps have been such a man as he if your education had not hindered; for you are like him in features:—yet not altogether, young man. He had an iron will in his face: it braced up everybody about him. When he was quite young he had already got one deep upright line in his brow. I see none of that in you. Daniel Charisi used to say, 'Better a wrong will than a wavering; better a steadfast enemy than an uncertain friend; better a false belief than no belief at all. What he despised most was indifference. He had longer reasons than I can give you.'"

"Yet his knowledge was not narrow?" said Deronda, with a tacit reference to the usual excuse for indecision—that it comes from knowing too much.

"Narrow? no," said Kalonymos, shaking his head with a compassionate smile. "From his childhood upward, he drank in learning as easily as the plant sucks up water. But he early took to medicine and theories about life and health. He travelled to many countries, and spent much

of his substance in seeing and knowing. What he used to insist on was that the strength and wealth of mankind depended on the balance of separateness and communication, and he was bitterly against our people losing themselves among the Gentiles; 'It's no better,' said he, 'than the many sorts of grain going back from their variety into sameness.' He mingled all sorts of learning; and in that he was like our Arabic writers in the golden time. We studied together, but he went beyond me. Though we were bosom friends, and he poured himself out to me, we were as different as the inside and the outside of the bowl. I stood up for no notions of my own: I took Charisi's sayings as I took the shape of the trees: they were there, not to be disputed about. It came to the same thing in both of us: we were both faithful Jews, thankful not to be Gentiles. And since I was a ripe man, I have been what I am now, for all but age—loving to wander, loving transactions, loving to behold all things, and caring nothing about hardship. Charisi thought continually of our people's future: he went with all his soul into that part of our religion: I, not. So we have freedom, I am content. Our people wandered before they were driven. Young man, when I am in the East, I

lie much on deck and watch the greater stars. The sight of them satisfies me. I know them as they rise, and hunger not to know more. Charisi was satisfied with no sight, but pieced it out with what had been before and what would come after. Yet we loved each other, and as he said, we bound our love with duty; we solemnly pledged ourselves to help and defend each other to the last. I have fulfilled my pledge." Here Kalonymos rose, and Deronda, rising also, said—

"And in being faithful to him you have caused justice to be done to me. It would have been a robbery of me too that I should never have known of the inheritance he had prepared for me. I thank you with my whole soul."

"Be worthy of him, young man. What is your vocation?" This question was put with a quick abruptness which embarrassed Deronda, who did not feel it quite honest to allege his law-reading as a vocation. He answered—

"I cannot say that I have any."

"Get one, get one. The Jew must be diligent. You will call yourself a Jew and profess the faith of your fathers?" said Kalonymos, putting his hand on Deronda's shoulder and looking sharply in his face.

"I shall call myself a Jew," said Deronda,

deliberately, becoming slightly paler under the piercing eyes of his questioner. "But I will not say that I shall profess to believe exactly as my fathers have believed. Our fathers themselves changed the horizon of their belief and learned of other races. But I think I can maintain my grandfather's notion of separateness with communication. I hold that my first duty is to my own people, and if there is anything to be done towards restoring or perfecting their common life, I shall make that my vocation."

It happened to Deronda at that moment, as it has often happened to others, that the need for speech made an epoch in resolve. His respect for the questioner would not let him decline to answer, and by the necessity to answer he found out the truth for himself.

"Ah, you argue and you look forward—you are Daniel Charisi's grandson," said Kalonymos, adding a benediction in Hebrew.

With that they parted; and almost as soon as Deronda was in London, the aged man was again on shipboard, greeting the friendly stars without any eager curiosity.

CHAPTER LXI.

" Within the gentle heart Love shelters him,
 As birds within the green shade of the grove.
 Before the gentle heart, in Nature's scheme,
 Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love."

—GUIDO GUINICELLI (*Rossetti's Translation*).

THERE was another house besides the white house at Pennicote, another breast besides Rex Gascoigne's, in which the news of Grandcourt's death caused both strong agitation and the effort to repress it.

It was Hans Meyrick's habit to send or bring in the 'Times' for his mother's reading. She was a great reader of news, from the widest-reaching politics to the list of marriages; the latter, she said, giving her the pleasant sense of finishing the fashionable novels without having read them, and seeing the heroes and heroines happy without knowing what poor creatures they were. On a Wednesday, there were reasons why Hans always chose to bring the paper, and to do so about the

time that Mirah had nearly ended giving Mab her weekly lesson, avowing that he came then because he wanted to hear Mirah sing. But on the particular Wednesday now in question, after entering the house as quietly as usual with his latch-key, he appeared in the parlour, shaking the 'Times' aloft with a crackling noise, in remorseless interruption of Mab's attempt to render *Lascia ch'io pianga* with a remote imitation of her teacher. Piano and song ceased immediately: Mirah, who had been playing the accompaniment, involuntarily started up and turned round, the crackling sound, after the occasional trick of sounds, having seemed to her something thunderous; and Mab said—

"O-o-o, Hans! why do you bring a more horrible noise than my singing?"

"What on earth is the wonderful news?" said Mrs Meyrick, who was the only other person in the room. "Anything about Italy—anything about the Austrians giving up Venice?"

"Nothing about Italy, but something from Italy," said Hans, with a peculiarity in his tone and manner which set his mother interpreting. Imagine how some of us feel and behave when an event, not disagreeable, seems to be confirming and carrying out our private constructions. We

say, "What do you think?" in a pregnant tone to some innocent person who has not embarked his wisdom in the same boat with ours, and finds our information flat.

"Nothing bad?" said Mrs Meyrick, anxiously, thinking immediately of Deronda; and Mirah's heart had been already clutched by the same thought.

"Not bad for anybody we care much about," said Hans, quickly; "rather uncommonly lucky, I think. I never knew anybody die conveniently before. Considering what a dear gazelle I am, I am constantly wondering to find myself alive."

"O me, Hans!" said Mab, impatiently, "if you must talk of yourself, let it be behind your own back. What *is* it that has happened?"

"Duke Alfonso is drowned, and the Duchess is alive, that's all," said Hans, putting the paper before Mrs Meyrick, with his finger against a paragraph. "But more than all is—Deronda was at Genoa in the same hotel with them, and he saw her brought in by the fishermen, who had got her out of the water time enough to save her from any harm. It seems they saw her jump in after her husband—which was a less judicious action than I should have expected of the Duchess."

However, Deronda is a lucky fellow in being there to take care of her."

Mirah had sunk on the music-stool again, with her eyelids down and her hands tightly clasped; and Mrs Meyrick, giving up the paper to Mab, said—

'Poor thing! she must have been fond of her husband, to jump in after him.'

"It was an inadvertence—a little absence of mind," said Hans, creasing his face roguishly, and throwing himself into a chair not far from Mirah. "Who can be fond of a jealous baritone, with freezing glances, always singing asides?—that was the husband's *rôle*, depend upon it. Nothing can be neater than his getting drowned. The Duchess is at liberty now to marry a man with a fine head of hair, and glances that will melt instead of freezing her. And I shall be invited to the wedding."

Here Mirah started from her sitting posture, and fixing her eyes on Hans with an angry gleam in them, she said, in the deeply-shaken voice of indignation—

"Mr Hans, you ought not to speak in that way. Mr Deronda would not like you to speak so. Why will you say he is lucky—why will you use words of that sort about life and death

—when what is life to one is death to another? How do you know it would be lucky if he loved Mrs Grandcourt? It might be a great evil to him. She would take him away from my brother—I know she would. Mr Deronda would not call that lucky—to pierce my brother's heart.”

All three were struck with the sudden transformation. Mirah's face, with a look of anger that might have suited Ithuriel, pale even to the lips that were usually so rich of tint, was not far from poor Hans, who sat transfixed, blushing under it as if he had been the girl, while he said nervously—

“I am a fool and a brute, and I withdraw every word. I'll go and hang myself like Judas—if it's allowable to mention him.” Even in Hans's sorrowful moments, his improvised words had inevitably some drollery.

But Mirah's anger was not appeased: how could it be? She had burst into indignant speech as creatures in intense pain bite and make their teeth meet even through their own flesh, by way of making their agony bearable. She said no more, but, seating herself at the piano, pressed the sheet of music before her, as if she thought of beginning to play again.

It was Mab who spoke, while Mrs Meyrick's

face seemed to reflect some of Hans's discomfort.

"Mirah is quite right to scold you, Hans. You are always taking Mr Deronda's name in vain. And it is horrible, joking in that way about his marrying Mrs Grandcourt. Men's minds must be very black, I think," ended Mab, with much scorn.

"Quite true, my dear," said Hans, in a low tone, rising and turning on his heel to walk towards the back window.

"We had better go on, Mab; you have not given your full time to the lesson," said Mirah, in a higher tone than usual. "Will you sing this again, or shall I sing it to you?"

"Oh, please sing it to me," said Mab, rejoiced to take no more notice of what had happened.

And Mirah immediately sang *Lascia ch'io pianga*, giving forth its melodious sobs and cries with new fulness and energy. Hans paused in his walk and leaned against the mantelpiece, keeping his eyes carefully away from his mother's. When Mirah had sung her last note and touched the last chord, she rose and said, "I must go home now. Ezra expects me."

She gave her hand silently to Mrs Meyrick and hung back a little, not daring to look at her, in-

stead of kissing her as usual. But the little mother drew Mirah's face down to hers, and said soothingly, "God bless you, my dear." Mirah felt that she had committed an offence against Mrs Meyrick by angrily rebuking Hans, and mixed with the rest of her suffering was the sense that she had shown something like a proud ingratitude, an unbecoming assertion of superiority. And her friend had divined this compunction.

Meanwhile Hans had seized his wide-awake, and was ready to open the door.

"Now Hans," said Mab, with what was really a sister's tenderness cunningly disguised, "you are not going to walk home with Mirah. I am sure she would rather not. You are so dreadfully disagreeable to-day."

"I shall go to take care of her, if she does not forbid me," said Hans, opening the door.

Mirah said nothing, and when he had opened the outer door for her and closed it behind him, he walked by her side unforbidden. She had not the courage to begin speaking to him again—conscious that she had perhaps been unbecomingly severe in her words to him, yet finding only severer words behind them in her heart. Besides, she was pressed upon by a crowd of thoughts thrusting themselves forward as interpreters of

that consciousness which still remained unuttered to herself.

Hans, on his side, had a mind equally busy. Mirah's anger had waked in him a new perception, and with it the unpleasant sense that he was a dolt not to have had it before. Suppose Mirah's heart were entirely preoccupied with Deronda in another character than that of her own and her brother's benefactor : the supposition was attended in Hans's mind with anxieties which, to do him justice, were not altogether selfish. He had a strong persuasion, which only direct evidence to the contrary could have dissipated, that there was a serious attachment between Deronda and Mrs Grandcourt ; he had pieced together many fragments of observation and gradually gathered knowledge, completed by what his sisters had heard from Anna Gascoigne, which convinced him not only that Mrs Grandcourt had a passion for Deronda, but also, notwithstanding his friend's austere self-repression, that Deronda's susceptibility about her was the sign of concealed love. Some men, having such a conviction, would have avoided allusions that could have roused that susceptibility ; but Hans's talk naturally fluttered towards mischief, and he was given to a form of experiment on live animals which consisted in

irritating his friends playfully. His experiments had ended in satisfying him that what he thought likely was true.

On the other hand, any susceptibility Deronda had manifested about a lover's attentions being shown to Mirah, Hans took to be sufficiently accounted for by the alleged reason, namely, her dependent position; for he credited his friend with all possible unselfish anxiety for those whom he could rescue or protect. And Deronda's insistence that Mirah would never marry one who was not a Jew necessarily seemed to exclude himself, since Hans shared the ordinary opinion, which he knew nothing to disturb, that Deronda was the son of Sir Hugo Mallinger.

Thus he felt himself in clearness about the state of Deronda's affections; but now, the events which really struck him as concurring towards the desirable union with Mrs Grandcourt, had called forth a flash of revelation from Mirah—a betrayal of her passionate feeling on this subject which made him melancholy on her account as well as his own—yet on the whole less melancholy than if he had imagined Deronda's hopes fixed on her. It is not sublime, but it is common, for a man to see the beloved object unhappy because his rival loves another, with more fortitude

and a milder jealousy than if he saw her entirely happy in his rival. At least it was so with the mercurial Hans, who fluctuated between the contradictory states, of feeling wounded because Mirah was wounded, and of being almost obliged to Deronda for loving somebody else. It was impossible for him to give Mirah any direct sign of the way in which he had understood her anger, yet he longed that his speechless companionship should be eloquent in a tender, penitent sympathy which is an admissible form of wooing a bruised heart.

Thus the two went side by side in a companionship that yet seemed an agitated communication, like that of two chords whose quick vibrations lie outside our hearing. But when they reached the door of Mirah's home, and Hans said "Good-bye," putting out his hand with an appealing look of penitence, she met the look with melancholy gentleness, and said, "Will you not come in and see my brother?"

Hans could not but interpret this invitation as a sign of pardon. He had not enough understanding of what Mirah's nature had been wrought into by her early experience, to divine how the very strength of her late excitement had made it pass the more quickly into a resolute acceptance

of pain. When he had said, "If you will let me," and they went in together, half his grief was gone, and he was spinning a little romance of how his devotion might make him indispensable to Mirah in proportion as Deronda gave his devotion elsewhere. This was quite fair, since his friend was provided for according to his own heart; and on the question of Judaism Hans felt thoroughly fortified:—who ever heard in tale or history that a woman's love went in the track of her race and religion? Moslem and Jewish damsels were always attracted towards Christians, and now if Mirah's heart had gone forth too precipitately towards Deronda, here was another case in point. Hans was wont to make merry with his own arguments, to call himself a Giaour, and antithesis the sole clue to events; but he believed a little in what he laughed at. And thus his bird-like hope, constructed on the lightest principles, soared again in spite of heavy circumstance.

They found Mordecai looking singularly happy, holding a closed letter in his hand, his eyes glowing with a quiet triumph which in his emaciated face gave the idea of a conquest over assailing death. After the greeting between him and Hans, Mirah put her arm round her brother's neck and looked down at the letter in his hand, without the cour-

age to ask about it, though she felt sure that it was the cause of his happiness.

“A letter from Daniel Deronda,” said Mordecai, answering her look. “Brief—only saying that he hopes soon to return. Unexpected claims have detained him. The promise of seeing him again is like the bow in the cloud to me,” continued Mordecai, looking at Hans; “and to you also it must be a gladness. For who has two friends like him?”

While Hans was answering Mirah slipped away to her own room; but not to indulge in any outburst of the passion within her. If the angels once supposed to watch the toilet of women had entered the little chamber with her and let her shut the door behind them, they would only have seen her take off her hat, sit down and press her hands against her temples as if she had suddenly reflected that her head ached; then rise to dash cold water on her eyes and brow and hair till her backward curls were full of crystal beads, while she had dried her brow and looked out like a freshly-opened flower from among the dewy tresses of the woodland; then give deep sighs of relief, and putting on her little slippers, sit still after that action for a couple of minutes, which seemed to her so long, so full of things to come, that she

rose with an air of recollection, and went down to make tea.

Something of the old life had returned. She had been used to remember that she must learn her part, must go to rehearsal, must act and sing in the evening, must hide her feelings from her father; and the more painful her life grew, the more she had been used to hide. The force of her nature had long found its chief action in resolute endurance, and to-day the violence of feeling which had caused the first jet of anger had quickly transformed itself into a steady facing of trouble, the well-known companion of her young years. But while she moved about and spoke as usual, a close observer might have discerned a difference between this apparent calm, which was the effect of restraining energy, and the sweet genuine calm of the months when she first felt a return of her infantine happiness.

Those who have been indulged by fortune and have always thought of calamity as what happens to others, feel a blind incredulous rage at the reversal of their lot, and half believe that their wild cries will alter the course of the storm. Mirah felt no such surprise when familiar Sorrow came back from brief absence, and sat down with her according to the old use and wont. And this

habit of expecting trouble rather than joy, hindered her from having any persistent belief in opposition to the probabilities which were not merely suggested by Hans but were supported by her own private knowledge and long-growing presentiment. An attachment between Deronda and Mrs Grandcourt, to end in their future marriage, had the aspect of a certainty for her feeling. There had been no fault in him: facts had ordered themselves so that there was a tie between him and this woman who belonged to another world than her own and Ezra's—nay, who seemed another sort of being than Deronda, something foreign that would be a disturbance in his life instead of blending with it. Well, well—but if it could have been deferred so as to make no difference while Ezra was there! She did not know all the momentousness of the relation between Deronda and her brother, but she had seen and instinctively felt enough to forbode its being incongruous with any close tie to Mrs Grandcourt; at least this was the clothing that Mirah first gave to her mortal repugnance. But in the still, quick action of her consciousness, thoughts went on like changing states of sensation unbroken by her habitual acts; and this inward language soon said distinctly that the mortal repugnance would remain even if Ezra were secured from loss.

“What I have read about and sung about and seen acted, is happening to me—this that I am feeling is the love that makes jealousy:”—so impartially Mirah summed up the charge against herself. But what difference could this pain of hers make to any one else? It must remain as exclusively her own, and hidden, as her early yearning and devotion towards her lost mother. But unlike that devotion, it was something that she felt to be a misfortune of her nature—a discovery that what should have been pure gratitude and reverence had sunk into selfish pain, that the feeling she had hitherto delighted to pour out in words was degraded into something she was ashamed to betray—an absurd longing that she who had received all and given nothing should be of importance where she was of no importance—an angry feeling towards another woman who possessed the good she wanted. But what notion, what vain reliance could it be that had lain darkly within her and was now burning itself into sight as disappointment and jealousy? It was as if her soul had been steeped in poisonous passion by forgotten dreams of deep sleep, and now flamed out in this unaccountable misery. For with her waking reason she had never entertained what seemed the wildly unfitting thought that Deronda could love her. The uneasiness she

had felt before had been comparatively vague and easily explained as part of a general regret that he was only a visitant in her and her brother's world, from which the world where his home lay was as different as a portico with lights and lacqueys was different from the door of a tent, where the only splendour came from the mysterious inaccessible stars. But her feeling was no longer vague: the cause of her pain—the image of Mrs Grandcourt by Deronda's side drawing him farther and farther into the distance, was as definite as pincers on her flesh. In the Psyche-mould of Mirah's frame there rested a fervid quality of emotion sometimes rashly supposed to require the bulk of a Cleopatra; her impressions had the thoroughness and tenacity that give to the first selection of passionate feeling the character of a life-long faithfulness. And now a selection had declared itself, which gave love a cruel heart of jealousy: she had been used to a strong repugnance towards certain objects that surrounded her, and to walk inwardly aloof from them while they touched her sense. And now her repugnance concentrated itself on Mrs Grandcourt, of whom she involuntarily conceived more evil than she knew. "I could bear everything that used to be—but this is worse—this is worse,—I used not to have hor-

rible feelings!" said the poor child in a loud whisper to her pillow. Strange, that she should have to pray against any feeling which concerned Deronda!

