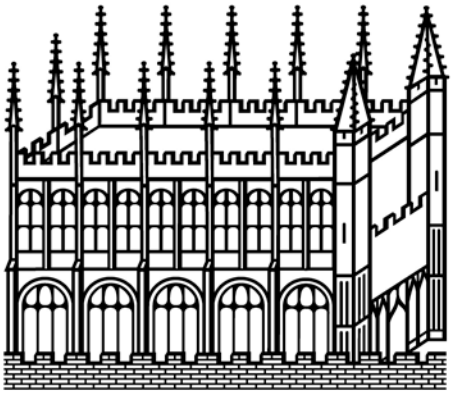

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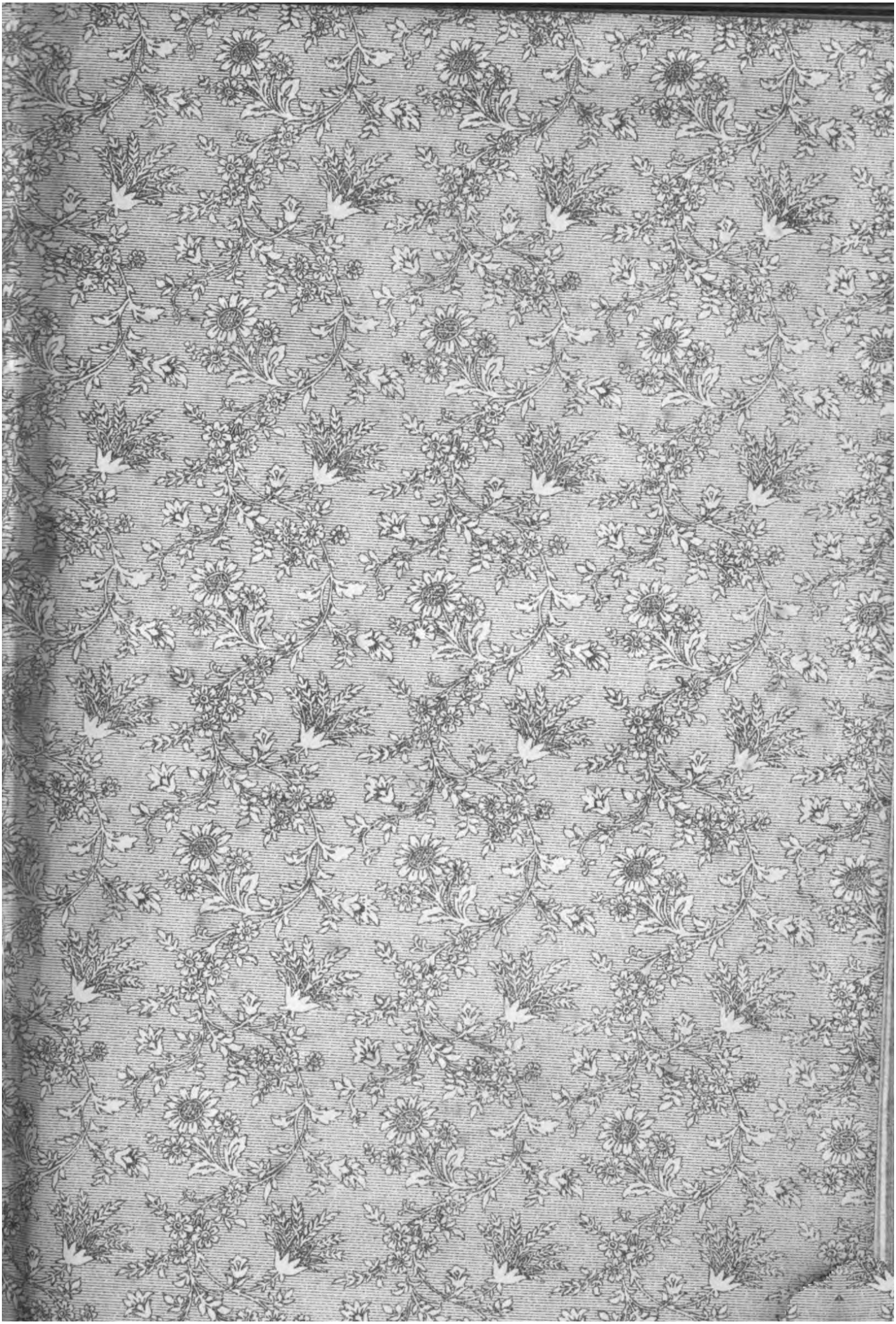

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DANIEL DERONDA

Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul:
There, 'mid the throng of hurrying desires
That trample o'er the dead to seize their spoil,
Lurks vengeance, footless, irresistible
As exhalations laden with slow death,
And o'er the fairest troop of captured joys
Breathes pallid pestilence.

DANIEL DERONDA

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

VOL. IV.

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DANIEL DERONDA

BOOK VII.

THE MOTHER AND THE SON

BOOK VII.

THE MOTHER AND THE SON.

CHAPTER L.

"If some mortal, born too soon,
Were laid away in some great trance—the ages
Coming and going all the while—till dawned
His true time's advent; and could then record
The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed,—
Then I might tell more of the breath so light
Upon my eyelids, and the fingers warm
Among my hair. Youth is confused; yet never
So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,
I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns
A water-snake when fairies cross his sleep."

—BROWNING: *Paracelsus.*

THIS was the letter which Sir Hugo put into Deronda's hands:—

TO MY SON, DANIEL DERONDA.

My good friend and yours, Sir Hugo Mallinger, will have told you that I wish to see you. My health is shaken, and I desire there should be no

time lost before I deliver to you what I have long withheld. Let nothing hinder you from being at the *Albergo dell' Italia* in Genoa by the fourteenth of this month. Wait for me there. I am uncertain when I shall be able to make the journey from Spezia, where I shall be staying. That will depend on several things. Wait for me—the Princess Halm-Eberstein. Bring with you the diamond ring that Sir Hugo gave you. I shall like to see it again.—Your unknown mother,

LEONORA HALM-EBERSTEIN.

This letter with its colourless wording gave Deronda no clue to what was in reserve for him; but he could not do otherwise than accept Sir Hugo's reticence, which seemed to imply some pledge not to anticipate the mother's disclosures; and the discovery that his lifelong conjectures had been mistaken checked further surmise. Deronda could not hinder his imagination from taking a quick flight over what seemed possibilities, but he refused to contemplate any one of them as more likely than another, lest he should be nursing it into a dominant desire or repugnance, instead of simply preparing himself with resolve to meet the fact bravely, whatever it might turn out to be.