But this conclusion had been reached through an evening spent in attending to Mordecai, whose exaltation of spirit in the prospect of seeing his friend again, disposed him to utter many thoughts aloud to Mirah, though such communication was often interrupted by intervals apparently filled with an inward utterance that animated his eyes and gave an occasional silent action to his lips. One thought especially occupied him.

"Seest thou, Mirah," he said once, after a long silence, "the *Shemah*, wherein we briefly confess the divine Unity, is the chief devotional exercise of the Hebrew; and this made our religion the fundamental religion for the whole world; for the divine Unity embraced as its consequence the ultimate unity of mankind. See, then—the nation which has been scoffed at for its separateness, has given a binding theory to the human race. Now, in complete unity a part possesses the whole as the whole possesses every part: and in this way human life is tending toward the image of the Supreme Unity: for as our life becomes more spiritual by capacity of thought, and joy therein, posses-

sion tends to become more universal, being independent of gross material contact; so that in a brief day the soul of a man may know in fuller volume the good which has been and is, nay, is to come, than all he could possess in a whole life where he had to follow the creeping paths of the senses. In this moment, my sister, I hold the joy of another's future within me: a future which these eyes will not see, and which my spirit may not then recognise as mine. I recognise it now, and love it so, that I can lay down this poor life upon its altar and say: 'Burn, burn indiscernibly into that which shall be, which is my love and not me.' Dost thou understand, Mirah?"

"A little," said Mirah, faintly, "but my mind is too poor to have felt it."

"And yet," said Mordecai, rather insistently, "women are specially framed for the love which feels possession in renouncing, and is thus a fit image of what I mean. Somewhere in the later *Midrash*, I think, is the story of a Jewish maiden who loved a Gentile king so well, that this was what she did:—She entered into prison and changed clothes with the woman who was beloved by the king, that she might deliver that woman from death by dying in her stead, and leave the king to be happy in his love which was not for

her. This is the surpassing love, that loses self in the object of love."

"No, Ezra, no," said Mirah, with low-toned intensity, "that was not it. She wanted the king when she was dead to know what she had done, and feel that she was better than the other. It was her strong self, wanting to conquer, that made her die."

Mordecai was silent a little, and then argued—

"That might be, Mirah. But if she acted so, believing the king would never know?"

"You can make the story so in your mind, Ezra, because you are great, and like to fancy the greatest that could be. But I think it was not really like that. The Jewish girl must have had jealousy in her heart, and she wanted somehow to have the first place in the king's mind. That is what she would die for."

"My sister, thou hast read too many plays, where the writers delight in showing the human passions as indwelling demons, unmixed with the relenting and devout elements of the soul. Thou judgest by the plays, and not by thy own heart, which is like our mother's."

Mirah made no answer.

CHAPTER LXII.

“ Das Glück ist eine leichte Dirne,
 Und weilt nicht gern am selben Ort;
 Sie streicht das Haar dir von der Stirne
 Und küsst dich rasch und flattert fort.

Frau Unglück hat im Gegentheile
 Dich liebefest an's Herz gedrückt;
 Sie sagt, sie habe keine Eile,
 Setzt sich zu dir ans Bett und strickt.”

—HEINE.

SOMETHING which Mirah had lately been watching for as the fulfilment of a threat, seemed now the continued visit of that familiar sorrow which had lately come back, bringing abundant luggage.

Turning out of Knightsbridge, after singing at a charitable morning concert in a wealthy house, where she had been recommended by Klesmer, and where there had been the usual groups outside to see the departing company, she began to feel herself dogged by footsteps that kept an even pace with her own. Her concert dress being simple black, over which she had thrown a

dust-cloak, could not make her an object of unpleasant attention, and render walking an imprudence; but this reflection did not occur to Mirah: another kind of alarm lay uppermost in her mind. She immediately thought of her father, and could no more look round than if she had felt herself tracked by a ghost. To turn and face him would be voluntarily to meet the rush of emotions which beforehand seemed intolerable. If it were her father, he must mean to claim recognition, and he would oblige her to face him. She must wait for that compulsion. She walked on, not quickening her pace—of what use was that?—but picturing what was about to happen as if she had the full certainty that the man behind her was her father; and along with her picturing went a regret that she had given her word to Mrs Meyrick not to use any concealment about him. The regret at last urged her, at least, to try and hinder any sudden betrayal that would cause her brother an unnecessary shock. Under the pressure of this motive, she resolved to turn before she reached her own door, and firmly will the encounter instead of merely submitting to it. She had already reached the entrance of the small square where her home lay, and had made up her mind to turn, when she felt

her embodied presentiment getting closer to her, then slipping to her side, grasping her wrist, and saying, with a persuasive curl of accent, ✓ "Mirah!"

She paused at once without any start; it was the voice she expected, and she was meeting the expected eyes. Her face was as grave as if she had been looking at her executioner, while his was adjusted to the intention of soothing and propitiating her. Once a handsome face, with bright colour, it was now sallow and deep-lined, and had that peculiar impress of impudent suavity which comes from courting favour while accepting disrespect. He was lightly made and active, with something of youth about him which made the signs of age seem a disguise; and in reality he was hardly fifty-seven. His dress was shabby, as when she had seen him before. The presence of this unreverend father now, more than ever, affected Mirah with the mingled anguish of shame and grief, repulsion and pity—more than ever, now that her own world was changed into one where there was no comradeship to fence him from scorn and contempt.

Slowly, with a sad, tremulous voice, she said, ✓ "It is you, father."

"Why did you run away from me, child?" he

began, with rapid speech which was meant to have a tone of tender remonstrance, accompanied with various quick gestures like an abbreviated finger - language. "What were you afraid of? You knew I never made you do anything against your will. It was for your sake I broke up your engagement in the Vorstadt, because I saw it didn't suit you, and you repaid me by leaving me to the bad times that came in consequence. I had made an easier engagement for you at the Vorstadt Theatre in Dresden: I didn't tell you, because I wanted to take you by surprise. And you left me planted there — obliged to make myself scarce because I had broken contract. That was hard lines for me, after I had given up everything for the sake of getting you an education which was to be a fortune to you. What father devoted himself to his daughter more than I did to you? You know how I bore that disappointment in your voice, and made the best of it; and when I had nobody besides you, and was getting broken, as a man must who has had to fight his way with his brains—you chose that time to leave me. Who else was it you owed everything to, if not to me? and where was your feeling in return? For what my daughter cared, I might have died in a ditch.

Lapidoth stopped short here, not from lack of invention, but because he had reached a pathetic climax, and gave a sudden sob, like a woman's, taking out hastily an old yellow silk handkerchief. He really felt that his daughter had treated him ill—a sort of sensibility which is naturally strong in unscrupulous persons, who put down what is owing to them, without any *per contra*. Mirah, in spite of that sob, had energy enough not to let him suppose that he deceived her. She answered more firmly, though it was the first time she had ever used accusing words to him.

“You know why I left you, father ; and I had reason to distrust you, because I felt sure that you had deceived my mother. If I could have trusted you, I would have stayed with you and worked for you.”

“I never meant to deceive your mother, Mirah,” said Lapidoth, putting back his handkerchief, but beginning with a voice that seemed to struggle against further sobbing. “I meant to take you back to her, but chances hindered me just at the time, and then there came information of her death. It was better for you that I should stay where I was, and your brother could take care of himself. Nobody had any claim on me but you. I had word of your mother's death from a par-

ticular friend, who had undertaken to manage things for me, and I sent him over money to pay expenses. There's one chance, to be sure"—Lapidoth had quickly conceived that he must guard against something unlikely, yet possible—"he may have written me lies for the sake of getting the money out of me."

Mirah made no answer; she could not bear to utter the only true one—"I don't believe one word of what you say"—and she simply showed a wish that they should walk on, feeling that their standing still might draw down unpleasant notice. Even as they walked along, their companionship might well have made a passer-by turn back to look at them. The figure of Mirah, with her beauty set off by the quiet, careful dress of an English lady, made a strange pendant to this shabby, foreign-looking, eager, and gesticulating man, who withal had an ineffaceable jauntiness of air, perhaps due to the bushy curls of his grizzled hair, the smallness of his hands and feet, and his light walk.

"You seem to have done well for yourself, Mirah? *You* are in no want, I see," said the father, looking at her with emphatic examination.

"Good friends who found me in distress have

helped me to get work," said Mirah, hardly knowing what she actually said, from being occupied with what she would presently have to say. "I give lessons. I have sung in private houses. I have just been singing at a private concert." She paused, and then added, with significance, "I have very good friends, who know all about me."

"And you would be ashamed they should see your father in this plight? No wonder. I came to England with no prospect, but the chance of finding you. It was a mad quest; but a father's heart is superstitious—feels a loadstone drawing it somewhere or other. I might have done very well, staying abroad: when I hadn't you to take care of, I could have rolled or settled as easily as a ball; but it's hard being lonely in the world, when your spirit's beginning to break. And I thought my little Mirah would repent leaving her father, when she came to look back. I've had a sharp pinch to work my way; I don't know what I shall come down to next. Talents like mine are no use in this country. When a man's getting out at elbows nobody will believe in him. I couldn't get any decent employ with my appearance. I've been obliged to go pretty low for a shilling already."

Mirah's anxiety was quick enough to imagine

her father's sinking into a further degradation, which she was bound to hinder if she could. But before she could answer his string of inventive sentences, delivered with as much glibness as if they had been learned by rote, he added promptly—

“Where do you live, Mirah?”

“Here, in this square. We are not far from the house.”

“In lodgings?”

“Yes.”

“Any one to take care of you?”

“Yes,” said Mirah again, looking full at the keen face which was turned towards hers—“my brother.”

The father's eyelids fluttered as if the lightning had come across them, and there was a slight movement of the shoulders. But he said, after a just perceptible pause: “Ezra? How did you know—how did you find him?”

“That would take long to tell. Here we are at the door. My brother would not wish me to close it on you.”

Mirah was already on the door-step, but had her face turned towards her father, who stood below her on the pavement. Her heart had begun to beat faster with the prospect of what was coming in the presence of Ezra; and already in

this attitude of giving leave to the father whom she had been used to obey—in this sight of him standing below her, with a perceptible shrinking from the admission which he had been indirectly asking for, she had a pang of the peculiar, sympathetic humiliation and shame—the stabbed heart of reverence—which belongs to a nature intensely filial.

“Stay a minute, *Liebchen*,” said Lapidoth, speaking in a lowered tone; “what sort of man has Ezra turned out?”

✓ “A good man—a wonderful man,” said Mirah, with slow emphasis, trying to master the agitation which made her voice more tremulous as she went on. She felt urged to prepare her father for the complete penetration of himself which awaited him. “But he was very poor when my friends found him for me—a poor workman. Once—twelve years ago—he was strong and happy, going to the East, which he loved to think of; and my mother called him back because—because she had lost me. And he went to her, and took care of her through great trouble, and worked for her till she died—died in grief. And Ezra, too, had lost his health and strength. The cold had seized him coming back to my mother, because she was forsaken. For years he has been getting

weaker—always poor, always working—but full of knowledge, and great-minded. All who come near him honour him. To stand before him, is like standing before a prophet of God”—Mirah ended with difficulty, her heart throbbing—“falsehoods are no use.”

She had cast down her eyes that she might not see her father while she spoke the last words—unable to bear the ignoble look of frustration that gathered in his face. But he was none the less quick in invention and decision.

“Mirah, *Liebchen*,” he said, in the old caressing way, “shouldn’t you like me to make myself a little more respectable before my son sees me? If I had a little sum of money, I could fit myself out and come home to you as your father ought, and then I could offer myself for some decent place. With a good shirt and coat on my back, people would be glad enough to have me. I could offer myself for a courier, if I didn’t look like a broken-down mountebank. I should like to be with my children, and forget and forgive. But you have never seen your father look like this before. If you had ten pounds at hand—or I could appoint you to bring it me somewhere—I could fit myself out by the day after to-morrow.”

Mirah felt herself under a temptation which she

must try to overcome. She answered, obliging herself to look at him again—

“I don’t like to deny you what you ask, father; but I have given a promise not to do things for you in secret. It *is* hard to see you looking needy; but we will bear that for a little while; and then you can have new clothes, and we can pay for them.” Her practical sense made her see now what was Mrs Meyrick’s wisdom in exacting a promise from her.

Lapidoth’s good-humour gave way a little. He said with a sneer, “You are a hard and fast young lady—you’ve been learning useful virtues—keeping promises not to help your father with a pound or two when you are getting money to dress yourself in silk—your father who made an idol of you, and gave up the best part of his life to providing for you.”

“It seems cruel—I know it seems cruel,” said Mirah, feeling this a worse moment than when she meant to drown herself. Her lips were suddenly pale. “But, father, it is more cruel to break the promises people trust in. That broke my mother’s heart—it has broken Ezra’s life. You and I must eat now this bitterness from what has been. Bear it. Bear to come in and be cared for as you are.”

“To-morrow, then,” said Lapidoth, almost turning on his heel away from this pale, trembling daughter, who seemed now to have got the inconvenient world to back her; but he quickly turned on it again, with his hands feeling about restlessly in his pockets, and said, with some return to his appealing tone, “I’m a little cut up with all this, Mirah. I shall get up my spirits by to-morrow. If you’ve a little money in your pocket, I suppose it isn’t against your promise to give me a trifle—to buy a cigar with.”

Mirah could not ask herself another question—could not do anything else than put her cold trembling hands in her pocket for her *portemonnaie* and hold it out. Lapidoth grasped it at once, pressed her fingers the while, said, “Good-bye, my little girl—to-morrow then!” and left her. He had not taken many steps before he looked carefully into all the folds of the purse, found two half-sovereigns and odd silver, and, pasted against the folding cover, a bit of paper on which Ezra had inscribed, in a beautiful Hebrew character, the name of his mother, the days of her birth, marriage, and death, and the prayer, “May ✓
✓ Mirah be delivered from evil.” It was Mirah’s liking to have this little inscription on many articles that she used. The father read it, and

had a quick vision of his marriage-day, and the bright, unblamed young fellow he was in that time ; teaching many things, but expecting by-and-by to get money more easily by writing ; and very fond of his beautiful bride Sara—crying when she expected him to cry, and reflecting every phase of her feeling with mimetic susceptibility. Lapidoth had travelled a long way from that young self, and thought of all that this inscription signified with an unemotional memory, which was like the ocular perception of a touch to one who has lost the sense of touch, or like morsels on an untasting palate, having shape and grain, but no flavour. Among the things we may gamble away in a lazy selfish life is the capacity for ruth, compunction, or any unselfish regret—which we may come to long for as one in slow death longs to feel laceration, rather than be conscious of a widening margin where consciousness once was. Mirah's purse was a handsome one—a gift to her, which she had been unable to reflect about giving away—and Lapidoth presently found himself outside of his reverie, considering what the purse would fetch in addition to the sum it contained, and what prospect there was of his being able to get more from his daughter without submitting to adopt a penitential form of life under the eyes of

that formidable son. On such a subject his susceptibilities were still lively.

Meanwhile Mirah had entered the house with her power of reticence overcome by the cruelty of her pain. She found her brother quietly reading and sifting old manuscripts of his own, which he meant to consign to Deronda. In the reaction from the long effort to master herself, she fell down before him and clasped his knees, sobbing, and crying, "Ezra, Ezra!"

He did not speak. His alarm for her was spending itself on conceiving the cause of her distress, the more striking from the novelty in her of this violent manifestation. But Mirah's own longing was to be able to speak and tell him the cause. Presently she raised her hand, and still sobbing, said brokenly—

"Ezra, my father! our father! He followed me. I wanted him to come in. I said you would let him come in. And he said No, he would not—not now, but to-morrow. And he begged for money from me. And I gave him my purse, and he went away."

Mirah's words seemed to herself to express all the misery she felt in them. Her brother found them less grievous than his preconceptions, and said gently, "Wait for calm, Mirah, and then

tell me all,"—putting off her hat and laying his hands tenderly on her head. She felt the soothing influence, and in a few minutes told him as exactly as she could all that had happened.

"He will not come to-morrow," said Mordecai. Neither of them said to the other what they both thought, namely, that he might watch for Mirah's outgoings and beg from her again.

"Seest thou," he presently added, "our lot is the lot of Israel. The grief and the glory are mingled as the smoke and the flame. It is because we children have inherited the good that we feel the evil. These things are wedded for us, as our father was wedded to our mother."

The surroundings were of Brompton, but the voice might have come from a Rabbi transmitting the sentences of an elder time to be registered in *Babli*—by which affectionate-sounding diminutive is meant the vast volume of the Babylonian Talmud. 'The Omnipresent,' said a Rabbi, 'is occupied in making marriages.' The levity of the saying lies in the ear of him who hears it; for by marriages the speaker meant all the wondrous combinations of the universe whose issue makes our good and evil.

CHAPTER LXIII.

“Moses, trotz seiner Befeindung der Kunst, dennoch selber ein grosser Künstler war und den wahren Künstlergeist besass. Nur war dieser Künstlergeist bei ihm, wie bei seinen ägyptischen Landsleuten, nur auf das Colossale und Unverwüstliche gerichtet. Aber nicht wie die Aegypter formirte er seine Kunstwerke aus Backstein und Granit, sondern er baute Menschenpyramiden, er meisselte Menschen-Obeliskten, er nahm einen armen Hirtenstamm und Schuf daraus ein Volk, das ebenfalls den Jahrhunderten trotzen sollte . . . er Schuf Israel.”—HEINE: *Geständnisse*.

IMAGINE the difference in Deronda's state of mind when he left England and when he returned to it. He had set out for Genoa in total uncertainty how far the actual bent of his wishes and affections would be encouraged—how far the claims revealed to him might draw him into new paths, far away from the tracks his thoughts had lately been pursuing with a consent of desire which uncertainty made dangerous. He came back with something like a discovered charter warranting the inherited right that his ambition had begun to yearn for: he came back with what was better than freedom—with a duteous bond which his experience had

been preparing him to accept gladly, even if it had been attended with no promise of satisfying a secret passionate longing never yet allowed to grow into a hope. But now he dared avow to himself the hidden selection of his love. Since the hour when he left the house at Chelsea in full-hearted silence under the effect of Mirah's farewell look and words—their exquisite appealingness stirring in him that deeply-laid care for womanhood which had begun when his own lip was like a girl's—her hold on his feeling had helped him to be blameless in word and deed under the difficult circumstances we know of.