In this state of mind he could not have communicated to any one the reason for the absence which in some quarters he was obliged to mention beforehand, least of all to Mordecai, whom it would affect as powerfully as it did himself, only in rather a different way. If he were to say, "I am going to learn the truth about my birth," Mordecai's hope would gather what might prove a painful, dangerous excitement. To exclude suppositions, he spoke of his journey as being undertaken by Sir Hugo's wish, and threw as much indifference as he could into his manner of announcing it, saying he was uncertain of its duration, but it would perhaps be very short.

"I will ask to have the child Jacob to stay with me," said Mordecai, comforting himself in this way, after the first mournful glances.

"I will drive round and ask Mrs Cohen to let him come," said Mirah.

"The grandmother will deny you nothing," said Deronda. "I'm glad you were a little wrong as well as I," he added, smiling at Mordecai. "You thought that old Mrs Cohen would not bear to see Mirah."

"I undervalued her heart," said Mordecai. "She is capable of rejoicing that another's plant blooms though her own be withered."

"Oh, they are dear good people; I feel as if we all belonged to each other," said Mirah, with a tinge of merriment in her smile.

"What should you have felt if that Ezra had been your brother?" said Deronda, mischievously —a little provoked that she had taken kindly at once to people who had caused him so much prospective annoyance on her account.

Mirah looked at him with a slight surprise for a moment, and then said, "He is not a bad man— I think he would never forsake any one." But when she had uttered the words she blushed deeply, and glancing timidly at Mordecai, turned away to some occupation. Her father was in her mind, and this was a subject on which she and her brother had a painful mutual consciousness. "If he should come and find us!" was a thought which to Mirah sometimes made the street daylight as shadowy as a haunted forest where each turn screened for her an imaginary apparition.

Deronda felt what was her involuntary allusion, and understood the blush. How could he be slow to understand feelings which now seemed nearer than ever to his own? for the words of his mother's letter implied that his filial relation was not to be freed from painful conditions; indeed, singularly enough that letter which had brought

his mother nearer as a living reality had thrown her into more remoteness for his affections. The tender yearning after a being whose life might have been the worse for not having his care and love, the image of a mother who had not had all her dues whether of reverence or compassion, had long been secretly present with him in his observation of all the women he had come near. But it seemed now that this picturing of his mother might fit the facts no better than his former conceptions about Sir Hugo. He wondered to find that when this mother's very handwriting had come to him with words holding her actual feeling, his affections had suddenly shrunk into a state of comparative neutrality towards her. A veiled figure with enigmatic speech had thrust away that image which, in spite of uncertainty, his clinging thought had gradually modelled and made the possessor of his tenderness and duteous longing. When he set off to Genoa, the interest really uppermost in his mind had hardly so much relation to his mother as to Mordecai and Mirah.

"God bless you, Dan!" Sir Hugo had said, when they shook hands. "Whatever else changes for you, it can't change my being the oldest friend you have known, and the one who has all along

felt the most for you. I couldn't have loved you better if you'd been my own—only I should have been better pleased with thinking of you always as the future master of the Abbey instead of my fine nephew; and then you would have seen it necessary for you to take a political line. However—things must be as they may." It was a defensive measure of the baronet's to mingle purposeless remarks with the expression of serious feeling.

When Deronda arrived at the *Italia* in Genoa, no Princess Halm-Eberstein was there; but on the second day there was a letter for him, saying that her arrival might happen within a week, or might be deferred a fortnight and more: she was under circumstances which made it impossible for her to fix her journey more precisely, and she entreated him to wait as patiently as he could.

With this indefinite prospect of suspense on matters of supreme moment to him, Deronda set about the difficult task of seeking amusement on philosophic grounds, as a means of quieting excited feeling and giving patience a lift over a weary road. His former visit to the superb city had been only cursory, and left him much to learn beyond the prescribed round of sight-seeing, by spending the cooler hours in observant wan-

dering about the streets, the quay, and the environs; and he often took a boat that he might enjoy the magnificent view of the city and harbour from the sea. All sights, all subjects, even the expected meeting with his mother, found a central union in Mordecai and Mirah, and the ideas immediately associated with them; and among the thoughts that most filled his mind while his boat was pushing about within view of the grand harbour was that of the multitudinous Spanish Jews centuries ago driven destitute from their Spanish homes, suffered to land from the crowded ships only for brief rest on this grand quay of Genoa, overspreading it with a pall of famine and plague—dying mothers with dying children at their breasts—fathers and sons agaze at each other's haggardness, like groups from a hundred Hunger-towers turned out beneath the mid-day sun. Inevitably, dreamy constructions of a possible ancestry for himself would weave themselves with historic memories which had begun to have a new interest for him on his discovery of Mirah, and now, under the influence of Mordecai, had become irresistibly dominant. He would have sealed his mind against such constructions if it had been possible, and he had never yet fully admitted to himself that he wished the facts

to verify Mordecai's conviction: he inwardly repeated that he had no choice in the matter, and that wishing was folly—nay, on the question of parentage, wishing seemed part of that meanness which disowns kinship: it was a disowning by anticipation. What he had to do was simply to accept the fact; and he had really no strong presumption to go upon, now that he was assured of his mistake about Sir Hugo. There had been a resolved concealment which made all inference untrustworthy, and the very name he bore might be a false one. If Mordecai were wrong—if he, the so-called Daniel Deronda, were held by ties entirely aloof from any such course as his friend's pathetic hope had marked out?—he would not say "I wish;" but he could not help feeling on which side the sacrifice lay.

Across these two importunate thoughts, which he resisted as much as one can resist anything in that unstrung condition which belongs to suspense, there came continually an anxiety which he made no effort to banish—dwelling on it rather with a mournfulness, which often seems to us the best atonement we can make to one whose need we have been unable to meet. The anxiety was for Gwendolen. In the wonderful mixtures of our nature there is a feeling distinct from that

exclusive passionate love of which some men and women (by no means all) are capable, which yet is not the same with friendship, nor with a merely benevolent regard, whether admiring or compassionate: a man, say—for it is a man who is here concerned—hardly represents to himself this shade of feeling towards a woman more nearly than in the words, "I should have loved her, if——:" the "if" covering some prior growth in the inclinations, or else some circumstances which have made an inward prohibitory law as a stay against the emotions ready to quiver out of balance. The "if" in Deronda's case carried reasons of both kinds; yet he had never throughout his relations with Gwendolen been free from the nervous consciousness that there was something to guard against not only on her account but on his own—some precipitancy in the manifestation of impulsive feeling—some ruinous inroad of what is but momentary on the permanent chosen treasure of the heart—some spoiling of her trust, which wrought upon him now as if it had been the retreating cry of a creature snatched and carried out of his reach by swift horsemen or swifter waves, while his own strength was only a stronger sense of weakness. How could his feeling for Gwendolen ever be exactly like his feeling for other women, even

when there was one by whose side he desired to stand apart from them? Strangely her figure entered into the pictures of his present and future; strangely (and now it seemed sadly) their two lots had come in contact, hers narrowly personal, his charged with far-reaching sensibilities, perhaps with durable purposes, which were hardly more present to her than the reasons why men migrate are present to the birds that come as usual for the crumbs and find them no more. Not that Deronda was too ready to imagine himself of supreme importance to a woman; but her words of insistance that he "must remain near her—must not forsake her"—continually recurred to him with the clearness and importunity of imagined sounds, such as Dante has said pierce us like arrows whose points carry the sharpness of pity:—

> "*Lamenti saettaron me diversi*
> *Che di pietà ferrati avean gli strali.*"

Day after day passed, and the very air of Italy seemed to carry the consciousness that war had been declared against Austria, and every day was a hurrying march of crowded Time towards the world-changing battle of Sadowa. Meanwhile, in Genoa, the noons were getting hotter, the converging outer roads getting deeper with white dust,

the oleanders in the tubs along the wayside gardens looking more and more like fatigued holiday-makers, and the sweet evening changing her office —scattering abroad those whom the mid-day had sent under shelter, and sowing all paths with happy social sounds, little tinklings of mule-bells and whirrings of thrumbed strings, light footsteps and voices, if not leisurely, then with the hurry of pleasure in them; while the encircling heights, crowned with forts, skirted with fine dwellings and gardens, seemed also to come forth and gaze in fulness of beauty after their long siesta, till all strong colour melted in the stream of moonlight which made the streets a new spectacle with shadows, both still and moving, on cathedral steps and against the façades of massive palaces; and then slowly with the descending moon all sank in deep night and silence, and nothing shone but the port lights of the great Lanterna in the blackness below, and the glimmering stars in the blackness above. Deronda, in his suspense, watched this revolving of the days as he might have watched a wonderful clock where the striking of the hours was made solemn with antique figures advancing and retreating in monitory procession, while he still kept his ear open for another kind of signal which would have its solemnity too.

He was beginning to sicken of occupation, and found himself contemplating all activity with the aloofness of a prisoner awaiting ransom. In his letters to Mordecai and Hans, he had avoided writing about himself, but he was really getting into that state of mind to which all subjects become personal; and the few books he had brought to make him a refuge in study were becoming unreadable, because the point of view that life would make for him was in that agitating moment of uncertainty which is close upon decision

Many nights were watched through by him in gazing from the open window of his room on the double, faintly pierced darkness of the sea and the heavens: often in struggling under the oppressive scepticism which represented his particular lot, with all the importance he was allowing Mordecai to give it, as of no more lasting effect than a dream—a set of changes which made passion to him, but beyond his consciousness were no more than an imperceptible difference of mass or shadow; sometimes with a reaction of emotive force which gave even to sustained disappointment, even to the fulfilled demand of sacrifice, the nature of a satisfied energy, and spread over his young future, whatever it might be, the attraction of devoted

service; sometimes with a sweet irresistible hopefulness that the very best of human possibilities might befall him—the blending of a complete personal love in one current with a larger duty; and sometimes again in a mood of rebellion (what human creature escapes it?) against things in general because they are thus and not otherwise, a mood in which Gwendolen and her equivocal fate moved as busy images of what was amiss in the world along with the concealments which he had felt as a hardship in his own life, and which were acting in him now under the form of an afflicting doubtfulness about the mother who had announced herself coldly and still kept away.

But at last she was come. One morning in his third week of waiting there was a new kind of knock at the door. A servant in chasseur's livery entered and delivered in French the verbal message that the Princess Halm-Eberstein had arrived, that she was going to rest during the day, but would be obliged if Monsieur would dine early, so as to be at liberty at seven, when she would be able to receive him.

CHAPTER LI.

She held the spindle as she sat,
Erinna with the thick-coiled mat
Of raven hair and deepest agate eyes,
Gazing with a sad surprise
At surging visions of her destiny—
To spin the byssus drearily
In insect-labour, while the throng
Of gods and men wrought deeds that poets wrought in song.

WHEN Deronda presented himself at the door of his mother's apartment in the *Italia*, he felt some revival of his boyhood with its premature agitations. The two servants in the antechamber looked at him markedly, a little surprised that the doctor their lady had come to consult was this striking young gentleman whose appearance gave even the severe lines of an evening dress the credit of adornment. But Deronda could notice nothing until, the second door being opened, he found himself in the presence of a figure which at the other end of the large room stood awaiting his approach.

She was covered, except as to her face and part of her arms, with black lace hanging loosely from the summit of her whitening hair to the long train stretching from her tall figure. Her arms, naked from the elbow, except for some rich bracelets, were folded before her, and the fine poise of her head made it look handsomer than it really was. But Deronda felt no interval of observation before he was close in front of her, holding the hand she had put out and then raising it to his lips. She still kept her hand in his and looked at him examiningly; while his chief consciousness was that her eyes were piercing and her face so mobile that the next moment she might look like a different person. For even while she was examining him there was a play of the brow and nostril which made a tacit language. Deronda dared no movement, not able to conceive what sort of manifestation her feeling demanded; but he felt himself changing colour like a girl, and yet wondering at his own lack of emotion: he had lived through so many ideal meetings with his mother, and they had seemed more real than this! He could not even conjecture in what language she would speak to him. He imagined it would not be English. Suddenly, she let fall his hand, and placed both hers on his shoulders, while her face gave out a

flash of admiration in which every worn line disappeared and seemed to leave a restored youth.

"You are a beautiful creature!" she said, in a low melodious voice, with syllables which had what might be called a foreign but agreeable outline. "I knew you would be." Then she kissed him on each cheek, and he returned her kisses. But it was something like a greeting between royalties.

She paused a moment, while the lines were coming back into her face, and then said in a colder tone, "I am your mother. But you can have no love for me."

"I have thought of you more than of any other being in the world," said Deronda, his voice trembling nervously.