There seemed no likelihood that he could ever woo this creature who had become dear to him amidst associations that forbade wooing; yet she had taken her place in his soul as a beloved type—reducing the power of other fascination and making a difference in it that became deficiency. The influence had been continually strengthened. It had lain in the course of poor Gwendolen's lot that her dependence on Deronda tended to rouse in him the enthusiasm of self-martyring pity rather than of personal love, and his less constrained tenderness flowed with the fuller stream towards an indwelling image in all things unlike Gwendolen. Still more, his relation to Mordecai had

brought with it a new nearness to Mirah which was not the less agitating because there was no apparent change in his position towards her; and she had inevitably been bound up in all the thoughts that made him shrink from an issue disappointing to her brother. This process had not gone on unconsciously in Deronda: he was conscious of it as we are of some covetousness that it would be better to nullify by encouraging other thoughts than to give it the insistency of confession even to ourselves: but the jealous fire had leaped out at Hans's pretensions, and when his mother accused him of being in love with a Jewess, any evasion suddenly seemed an infidelity. His mother had compelled him to a decisive acknowledgment of his love, as Joseph Kalonymos had compelled him to a definite expression of his resolve. This new state of decision wrought on Deronda with a force which surprised even himself. There was a release of all the energy which had long been spent in self-checking and suppression because of doubtful conditions; and he was ready to laugh at his own impetuosity when, as he neared England on his way from Mainz, he felt the remaining distance more and more of an obstruction. It was as if he had found an added soul in finding his ancestry—his judgment no

longer wandering in the mazes of impartial sympathy, but choosing, with that noble partiality which is man's best strength, the closer fellowship that makes sympathy practical—exchanging that bird's-eye reasonableness which soars to avoid preference and loses all sense of quality, for the generous reasonableness of drawing shoulder to shoulder with men of like inheritance. He wanted now to be again with Mordecai, to pour forth instead of restraining his feeling, to admit agreement and maintain dissent, and all the while to find Mirah's presence without the embarrassment of obviously seeking it, to see her in the light of a new possibility, to interpret her looks and words from a new starting-point. He was not greatly alarmed about the effect of Hans's attentions, but he had a presentiment that her feeling towards himself had from the first lain in a channel from which it was not likely to be diverted into love. To astonish a woman by turning into her lover when she has been thinking of you merely as a Lord Chancellor is what a man naturally shrinks from: he is anxious to create an easier transition.

What wonder that Deronda saw no other course than to go straight from the London railway station to the lodgings in that small square in

Brompton? Every argument was in favour of his losing no time. He had promised to run down the next day to see Lady Mallinger at the Abbey, and it was already sunset. He wished to deposit the precious chest with Mordecai, who would study its contents, both in his absence and in company with him; and that he should pay this visit without pause would gratify Mordecai's heart. Hence, and for other reasons, it gratified Deronda's heart. The strongest tendencies of his nature were rushing in one current—the fervent affectionateness which made him delight in meeting the wish of beings near to him, and the imaginative need of some far-reaching relation to make the horizon of his immediate, daily acts. It has to be admitted that in this classical, romantic, world-historic position of his, bringing as it were from its hiding-place his hereditary armour, he wore—but so, one must suppose, did the most ancient heroes whether Semitic or Japhetic—the summer costume of his contemporaries. He did not reflect that the drab tints were becoming to him, for he rarely went to the expense of such thinking; but his own depth of colouring, which made the becomingness, got an added radiance in the eyes, a fleeting and returning glow in the skin, as he entered the house,

wondering what exactly he should find. He made his entrance as noiseless as possible.

It was the evening of that same afternoon on which Mirah had had the interview with her father. Mordecai, penetrated by her grief, and also by the sad memories which the incident had awakened, had not resumed his task of sifting papers: some of them had fallen scattered on the floor in the first moments of anxiety, and neither he nor Mirah had thought of laying them in order again. They had sat perfectly still together, not knowing how long; while the clock ticked on the mantelpiece, and the light was fading. Mirah, unable to think of the food that she ought to have been taking, had not moved since she had thrown off her dust-cloak and sat down beside Mordecai with her hand in his, while he had laid his head backward, with closed eyes and difficult breathing, looking, Mirah thought, as he would look when the soul within him could no longer live in its straitened home. The thought that his death might be near was continually visiting her when she saw his face in this way, without its vivid animation; and now, to the rest of her grief was added the regret that she had been unable to control the violent outburst which had shaken him. She sat watching him — her oval cheeks

pallid, her eyes with the sorrowful brilliancy left by young tears, her curls in as much disorder as a just-wakened child's—watching that emaciated face, where it might have been imagined that a veil had been drawn never to be lifted, as if it were her dead joy which had left her strong enough to live on in sorrow. And life at that moment stretched before Mirah with more than a repetition of former sadness. The shadow of the father was there, and more than that, a double bereavement—of one living as well as one dead.

But now the door was opened, and while none entered, a well-known voice said: "Daniel Deronda—may he come in?"

"Come! come!" said Mordecai, immediately rising with an irradiated face and opened eyes—apparently as little surprised as if he had seen Deronda in the morning, and expected this evening visit; while Mirah started up blushing with confused, half-alarmed expectation.

Yet when Deronda entered, the sight of him was like the clearness after rain: no clouds to come could hinder the cherishing beam of that moment. As he held out his right hand to Mirah, who was close to her brother's left, he laid his other hand on Mordecai's right shoulder, and stood so a moment, holding them both at once,

uttering no word, but reading their faces, till he said anxiously to Mirah, "Has anything happened?—any trouble?"

"Talk not of trouble now," said Mordecai, saving her from the need to answer. "There is joy in your face—let the joy be ours."

Mirah thought, "It is for something he cannot tell us." But they all sat down, Deronda drawing a chair close in front of Mordecai.

"That is true," he said, emphatically. "I have a joy which will remain to us even in the worst trouble. I did not tell you the reason of my journey abroad, Mordecai, because—never mind—I went to learn my parentage. And you were right. I am a Jew."

The two men clasped hands with a movement that seemed part of the flash from Mordecai's eyes, and passed through Mirah like an electric shock. But Deronda went on without pause, speaking from Mordecai's mind as much as from his own—

"We have the same people. Our souls have the same vocation. We shall not be separated by life or by death."

Mordecai's answer was uttered in Hebrew, and in no more than a loud whisper. It was in the

liturgical words which express the religious bond:
“Our God, and the God of our fathers.”

The weight of feeling pressed too strongly on that ready-winged speech which usually moved in quick adaptation to every stirring of his fervour.

Mirah fell on her knees by her brother's side, and looked at his now illuminated face, which had just before been so deathly. The action was an inevitable outlet of the violent reversal from despondency to a gladness which came over her as solemnly as if she had been beholding a religious rite. For the moment she thought of the effect on her own life only through the effect on her brother.

“And it is not only that I am a Jew,” Deronda went on, enjoying one of those rare moments when our yearnings and our acts can be completely one, and the real we behold is our ideal good; “but I come of a strain that has ardently maintained the fellowship of our race—a line of Spanish Jews that has borne many students and men of practical power. And I possess what will give us a sort of communion with them. My grandfather, Daniel Charisi, preserved manuscripts, family records stretching far back, in the hope that they would pass into the hands of

his grandson. And now his hope is fulfilled, in spite of attempts to thwart it by hiding my parentage from me. I possess the chest containing them, with his own papers, and it is down below in this house. I mean to leave it with you, Mordecai, that you may help me to study the manuscripts. Some of them I can read easily enough—those in Spanish and Italian. Others are in Hebrew, and, I think, Arabic; but there seem to be Latin translations. I was only able to look at them cursorily while I stayed at Mainz. We will study them together.”

Deronda ended with that bright smile which, beaming out from the habitual gravity of his face, seemed a revelation (the reverse of the continual smile that discredits all expression). But when this happy glance passed from Mordecai to rest on Mirah, it acted like a little too much sunshine, and made her change her attitude. She had knelt under an impulse with which any personal embarrassment was incongruous, and especially any thoughts about how Mrs Grandcourt might stand to this new aspect of things—thoughts which made her colour under Deronda’s glance, and rise to take her seat again in her usual posture of crossed hands and feet, with the effort to look as quiet as possible. Deronda, equally sensitive,

imagined that the feeling of which he was conscious, had entered too much into his eyes, and had been repugnant to her. He was ready enough to believe that any unexpected manifestation might spoil her feeling towards him—and then his precious relation to brother and sister would be marred. If Mirah could have no love for him, any advances of love on his part would make her wretched in that continual contact with him which would remain inevitable.

While such feelings were pulsating quickly in Deronda and Mirah, Mordecai, seeing nothing in his friend's presence and words but a blessed fulfilment, was already speaking with his old sense of enlargement in utterance—

“Daniel, from the first, I have said to you, we know not all the pathways. Has there not been a meeting among them, as of the operations in one soul, where an idea being born and breathing draws the elements towards it, and is fed and grows? For all things are bound together in that Omnipresence which is the place and habitation of the world, and events are as a glass where-through our eyes see some of the pathways. And if it seems that the erring and unloving wills of men have helped to prepare you, as Moses was prepared, to serve your people the better, that

depends on another order than the law which must guide our footsteps. For the evil will of man makes not a people's good except by stirring the righteous will of man ; and beneath all the clouds with which our thought encompasses the Eternal, this is clear—that a people can be blessed only by having counsellors and a multitude whose will moves in obedience to the laws of justice and love. For see, now, it was your loving will that made a chief pathway, and resisted the effect of evil ; for, by performing the duties of brotherhood to my sister, and seeking out her brother in the flesh, your soul has been prepared to receive with gladness this message of the Eternal: 'Behold the multitude of your brethren.'"

"It is quite true that you and Mirah have been my teachers," said Deronda. "If this revelation had been made to me before I knew you both, I think my mind would have rebelled against it. Perhaps I should have felt then—'If I could have chosen, I would not have been a Jew.' What I feel now is—that my whole being is a consent to the fact. But it has been the gradual accord between your mind and mine which has brought about that full consent."

At the moment Deronda was speaking, that first evening in the book-shop was vividly in his

remembrance, with all the struggling aloofness he had then felt from Mordecai's prophetic confidence. It was his nature to delight in satisfying to the utmost the eagerly-expectant soul, which seemed to be looking out from the face before him, like the long-enduring watcher who at last sees the mounting signal-flame; and he went on with fuller fervour—

“It is through your inspiration that I have discerned what may be my life's task. It is you who have given shape to what, I believe, was an inherited yearning—the effect of brooding, passionate thoughts in many ancestors—thoughts that seem to have been intensely present in my grandfather. Suppose the stolen offspring of some mountain tribe brought up in a city of the plain, or one with an inherited genius for painting, and born blind—the ancestral life would lie within them as a dim longing for unknown objects and sensations, and the spell-bound habit of their inherited frames would be like a cunningly-wrought musical instrument, never played on, but quivering throughout in uneasy mysterious moanings of its intricate structure that, under the right touch, gives music. Something like that, I think, has been my experience. Since I began to read and know, I have always longed for some

ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitude—some social captainship, which would come to me as a duty, and not be striven for as a personal prize. You have raised the image of such a task for me—to bind our race together in spite of heresy. You have said to me—‘Our religion united us before it divided us—it made us a people before it made Rabbanites and Karaites. I mean to try what can be done with that union—I mean to work in your spirit. Failure will not be ignoble, but it would be ignoble for me not to try.’”

“Even as my brother that fed at the breasts of my mother,” said Mordecai, falling back in his chair with a look of exultant repose, as after some finished labour.

To estimate the effect of this ardent outpouring from Deronda we must remember his former reserve, his careful avoidance of premature assent or delusive encouragement, which gave to this decided pledge of himself a sacramental solemnity, both for his own mind and Mordecai’s. On Mirah the effect was equally strong, though with a difference: she felt a surprise which had no place in her brother’s mind, at Deronda’s suddenly revealed sense of nearness to them: there seemed to be a breaking of day around her which might

show her other facts unlike her forebodings in the darkness. But after a moment's silence Mordecai spoke again :

“It has begun already—the marriage of our souls. It waits but the passing away of this body, and then they who are betrothed shall unite in a stricter bond, and what is mine shall be thine. Call nothing mine that I have written, Daniel ; for though our Masters delivered rightly that everything should be quoted in the name of him that said it—and their rule is good—yet it does not exclude the willing marriage which melts soul into soul, and makes thought fuller as the clear waters are made fuller, where the fulness is inseparable and the clearness is inseparable. For I have judged what I have written, and I desire the body that I gave my thought to pass away as this fleshly body will pass ; but let the thought be born again from our fuller soul which shall be called yours.”

“You must not ask me to promise that,” said Deronda, smiling. “I must be convinced first of special reasons for it in the writings themselves. And I am too backward a pupil yet. That blent transmission must go on without any choice of ours ; but what we can't hinder must not make our rule for what we ought to choose. I think

our duty is faithful tradition where we can attain it. And so you would insist for any one but yourself. Don't ask me to deny my spiritual parentage, when I am finding the clue of my life in the recognition of my natural parentage."

"I will ask for no promise till you see the reason," said Mordecai. "You have said the truth: I would obey the Masters' rule for another. But for years my hope, nay, my confidence, has been, not that the imperfect image of my thought, which is as the ill-shapen work of the youthful carver who has seen a heavenly pattern, and trembles in imitating the vision—not that this should live, but that my vision and passion should enter into yours—yea, into yours; for he whom I longed for afar, was he not you whom I discerned as mine when you came near? Nevertheless, you shall judge. For my soul is satisfied." Mordecai paused, and then began in a changed tone, reverting to previous suggestions from Deronda's disclosure: "What moved your parents——?" but he immediately checked himself, and added, "Nay, I ask not that you should tell me aught concerning others, unless it is your pleasure."

"Some time—gradually—you will know all," said Deronda. "But now tell me more about yourselves, and how the time has passed since

I went away. I am sure there has been some trouble. Mirah has been in distress about something."

He looked at Mirah, but she immediately turned to her brother, appealing to him to give the difficult answer. She hoped he would not think it necessary to tell Deronda the facts about her father on such an evening as this. Just when Deronda had brought himself so near, and identified himself with her brother, it was cutting to her that he should hear of this disgrace clinging about them, which seemed to have become partly his. To relieve herself she rose to take up her hat and cloak, thinking she would go to her own room: perhaps they would speak more easily when she had left them. But meanwhile Mordecai said—

"To-day there has been a grief. A duty which seemed to have gone far into the distance, has come back and turned its face upon us, and raised no gladness—has raised a dread that we must submit to. But for the moment we are delivered from any visible yoke. Let us defer speaking of it, as if this evening which is deepening about us were the beginning of the festival in which we must offer the first-fruits of our joy, and mingle no mourning with them."

Deronda divined the hinted grief, and left it in silence, rising as he saw Mirah rise, and saying to her, "Are you going? I must leave almost immediately — when I and Mrs Adam have mounted the precious chest, and I have delivered the key to Mordecai—no, Ezra—may I call him Ezra now? I have learned to think of him as Ezra since I have heard you call him so."

"Please call him Ezra," said Mirah, faintly, feeling a new timidity under Deronda's glance and near presence. Was there really something different about him, or was the difference only in her feeling? The strangely various emotions of the last few hours had exhausted her; she was faint with fatigue and want of food. Deronda, observing her pallor and tremulousness, longed to show more feeling, but dared not. She put out her hand, with an effort to smile, and then he opened the door for her. That was all.

A man of refined pride shrinks from making a lover's approaches to a woman whose wealth or rank might make them appear presumptuous or low-motived; but Deronda was finding a more delicate difficulty in a position which, superficially taken, was the reverse of that—though to an ardent reverential love, the loved woman has always a kind of wealth and rank which makes a man

keenly susceptible about the aspect of his addresses. Deronda's difficulty was what any generous man might have felt in some degree; but it affected him peculiarly through his imaginative sympathy with a mind in which gratitude was strong. Mirah, he knew, felt herself bound to him by deep obligations, which to her sensibilities might give every wish of his the aspect of a claim; and an inability to fulfil it would cause her a pain continually revived by their inevitable communion in care for Ezra. Here were fears not of pride only, but of extreme tenderness. Altogether, to have the character of a benefactor seemed to Deronda's anxiety an insurmountable obstacle to confessing himself a lover, unless in some inconceivable way it could be revealed to him that Mirah's heart had accepted him beforehand. And the agitation on his own account, too, was not small.

Even a man who has practised himself in love-making till his own glibness has rendered him sceptical, may at last be overtaken by the lover's awe—may tremble, stammer, and show other signs of recovered sensibility no more in the range of his acquired talents than pins and needles after numbness: how much more may that energetic timidity possess a man whose inward history has

cherished his susceptibilities instead of dulling them, and has kept all the language of passion fresh and rooted as the lovely leafage about the hillside spring!

As for Mirah her dear head lay on its pillow that night with its former suspicions thrown out of shape but still present, like an ugly story which has been discredited but not therefore dissipated. All that she was certain of about Deronda seemed to prove that he had no such fetters upon him as she had been allowing herself to believe in. His whole manner as well as his words implied that there were no hidden bonds remaining to have any effect in determining his future. But notwithstanding this plainly reasonable inference, uneasiness still clung about Mirah's heart. Deronda was not to blame, but he had an importance for Mrs Grandcourt which must give her some hold on him. And the thought of any close confidence between them stirred the little biting snake that had long lain curled and harmless in Mirah's gentle bosom.

But did she this evening feel as completely as before that her jealousy was no less remote from any possibility for herself personally than if her human soul had been lodged in the body of a

fawn that Deronda had saved from the archers? Hardly. Something indefinable had happened and made a difference. The soft warm rain of blossoms which had fallen just where she was—did it really come because she was there? What spirit was there among the boughs?

CHAPTER LXIV.

“ Questa montagna è tale,
Che sempre al cominciar di sotto è grave,
E quanto uom più va su e men fa male.”

—DANTE: *Il Purgatorio*.

It was not many days after her mother's arrival that Gwendolen would consent to remain at Genoa. Her desire to get away from that gem of the sea, helped to rally her strength and courage. For what place, though it were the flowery vale of Enna, may not the inward sense turn into a circle of punishment where the flowers are no better than a crop of flame-tongues burning the soles of our feet?

“I shall never like to see the Mediterranean again,” said Gwendolen to her mother, who thought that she quite understood her child's feeling—even in her tacit prohibition of any express reference to her late husband.

Mrs Davilow, indeed, though compelled formally to regard this time as one of severe calamity, was

virtually enjoying her life more than she had ever done since her daughter's marriage. It seemed that her darling was brought back to her not merely with all the old affection, but with a conscious cherishing of her mother's nearness, such as we give to a possession that we have been on the brink of losing.

“Are you there, mamma?” cried Gwendolen in the middle of the night (a bed had been made for her mother in the same room with hers), very much as she would have done in her early girlhood, if she had felt frightened in lying awake.

“Yes, dear; can I do anything for you?”

“No, thank you; only I like so to know you are there. Do you mind my waking you?” (This question would hardly have been Gwendolen's in her early girlhood.)

“I was not asleep, darling.”

“It seemed not real that you were with me. I wanted to make it real. I can bear things if you are with me. But you must not lie awake being anxious about me. You must be happy now. You must let me make you happy now at last—else what shall I do?”

“God bless you, dear; I have the best happiness I can have, when you make much of me.”

But the next night, hearing that she was sigh-

ing and restless, Mrs Davilow said, "Let me give you your sleeping-draught, Gwendolen."