"I am not like what you thought I was," said the mother, decisively, withdrawing her hands from his shoulders and folding her arms as before, looking at him as if she invited him to observe her. He had often pictured her face in his imagination as one which had a likeness to his own: he saw some of the likeness now, but amidst more striking differences. She was a remarkable-looking being. What was it that gave her son a painful sense of aloofness?—Her worn beauty had a strangeness in it as if she were not quite a human

mother, but a Melusina, who had ties with some world which is independent of ours.

"I used to think that you might be suffering," said Deronda, anxious above all not to wound her. "I used to wish that I could be a comfort to you."

"I *am* suffering. But with a suffering that you can't comfort," said the Princess, in a harder voice than before, moving to a sofa where cushions had been carefully arranged for her. "Sit down." She pointed to a seat near her; and then discerning some distress in Deronda's face, she added, more gently, "I am not suffering at this moment. I am at ease now. I am able to talk."

Deronda seated himself and waited for her to speak again. It seemed as if he were in the presence of a mysterious Fate rather than of the longed-for mother. He was beginning to watch her with wonder, from the spiritual distance to which she had thrown him.

"No," she began; "I did not send for you to comfort me. I could not know beforehand—I don't know now—what you will feel towards me. I have not the foolish notion that you can love me merely because I am your mother, when you have never seen or heard of me all your life. But I thought I chose something better for you than

being with me. I did not think that I deprived you of anything worth having."

"You cannot wish me to believe that your affection would not have been worth having," said Deronda, finding that she paused as if she expected him to make some answer.

"I don't mean to speak ill of myself," said the Princess, with proud impetuosity "but I had not much affection to give you. I did not want affection. I had been stifled with it. I wanted to live out the life that was in me, and not to be hampered with other lives. You wonder what I was. I was no princess then." She rose with a sudden movement, and stood as she had done before. Deronda immediately rose too: he felt breathless.

"No princess in this tame life that I live in now. I was a great singer, and I acted as well as I sang. All the rest were poor beside me. Men followed me from one country to another. I was living a myriad lives in one. I did not want a child."

There was a passionate self-defence in her tone. She had cast all precedent out of her mind. Precedent had no excuse for her, and she could only seek a justification in the intensest words she could find for her experience. She seemed to fling out the last words against some possible reproach

in the mind of her son, who had to stand and hear them—clutching his coat-collar as if he were keeping himself above water by it, and feeling his blood in the sort of commotion that might have been excited if he had seen her going through some strange rite of a religion which gave a sacredness to crime. What else had she to tell him? She went on with the same intensity and a sort of pale illumination in her face.

"I did not want to marry. I was forced into marrying your father—forced, I mean, by my father's wishes and commands; and besides, it was my best way of getting some freedom. I could rule my husband, but not my father. I had a right to be free. I had a right to seek my freedom from a bondage that I hated."

She seated herself again, while there was that subtle movement in her eyes and closed lips which is like the suppressed continuation of speech. Deronda continued standing, and after a moment or two she looked up at him with a less defiant pleading as she said—

"And the bondage I hated for myself I wanted to keep you from. What better could the most loving mother have done? I relieved you from the bondage of having been born a Jew."

"Then I *am* a Jew?" Deronda burst out with

a deep-voiced energy that made his mother shrink a little backward against her cushions. "My father was a Jew, and you are a Jewess?"

"Yes, your father was my cousin," said the mother, watching him with a change in her look, as if she saw something that she might have to be afraid of.

"I am glad of it," said Deronda, impetuously, in the veiled voice of passion. He could not have imagined beforehand how he would come to say that which he had never hitherto admitted. He could not have dreamed that it would be in impulsive opposition to his mother. He was shaken by a mixed anger which no reflection could come soon enough to check, against this mother who it seemed had borne him unwillingly, had willingly made herself a stranger to him, and —perhaps—was now making herself known unwillingly. This last suspicion seemed to flash some explanation over her speech.

But the mother was equally shaken by an anger differently mixed, and her frame was less equal to any repression. The shaking with her was visibly physical, and her eyes looked the larger for her pallid excitement as she said violently—

"Why do you say you are glad? You are an English gentleman. I secured you that."

"You did not know *what* you secured me. How could you choose my birthright for me?" said Deronda, throwing himself sideways into his chair again, almost unconsciously, and leaning his arm over the back while he looked away from his mother.

He was fired with an intolerance that seemed foreign to him. But he was now trying hard to master himself and keep silence. A horror had swept in upon his anger lest he should say something too hard in this moment which made an epoch never to be recalled. There was a pause before his mother spoke again, and when she spoke her voice had become more firmly resistant in its finely-varied tones:

"I chose for you what I would have chosen for myself. How could I know that you would have the spirit of my father in you? How could I know that you would love what I hated?—if you really love to be a Jew." The last words had such bitterness in them that any one overhearing might have supposed some hatred had arisen between the mother and son.

But Deronda had recovered his fuller self. He was recalling his sensibilities to what life had been and actually was for her whose best years were gone, and who with the signs of suffering in

her frame was now exerting herself to tell him of a past which was not his alone but also hers. His habitual shame at the acceptance of events as if they were his only, helped him even here. As he looked at his mother silently after her last words, his face regained some of its penetrative calm; yet it seemed to have a strangely agitating influence over her: her eyes were fixed on him with a sort of fascination, but not with any repose of maternal delight.

"Forgive me if I speak hastily," he said, with diffident gravity. "Why have you resolved now on disclosing to me what you took care to have me brought up in ignorance of? Why—since you seem angry that I should be glad?"

"Oh—the reasons of our actions!" said the Princess, with a ring of something like sarcastic scorn. "When you are as old as I am, it will not seem so simple a question—'Why did you do this?' People talk of their motives in a cut and dried way. Every woman is supposed to have the same set of motives, or else to be a monster. I am not a monster, but I have not felt exactly what other women feel—or say they feel, for fear of being thought unlike others. When you reproach me in your heart for sending you away from me, you mean that I ought to say I

felt about you as other women say they feel about their children. I did *not* feel that. I was glad to be freed from you. But I did well for you, and I gave you your father's fortune. Do I seem now to be revoking everything?—Well, there are reasons. I feel many things that I can't understand. A fatal illness has been growing in me for a year. I shall very likely not live another year. I will not deny anything I have done. I will not pretend to love where I have no love. But shadows are rising round me. Sickness makes them. If I have wronged the dead—I have but little time to do what I left undone."