"No, mamma, thank you; I don't want to sleep."

"It would be so good for you to sleep more, my darling."

"Don't say what would be good for me, mamma," Gwendolen answered, impetuously. "You don't know what would be good for me. You and my uncle must not contradict me and tell me anything is good for me when I feel it is not good."

Mrs Davilow was silent, not wondering that the poor child was irritable. Presently Gwendolen said—

✓ "I was always naughty to you, mamma." ✓

"No, dear, no."

"Yes, I was," said Gwendolen, insistently.

✓ "It is because I was always wicked that I am miserable now."

She burst into sobs and cries. The determination to be silent about all the facts of her married life and its close, reacted in these escapes of enigmatic excitement.

But dim lights of interpretation were breaking on the mother's mind through the information that came from Sir Hugo to Mr Gascoigne, and,

with some omissions, from Mr Gascoigne to herself. The good-natured baronet, while he was attending to all decent measures in relation to his nephew's death, and the possible washing ashore of the body, thought it the kindest thing he could do to use his present friendly intercourse with the Rector as an opportunity for communicating to him, in the mildest way, the purport of Grandcourt's will, so as to save him the additional shock that would be in store for him if he carried his illusions all the way home. Perhaps Sir Hugo would have been communicable enough without that kind motive, but he really felt the motive. He broke the unpleasant news to the Rector by degrees: at first he only implied his fear that the widow was not so splendidly provided for as Mr Gascoigne, nay, as the baronet himself had expected; and only at last, after some previous vague reference to large claims on Grandcourt, he disclosed the prior relations which, in the unfortunate absence of a legitimate heir, had determined all the splendour in another direction.

The Rector was deeply hurt, and remembered, more vividly than he had ever done before, how offensively proud and repelling the manners of the deceased had been towards him—remembered

also that he himself, in that interesting period just before the arrival of the new occupant at Diplow, had received hints of former entangling dissipations, and an undue addiction to pleasure, though he had not foreseen that the pleasure which had probably, so to speak, been swept into private rubbish-heaps, would ever present itself as an array of live caterpillars, disastrous to the green meat of respectable people. But he did not make these retrospective thoughts audible to Sir Hugo, or lower himself by expressing any indignation on merely personal grounds, but behaved like a man of the world who had become a conscientious clergyman. His first remark was—

“When a young man makes his will in health, he usually counts on living a long while. Probably Mr Grandcourt did not believe that this will would ever have its present effect.” After a moment, he added, “The effect is painful in more ways than one. Female morality is likely to suffer from this marked advantage and prominence being given to illegitimate offspring.”

“Well, in point of fact,” said Sir Hugo, in his comfortable way, “since the boy is there, this was really the best alternative for the disposal of the estates. Grandcourt had nobody nearer than his cousin. And it’s a chilling thought that you go

out of this life only for the benefit of a cousin. A man gets a little pleasure in making his will, if it's for the good of his own curly heads; but it's a nuisance when you're giving and bequeathing to a used-up fellow like yourself, and one you don't care two straws for. It's the next worst thing to having only a life interest in your estates. No; I forgive Grandcourt for that part of his will. But, between ourselves, what I don't forgive him for, is the shabby way he has provided for your niece—*our* niece, I will say—no better a position than if she had been a doctor's widow. Nothing grates on me more than that posthumous grudgingness towards a wife. A man ought to have some pride and fondness for his widow. *I* should, I know. I take it as a test of a man, that he feels the easier about his death when he can think of his wife and daughters being comfortable after it. I like that story of the fellows in the Crimean war, who were ready to go to the bottom of the sea, if their widows were provided for."

"It has certainly taken me by surprise," said Mr Gascoigne, "all the more because, as the one who stood in the place of father to my niece, I had shown my reliance on Mr Grandcourt's apparent liberality in money matters by making no claims for her beforehand. That seemed to

me due to him under the circumstances. Probably you think me blamable."

"Not blamable exactly. I respect a man for trusting another. But take my advice. If you marry another niece, though it may be to the Archbishop of Canterbury, bind him down. Your niece can't be married for the first time twice over. And if he's a good fellow, he'll wish to be bound. But as to Mrs Grandcourt, I can only say that I feel my relation to her all the nearer, because I think that she has not been well treated. And I hope you will urge her to rely on me as a friend."

Thus spake the chivalrous Sir Hugo, in his disgust at the young and beautiful widow of a Mallinger Grandcourt being left with only two thousand a-year and a house in a coal-mining district. To the Rector that income naturally appeared less shabby and less accompanied with mortifying privations; but in this conversation he had devoured a much keener sense than the baronet's of the humiliation cast over his niece, and also over her nearest friends, by the conspicuous publishing of her husband's relation to Mrs Glasher. And like all men who are good husbands and fathers, he felt the humiliation through the minds of the women who would be chiefly

affected by it; so that the annoyance of first hearing the facts was far slighter than what he felt in communicating them to Mrs Davilow, and in anticipating Gwendolen's feeling whenever her mother saw fit to tell her of them. For the good Rector had an innocent conviction that his niece was unaware of Mrs Glasher's existence, arguing with masculine soundness from what maidens and wives were likely to know, do, and suffer, and having had a most imperfect observation of the particular maiden and wife in question. Not so Gwendolen's mother, who now thought that she saw an explanation of much that had been enigmatic in her child's conduct and words before and after her engagement, concluding that in some inconceivable way Gwendolen had been informed of this left-handed marriage and the existence of the children. She trusted to opportunities that would arise in moments of affectionate confidence before and during their journey to England, when she might gradually learn how far the actual state of things was clear to Gwendolen, and prepare her for anything that might be a disappointment. But she was spared from devices on the subject.

"I hope you don't expect that I am going to be rich and grand, mamma," said Gwendolen, not



long after the Rector's communication ; " perhaps I shall have nothing at all."

She was drest, and had been sitting long in quiet meditation. Mrs Davilow was startled, but said, after a moment's reflection—

" Oh yes, dear, you will have something. Sir Hugo knows all about the will."

" That will not decide," said Gwendolen, abruptly.

" Surely, dear : Sir Hugo says you are to have two thousand a-year and the house at Gadsmere."

" What I have will depend on what I accept," said Gwendolen. " You and my uncle must not attempt to cross me and persuade me about this. I will do everything I can do to make you happy, but in anything about my husband I must not be interfered with. Is eight hundred a-year enough for you, mamma ?"

" More than enough, dear. You must not think of giving me so much." Mrs Davilow paused a little, and then said, " Do you know who is to have the estates and the rest of the money ?"

" Yes," said Gwendolen, waving her hand in dismissal of the subject. " I know everything. It is all perfectly right, and I wish never to have it mentioned."

The mother was silent, looked away, and rose

to fetch a fan-screen, with a slight flush on her delicate cheeks. Wondering, imagining, she did not like to meet her daughter's eyes, and sat down again under a sad constraint. What wretchedness her child had perhaps gone through, which yet must remain as it always had been, locked away from their mutual speech. But Gwendolen was watching her mother with that new divination which experience had given her; and in tender relenting at her own peremptoriness, she said, "Come and sit nearer to me, mamma, and don't be unhappy."

Mrs Davilow did as she was told, but bit her lips in the vain attempt to hinder smarting tears. Gwendolen leaned towards her caressingly and said, "I mean to be very wise; I do really. And good—oh so good to you, dear, old, sweet mamma, you won't know me. Only you must not cry."

✓ The resolve that Gwendolen had in her mind was that she would ask Deronda whether she ought to accept any of her husband's money—whether she might accept what would enable her to provide for her mother. The poor thing felt strong enough to do anything that would give her a higher place in Deronda's mind.

An invitation that Sir Hugo pressed on her with

kind urgency was that she and Mrs Davilow should go straight with him to Park Lane, and make his house their abode as long as mourning and other details needed attending to in London. Town, he insisted, was just then the most retired of places ; and he proposed to exert himself at once in getting all articles belonging to Gwendolen away from the house in Grosvenor Square. No proposal could have suited her better than this of staying a little while in Park Lane. It would be easy for her there to have an interview with Deronda, if she only knew how to get a letter into his hands, asking him to come to her. During the journey Sir Hugo, having understood that she was acquainted with the purport of her husband's will, ventured to talk before her and to her about her future arrangements, referring here and there to mildly agreeable prospects as matters of course, and otherwise shedding a decorous cheerfulness over her widowed position. It seemed to him really the more graceful course for a widow to recover her spirits on finding that her husband had not dealt as handsomely by her as he might have done ; it was the testator's fault if he compromised all her grief at his departure by giving a testamentary reason for it, so that she might be supposed to look sad not because he had left her, but

because he had left her poor. The baronet, having his kindness doubly fanned by the favourable wind on his own fortunes and by compassion for Gwendolen, had become quite fatherly in his behaviour to her, called her "my dear," and in mentioning Gadsmere to Mr Gascoigne with its various advantages and disadvantages, spoke of what "we" might do to make the best of that property. Gwendolen sat by in pale silence while Sir Hugo, with his face turned towards Mrs Davilow or Mr Gascoigne, conjectured that Mrs Grandcourt might perhaps prefer letting Gadsmere to residing there during any part of the year, in which case he thought that it might be leased on capital terms to one of the fellows engaged with the coal: Sir Hugo had seen enough of the place to know that it was as comfortable and picturesque a box as any man need desire, providing his desires were circumscribed within a coal area.

"*I shouldn't mind about the soot myself,*" said the baronet, with that dispassionateness which belongs to the potential mood. "Nothing is more healthy. And if one's business lay there, Gadsmere would be a paradise. It makes quite a feature in Scrogg's history of the county, with the little tower and the fine piece of water—the prettiest print in the book."

"A more important place than Offendene, I suppose?" said Mr Gascoigne.

"Much," said the baronet, decisively. "I was there with my poor brother—it is more than a quarter of a century ago, but I remember it very well. The rooms may not be larger, but the grounds are on a different scale."

"Our poor dear Offendene is empty after all," said Mrs Davilow. "When it came to the point, Mr Haynes declared off, and there has been no one to take it since. I might as well have accepted Lord Brackenshaw's kind offer that I should remain in it another year rent-free: for I should have kept the place aired and warmed."

"I hope you have got something snug instead," said Sir Hugo.

"A little too snug," said Mr Gascoigne, smiling at his sister-in-law. "You are rather thick upon the ground."

Gwendolen had turned with a changed glance when her mother spoke of Offendene being empty. This conversation passed during one of the long unaccountable pauses often experienced in foreign trains at some country station. There was a dreamy, sunny stillness over the hedgeless fields stretching to the boundary of poplars; and to Gwendolen the talk within the carriage seemed

only to make the dreamland larger with an indistinct region of coal-pits, and a purgatorial Gads-mere which she would never visit ; till, at her mother's words, this mingled, dozing view seemed to dissolve and give way to a more wakeful vision of Offendene and Pennicote under their cooler lights. She saw the grey shoulders of the downs, the cattle-specked fields, the shadowy plantations with rutted lanes where the barked timber lay for a wayside seat, the neatly-clipped hedges on the road from the parsonage to Offendene, the avenue where she was gradually discerned from the windows, the hall-door opening, and her mother or one of the troublesome sisters coming out to meet her. All that brief experience of a quiet home which had once seemed a dulness to be fled from, now came back to her as a restful escape, a station where she found the breath of morning and the unrepublishing voice of birds, after following a lure through a long Satanic masquerade, which she had entered on with an intoxicated belief in its disguises, and had seen the end of in shrieking fear lest she herself had become one of the evil spirits who were dropping their human mummery and hissing around her with serpent tongues.

In this way Gwendolen's mind paused over Offendene and made it the scene of many thoughts;

but she gave no further outward sign of interest in this conversation, any more than in Sir Hugo's opinion on the telegraphic cable or her uncle's views of the Church Rate Abolition Bill. What subjects will not our talk embrace in leisurely day-journeying from Genoa to London? Even strangers, after glancing from China to Peru and opening their mental stores with a liberality threatening a mutual impression of poverty on any future meeting, are liable to become excessively confidential. But the baronet and the rector were under a still stronger pressure towards cheerful communication: they were like acquaintances compelled to a long drive in a mourning-coach, who having first remarked that the occasion is a melancholy one, naturally proceed to enliven it by the most miscellaneous discourse. "I don't mind telling *you*," said Sir Hugo to the Rector, in mentioning some private detail; while the Rector, without saying so, did not mind telling the baronet about his sons, and the difficulty of placing them in the world. By dint of discussing all persons and things within driving-reach of Dip-low, Sir Hugo got himself wrought to a pitch of interest in that former home, and of conviction that it was his pleasant duty to regain and strengthen his personal influence in the neigh-

bourhood, that made him declare his intention of taking his family to the place for a month or two before the autumn was over; and Mr Gascoigne cordially rejoiced in that prospect. Altogether, the journey was continued and ended with mutual liking between the male fellow-travellers.

Meanwhile Gwendolen sat by like one who had visited the spirit-world and was full to the lips of an unutterable experience that threw a strange unreality over all the talk she was hearing of her own and the world's business; and Mrs Davilow was chiefly occupied in imagining what her daughter was feeling, and in wondering what was signified by her hinted doubt whether she would accept her husband's bequest. Gwendolen in fact had before her the unscaled wall of an immediate purpose shutting off every other resolution. How to scale the wall? She wanted again to see and consult Deronda, that she might secure herself against any act he would disapprove. Would her remorse have maintained its power within her, or would she have felt absolved by secrecy, if it had not been for that outer conscience which was made for her by Deronda? It is hard to say how much we could forgive ourselves if we were secure from judgment by another whose opinion is the breathing-medium of all our joy—who brings to

us with close pressure and immediate sequence that judgment of the Invisible and Universal which self-flattery and the world's tolerance would easily melt and disperse. In this way our brother may be in the stead of God to us, and his opinion which has pierced even to the joints and marrow, may be our virtue in the making. That mission of Deronda to Gwendolen had begun with what she had felt to be his judgment of her at the gaming-table. He might easily have spoiled it :—much of our lives is spent in marring our own influence and turning others' belief in us into a widely concluding unbelief which they call knowledge of the world, while it is really disappointment in you or me. Deronda had not spoiled his mission.

But Gwendolen had forgotten to ask him for his address in case she wanted to write, and her only way of reaching him was through Sir Hugo. She was not in the least blind to the construction that all witnesses might put on her giving signs of dependence on Deronda, and her seeking him more than he sought her : Grandcourt's rebukes had sufficiently enlightened her pride. But the force, the tenacity of her nature had thrown itself into that dependence, and she would no more let go

her hold on Deronda's help, or deny herself the interview her soul needed, because of witnesses, than if she had been in prison in danger of being condemned to death. When she was in Park Lane and knew that the baronet would be going down to the Abbey immediately (just to see his family for a couple of days and then return to transact needful business for Gwendolen), she said to him without any air of hesitation, while her mother was present—

“Sir Hugo, I wish to see Mr Deronda again as soon as possible. I don't know his address. Will you tell it me, or let him know that I want to see him?”

A quick thought passed across Sir Hugo's face, but made no difference to the ease with which he said, “Upon my word, I don't know whether he's at his chambers or the Abbey at this moment. But I'll make sure of him. I'll send a note now to his chambers telling him to come, and if he's at the Abbey I can give him your message and send him up at once. I am sure he will want to obey your wish,” the baronet ended, with grave kindness, as if nothing could seem to him more in the appropriate course of things than that she should send such a message.

But he was convinced that Gwendolen had a passionate attachment to Deronda, the seeds of which had been laid long ago, and his former suspicion now recurred to him with more strength than ever, that her feeling was likely to lead her into imprudences—in which kind-hearted Sir Hugo was determined to screen and defend her as far as lay in his power. To him it was as pretty a story as need be that this fine creature and his favourite Dan should have turned out to be formed for each other, and that the unsuitable husband should have made his exit in such excellent time. Sir Hugo liked that a charming woman should be made as happy as possible. In truth, what most vexed his mind in this matter at present was a doubt whether the too lofty and inscrutable Dan had not got some scheme or other in his head, which would prove to be dearer to him than the lovely Mrs Grandcourt, and put that neatly-prepared marriage with her out of the question. It was among the usual paradoxes of feeling that Sir Hugo, who had given his fatherly cautions to Deronda against too much tenderness in his relations with the bride, should now feel rather irritated against him by the suspicion that he had not fallen in love as he ought to have done. Of

course all this thinking on Sir Hugo's part was eminently premature, only a fortnight or so after Grandcourt's death. But it is the trick of thinking to be either premature or behindhand.

However, he sent the note to Deronda's chambers and it found him there.

CHAPTER LXV.

// “ O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings ! ”
—MILTON.

DERONDA did not obey Gwendolen's new summons without some agitation. Not his vanity, but his keen sympathy made him susceptible to the danger that another's heart might feel larger demands on him than he would be able to fulfil ; and it was no longer a matter of argument with him, but of penetrating consciousness, that Gwendolen's soul clung to his with a passionate need. We do not argue the existence of the anger or the scorn that thrills through us in a voice ; we simply feel it, and it admits of no disproof. Deronda felt this woman's destiny hanging on his over a precipice of despair. Any one who knows him cannot wonder at his inward confession, that if all this had happened little more than a year ago, he would hardly have asked himself whether he loved her :

the impetuous determining impulse which would have moved him would have been to save her from sorrow, to shelter her life for evermore from the dangers of loneliness, and carry out to the last the rescue he had begun in that monitory redemption of the necklace. But now, love and duty had thrown other bonds around him, and that impulse could no longer determine his life; still, it was present in him as a compassionate yearning, a painful quivering at the very imagination of having again and again to meet the appeal of her eyes and words. The very strength of the bond, the certainty of the resolve, that kept him asunder from her, made him gaze at her lot apart with the more aching pity.

He awaited her coming in the back drawing-room—part of that white and crimson space where they had sat together at the musical party, where Gwendolen had said for the first time that her lot depended on his not forsaking her, and her appeal had seemed to melt into the melodic cry—*Per pietà non dirmi addio*. But the melody had come from Mirah's dear voice.

Deronda walked about this room, which he had for years known by heart, with a strange sense of metamorphosis in his own life. The familiar objects around him, from Lady Mallinger's gently

smiling portrait to the also human and urbane faces of the lions on the pilasters of the chimney-piece, seemed almost to belong to a previous state of existence which he was revisiting in memory only, not in reality; so deep and transforming had been the impressions he had lately experienced, so new were the conditions under which he found himself in the house he had been accustomed to think of as a home—standing with his hat in his hand awaiting the entrance of a young creature whose life had also been undergoing a transformation—a tragic transformation towards a wavering result, in which he felt with apprehensiveness that his own action was still bound up.

But Gwendolen was come in, looking changed, not only by her mourning dress, but by a more satisfied quietude of expression than he had seen in her face at Genoa. Her satisfaction was that Deronda was there; but there was no smile between them as they met and clasped hands: each was full of remembrances—full of anxious prevision. She said, "It was good of you to come. Let us sit down," immediately seating herself in the nearest chair. He placed himself opposite to her.

"I asked you to come because I want you to tell me what I ought to do," she began, at once.

“Don’t be afraid of telling me what you think is right, because it seems hard. I have made up my mind to do it. I was afraid once of being poor; I could not bear to think of being under other people; and that was why I did something—why I married. I have borne worse things now. I think I could bear to be poor, if you think I ought. Do you know about my husband’s will?”

“Yes, Sir Hugo told me,” said Deronda, already guessing the question she had to ask.

“Ought I to take anything he has left me? I will tell you what I have been thinking,” said Gwendolen, with a more nervous eagerness. “Perhaps you may not quite know that I really did think a good deal about my mother when I married. I *was* selfish, but I did love her, and feel about her poverty; and what comforted me most at first, when I was miserable, was her being better off because I had married. The thing that would be hardest to me now would be to see her in poverty again; and I have been thinking that if I took enough to provide for her, and no more—nothing for myself—it would not be wrong; for I was very precious to my mother—and he took me from her—and he meant—and if she had known——”

Gwendolen broke off. She had been preparing

herself for this interview by thinking of hardly anything else than this question of right towards her mother; but the question had carried with it thoughts and reasons which it was impossible for her to utter, and these perilous remembrances swarmed between her words, making her speech more and more agitated and tremulous. She looked down helplessly at her hands, now unladen of all rings except her wedding-ring.

“Do not hurt yourself by speaking of that,” said Deronda, tenderly. “There is no need; the case is very simple. I think I can hardly judge wrongly about it. You consult me because I am the only person to whom you have confided the most painful part of your experience; and I can understand your scruples.” He did not go on immediately, waiting for her to recover herself. The silence seemed to Gwendolen full of the tenderness that she heard in his voice, and she had courage to lift up her eyes and look at him as he said, “You are conscious of something which you feel to be a crime towards one who is dead. You think that you have forfeited all claim as a wife. You shrink from taking what was his. You want to keep yourself pure from profiting by his death. Your feeling even urges you to some self-punishment—some scourging of the self that

disobeyed your better will—the will that struggled against temptation. I have known something of that myself. Do I understand you?”

“Yes—at least, I want to be good—not like what I have been,” said Gwendolen. “I will try to bear what you think I ought to bear. I have tried to tell you the worst about myself. What ought I to do?”

“If no one but yourself were concerned in this question of income,” said Deronda, “I should hardly dare to urge you against any remorseful prompting; but I take as a guide now your feeling about Mrs Davilow, which seems to me quite just. I cannot think that your husband’s dues even to yourself are nullified by any act you have committed. He voluntarily entered into your life, and affected its course in what is always the most momentous way. But setting that aside, it was due from him in his position that he should provide for your mother, and he of course understood that if this will took effect she would share the provision he had made for you.”

“She has had eight hundred a-year. What I thought of was to take that and leave the rest,” said Gwendolen. She had been so long inwardly arguing for this as a permission, that her mind could not at once take another attitude.

"I think it is not your duty to fix a limit in that way," said Deronda. "You would be making a painful enigma for Mrs Davilow; an income from which you shut yourself out must be embittered to her. And your own course would become too difficult. We agreed at Genoa that the burthen on your conscience is what no one ought to be admitted to the knowledge of. The future beneficence of your life will be best furthered by your saving all others from the pain of that knowledge. In my opinion you ought simply to abide by the provisions of your husband's will, and let your remorse tell only on the use that you will make of your monetary independence."

In uttering the last sentence Deronda automatically took up his hat, which he had laid on the floor beside him. Gwendolen, sensitive to his slightest movement, felt her heart giving a great leap, as if it too had a consciousness of its own, and would hinder him from going: in the same moment she rose from her chair, unable to reflect that the movement was an acceptance of his apparent intention to leave her; and Deronda of course also rose, advancing a little.

"I will do what you tell me," said Gwendolen, hurriedly; "but what else shall I do?" No other

than these simple words were possible to her; and even these were too much for her in a state of emotion where her proud secrecy was disenthroned: as the childlike sentences fell from her lips they reacted on her like a picture of her own helplessness, and she could not check the sob which sent the large tears to her eyes. Deronda, too, felt a crushing pain; but imminent consequences were visible to him, and urged him to the utmost exertion of conscience. When she had pressed her tears away, he said, in a gently questioning tone—

“You will probably be soon going with Mrs Davilow into the country?”

“Yes, in a week or ten days.” Gwendolen waited an instant, turning her eyes vaguely towards the window, as if looking at some imagined prospect. “I want to be kind to them all—they can be happier than I can. Is that the best I can do?”

“I think so. It is a duty that cannot be doubtful,” said Deronda. He paused a little between his sentences, feeling a weight of anxiety on all his words. “Other duties will spring from it. Looking at your life as a debt may seem the dreariest view of things at a distance; but it cannot really be so. What makes life dreary is the

want of motive ; but once beginning to act with that penitential, loving purpose you have in your mind, there will be unexpected satisfactions—there will be newly-opening needs—continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant.”

Gwendolen turned her eyes on him with the look of one athirst towards the sound of unseen waters. Deronda felt the look as if she had been stretching her arms towards him from a forsaken shore. His voice took an affectionate imploringness when he said—

“ This sorrow, which has cut down to the root, has come to you while you are so young—try to think of it, not as a spoiling of your life, but as a preparation for it. Let it be a preparation——”

Any one overhearing his tones would have thought he was entreating for his own happiness. “ See ! you have been saved from the worst evils that might have come from your marriage, which you feel was wrong. You have had a vision of injurious, selfish action—a vision of possible degradation ; think that a severe angel, seeing you along the road of error, grasped you by the wrist, and showed you the horror of the life you must avoid. And it has come to you in your spring-time. Think of it as a preparation. You can, you will.”

be among the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born."

The words were like the touch of a miraculous hand to Gwendolen. Mingled emotions streamed through her frame with a strength that seemed the beginning of a new existence, having some new powers or other which stirred in her vaguely. So pregnant is the divine hope of moral recovery with the energy that fulfils it. So potent in us is the infused action of another soul, before which we bow in complete love. But the new existence seemed inseparable from Deronda: the hope seemed to make his presence permanent. It was not her thought, that he loved her and would cling to her—a thought would have tottered with improbability: it was her spiritual breath. For the first time since that terrible moment on the sea a flush rose and spread over her cheek, brow, and neck, deepened an instant or two, and then gradually disappeared. She did not speak.

Deronda advanced and put out his hand, saying, "I must not weary you."

She was startled by the sense that he was going, and put her hand in his, still without speaking.

"You look ill yet—unlike yourself," he added, while he held her hand.

"I can't sleep much," she answered, with some return of her dispirited manner. "Things repeat themselves in me so. They come back—they will all come back," she ended, shudderingly, a chill fear threatening her.

"By degrees they will be less insistent," said Deronda. He could not drop her hand or move away from her abruptly.

"Sir Hugo says he shall come to stay at Diploew," said Gwendolen, snatching at previously intended words which had slipped away from her. "You will come too."

"Probably," said Deronda, and then feeling that the word was cold, he added, correctively, "Yes, I shall come," and then released her hand, with the final friendly pressure of one who has virtually said good-bye.

"And not again here, before I leave town?" said Gwendolen, with timid sadness, looking as pallid as ever.

What could Deronda say? "If I can be of any use—if you wish me—certainly I will."

"I must wish it," said Gwendolen, impetuously; "you know I must wish it. What strength have I? Who else is there?" Again a sob was rising.

Deronda felt a pang, which showed itself in his

face. He looked miserable as he said, "I will certainly come."

Gwendolen perceived the change in his face; but the intense relief of expecting him to come again could not give way to any other feeling, and there was a recovery of the inspired hope and courage in her.

"Don't be unhappy about me," she said, in a tone of affectionate assurance. "I shall remember your words—every one of them. I shall remember what you believe about me; I shall try."

She looked at him firmly, and put out her hand again as if she had forgotten what had passed since those words of his which she promised to remember. But there was no approach to a smile on her lips. She had never smiled since her husband's death. When she stood still and in silence, she looked like a melancholy statue of the Gwendolen whose laughter had once been so ready when others were grave.

It is only by remembering the searching anguish which had changed the aspect of the world for her that we can understand her behaviour to Deronda—the unreflecting openness, nay, the importunate pleading, with which she expressed her dependence on him. Considera-

tions such as would have filled the minds of indifferent spectators could not occur to her, any more than if flames had been mounting around her, and she had flung herself into his opened arms and clung about his neck that he might carry her into safety. She identified him with the struggling regenerative process in her which had begun with his action. Is it any wonder that she saw her own necessity reflected in his feeling? She was in that state of unconscious reliance and expectation which is a common experience with us when we are preoccupied with our own trouble or our own purposes. We diffuse our feeling over others, and count on their acting from our motives. Her imagination had not been turned to a future union with Deronda by any other than the spiritual tie which had been continually strengthening; but also it had not been turned towards a future separation from him. Love-making and marriage—how could they now be the imagery in which poor Gwendolen's deepest attachment could spontaneously clothe itself? Mighty Love had laid his hand upon her; but what had he demanded of her? Acceptance of rebuke—the hard task of self-change—confession—endurance. If she cried towards him, what then? She cried as the child cries whose little

feet have fallen backward—cried to be taken by the hand, lest she should lose herself.

The cry pierced Deronda. What position could have been more difficult for a man full of tenderness, yet with clear foresight? He was the only creature who knew the real nature of Gwendolen's trouble: to withdraw himself from any appeal of hers would be to consign her to a dangerous loneliness. He could not reconcile himself to the cruelty of apparently rejecting her dependence on him; and yet in the nearer or farther distance he saw a coming wrench, which all present strengthening of their bond would make the harder.

He was obliged to risk that. He went once and again to Park Lane before Gwendolen left; but their interviews were in the presence of Mrs Davilow, and were therefore less agitating. Gwendolen, since she had determined to accept her income, had conceived a project which she liked to speak of: it was, to place her mother and sisters with herself in Offendene again, and, as she said, piece back her life on to that time when they first went there, and when everything was happiness about her, only she did not know it. The idea had been mentioned to Sir Hugo, who was going to exert himself about the letting of Gadsmere for a rent which would more than pay the rent of Offen-

dene. All this was told to Deronda, who willingly dwelt on a subject that seemed to give some soothing occupation to Gwendolen. He said nothing, and she asked nothing, of what chiefly occupied himself. Her mind was fixed on his coming to Diploew before the autumn was over; and she no more thought of the Lapidows—the little Jewess and her brother—as likely to make a difference in her destiny, than of the fermenting political and social leaven which was making a difference in the history of the world. In fact, poor Gwendolen's memory had been stunned, and all outside the lava-lit track of her troubled conscience, and her effort to get deliverance from it, lay for her in dim forgetfulness.

CHAPTER LXVI.

"One day still fierce 'mid many a day struck calm."

—BROWNING: *The Ring and the Book*.

MEANWHILE Ezra and Mirah, whom Gwendolen did not include in her thinking about Deronda, were having their relation to him drawn closer and brought into fuller light.

The father Lapidoth had quitted his daughter at the doorstep, ruled by that possibility of staking something in play or betting which presented itself with the handling of any sum beyond the price of staying actual hunger, and left no care for alternative prospects or resolutions. Until he had lost everything he never considered whether he would apply to Mirah again or whether he would brave his son's presence. In the first moment he had shrunk from encountering Ezra as he would have shrunk from any other situation of disagreeable constraint; and the possession of Mirah's purse was enough to banish the thought of

future necessities. The gambling appetite is more absolutely dominant than bodily hunger, which can be neutralised by an emotional or intellectual excitation; but the passion for watching chances—the habitual suspensive poise of the mind in actual or imaginary play—nullifies the susceptibility to other excitation. In its final, imperious stage, it seems the unjoyous dissipation of demons, seeking diversion on the burning marl of perdition.

But every form of selfishness, however abstract and unhuman, requires the support of at least one meal a-day; and though Lapidoth's appetite for food and drink was extremely moderate, he had slipped into a shabby, unfriended form of life in which the appetite could not be satisfied without some ready money. When, in a brief visit at a house which announced "Pyramids" on the window-blind, he had first doubled and trebled and finally lost Mirah's thirty shillings, he went out with her empty purse in his pocket, already balancing in his mind whether he should get another immediate stake by pawning the purse, or whether he should go back to her giving himself a good countenance by restoring the purse, and declaring that he had used the money in paying a score that was standing against him. Besides, among the sensibilities still left strong in Lapidoth was the

sensibility to his own claims, and he appeared to himself to have a claim on any property his children might possess, which was stronger than the justice of his son's resentment. After all, to take up his lodging with his children was the best thing he could do; and the more he thought of meeting Ezra the less he winced from it, his imagination being more wrought on by the chances of his getting something into his pocket with safety and without exertion, than by the threat of a private humiliation. Luck had been against him lately; he expected it to turn—and might not the turn begin with some opening of supplies which would present itself through his daughter's affairs and the good friends she had spoken of? Lapidoth counted on the fascination of his cleverness—an old habit of mind which early experience had sanctioned; and it is not only women who are unaware of their diminished charm, or imagine that they can feign not to be worn out.

The result of Lapidoth's rapid balancing was that he went towards the little square in Brompton with the hope that, by walking about and watching, he might catch sight of Mirah going out or returning, in which case his entrance into the house would be made easier. But it was already evening—the evening of the day next to that on

which he had first seen her ; and after a little waiting, weariness made him reflect that he might ring, and if she were not at home, he might ask the time at which she was expected. But on coming near the house he knew that she was at home : he heard her singing.

Mirah, seated at the piano, was pouring forth "*Herz, mein Herz,*" while Ezra was listening with his eyes shut, when Mrs Adam opened the door, and said in some embarrassment—

"A gentleman below says he is your father, miss."

"I will go down to him," said Mirah, starting up immediately, and looking towards her brother.

"No, Mirah, not so," said Ezra, with decision. "Let him come up, Mrs Adam."

Mirah stood with her hands pinching each other, and feeling sick with anxiety, while she continued looking at Ezra, who had also risen, and was evidently much shaken. But there was an expression in his face which she had never seen before ; his brow was knit, his lips seemed hardened with the same severity that gleamed from his eyes.

When Mrs Adam opened the door to let in the father, she could not help casting a look at the group, and after glancing from the younger man

to the elder, said to herself as she closed the door, "Father, sure enough." The likeness was that of outline, which is always most striking at the first moment; the expression had been wrought into the strongest contrast by such hidden or inconspicuous differences as can make the genius of a Cromwell within the outward type of a father who was no more than a respectable parishioner.

Lapidoth had put on a melancholy expression beforehand, but there was some real wincing in his frame as he said—

"Well, Ezra, my boy, you hardly know me after so many years."

"I know you—too well—father," said Ezra, with a slow biting solemnity which made the word father a reproach.

"Ah, you are not pleased with me. I don't wonder at it. Appearances have been against me. When a man gets into straits he can't do just as he would by himself or anybody else. *I've* suffered enough, I know," said Lapidoth, quickly. In speaking he always recovered some glibness and hardihood; and now turning towards Mirah, he held out her purse, saying, "Here's your little purse, my dear. I thought you'd be anxious about it because of that bit of writing. I've emptied it, you'll see, for I had a score to pay for

food and lodging. I knew you would like me to clear myself, and here I stand—without a single farthing in my pocket—at the mercy of my children. You can turn me out if you like, without getting a policeman. Say the word, Mirah; say, ‘Father, I’ve had enough of you; you made a pet of me, and spent your all on me, when I couldn’t have done without you; but I can do better without you now,’—say that, and I’m gone out like a spark. I shan’t spoil your pleasure again.” The tears were in his voice as usual, before he had finished.

“You know I could never say it, father,” answered Mirah, with not the less anguish because she felt the falsity of everything in his speech except the implied wish to remain in the house.

“Mirah, my sister, leave us!” said Ezra, in a tone of authority.

She looked at her brother falteringly, beseechingly—in awe of his decision, yet unable to go without making a plea for this father who was like something that had grown in her flesh with pain, but that she could never have cut away without worse pain. She went close to her brother, and putting her hand in his, said, in a low voice, but not so low as to be unheard by

Lapidoth, "Remember, Ezra—you said my mother would not have shut him out."

"Trust me, and go," said Ezra.

She left the room, but after going a few steps up the stairs, sat down with a palpitating heart. If, because of anything her brother said to him, he went away——

Lapidoth had some sense of what was being prepared for him in his son's mind, but he was beginning to adjust himself to the situation and find a point of view that would give him a cool superiority to any attempt at humiliating him. This haggard son, speaking as from a sepulchre, had the incongruity which selfish levity learns to see in suffering and death, until the unrelenting pincers of disease clutch its own flesh. Whatever preaching he might deliver must be taken for a matter of course, as a man finding shelter from hail in an open cathedral might take a little religious howling that happened to be going on there.

Lapidoth was not born with this sort of callousness: he had achieved it.

"This home that we have here," Ezra began, "is maintained partly by the generosity of a beloved friend who supports me, and partly by the labours of my sister, who supports herself. While we have a home we will not shut you out from it.

We will not cast you out to the mercy of your vices. For you are our father, and though you have broken your bond, we acknowledge ours. But I will never trust you. You absconded with money, leaving your debts unpaid; you forsook my mother; you robbed her of her little child and broke her heart; you have become a gambler, and where shame and conscience were, there sits an insatiable desire; you were ready to sell my sister—you had sold her, but the price was denied you. The man who has done these things must never expect to be trusted any more. We will share our food with you—you shall have a bed, and clothing. We will do this duty to you, because you are our father. But you will never be trusted. You are an evil man: you made the misery of our mother. That such a man is our father is a brand on our flesh which will not cease smarting. But the Eternal has laid it upon us; and though human justice were to flog you for crimes, and your body fell helpless before the public scorn—we would still say, ‘This is our father; make way, that we may carry him out of your sight.’”

Lapidoth, in adjusting himself to what was coming, had not been able to foresee the exact intensity of the lightning or the exact course it

would take—that it would not fall outside his frame but through it. He could not foresee what was so new to him as this voice from the soul of his son. It touched that spring of hysterical excitability which Mirah used to witness in him when he sat at home and sobbed. As Ezra ended, Lapidoth threw himself into a chair and cried like a woman, burying his face against the table—and yet, strangely, while this hysterical crying was an inevitable reaction in him under the stress of his son's words, it was also a conscious resource in a difficulty; just as in early life, when he was a bright-faced curly young man, he had been used to avail himself of this subtly-poised physical susceptibility to turn the edge of resentment or disapprobation.