The varied transitions of tone with which this speech was delivered were as perfect as the most accomplished actress could have made them. The speech was in fact a piece of what may be called sincere acting: this woman's nature was one in which all feeling—and all the more when it was tragic as well as real—immediately became matter of conscious representation: experience immediately passed into drama, and she acted her own emotions. In a minor degree this is nothing uncommon, but in the Princess the acting had a rare perfection of physiognomy, voice, and gesture. It would not be true to say that she felt less because of this double consciousness: she felt—that is,

her mind went through—all the more, but with a difference: each nucleus of pain or pleasure had a deep atmosphere of the excitement or spiritual intoxication which at once exalts and deadens. But Deronda made no reflection of this kind. All his thoughts hung on the purport of what his mother was saying; her tones and her wonderful face entered into his agitation without being noted. What he longed for with an awed desire was to know as much as she would tell him of the strange mental conflict under which it seemed that he had been brought into the world: what his compassionate nature made the controlling idea within him were the suffering and the confession that breathed through her later words, and these forbade any further question, when she paused and remained silent, with her brow knit, her head turned a little away from him, and her large eyes fixed as if on something incorporeal. He must wait for her to speak again. She did so with strange abruptness, turning her eyes upon him suddenly, and saying more quickly—

"Sir Hugo has written much about you. He tells me you have a wonderful mind—you comprehend everything—you are wiser than he is with all his sixty years. You say you are glad to know that you were born a Jew. I am not

going to tell you that I have changed my mind about that. Your feelings are against mine. You don't thank me for what I did. Shall you comprehend your mother—or only blame her?"

"There is not a fibre within me but makes me wish to comprehend her," said Deronda, meeting her sharp gaze solemnly. "It is a bitter reversal of my longing to think of blaming her. What I have been most trying to do for fifteen years is to have some understanding of those who differ from myself."

"Then you have become unlike your grandfather in that," said the mother, "though you are a young copy of him in your face. He never comprehended me, or if he did, he only thought of fettering me into obedience. I was to be what he called 'the Jewish woman' under pain of his curse. I was to feel everything I did not feel, and believe everything I did not believe. I was to feel awe for the bit of parchment in the *mezuza* over the door; to dread lest a bit of butter should touch a bit of meat; to think it beautiful that men should bind the *tephillin* on them, and women not,—to adore the wisdom of such laws, however silly they might seem to me. I was to love the long prayers in the ugly synagogue, and the howling, and the gabbling, and the dreadful

fasts, and the tiresome feasts, and my father's endless discoursing about Our People, which was a thunder without meaning in my ears. I was to care for ever about what Israel had been; and I did not care at all. I cared for the wide world, and all that I could represent in it. I hated living under the shadow of my father's strictness. Teaching, teaching for everlasting — 'this you must be,' 'that you must not be'—pressed on me like a frame that got tighter and tighter as I grew. I wanted to live a large life, with freedom to do what every one else did, and be carried along in a great current, not obliged to care. Ah!"—here her tone changed to one of a more bitter incisiveness—"you are glad to have been born a Jew. You say so. That is because you have not been brought up as a Jew. That separateness seems sweet to you because I saved you from it."

"When you resolved on that, you meant that I should never know my origin?" said Deronda, impulsively. "You have at least changed in your feeling on that point."

"Yes, that was what I meant. That is what I persevered in. And it is not true to say that I have changed. Things have changed in spite of me. I am still the same Leonora"—she pointed

with her forefinger to her breast—"here within me is the same desire, the same will, the same choice, *but*"—she spread out her hands, palm upwards, on each side of her, as she paused with a bitter compression of her lip, then let her voice fall into muffled, rapid utterance—"events come upon us like evil enchantments: and thoughts, feelings, apparitions in the darkness are events—are they not? I don't consent. We only consent to what we love. I obey something tyrannic"—she spread out her hands again—"I am forced to be withered, to feel pain, to be dying slowly. Do I love that? Well, I have been forced to obey my dead father. I have been forced to tell you that you are a Jew, and deliver to you what he commanded me to deliver."

"I beseech you to tell me what moved you—when you were young, I mean—to take the course you did," said Deronda, trying by this reference to the past to escape from what to him was the heart-rending piteousness of this mingled suffering and defiance. "I gather that my grandfather opposed your bent to be an artist. Though my own experience has been quite different, I enter into the painfulness of your struggle. I can imagine the hardship of an enforced renunciation."

"No," said the Princess, shaking her head, and folding her arms with an air of decision. "You are not a woman. You may try—but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl. To have a pattern cut out—'this is the Jewish woman; this is what you must be; this is what you are wanted for; a woman's heart must be of such a size and no larger, else it must be pressed small, like Chinese feet; her happiness is to be made as cakes are, by a fixed receipt.' That was what my father wanted. He wished I had been a son; he cared for me as a makeshift link. His heart was set on his Judaism. He hated that Jewish women should be thought of by the Christian world as a sort of ware to make public singers and actresses of. As if we were not the more enviable for that! That is a chance of escaping from bondage."

"Was my grandfather a learned man?" said Deronda, eager to know particulars that he feared his mother might not think of.

She answered impatiently, putting up her hand, "Oh yes,—and a clever physician—and good: I don't deny that he was good. A man to be admired in a play—grand, with an iron will. Like the old Foscari before he pardons. But such men

turn their wives and daughters into slaves. They would rule the world if they could; but not ruling the world, they throw all the weight of their will on the necks and souls of women. But nature sometimes thwarts them. My father had no other child than his daughter, and she was like himself."

She had folded her arms again, and looked as if she were ready to face some impending attempt at mastery.

"Your father was different. Unlike me—all lovingness and affection. I knew I could rule him; and I made him secretly promise me, before I married him, that he would put no hindrance in the way of my being an artist. My father was on his deathbed when we were married: from the first he had fixed his mind on my marrying my cousin Ephraim. And when a woman's will is as strong as the man's who wants to govern her, half her strength must be concealment. I meant to have my will in the end, but I could only have it by seeming to obey. I had an awe of my father—always I had had an awe of him: it was impossible to help it. I hated to feel awed—I wished I could have defied him openly; but I never could. It was what I could not imagine: I could not act it to myself that I should begin

to defy my father openly and succeed. And I never would risk failure."

That last sentence was uttered with an abrupt emphasis, and she paused after it as if the words had raised a crowd of remembrances which obstructed speech. Her son was listening to her with feelings more and more highly mixed: the first sense of being repelled by the frank coldness which had replaced all his preconceptions of a mother's tender joy in the sight of him; the first impulses of indignation at what shocked his most cherished emotions and principles—all these busy elements of collision between them were subsiding for a time, and making more and more room for that effort at just allowance and that admiration of a forcible nature whose errors lay along high pathways, which he would have felt if, instead of being his mother, she had been a stranger who had appealed to his sympathy. Still it was impossible to be dispassionate: he trembled lest the next thing she had to say would be more repugnant to him than what had gone before: he was afraid of the strange coercion she seemed to be under to lay her mind bare: he almost wished he could say, "Tell me only what is necessary," and then again he felt the fascination that made him watch her and listen to her

eagerly. He tried to recall her to particulars by asking—

"Where was my grandfather's home?"