Ezra sat down again and said nothing—exhausted by the shock of his own irrepressible utterance, the outburst of feelings which for years he had borne in solitude and silence. His thin hands trembled on the arms of the chair; he would hardly have found voice to answer a question; he felt as if he had taken a step towards beckoning Death. Meanwhile Mirah's quick expectant ear detected a sound which her heart recognised: she could not stay out of the room any longer. But on opening the door, her immediate alarm was for

Ezra, and it was to his side that she went, taking his trembling hand in hers, which he pressed and found support in; but he did not speak, or even look at her. The father with his face buried was conscious that Mirah had entered, and presently lifted up his head, pressed his handkerchief against his eyes, put out his hand towards her, and said with plaintive hoarseness, "Good-bye, Mirah; your father will not trouble you again. He deserves to die like a dog by the roadside, and he will. If your mother had lived, she would have forgiven me—thirty-four years ago I put the ring on her finger under the *Chuppa*, and we were made one. She would have forgiven me, and we should have spent our old age together. But I haven't deserved it. Good-bye."

He rose from the chair as he said the last 'good-bye.' Mirah had put her hand in his and held him. She was not tearful and grieving, but frightened and awe-struck, as she cried out—

"No, father, no!" Then turning to her brother, "Ezra, you have not forbidden him?—Stay, father, and leave off wrong things. Ezra, I cannot bear it. How can I say to my father, 'Go and die!'"

"I have not said it," Ezra answered, with great effort. "I have said, stay and be sheltered."

“Then you will stay, father—and be taken care of—and come with me,” said Mirah, drawing him towards the door.

This was really what Lapidoth wanted. And for the moment he felt a sort of comfort in recovering his daughter’s dutiful tendance, that made a change of habits seem possible to him. She led him down to the parlour below, and said—

“This is my sitting-room when I am not with Ezra, and there is a bedroom behind which shall be yours. You will stay and be good, father. Think that you are come back to my mother, and that she has forgiven you—she speaks to you through me.” Mirah’s tones were imploring, but she could not give one of her former caresses.

Lapidoth quickly recovered his composure, began to speak to Mirah of the improvement in her voice, and other easy subjects, and when Mrs Adam came to lay out his supper, entered into converse with her in order to show her that he was not a common person, though his clothes were just now against him.

But in his usual wakefulness at night, he fell to wondering what money Mirah had by her, and went back over old Continental hours at *Roulette*, reproducing the method of his play, and the chances that had frustrated it. He had had his

reasons for coming to England, but for most things it was a cursed country.

These were the stronger visions of the night with Lapidoth, and not the worn frame of his ireful son uttering a terrible judgment. Ezra did pass across the gaming-table, and his words were audible; but he passed like an insubstantial ghost, and his words had the heart eaten out of them by numbers and movements that seemed to make the very tissue of Lapidoth's consciousness.

CHAPTER LXVII.

✓ The godhead in us wrings our nobler deeds
From our reluctant selves.

IT was an unpleasant surprise to Deronda when he returned from the Abbey to find the undesirable father installed in the lodgings at Brompton. Mirah had felt it necessary to speak of Deronda to her father, and even to make him as fully aware as she could of the way in which the friendship with Ezra had begun, and of the sympathy which had cemented it. She passed more lightly over what Deronda had done for her, omitting altogether the rescue from drowning, and speaking of the shelter she had found in Mrs Meyrick's family so as to leave her father to suppose that it was through these friends Deronda had become acquainted with her. She could not persuade herself to more completeness in her narrative: she could not let the breath of her father's soul pass over her relation to Deronda. And Lapidoth,

for reasons, was not eager in his questioning about the circumstances of her flight and arrival in England. But he was much interested in the fact of his children having a beneficent friend apparently high in the world.

It was the brother who told Deronda of this new condition added to their life. "I am become calm in beholding him now," Ezra ended, "and I try to think it possible that my sister's tenderness, and the daily tasting a life of peace, may win him to remain aloof from temptation. I have enjoined her, and she has promised, to trust him with no money. I have convinced her that he will buy with it his own destruction."

Deronda first came on the third day from Lapidoth's arrival. The new clothes for which he had been measured were not yet ready, and wishing to make a favourable impression he did not choose to present himself in the old ones. He watched for Deronda's departure, and getting a view of him from the window was rather surprised at his youthfulness, which Mirah had not mentioned, and which he had somehow thought out of the question in a personage who had taken up a grave friendship and hoary studies with the sepulchral Ezra. Lapidoth began to imagine that Deronda's real or chief motive must be that he was in love

with Mirah. And so much the better ; for a tie to Mirah had more promise of indulgence for her father than the tie to Ezra ; and Lapidoth was not without the hope of recommending himself to Deronda, and of softening any hard prepossessions. He was behaving with much amiability, and trying in all ways at his command to get himself into easy domestication with his children—entering into Mirah's music, showing himself docile about smoking, which Mrs Adam could not tolerate in her parlour, and walking out in the square with his German pipe and the tobacco with which Mirah supplied him. He was too acute to venture any present remonstrance against the refusal of money, which Mirah told him that she must persist in as a solemn duty promised to her brother. He was comfortable enough to wait.

The next time Deronda came, Lapidoth, equipped in his new clothes and satisfied with his own appearance, was in the room with Ezra, who was teaching himself, as part of his severe duty, to tolerate his father's presence whenever it was imposed. Deronda was cold and distant, the first sight of this man, who had blighted the lives of his wife and children, creating in him a repulsion that was even a physical discomfort. But Lapidoth did not let himself be discouraged, asked

leave to stay and hear the reading of papers from the old chest, and actually made himself useful in helping to decipher some difficult German manuscript. This led him to suggest that it might be desirable to make a transcription of the manuscript, and he offered his services for this purpose, and also to make copies of any papers in Roman characters. Though Ezra's young eyes, he observed, were getting weak, his own were still strong. Deronda accepted the offer, thinking that Lapidoth showed a sign of grace in the willingness to be employed usefully; and he saw a gratified expression in Ezra's face, who, however, presently said, "Let all the writing be done here; for I cannot trust the papers out of my sight, lest there be an accident by burning or otherwise." Poor Ezra felt very much as if he had a convict on leave under his charge. Unless he saw his father working, it was not possible to believe that he would work in good faith. But by this arrangement he fastened on himself the burthen of his father's presence, which was made painful not only through his deepest, longest associations, but also through Lapidoth's restlessness of temperament, which showed itself the more as he became familiarised with his situation, and lost any awe he had felt of his son. The fact was, he was put-

ting a strong constraint on himself in confining his attention for the sake of winning Deronda's favour; and like a man in an uncomfortable garment he gave himself relief at every opportunity, going out to smoke, or moving about and talking, or throwing himself back in his chair and remaining silent, but incessantly carrying on a dumb language of facial movement or gesticulation; and if Mirah were in the room, he would fall into his old habit of talk with her, gossiping about their former doings and companions, or repeating quirks, and stories, and plots of the plays he used to adapt, in the belief that he could at will command the vivacity of his earlier time. All this was a mortal infliction to Ezra; and when Mirah was at home she tried to relieve him, by getting her father down into the parlour and keeping watch over him there. What duty is made of a single difficult resolve? The difficulty lies in the daily unflinching support of consequences that mar the blessed return of morning with the prospect of irritation to be suppressed or shame to be endured. And such consequences were being borne by these, as by many other, heroic children of an unworthy father—with the prospect, at least to Mirah, of their stretching onward through the solid part of life.

Meanwhile Lapidoth's presence had raised a new impalpable partition between Deronda and Mirah—each of them dreading the soiling inferences of his mind, each of them interpreting mistakenly the increased reserve and diffidence of the other. But it was not very long before some light came to Deronda.

As soon as he could, after returning from his brief visit to the Abbey, he had called at Hans Meyrick's rooms, feeling it, on more grounds than one, a due of friendship that Hans should be at once acquainted with the reasons of his late journey, and the changes of intention it had brought about. Hans was not there; he was said to be in the country for a few days; and Deronda, after leaving a note, waited a week, rather expecting a note in return. But receiving no word, and fearing some freak of feeling in the incalculably susceptible Hans, whose proposed sojourn at the Abbey he knew had been deferred, he at length made a second call, and was admitted into the painting-room, where he found his friend in a light coat, without a waistcoat, his long hair still wet from a bath, but with a face looking worn and wizened—anything but country-like. He had taken up his palette and brushes, and stood before his easel when Deronda entered, but

the equipment and attitude seemed to have been got up on short notice.

As they shook hands, Deronda said, "You don't look much as if you had been in the country, old fellow. Is it Cambridge you have been to?"

"No," said Hans, curtly, throwing down his palette with the air of one who has begun to feign by mistake; then, pushing forward a chair for Deronda, he threw himself into another, and leaned backward with his hands behind his head, while he went on, "I've been to I-don't-know-where—No man's land—and a mortally unpleasant country it is."

"You don't mean to say you have been drinking, Hans," said Deronda, who had seated himself opposite, in anxious survey.

"Nothing so good. I've been smoking opium. I always meant to do it some time or other, to try how much bliss could be got by it; and having found myself just now rather out of other bliss, I thought it judicious to seize the opportunity. But I pledge you my word I shall never tap a cask of that bliss again. It disagrees with my constitution."

"What has been the matter? You were in good spirits enough when you wrote to me."

"Oh, nothing in particular. The world began to

look seedy—a sort of cabbage-garden with all the cabbages cut. A malady of genius, you may be sure,” said Hans, creasing his face into a smile; “and, in fact, I was tired of being virtuous without reward, especially in this hot London weather.”

“Nothing else? No real vexation?” said Deronda.

Hans shook his head.

“I came to tell you of my own affairs, but I can’t do it with a good grace if you are to hide yours.”

“Haven’t an affair in the world,” said Hans, in a flighty way, “except a quarrel with a bric-à-brac man. Besides, as it is the first time in our lives that you ever spoke to me about your own affairs, you are only beginning to pay a pretty long debt.”

Deronda felt convinced that Hans was behaving artificially, but he trusted to a return of the old frankness by-and-by if he gave his own confidence.

“You laughed at the mystery of my journey to Italy, Hans,” he began. “It was for an object that touched my happiness at the very roots. I had never known anything about my parents, and I really went to Genoa to meet my mother. My

father has been long dead—died when I was an infant. My mother was the daughter of an eminent Jew; my father was her cousin. Many things had caused me to think of this origin as almost a probability before I set out. I was so far prepared for the result that I was glad of it—glad to find myself a Jew.”

“You must not expect me to look surprised, Deronda,” said Hans, who had changed his attitude, laying one leg across the other and examining the heel of his slipper.

“You knew it?”

“My mother told me. She went to the house the morning after you had been there—brother and sister both told her. You may imagine we can’t rejoice as they do. But whatever you are glad of, I shall come to be glad of in the end—*when* exactly the end may be I can’t predict,” said Hans, speaking in a low tone, which was as unusual with him as it was to be out of humour with his lot, and yet bent on making no fuss about it.

“I quite understand that you can’t share my feeling,” said Deronda; “but I could not let silence lie between us on what casts quite a new light over my future. I have taken up some of Mordecai’s ideas, and I mean to try and carry them

out, so far as one man's efforts can go. I daresay I shall by-and-by travel to the East and be away for some years."

Hans said nothing, but rose, seized his palette and began to work his brush on it, standing before his picture with his back to Deronda, who also felt himself at a break in his path, embarrassed by Hans's embarrassment.

Presently Hans said, again speaking low, and without turning, "Excuse the question, but does Mrs Grandcourt know of all this?"

"No; and I must beg of you, Hans," said Deronda, rather angrily, "to cease joking on that subject. Any notions you have are wide of the truth—are the very reverse of the truth."

"I am no more inclined to joke than I shall be at my own funeral," said Hans. "But I am not at all sure that you are aware what are my notions on that subject."

"Perhaps not," said Deronda. "But let me say, once for all, that in relation to Mrs Grandcourt, I never have had, and never shall have, the position of a lover. If you have ever seriously put that interpretation on anything you have observed, you are supremely mistaken."

There was silence a little while, and to each the

silence was like an irritating air, exaggerating discomfort.

"Perhaps I have been mistaken in another interpretation also," said Hans, presently.

"What is that?"

"That you had no wish to hold the position of a lover towards another woman, who is neither wife nor widow."

"I can't pretend not to understand you, Meyrick. It is painful that our wishes should clash. But I hope you will tell me if you have any ground for supposing that you would succeed."

"That seems rather a superfluous inquiry on your part, Deronda," said Hans, with some irritation.

"Why superfluous?"

"Because you are perfectly convinced on the subject—and probably you have had the very best evidence to convince you."

"I will be more frank with you than you are with me," said Deronda, still heated by Hans's show of temper, and yet sorry for him. "I have never had the slightest evidence that I should succeed myself. In fact, I have very little hope."

Hans looked round hastily at his friend, but immediately turned to his picture again.

"And in our present situation," said Deronda, hurt by the idea that Hans suspected him of insincerity, and giving an offended emphasis to his words, "I don't see how I can deliberately make known my feeling to her. If she could not return it, I should have embittered her best comfort, for neither she nor I can be parted from her brother, and we should have to meet continually. If I were to cause her that sort of pain by an unwilling betrayal of my feeling, I should be no better than a mischievous animal."

"I don't know that I have ever betrayed *my* feeling to her," said Hans, as if he were vindicating himself.

"You mean that we are on a level; then, you have no reason to envy me."

"Oh, not the slightest," said Hans, with bitter irony. "You have measured my conceit and know that it out-tops all your advantages."

"I am a nuisance to you, Meyrick. I am sorry, but I can't help it," said Deronda, rising. "After what passed between us before, I wished to have this explanation; and I don't see that any pretensions of mine have made a real difference to you. They are not likely to make any pleasant difference to myself under present cir-

cumstances. Now the father is there—did you know that the father is there?”

“Yes. If he were not a Jew I would permit myself to damn him—with faint praise, I mean,” said Hans, but with no smile.

“She and I meet under greater constraint than ever. Things might go on in this way for two years without my getting any insight into her feeling towards me. That is the whole state of affairs, Hans. Neither you nor I have injured the other, that I can see. We must put up with this sort of rivalry in a hope that is likely enough to come to nothing. Our friendship can bear that strain, surely.”

“No, it can’t,” said Hans, impetuously, throwing down his tools, thrusting his hands into his coat-pockets, and turning round to face Deronda, who drew back a little and looked at him with amazement. Hans went on in the same tone—

“Our friendship—my friendship—can’t bear the strain of behaving to you like an ungrateful dastard and grudging you your happiness. For you *are* the happiest dog in the world. If Mirah loves anybody better than her brother, *you are the man.*”

Hans turned on his heel and threw himself into his chair, looking up at Deronda with an expres-

sion the reverse of tender. Something like a shock passed through Deronda, and, after an instant, he said—

“It is a good-natured fiction of yours, Hans.”

“I am not in a good-natured mood. I assure you I found the fact disagreeable when it was thrust on me—all the more, or perhaps all the less, because I believed then that your heart was pledged to the Duchess. But now, confound you! you turn out to be in love in the right place—a Jew—and everything eligible.”

“Tell me what convinced you—there’s a good fellow,” said Deronda, distrusting a delight that he was unused to.

“Don’t ask. Little mother was witness. The upshot is, that Mirah is jealous of the Duchess, and the sooner you relieve her mind, the better. There! I’ve cleared off a score or two, and may be allowed to swear at you for getting what you deserve—which is just the very best luck I know of.”

“God bless you, Hans!” said Deronda, putting out his hand, which the other took and wrung in silence.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

“All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
 Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
 All are but ministers of Love,
 And feed his sacred flame.”

—COLERIDGE.

DERONDA'S eagerness to confess his love could hardly have had a stronger stimulus than Hans had given it in his assurance that Mirah needed relief from jealousy. He went on his next visit to Ezra with the determination to be resolute in using—nay, in requesting—an opportunity of private conversation with her. If she accepted his love, he felt courageous about all other consequences, and as her betrothed husband he would gain a protective authority which might be a desirable defence for her in future difficulties with her father. Deronda had not observed any signs of growing restlessness in Lapidoth, or of diminished desire to recommend himself; but he had forebodings of some future struggle, some mortifi-

cation, or some intolerable increase of domestic disquietude in which he might save Ezra and Mirah from being helpless victims.

His forebodings would have been strengthened if he had known what was going on in the father's mind. That amount of restlessness, that desultoriness of attention, which made a small torture to Ezra, was to Lapidoth an irksome submission to restraint, only made bearable by his thinking of it as a means of by-and-by securing a well-conditioned freedom. He began with the intention of awaiting some really good chance, such as an opening for getting a considerable sum from Deronda; but all the while he was looking about curiously, and trying to discover where Mirah deposited her money and her keys. The imperious gambling desire within him, which carried on its activity through every other occupation, and made a continuous web of imagination that held all else in its meshes, would hardly have been under the control of a protracted purpose, if he had been able to lay his hand on any sum worth capturing. But Mirah, with her practical clear-sightedness, guarded against any frustration of the promise she had given Ezra, by confiding all money, except what she was immediately in want of, to Mrs Meyrick's care, and Lapidoth felt himself under

an irritating completeness of supply in kind as in a lunatic asylum where everything was made safe against him. To have opened a desk or drawer of Mirah's, and pocketed any bank-notes found there, would have been to his mind a sort of domestic appropriation which had no disgrace in it; the degrees of liberty a man allows himself with other people's property being often delicately drawn, even beyond the boundary where the law begins to lay its hold—which is the reason why spoons are a safer investment than mining shares. Lapidoth really felt himself injuriously treated by his daughter, and thought that he ought to have had what he wanted of her other earnings as he had of her apple-tart. But he remained submissive; indeed, the indiscretion that most tempted him was not any insistence with Mirah, but some kind of appeal to Deronda. Clever persons who have nothing else to sell can often put a good price on their absence, and Lapidoth's difficult search for devices forced upon him the idea that his family would find themselves happier without him, and that Deronda would be willing to advance a considerable sum for the sake of getting rid of him. But, in spite of well-practised hardihood, Lapidoth was still in some awe of Ezra's imposing friend, and deferred his purpose indefinitely.

On this day, when Deronda had come full of a gladdened consciousness, which inevitably showed itself in his air and speech, Lapidoth was at a crisis of discontent and longing that made his mind busy with schemes of freedom, and Deronda's new amenity encouraged them. This pre-occupation was at last so strong as to interfere with his usual show of interest in what went forward; and his persistence in sitting by even when there was reading which he could not follow. After sitting a little while, he went out to smoke and walk in the square, and the two friends were all the easier. Mirah was not at home, but she was sure to be in again before Deronda left, and his eyes glowed with a secret anticipation: he thought that when he saw her again he should see some sweetness of recognition for himself to which his eyes had been sealed before. There was an additional playful affectionateness in his manner towards Ezra.

"This little room is too close for you, Ezra," he said, breaking off his reading. "The week's heat we sometimes get here is worse than the heat in Genoa, where one sits in the shaded coolness of large rooms. You must have a better home now. I shall do as I like with you, being the stronger half." He smiled toward Ezra, who said—

“I am straitened for nothing except breath. But you, who might be in a spacious palace, with the wide green country around you, find this a narrow prison. Nevertheless, I cannot say, ‘Go.’”