"Here in Genoa, when I was married; and his family had lived here generations ago. But my father had been in various countries."

"You must surely have lived in England?"

"My mother was English—a Jewess of Portuguese descent. My father married her in England. Certain circumstances of that marriage made all the difference in my life: through that marriage my father thwarted his own plans. My mother's sister was a singer, and afterwards she married the English partner of a merchant's house here in Genoa, and they came and lived here eleven years. My mother died when I was eight years old, and then my father allowed me to be continually with my aunt Leonora and be taught under her eyes, as if he had not minded the danger of her encouraging my wish to be a singer, as she had been. But this was it—I saw it again and again in my father:—he did not guard against consequences, because he felt sure he could hinder them if he liked. Before my aunt left Genoa, I had had enough teaching to bring out the born singer and actress within me: my father did not know everything that was

done; but he knew that I was taught music and singing—he knew my inclination. That was nothing to him: he meant that I should obey his will. And he was resolved that I should marry my cousin Ephraim, the only one left of my father's family that he knew. I wanted not to marry. I thought of all plans to resist it, but at last I found that I could rule my cousin, and I consented. My father died three weeks after we were married, and then I had my way!" She uttered these words almost exultantly; but after a little pause her face changed, and she said in a biting tone, "It has not lasted, though. My father is getting his way now."

She began to look more contemplatively again at her son, and presently said—

"You are like him—but milder—there is something of your own father in you; and he made it the labour of his life to devote himself to me: wound up his money-changing and banking, and lived to wait upon me—he went against his conscience for me. As I loved the life of my art, so he loved me. Let me look at your hand again: the hand with the ring on. It was your father's ring."

He drew his chair nearer to her and gave her his hand. We know what kind of hand it was:

her own, very much smaller, was of the same type. As he felt the smaller hand holding his, as he saw nearer to him the face that held a likeness of his own, aged not by time but by intensity, the strong bent of his nature towards a reverential tenderness asserted itself above every other impression, and in his most fervent tone he said—

"Mother! take us all into your heart—the living and the dead. Forgive everything that hurts you in the past Take my affection."

She looked at him admiringly rather than lovingly, then kissed him on the brow, and saying sadly, "I reject nothing, but I have nothing to give," she released his hand and sank back on her cushions. Deronda turned pale with what seems always more of a sensation than an emotion — the pain of repulsed tenderness. She noticed the expression of pain, and said, still with melodious melancholy in her tones—

"It is better so. We must part again soon, and you owe me no duties. I did not wish you to be born. I parted with you willingly. When your father died, I resolved that I would have no more ties, but such as I could free myself from. I was the Alcharisi you have heard of: the name had magic wherever it was carried. Men courted me. Sir Hugo Mallinger was one who wished to

marry me. He was madly in love with me. One day I asked him, 'Is there a man capable of doing something for love of me, and expecting nothing in return?' He said, 'What is it you want done?' I said, 'Take my boy and bring him up as an Englishman, and let him never know anything about his parents.' You were little more than two years old, and were sitting on his foot. He declared that he would pay money to have such a boy. I had not meditated much on the plan beforehand, but as soon as I had spoken about it, it took possession of me as something I could not rest without doing. At first he thought I was not serious, but I convinced him, and he was never surprised at anything. He agreed that it would be for your good, and the finest thing for you. A great singer and actress is a queen, but she gives no royalty to her son.—All that happened at Naples. And afterwards I made Sir Hugo the trustee of your fortune. That is what I did; and I had a joy in doing it. My father had tyrannised over me—he cared more about a grandson to come than he did about me: I counted as nothing. You were to be such a Jew as he; you were to be what he wanted. But you were my son, and it was my turn to say what you should be. I said you should not know you were a Jew."

"And for months events have been preparing me to be glad that I am a Jew," said Deronda, his opposition roused again. The point touched the quick of his experience. "It would always have been better that I should have known the truth. I have always been rebelling against the secrecy that looked like shame. It is no shame to have Jewish parents—the shame is to disown it."

"You say it was a shame to me, then, that I used that secrecy," said his mother, with a flash of new anger. "There is no shame attaching to me. I have no reason to be ashamed. I rid myself of the Jewish tatters and gibberish that make people nudge each other at sight of us, as if we were tattoed under our clothes, though our faces are as whole as theirs. I delivered you from the pelting contempt that pursues Jewish separateness. I am not ashamed that I did it. It was the better for you."

"Then why have you now undone the secrecy? —no, not undone it—the effects will never be undone. But why have you now sent for me to tell me that I am a Jew?" said Deronda, with an intensity of opposition in feeling that was almost bitter. It seemed as if her words had called out a latent obstinacy of race in him.

"Why?—ah, why?" said the Princess, rising

quickly and walking to the other side of the room, where she turned round and slowly approached him, as he, too, stood up. Then she began to speak again in a more veiled voice. "I can't explain; I can only say what is. I don't love my father's religion now any more than I did then. Before I married the second time, I was baptised; I made myself like the people I lived among. I had a right to do it; I was not, like a brute, obliged to go with my own herd. I have not repented; I will not say that I have repented. But yet,"—here she had come near to her son, and paused; then again retreated a little and stood still, as if resolute not to give way utterly to an imperious influence; but, as she went on speaking, she became more and more unconscious of anything but the awe that subdued her voice. "It is illness, I don't doubt that it has been gathering illness,—my mind has gone back; more than a year ago it began. You see my grey hair, my worn look: it has all come fast. Sometimes I am in an agony of pain—I daresay I shall be to-night. Then it is as if all the life I have chosen to live, all thoughts, all will, forsook me and left me alone in spots of memory, and I can't get away: my pain seems to keep me there. My childhood—my girlhood—the day of my marriage—the day

of my father's death—there seems to be nothing since. Then a great horror comes over me: what do I know of life or death? and what my father called 'right' may be a power that is laying hold of me—that is clutching me now. Well, I will satisfy him. I cannot go into the darkness without satisfying him. I have hidden what was his. I thought once I would burn it. I have not burnt it. I thank God I have not burnt it!"

She threw herself on her cushions again, visibly fatigued. Deronda, moved too strongly by her suffering for other impulses to act within him, drew near her, and said, entreatingly—

"Will you not spare yourself this evening? Let us leave the rest till to-morrow."