“Oh, the country would be a banishment while you are here,” said Deronda, rising and walking round the double room, which yet offered no long promenade, while he made a great fan of his handkerchief. “This is the happiest room in the world to me. Besides, I will imagine myself in the East, since I am getting ready to go there some day. Only I will not wear a cravat and a heavy ring there,” he ended emphatically, pausing to take off those superfluities and deposit them on a small table behind Ezra, who had the table in front of him covered with books and papers.

“I have been wearing my memorable ring ever since I came home,” he went on, as he reseated himself. “But I am such a Sybarite that I constantly put it off as a burthen when I am doing anything. I understand why the Romans had summer rings—*if* they had them. Now then, I shall get on better.”

They were soon absorbed in their work again. Deronda was reading a piece of rabbinical Hebrew under Ezra’s correction and comment, and they

took little notice when Lapidoth re-entered and seated himself somewhat in the background.

His rambling eyes quickly alighted on the ring that sparkled on the bit of dark mahogany. During his walk, his mind had been occupied with the fiction of an advantageous opening for him abroad, only requiring a sum of ready money, which, on being communicated to Deronda in private, might immediately draw from him a question as to the amount of the required sum ; and it was this part of his forecast that Lapidoth found the most debateable, there being a danger in asking too much, and a prospective regret in asking too little. His own desire gave him no limit, and he was quite without guidance as to the limit of Deronda's willingness. But now, in the midst of these airy conditions preparatory to a receipt which remained indefinite, this ring, which on Deronda's finger had become familiar to Lapidoth's envy, suddenly shone detached, and within easy grasp. Its value was certainly below the smallest of the imaginary sums that his purpose fluctuated between ; but then it was before him as a solid fact, and his desire at once leaped into the thought (not yet an intention) that if he were quietly to pocket that ring and walk away he would have the means of comfortable escape from

present restraint, without trouble, and also without danger ; for any property of Deronda's (available without his formal consent) was all one with his children's property, since their father would never be prosecuted for taking it. The details of this thinking followed each other so quickly that they seemed to rise before him as one picture. Lapidoth had never committed larceny ; but larceny is a form of appropriation for which people are punished by law ; and to take this ring from a virtual relation, who would have been willing to make a much heavier gift, would not come under the head of larceny. Still, the heavier gift was to be preferred, if Lapidoth could only make haste enough in asking for it, and the imaginary action of taking the ring, which kept repeating itself like an inward tune, sank into a rejected idea. He satisfied his urgent longing by resolving to go below and watch for the moment of Deronda's departure, when he would ask leave to join him in his walk, and boldly carry out his meditated plan. He rose and stood looking out of the window, but all the while he saw what lay behind him—the brief passage he would have to make to the door close by the table where the ring was. However, he was resolved to go down ; but—by no

distinct change of resolution, rather by a dominance of desire, like the thirst of the drunkard—it so happened that in passing the table his fingers fell noiselessly on the ring, and he found himself in the passage with the ring in his hand. It followed that he put on his hat and quitted the house. The possibility of again throwing himself on his children receded into the indefinite distance, and before he was out of the square his sense of haste had concentrated itself on selling the ring and getting on shipboard.

Deronda and Ezra were just aware of his exit ; that was all. But, by-and-by, Mirah came in and made a real interruption. She had not taken off her hat ; and when Deronda rose and advanced to shake hands with her, she said, in a confusion at once unaccountable and troublesome to herself—

“I only came in to see that Ezra had his new draught. I must go directly to Mrs Meyrick’s to fetch something.”

“Pray allow me to walk with you,” said Deronda, urgently. “I must not tire Ezra any further ; besides, my brains are melting. I want to go to Mrs Meyrick’s : may I go with you ?”

“Oh yes,” said Mirah, blushing still more, with the vague sense of something new in Deronda, and turning away to pour out Ezra’s draught ;

Ezra meanwhile throwing back his head with his eyes shut, unable to get his mind away from the ideas that had been filling it while the reading was going on. Deronda for a moment stood thinking of nothing but the walk, till Mirah turned round again and brought the draught, when he suddenly remembered that he had laid aside his cravat, and saying—"Pray excuse my dishabille—I did not mean you to see it," he went to the little table, took up his cravat, and exclaimed with a violent impulse of surprise, "Good heavens! where is my ring gone?" beginning to search about on the floor.

Ezra looked round the corner of his chair. Mirah, quick as thought, went to the spot where Deronda was seeking, and said, "Did you lay it down?"

"Yes," said Deronda, still unvisited by any other explanation than that the ring had fallen and was lurking in shadow, indiscernible on the variegated carpet. He was moving the bits of furniture near, and searching in all possible and impossible places with hand and eyes.

But another explanation had visited Mirah and taken the colour from her cheek. She went to Ezra's ear and whispered, "Was my father here?" He bent his head in reply, meeting her eyes with terrible understanding. She darted back to the

spot where Deronda was still casting down his eyes in that hopeless exploration which we are apt to carry on over a space we have examined in vain. "You have not found it?" she said, hurriedly.

He, meeting her frightened gaze, immediately caught alarm from it and answered, "I perhaps put it in my pocket," professing to feel for it there.

She watched him and said, "It is not there?—you put it on the table," with a penetrating voice that would not let him feign to have found it in his pocket; and immediately she rushed out of the room. Deronda followed her—she was gone into the sitting-room below to look for her father—she opened the door of the bedroom to see if he were there—she looked where his hat usually hung—she turned with her hands clasped tight and her lips pale, gazing despairingly out of the window. Then she looked up at Deronda who had not dared to speak to her in her white agitation. She looked up at him, unable to utter a word—the look seemed a tacit acceptance of the humiliation she felt in his presence. But he, taking her clasped hands between both his, said, in a tone of reverent adoration—

"Mirah, let me think that he is my father

as well as yours—that we can have no sorrow, no disgrace, no joy apart. I will rather take your grief to be mine than I would take the brightest joy of another woman. Say you will not reject me—say you will take me to share all things with you. Say you will promise to be my wife—say it now. I have been in doubt so long—I have had to hide my love so long. Say that now and always I may prove to you that I love you with complete love.”

The change in Mirah had been gradual. She had not passed at once from anguish to the full, blessed consciousness that, in this moment of grief and shame, Deronda was giving her the highest tribute man can give to woman. With the first tones and the first words, she had only a sense of solemn comfort, referring this goodness of Deronda's to his feeling for Ezra. But by degrees the rapturous assurance of unhopèd-for good took possession of her frame; her face glowed under Deronda's as he bent over her; yet she looked up still with intense gravity, as when she had first acknowledged with religious gratitude that he had thought her “worthy of the best;” and when he had finished, she could say nothing—she could only lift up her lips to his and just kiss them, as if that were the simplest “yes.” They stood

then, only looking at each other, he holding her hands between his—too happy to move, meeting so fully in their new consciousness that all signs would have seemed to throw them farther apart, till Mirah said in a whisper: "Let us go and comfort Ezra."

CHAPTER LXIX.

“The human nature unto which I felt
 That I belonged, and revered with love,
 Was not a punctual presence, but a spirit
 Diffused through time and space, with aid derived
 Of evidence from monuments, erect,
 Prostrate, or leaning towards their common rest
 In earth, the widely scattered wreck sublime
 Of vanished nations.”

—WORDSWORTH : *The Prelude*.

SIR HUGO carried out his plan of spending part of the autumn at Diplow, and by the beginning of October his presence was spreading some cheerfulness in the neighbourhood, among all ranks and persons concerned, from the stately homes of Brackenshaw and Quetcham to the respectable shop-parlours in Wancester. For Sir Hugo was a man who liked to show himself and be affable, a Liberal of good lineage, who confided entirely in Reform as not likely to make any serious difference in English habits of feeling, one of which undoubtedly is the liking to behold society well fenced and adorned with hereditary rank. Hence

he made Diplow a most agreeable house, extending his invitations to old Wancester solicitors and young village curates, but also taking some care in the combination of his guests, and not feeding all the common poultry together, so that they should think their meal no particular compliment. Easy-going Lord Brackenshaw, for example, would not mind meeting Robinson the attorney, but Robinson would have been naturally piqued if he had been asked to meet a set of people who passed for his equals. On all these points Sir Hugo was well informed enough at once to gain popularity for himself and give pleasure to others—two results which eminently suited his disposition. The Rector of Pennicote now found a reception at Diplow very different from the haughty tolerance he had undergone during the reign of Grandcourt. It was not only that the baronet liked Mr Gascoigne, it was that he desired to keep up a marked relation of friendliness with him on account of Mrs Grandcourt, for whom Sir Hugo's chivalry had become more and more engaged. Why? The chief reason was one that he could not fully communicate, even to Lady Mallinger—for he would not tell what he thought one woman's secret to another even though the other was his wife—

which shows that his chivalry included a rare reticence.

Deronda, after he had become engaged to Mirah, felt it right to make a full statement of his position and purposes to Sir Hugo, and he chose to make it by letter. He had more than a presentiment that his fatherly friend would feel some dissatisfaction, if not pain, at this turn of destiny. In reading unwelcome news, instead of hearing it, there is the advantage that one avoids a hasty expression of impatience which may afterwards be repented of. Deronda dreaded that verbal collision which makes otherwise pardonable feeling lastingly offensive.

And Sir Hugo, though not altogether surprised, was thoroughly vexed. His immediate resource was to take the letter to Lady Mallinger, who would be sure to express an astonishment which her husband could argue against as unreasonable, and in this way divide the stress of his discontent. And in fact when she showed herself astonished and distressed that all Daniel's wonderful talents, and the comfort of having him in the house, should have ended in his going mad in this way about the Jews, the baronet could say—

“Oh, nonsense, my dear! depend upon it, Dan will not make a fool of himself. He has large

notions about Judaism—political views which you can't understand. No fear but Dan will keep himself head uppermost."

But with regard to the prospective marriage, she afforded him no counter-irritant. The gentle lady observed, without rancour, that she had little dreamed of what was coming when she had Mirah to sing at her musical party and give lessons to Amabel. After some hesitation, indeed, she confessed it *had* passed through her mind that after a proper time Daniel might marry Mrs Grandcourt—because it seemed so remarkable that he should be at Genoa just at that time—and although she herself was not fond of widows she could not help thinking that such a marriage would have been better than his going altogether with the Jews. But Sir Hugo was so strongly of the same opinion that he could not correct it as a feminine mistake; and his ill-humour at the disproof of his agreeable conclusions on behalf of Gwendolen was left without vent. He desired Lady Mallinger not to breathe a word about the affair till further notice, saying to himself, "If it is an unkind cut to the poor thing" (meaning Gwendolen), "the longer she is without knowing it the better, in her present nervous state. And she will best learn it from

Dan himself." Sir Hugo's conjectures had worked so industriously with his knowledge, that he fancied himself well informed concerning the whole situation.

Meanwhile his residence with his family at Diplow enabled him to continue his fatherly attentions to Gwendolen; and in these Lady Malinger, notwithstanding her small liking for widows, was quite willing to second him.

The plan of removal to Offendene had been carried out; and Gwendolen, in settling there, maintained a calm beyond her mother's hopes. She was experiencing some of that peaceful melancholy which comes from the renunciation of demands for self, and from taking the ordinary good of existence, and especially kindness, even from a dog, as a gift above expectation. Does one who has been all but lost in a pit of darkness complain of the sweet air and the daylight? There is a way of looking at our life daily as an escape, and taking the quiet return of morn and evening—still more the star-like out-glowing of some pure fellow-feeling, some generous impulse breaking our inward darkness—as a salvation that reconciles us to hardship. Those who have a self-knowledge prompting such self-accusation as Hamlet's, can understand this

habitual feeling of rescue. And it was felt by Gwendolen as she lived through and through again the terrible history of her temptations, from their first form of illusory self-pleasing when she struggled away from the hold of conscience, to their latest form of an urgent hatred dragging her towards its satisfaction, while she prayed and cried for the help of that conscience which she had once forsaken. She was now dwelling on every word of Deronda's that pointed to her past deliverance from the worst evil in herself and the worst infliction of it on others, and on every word that carried a force to resist self-despair.

But she was also upborne by the prospect of soon seeing him again: she did not imagine him otherwise than always within her reach, her supreme need of him blinding her to the separateness of his life, the whole scene of which she filled with his relation to her—no unique pre-occupation of Gwendolen's, for we are all apt to fall into this passionate egoism of imagination, not only towards our fellow-men, but towards God. And the future which she turned her face to with a willing step was one where she would be continually assimilating herself to some type that he would hold before her. Had he not first risen on her vision as a corrective presence which

she had recognised in the beginning with resentment, and at last with entire love and trust? She could not spontaneously think of an end to that reliance, which had become to her imagination like the firmness of the earth, the only condition of her walking.

And Deronda was not long before he came to Diplow, which was at a more convenient distance from town than the Abbey. He had wished to carry out a plan for taking Ezra and Mirah to a mild spot on the coast, while he prepared another home that Mirah might enter as his bride, and where they might unitedly watch over her brother. But Ezra begged not to be removed, unless it were to go with them to the East. All outward solicitations were becoming more and more of a burthen to him; but his mind dwelt on the possibility of this voyage with a visionary joy. Deronda in his preparations for the marriage, which he hoped might not be deferred beyond a couple of months, wished to have fuller consultation as to his resources and affairs generally with Sir Hugo, and here was a reason for not delaying his visit to Diplow. But he thought quite as much of another reason—his promise to Gwendolen. The sense of blessedness in his own lot had yet an aching anxiety at its heart: this may be held paradoxical.

cal, for the beloved lover is always called happy, and happiness is considered as a well-fleshed indifference to sorrow outside it. But human experience is usually paradoxical, if that means incongruous with the phrases of current talk or even current philosophy. It was no treason to Mirah, but a part of that full nature which made his love for her the more worthy, that his joy in her could hold by its side the care for another. For what is love itself, for the one we love best?—an enfolding of immeasurable cares which yet are better than any joys outside our love.

Deronda came twice to Diplow, and saw Gwendolen twice—and yet he went back to town without having told her anything about the change in his lot and prospects. He blamed himself; but in all momentous communication likely to give pain we feel dependent on some preparatory turn of words or associations, some agreement of the other's mood with the probable effect of what we have to impart. In the first interview Gwendolen was so absorbed in what she had to say to him, so full of questions which he must answer, about the arrangement of her life, what she could do to make herself less ignorant, how she could be kindest to everybody, and make amends for her selfishness and try to be rid of it, that Deronda

utterly shrank from waiving her immediate wants in order to speak of himself, nay, from inflicting a wound on her in these moments when she was leaning on him for help in her path. In the second interview, when he went with new resolve to command the conversation into some preparatory track, he found her in a state of deep depression, overmastered by those distasteful miserable memories which forced themselves on her as something more real and ample than any new material out of which she could mould her future. She cried hysterically, and said that he would always despise her. He could only seek words of soothing and encouragement; and when she gradually revived under them, with that pathetic look of renewed childlike interest which we see in eyes where the lashes are still beaded with tears, it was impossible to lay another burthen on her.

But time went on, and he felt it a pressing duty to make the difficult disclosure. Gwendolen, it was true, never recognised his having any affairs; and it had never even occurred to her to ask him why he happened to be at Genoa. But this unconsciousness of hers would make a sudden revelation of affairs that were determining his course in life all the heavier blow to

her ; and if he left the revelation to be made by indifferent persons, she would feel that he had treated her with cruel inconsiderateness. He could not make the communication in writing : his tenderness could not bear to think of her reading his virtual farewell in solitude, and perhaps feeling his words full of a hard gladness for himself and indifference for her. He went down to Diplow again, feeling that every other peril was to be incurred rather than that of returning and leaving her still in ignorance.

On this third visit Deronda found Hans Meyrick installed with his easel at Diplow, beginning his picture of the three daughters sitting on a bank "in the Gainsborough style," and varying his work by rambling to Pennicote to sketch the village children and improve his acquaintance with the Gascoignes. Hans appeared to have recovered his vivacity, but Deronda detected some feigning in it, as we detect the artificiality of a lady's bloom from its being a little too high-toned and steadily persistent (a "Fluctuating Rouge" not having yet appeared among the advertisements). Also, with all his grateful friendship and admiration for Deronda, Hans could not help a certain irritation against him such as extremely incautious, open natures are apt to feel when the

breaking of a friend's reserve discloses a state of things not merely unsuspected but the reverse of what had been hoped and ingeniously conjectured. It is true that poor Hans had always cared chiefly to confide in Deronda, and had been quite incurious as to any confidence that might have been given in return ; but what outpourer of his own affairs is not tempted to think any hint of his friend's affairs as an egotistic irrelevance? That was no reason why it was not rather a sore reflection to Hans that while he had been all along naïvely opening his heart about Mirah, Deronda had kept secret a feeling of rivalry which now revealed itself as the important determining fact. Moreover, it is always at their peril that our friends turn out to be something more than we were aware of. Hans must be excused for these promptings of bruised sensibility, since he had not allowed them to govern his substantial conduct : he had the consciousness of having done right by his fortunate friend ; or, as he told himself, "his metal had given a better ring than he would have sworn to beforehand." For Hans had always said that in point of virtue he was a *dilet-tante* : which meant that he was very fond of it in other people, but if he meddled with it himself he cut a poor figure. Perhaps in reward of his good

behaviour he gave his tongue the more freedom ; and he was too fully possessed by the notion of Deronda's happiness to have a conception of what he was feeling about Gwendolen, so that he spoke of her without hesitation.

"When did you come down, Hans?" said Deronda, joining him in the grounds where he was making a study of the requisite bank and trees.

"Oh, ten days ago—before the time Sir Hugo fixed. I ran down with Rex Gascoigne and stayed at the Rectory a day or two. I'm up in all the gossip of these parts—I know the state of the wheelwright's interior, and have assisted at an infant school examination. Sister Anna with the good upper lip escorted me, else I should have been mobbed by three urchins and an idiot, because of my long hair and a general appearance which departs from the Pennicote type of the beautiful. Altogether, the village is idyllic. Its only fault is a dark curate with broad shoulders and broad trousers who ought to have gone into the heavy drapery line. The Gascoignes are perfect—besides being related to the Vandyke duchess. I caught a glimpse of her in her black robes at a distance, though she doesn't show to visitors."

"She was not staying at the Rectory?" said Deronda.

"No; but I was taken to Offendene to see the old house, and as a consequence I saw the duchess's family. I suppose you have been there and know all about them?"

"Yes, I have been there," said Deronda, quietly.

"A fine old place. An excellent setting for a widow with romantic fortunes. And she seems to have had several romances. I think I have found out that there was one between her and my friend Rex."

"Not long before her marriage, then?" said Deronda, really interested; "for they had only been a year at Offendene. How came you to know anything of it?"

"Oh—not ignorant of what it is to be a miserable devil, I learn to gloat on the signs of misery in others. I found out that Rex never goes to Offendene, and has never seen the duchess since she came back; and Miss Gascoigne let fall something in our talk about charade-acting—for I went through some of my nonsense to please the young ones—something which proved to me that Rex was once hovering about his fair cousin close enough to get singed. I don't know what was her part in the affair. Perhaps the duke came in and carried

her off. That is always the way when an exceptionally worthy young man forms an attachment. I understand now why Gascoigne talks of making the law his mistress and remaining a bachelor. But these are green resolves. Since the duke did not get himself drowned for your sake, it may turn out to be for my friend Rex's sake. Who knows?"