"No," she said, decisively. "I will confess it all, now that I have come up to it. Often when I am at ease it all fades away; my whole self comes quite back; but I know it will sink away again, and the other will come—the poor, solitary, forsaken remains of self, that can resist nothing. It was my nature to resist, and say, 'I have a right to resist.' Well, I say so still when I have any strength in me. You have heard me say it, and I don't withdraw it. But when my strength goes, some other right forces itself upon me like iron in an inexorable hand; and even when I am at ease,

it is beginning to make ghosts upon the daylight. And now you have made it worse for me," she said, with a sudden return of impetuosity; "but I shall have told you everything. And what reproach is there against me," she added, bitterly, "since I have made you glad to be a Jew? Joseph Kalonymos reproached me: he said you had been turned into a proud Englishman, who resented being touched by a Jew. I wish you had!" she ended, with a new marvellous alternation. It was as if her mind were breaking into several, one jarring the other into impulsive action.

"Who is Joseph Kalonymos?" said Deronda, with a darting recollection of that Jew who touched his arm in the Frankfort synagogue.

"Ah! some vengeance sent him back from the East, that he might see you and come to reproach me. He was my father's friend. He knew of your birth: he knew of my husband's death, and once, twenty years ago, after he had been away in the Levant, he came to see me and inquire about you. I told him that you were dead: I meant you to be dead to all the world of my childhood. If I had said you were living, he would have interfered with my plans: he would have taken on him to represent my father, and have tried to make me recall what I had done. What could I

do but say you were dead? The act was done. If I had told him of it, there would have been trouble and scandal—and all to conquer me, who would not have been conquered. I was strong then, and I would have had my will, though there might have been a hard fight against me. I took the way to have it without any fight. I felt then that I was not really deceiving: it would have come to the same in the end; or if not to the same, to something worse. He believed me, and begged that I would give up to him the chest that my father had charged me and my husband to deliver to our eldest son. I knew what was in the chest—things that had been dinned in my ears since I had had any understanding—things that were thrust on my mind that I might feel them like a wall around my life—my life that was growing like a tree. Once, after my husband died, I was going to burn the chest. But it was difficult to burn; and burning a chest and papers looks like a shameful act. I have committed no shameful act—except what Jews would call shameful. I had kept the chest, and I gave it to Joseph Kalonymos. He went away mournful, and said, 'If you marry again, and if another grandson is born to him who is departed, I will deliver up the chest to him.' I bowed in silence. I meant not to marry again—

no more than I meant to be the shattered woman that I am now."

She ceased speaking, and her head sank back while she looked vaguely before her. Her thought was travelling through the years, and when she began to speak again her voice had lost its argumentative spirit, and had fallen into a veiled tone of distress.

"But months ago this Kalonymos saw you in the synagogue at Frankfort. He saw you enter the hotel, and he went to ask your name. There was nobody else in the world to whom the name would have told anything about me."

"Then it is not my real name?" said Deronda, with a dislike even to this trifling part of the disguise which had been thrown round him.

"Oh, as real as another," said his mother, indifferently. "The Jews have always been changing their names. My father's family had kept the name of Charisi: my husband was a Charisi. When I came out as a singer, we made it Alcharisi. But there had been a branch of the family my father had lost sight of who called themselves Deronda, and when I wanted a name for you, and Sir Hugo said, "Let it be a foreign name," I thought of Deronda. But Joseph Kalonymos had heard my father speak of the Deronda branch,

and the name confirmed his suspicion. He began to suspect what had been done. It was as if everything had been whispered to him in the air. He found out where I was. He took a journey into Russia to see me; he found me weak and shattered. He had come back again, with his white hair, and with rage in his soul against me. He said I was going down to the grave clad in falsehood and robbery — falsehood to my father and robbery of my own child. He accused me of having kept the knowledge of your birth from you, and having brought you up as if you had been the son of an English gentleman. Well, it was true; and twenty years before I would have maintained that I had a right to do it. But I can maintain nothing now. No faith is strong within me. My father may have God on his side. This man's words were like lion's teeth upon me. My father's threats eat into me with my pain. If I tell everything—if I deliver up everything—what else can be demanded of me? I cannot make myself love the people I have never loved—is it not enough that I lost the life I did love?"

She had leaned forward a little in her low-toned pleading, that seemed like a smothered cry: her arms and hands were stretched out at full length, as if strained in beseeching. Deronda's soul was

absorbed in the anguish of compassion. He could not mind now that he had been repulsed before. His pity made a flood of forgiveness within him. His single impulse was to kneel by her and take her hand gently between his palms, while he said in that exquisite voice of soothing which expresses oneness with the sufferer—

"Mother, take comfort!"

She did not seem inclined to repulse him now, but looked down at him and let him take both her hands to fold between his. Gradually tears gathered, but she pressed her handkerchief against her eyes and then leaned her cheek against his brow, as if she wished that they should not look at each other.

"Is it not possible that I could be near you often and comfort you?" said Deronda. He was under that stress of pity that propels us on sacrifices.

"No, not possible," she answered, lifting up her head again and withdrawing her hand as if she wished him to move away. "I have a husband and five children. None of them know of your existence."

Deronda felt painfully silenced. He rose and stood at a little distance.

"You wonder why I married," she went on

presently, under the influence of a newly-recurring thought. "I meant never to marry again. I meant to be free, and to live for my art. I had parted with you. I had no bonds. For nine years I was a queen. I enjoyed the life I had longed for. But something befell me. It was like a fit of forgetfulness. I began to sing out of tune. They told me of it. Another woman was thrusting herself in my place. I could not endure the prospect of failure and decline. It was horrible to me." She started up again, with a shudder, and lifted screening hands like one who dreads missiles. "It drove me to marry. I made believe that I preferred being the wife of a Russian noble to being the greatest lyric actress of Europe; I made believe—I acted that part. It was because I felt my greatness sinking away from me, as I feel my life sinking now. I would not wait till men said, 'She had better go.'"

She sank into her seat again and looked at the evening sky as she went on: "I repented. It was a resolve taken in desperation. That singing out of tune was only like a fit of illness; it went away. I repented; but it was too late. I could not go back. All things hindered me—all things."

A new haggardness had come in her face, but

her son refrained from again urging her to leave further speech till the morrow: there was evidently some mental relief for her in an outpouring such as she could never have allowed herself before. He stood still while she maintained silence longer than she knew, and the light was perceptibly fading. At last she turned to him and said—

"I can bear no more now." She put out her hand, but then quickly withdrew it saying, "Stay. How do I know that I can see you again? I cannot bear to be seen when I am in pain."