"Is it absolutely necessary that Mrs Grandcourt should marry again?" said Deronda, ready to add that Hans's success in constructing her fortunes hitherto had not been enough to warrant a new attempt.

"You monster!" retorted Hans, "do you want her to wear weeds for *you* all her life—burn herself in perpetual suttee while *you* are alive and merry?"

Deronda could say nothing, but he looked so much annoyed that Hans turned the current of his chat, and when he was alone shrugged his shoulders a little over the thought that there really had been some stronger feeling between Deronda and the duchess than Mirah would like to know of. "Why didn't she fall in love with me?" thought Hans, laughing at himself. "She would have had no rivals. No woman ever wanted to discuss theology with me."

No wonder that Deronda winced under that sort of joking with a whip-lash. It touched sensibilities that were already quivering with the anticipation of witnessing some of that pain to which even Hans's light words seemed to give more reality—any sort of recognition by another giving emphasis to the subject of our anxiety. And now he had come down with the firm resolve that he would not again evade the trial. The next day he rode to Offendene. He had sent word that he intended to call and to ask if Gwendolen could receive him; and he found her awaiting him in the old drawing-room where some chief crises of her life had happened. She seemed less sad than he had seen her since her husband's death; there was no smile on her face, but a placid self-possession, in contrast with the mood in which he had last found her. She was all the more alive to the sadness perceptible in Deronda; and they were no sooner seated—he at a little distance opposite to her—than she said:

“You were afraid of coming to see me, because I was so full of grief and despair the last time. But I am not so to-day. I have been sorry ever since. I have been making it a reason why I should keep up my hope and be as cheerful as I can, because I would not give you any pain about me.”

There was an unwonted sweetness in Gwendolen's tone and look as she uttered these words that seemed to Deronda to infuse the utmost cruelty into the task now laid upon him. But he felt obliged to make his answer a beginning of the task.

"I *am* in some trouble to-day," he said, looking at her rather mournfully; "but it is because I have things to tell you which you will almost think it a want of confidence on my part not to have spoken of before. They are things affecting my own life—my own future. I shall seem to have made an ill return to you for the trust you have placed in me—never to have given you an idea of events that make great changes for me. But when we have been together we have hardly had time to enter into subjects which at the moment were really less pressing to me than the trials you have been going through." There was a sort of timid tenderness in Deronda's deep tones, and he paused with a pleading look, as if it had been Gwendolen only who had conferred anything in her scenes of beseeching and confession.

A thrill of surprise was visible in her. Such meaning as she found in his words had shaken her, but without causing fear. Her mind had flown at once to some change in his position with regard

to Sir Hugo and Sir Hugo's property. She said, with a sense of comfort from Deronda's way of asking her pardon—

"You never thought of anything but what you could do to help me; and I was so troublesome. How could you tell me things?"

"It will perhaps astonish you," said Deronda, "that I have only quite lately known who were my parents."

Gwendolen was not astonished: she felt the more assured that her expectations of what was coming were right. Deronda went on without check.

"The reason why you found me in Italy was that I had gone there to learn that—in fact, to meet my mother. It was by her wish that I was brought up in ignorance of my parentage. She parted with me after my father's death, when I was a little creature. But she is now very ill, and she felt that the secrecy ought not to be any longer maintained. Her chief reason had been that she did not wish me to know I was a Jew."

"*A Jew!*" Gwendolen exclaimed, in a low tone of amazement, with an utterly frustrated look, as if some confusing potion were creeping through her system.

Deronda coloured and did not speak, while

Gwendolen, with her eyes fixed on the floor, was struggling to find her way in the dark by the aid of various reminiscences. She seemed at last to have arrived at some judgment, for she looked up at Deronda again and said, as if remonstrating against the mother's conduct—

“What difference need that have made?”

“It has made a great difference to me that I have known it,” said Deronda, emphatically; but he could not go on easily—the distance between her ideas and his acted like a difference of native language, making him uncertain what force his words would carry.

Gwendolen meditated again, and then said feelingly, “I hope there is nothing to make you mind. *You* are just the same as if you were not a Jew.”

She meant to assure him that nothing of that external sort could affect the way in which she regarded him, or the way in which he could influence her. Deronda was a little helped by this misunderstanding.

“The discovery was far from being painful to me,” he said. “I had been gradually prepared for it, and I was glad of it. I had been prepared for it by becoming intimate with a very remarkable Jew, whose ideas have attracted me so much

that I think of devoting the best part of my life to some effort at giving them effect."

Again Gwendolen seemed shaken—again there was a look of frustration, but this time it was mingled with alarm. She looked at Deronda with lips childishly parted. It was not that she had yet connected his words with Mirah and her brother, but that they had inspired her with a dreadful presentiment of mountainous travel for her mind before it could reach Deronda's. Great ideas in general which she had attributed to him seemed to make no great practical difference, and were not formidable in the same way as these mysteriously - shadowed particular ideas. He could not quite divine what was going on within her; he could only seek the least abrupt path of disclosure.

"That is an object," he said, after a moment, "which will by-and-by force me to leave England for some time—for some years. I have purposes which will take me to the East."

Here was something clearer, but all the more immediately agitating. Gwendolen's lip began to tremble. "But you will come back?" she said, tasting her own tears as they fell, before she thought of drying them.

Deronda could not sit still. He rose, grasping

his coat-collar, and went to prop himself against the corner of the mantelpiece, at a different angle from her face. But when she had pressed her handkerchief against her cheeks, she turned and looked up at him, awaiting an answer.

"If I live," said Deronda—" *some time.*"

They were both silent. He could not persuade himself to say more unless she led up to it by a question; and she was apparently meditating something that she had to say.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, at last, very timidly. "Can I understand the ideas, or am I too ignorant?"

X "I am going to the East to become better acquainted with the condition of my race in various countries there," said Deronda, gently—
anxious to be as explanatory as he could on what was the impersonal part of their separateness from each other. "The idea that I am possessed with is that of restoring a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the face of the globe. That is a task which presents itself to me as a duty: I am resolved to begin it, however feebly. I am resolved to devote my life to it. At the least, I may awaken a move-

ment in other minds, such as has been awakened in my own."

There was a long silence between them. The world seemed getting larger round poor Gwendolen, and she more solitary and helpless in the midst. The thought that he might come back after going to the East, sank before the bewildering vision of these wide-stretching purposes in which she felt herself reduced to a mere speck. There comes a terrible moment to many souls when the great movements of the world, the larger destinies of mankind, which have lain aloof in newspapers and other neglected reading, enter like an earthquake into their own lives—when the slow urgency of growing generations turns into the tread of an invading army or the dire clash of civil war, and grey fathers know nothing to seek for but the corpses of their blooming sons, and girls forget all vanity to make lint and bandages which may serve for the shattered limbs of their betrothed husbands. Then it is as if the Invisible Power that has been the object of lip-worship and lip-resignation became visible, according to the imagery of the Hebrew poet, making the flames his chariot and riding on the wings of the wind, till the mountains smoke and the plains shudder under the rolling, fiery visitation.

Often the good cause seems to lie prostrate under the thunder of unrelenting force, the martyrs live reviled, they die, and no angel is seen holding forth the crown and the palm branch. Then it is that the submission of the soul to the Highest is tested, and even in the eyes of frivolity life looks out from the scene of human struggle with the awful face of duty, and a religion shows itself which is something else than a private consolation.

That was the sort of crisis which was at this moment beginning in Gwendolen's small life: she was for the first time feeling the pressure of a vast mysterious movement, for the first time being dislodged from her supremacy in her own world, and getting a sense that her horizon was but a dipping onward of an existence with which her own was revolving. All the troubles of her wifehood and widowhood had still left her with the implicit impression which had accompanied her from childhood, that whatever surrounded her was somehow specially for her, and it was because of this that no personal jealousy had been roused in her in relation to Deronda: she could not spontaneously think of him as rightfully belonging to others more than to her. But here had come a shock which went deeper

than personal jealousy—something spiritual and vaguely tremendous that thrust her away, and yet quelled all anger into self-humiliation.

There had been a long silence. Deronda had stood still, even thankful for an interval before he needed to say more, and Gwendolen had sat like a statue with her wrists lying over each other and her eyes fixed—the intensity of her mental action arresting all other excitation. At length something occurred to her that made her turn her face to Deronda and say in a trembling voice—

“Is that all you can tell me?”

The question was like a dart to him. “The Jew whom I mentioned just now,” he answered, not without a certain tremor in his tones too, “the remarkable man who has greatly influenced my mind, has not perhaps been totally unheard of by you. He is the brother of Miss Lapidoth, whom you have often heard sing.”

A great wave of remembrance passed through Gwendolen and spread as a deep, painful flush over face and neck. It had come first as the scene of that morning when she had called on Mirah, and heard Deronda’s voice reading, and been told, without then heeding it, that he was reading Hebrew with Mirah’s brother.

“He is very ill—very near death now,” Deronda

went on, nervously, and then stopped short. He felt that he must wait. Would she divine the rest?

"Did she tell you that I went to her?" said Gwendolen, abruptly, looking up at him.

"No," said Deronda. "I don't understand you."

She turned away her eyes again, and sat thinking. Slowly the colour died out of face and neck, and she was as pale as before—with that almost withered paleness which is seen after a painful flush. At last she said, without turning towards him—in a low, measured voice, as if she were only thinking aloud in preparation for future speech—

"But *can* you marry?"

"Yes," said Deronda, also in a low voice. "I am going to marry."

At first there was no change in Gwendolen's attitude: she only began to tremble visibly; then she looked before her with dilated eyes, as at something lying in front of her, till she stretched her arms out straight, and cried with a smothered voice—

"I said I should be forsaken. I have been a cruel woman. And I am forsaken."

Deronda's anguish was intolerable. He could

not help himself. He seized her outstretched hands and held them together and kneeled at her feet. She was the victim of his happiness.

"I am cruel too, I am cruel," he repeated, with a sort of groan, looking up at her imploringly.

His presence and touch seemed to dispel a horrible vision, and she met his upward look of sorrow with something like the return of consciousness after fainting. Then she dwelt on it with that growing pathetic movement of the brow which accompanies the revival of some tender recollection. The look of sorrow brought back what seemed a very far-off moment—the first time she had ever seen it, in the library at the Abbey. Sobs rose, and great tears fell fast. Deronda would not let her hands go—held them still with one of his, and himself pressed her handkerchief against her eyes. She submitted like a half-soothed child, making an effort to speak, which was hindered by struggling sobs. At last she succeeded in saying brokenly—

"I said . . . I said . . . it should be better . . . better with me . . . for having known you."

His eyes too were larger with tears. She wrested one of her hands from his, and returned his action, pressing his tears away.

"We shall not be quite parted," he said. "I will write to you always, when I can, and you will answer?"

He waited till she said in a whisper, "I will try."

"I shall be more with you than I used to be," Deronda said with gentle urgency, releasing her hands and rising from his kneeling posture. "If we had been much together before, we should have felt our differences more, and seemed to get farther apart. Now we can perhaps never see each other again. But our minds may get nearer."

Gwendolen said nothing, but rose too, automatically. Her withered look of grief, such as the sun often shines on when the blinds are drawn up after the burial of life's joy, made him hate his own words: they seemed to have the hardness of easy consolation in them. She felt that he was going, and that nothing could hinder it. The sense of it was like a dreadful whisper in her ear, which dulled all other consciousness; and she had not known that she was rising.

Deronda could not speak again. He thought that they must part in silence, but it was difficult to move towards the parting, till she looked at him with a sort of intention in her eyes, which helped him. He advanced to put out his hand

silently, and when she had placed hers within it, she said what her mind had been labouring with—

“You have been very good to me. I have deserved nothing. I will try—try to live. I shall think of you. What good have I been? Only harm. Don’t let me be harm to *you*. It shall be the better for me——”

She could not finish. It was not that she was sobbing, but that the intense effort with which she spoke made her too tremulous. The burthen of that difficult rectitude towards him was a weight her frame tottered under.

She bent forward to kiss his cheek, and he kissed hers. Then they looked at each other for an instant with clasped hands, and he turned away.

When he was quite gone, her mother came in and found her sitting motionless.

“Gwendolen, dearest, you look very ill,” she said, bending over her and touching her cold hands.

“Yes, mamma. But don’t be afraid. I am going to live,” said Gwendolen, bursting out hysterically.

Her mother persuaded her to go to bed, and

watched by her. Through the day and half the night she fell continually into fits of shrieking, but cried in the midst of them to her mother, "Don't be afraid. I shall live. I mean to live."

After all, she slept; and when she waked in the morning light, she looked up fixedly at her mother and said tenderly, "Ah, poor mamma! You have been sitting up with me. Don't be unhappy. I shall live. I shall be better."

CHAPTER LXX.

In the chequered area of human experience the seasons are all mingled as in the golden age : fruit and blossom hang together ; in the same moment the sickle is reaping and the seed is sprinkled ; one tends the green cluster and another treads the wine-press. Nay, in each of our lives harvest and spring-time are continually one, until Death himself gathers us and sows us anew in his invisible fields.

AMONG the blessings of love there is hardly one more exquisite than the sense that in uniting the beloved life to ours we can watch over its happiness, bring comfort where hardship was, and over memories of privation and suffering open the sweetest fountains of joy. Deronda's love for Mirah was strongly imbued with that blessed protectiveness. Even with infantine feet she had begun to tread among thorns ; and the first time he had beheld her face it had seemed to him the girlish image of despair.

But now she was glowing like a dark-tipped yet delicate ivory-tinted flower in the warm sunlight of content, thinking of any possible grief as part of that life with Deronda which she could

call by no other name than good. And he watched the sober gladness which gave new beauty to her movements and her habitual attitudes of repose, with a delight which made him say to himself that it was enough of personal joy for him to save her from pain. She knew nothing of Hans's struggle or of Gwendolen's pang; for after the assurance that Deronda's hidden love had been for her, she easily explained Gwendolen's eager solicitude about him as part of a grateful dependence on his goodness, such as she herself had known. And all Deronda's words about Mrs Grandcourt confirmed that view of their relation, though he never touched on it except in the most distant manner. Mirah was ready to believe that he had been a rescuing angel to many besides herself. The only wonder was, that she among them all was to have the bliss of being continually by his side.

So, when the bridal veil was around Mirah it hid no doubtful tremors — only a thrill of awe at the acceptance of a great gift which required great uses. And the velvet canopy never covered a more goodly bride and bridegroom, to whom their people might more wisely wish offspring; more truthful lips never touched the sacramental marriage-wine; the marriage-blessing never gath-

ered stronger promise of fulfilment than in the integrity of their mutual pledge. Naturally, they were married according to the Jewish rite. And since no religion seems yet to have demanded that when we make a feast we should invite only the highest rank of our acquaintances, few, it is to be hoped, will be offended to learn that among the guests at Deronda's little wedding-feast was the entire Cohen family, with the one exception of the baby who carried on her teething intelligently at home. How could Mordecai have borne that those friends of his adversity should have been shut out from rejoicing in common with him?

Mrs Meyrick so fully understood this that she had quite reconciled herself to meeting the Jewish pawnbroker, and was there with her three daughters—all of them enjoying the consciousness that Mirah's marriage to Deronda crowned a romance which would always make a sweet memory to them. For which of them, mother or girls, had not had a generous part in it—giving their best in feeling and in act to her who needed? If Hans could have been there, it would have been better; but Mab had already observed that men must suffer for being so inconvenient: suppose she, Kate, and Amy had all fallen in love with Mr

Deronda?—but being women, they were not so ridiculous.

The Meyricks were rewarded for conquering their prejudices by hearing a speech from Mr Cohen, which had the rare quality among speeches of not being quite after the usual pattern. Jacob ate beyond his years; and contributed several small whinnying laughs as a free accompaniment of his father's speech, not irreverently, but from a lively sense that his family was distinguishing itself; while Adelaide Rebekah, in a new Sabbath frock, maintained throughout a grave air of responsibility.

Mordecai's brilliant eyes, sunken in their large sockets, dwelt on the scene with the cherishing benignancy of a spirit already lifted into an aloofness which nullified only selfish requirements and left sympathy alive. But continually, after his gaze had been travelling round on the others, it returned to dwell on Deronda with a fresh gleam of trusting affection.

The wedding-feast was humble, but Mirah was not without splendid wedding-gifts. As soon as the betrothal had been known, there were friends who had entertained graceful devices. Sir Hugo and Lady Mallinger had taken trouble to provide a complete equipment for Eastern travel, as well

as a precious locket containing an inscription—
“*To the bride of our dear Daniel Deronda all
blessings.—H. & L. M.*” The Klesmers sent a
perfect watch, also with a pretty inscription.

But something more precious than gold and
gems came to Deronda from the neighbourhood
of Diplow on the morning of his marriage. It
was a letter containing these words:—

*Do not think of me sorrowfully on your wedding-
day. I have remembered your words—that I may
live to be one of the best of women, who make others
glad that they were born. I do not yet see how that
can be, but you know better than I. If it ever comes
true, it will be because you helped me. I only thought
of myself, and I made you grieve. It hurts me now
to think of your grief. You must not grieve any
more for me. It is better—it shall be better with me
because I have known you.*

GWENDOLEN GRANDCOURT.

The preparations for the departure of all three
to the East began at once; for Deronda could not
deny Ezra's wish that they should set out on the
voyage forthwith, so that he might go with them,
instead of detaining them to watch over him. He
had no belief that Ezra's life would last through

the voyage, for there were symptoms which seemed to show that the last stage of his malady had set in. But Ezra himself had said, "Never mind where I die, so that I am with you."

He did not set out with them. One morning early he said to Deronda, "Do not quit me to-day. I shall die before it is ended."

He chose to be dressed and sit up in his easy-chair as usual, Deronda and Mirah on each side of him, and for some hours he was unusually silent, not even making the effort to speak, but looking at them occasionally with eyes full of some restful meaning, as if to assure them that while this remnant of breathing-time was difficult, he felt an ocean of peace beneath him.

It was not till late in the afternoon, when the light was falling, that he took a hand of each in his and said, looking at Deronda, "Death is coming to me as the divine kiss which is both parting and reunion—which takes me from your bodily eyes and gives me full presence in your soul. Where thou goest, Daniel, I shall go. Is it not begun? Have I not breathed my soul into you? We shall live together."

He paused, and Deronda waited, thinking that there might be another word for him. But slowly and with effort Ezra, pressing on their hands,

raised himself and uttered in Hebrew the confession of the divine Unity, which for long generations has been on the lips of the dying Israelite.

He sank back gently into his chair, and did not speak again. But it was some hours before he had ceased to breathe, with Mirah's and Deronda's arms around him.

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame ; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

THE END.