She drew forth a pocket-book, and taking out a letter said, "This is addressed to the banking-house in Mainz, where you are to go for your grandfather's chest. It is a letter written by Joseph Kalonymos: if he is not there himself, this order of his will be obeyed."

When Deronda had taken the letter, she said, with effort, but more gently than before, "Kneel again, and let me kiss you."

He obeyed, and holding his head between her hands she kissed him solemnly on the brow. "You see I had no life left to love you with," she said, in a low murmur. "But there is more fortune for you. Sir Hugo was to keep it in reserve.

I gave you all your father's fortune. They can never accuse me of robbery there."

"If you had needed anything I would have worked for you," said Deronda, conscious of a disappointed yearning—a shutting out for ever from long early vistas of affectionate imagination.

"I need nothing that the skill of man can give me," said his mother, still holding his head, and perusing his features. "But perhaps now I have satisfied my father's will, your face will come instead of his—your young, loving face."

"But you will see me again?" said Deronda, anxiously.

"Yes—perhaps. Wait, wait. Leave me now."

CHAPTER LII.

"La même fermeté qui sert à résister à l'amour sert aussi à le rendre violent et durable ; et les personnes foibles qui sont toujours agitées des passions n'en sont presque jamais véritablement remplies."—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

AMONG Deronda's letters the next morning was one from Hans Meyrick of four quarto pages, in the small beautiful handwriting which ran in the Meyrick family.

MY DEAR DERONDA, — In return for your sketch of Italian movements and your view of the world's affairs generally, I may say that here at home the most judicious opinion going as to the effects of present causes is that "time will show." As to the present causes of past effects, it is now seen that the late swindling telegrams account for the last year's cattle plague—which is a refutation of philosophy falsely so called, and justifies the compensation to the farmers. My own idea that a murrain will shortly break out

in the commercial class, and that the cause will subsequently disclose itself in the ready sale of all rejected pictures, has been called an unsound use of analogy; but there are minds that will not hesitate to rob even the neglected painter of his solace. To my feeling there is great beauty in the conception that some bad judge might give a high price for my Berenice series, and that the men in the city would have already been punished for my ill-merited luck.

Meanwhile I am consoling myself for your absence by finding my advantage in it—shining like Hesperus when Hyperion has departed—sitting with our Hebrew prophet, and making a study of his head, in the hours when he used to be occupied with you—getting credit with him as a learned young Gentile, who would have been a Jew if he could—and agreeing with him in the general principle, that whatever is best is for that reason Jewish. I never held it my *forte* to be a severe reasoner, but I can see that if whatever is best is A and B happens to be best, B must be A, however little you might have expected it beforehand. On that principle, I could see the force of a pamphlet I once read to prove that all good art was Protestant. However, our prophet is an uncommonly interesting sitter—a better model

than Rembrandt had for his Rabbi—and I never come away from him without a new discovery. For one thing, it is a constant wonder to me that, with all his fiery feeling for his race and their traditions, he is no strait-laced Jew, spitting after the word Christian, and enjoying the prospect that the Gentile mouth will water in vain for a slice of the roasted Leviathan, while Israel will be sending up plates for more, *ad libitum*. (You perceive that my studies had taught me what to expect from the orthodox Jew.) I confess that I have always held lightly by your account of Mordecai, as apologetic, and merely part of your disposition to take an antediluvian point of view, lest you should do injustice to the megatherium. But now I have given ear to him in his proper person, I find him really a sort of philosophical-allegorical-mystical believer, and yet with a sharp dialectic point, so that any argumentative rattler of peas in a bladder might soon be pricked into silence by him. The mixture may be one of the Jewish prerogatives, for what I know. In fact, his mind seems so broad that I find my own correct opinions lying in it quite commodiously, and how they are to be brought into agreement with the vast remainder is his affair, not mine. I leave it to him to settle our basis, never yet having seen a

basis which is not a world-supporting elephant, more or less powerful and expensive to keep. My means will not allow me to keep a private elephant. I go into mystery instead, as cheaper and more lasting—a sort of gas which is likely to be continually supplied by the decomposition of the elephants. And if I like the look of an opinion, I treat it civilly, without suspicious inquiries. I have quite a friendly feeling towards Mordecai's notion that a whole Christian is three-fourths a Jew, and that from the Alexandrian time downward, the most comprehensive minds have been Jewish; for I think of pointing out to Mirah that, Arabic and other accidents of life apart, there is really little difference between me and — Maimonides. But I have lately been finding out that it is your shallow lover who can't help making a declaration. If Mirah's ways were less distracting, and it were less of a heaven to be in her presence and watch her, I must long ago have flung myself at her feet, and requested her to tell me, with less indirectness, whether she wished me to blow my brains out. I have a knack of hoping, which is as good as an estate in reversion, if one can keep from the temptation of turning it into certainty, which may spoil all. My Hope wanders among the orchard-blossoms, feels the warm snow falling on it

through the sunshine, and is in doubt of nothing; but, catching sight of Certainty in the distance, sees an ugly Janus-faced deity, with a dubious wink on the hither side of him, and turns quickly away. But you, with your supreme reasonableness, and self-nullification, and preparation for the worst—you know nothing about the drama of Hope, that immortal delicious maiden, for ever courted, for ever propitious, whom fools have called deceitful, as if it were Hope that carried the cup of disappointment, whereas it is her deadly enemy Certainty, whom she only escapes by transformation. (You observe my new vein of allegory?) Seriously, however, I must be permitted to allege that truth will prevail, that prejudice will melt before it, that diversity, accompanied by merit, will make itself felt as fascination, and that no virtuous aspiration will be frustrated—all which, if I mistake not, are doctrines of the schools, and all imply that the Jewess I prefer will prefer me. Any blockhead can cite generalities, but the master-mind discerns the particular cases they represent.

I am less convinced that my society makes amends to Mordecai for your absence, but another substitute occasionally comes in the form of Jacob Cohen. It is worth while to catch our prophet's

expression when he has that remarkable type of young Israel on his knee, and pours forth some Semitic inspiration with a sublime look of melancholy patience and devoutness. Sometimes it occurs to Jacob that Hebrew will be more edifying to him if he stops his ears with his palms, and imitates the venerable sounds as heard through that muffling medium. When Mordecai gently draws down the little fists and holds them fast, Jacob's features all take on an extraordinary activity, very much as if he were walking through a menagerie and trying to imitate every animal in turn, succeeding best with the owl and the peccary. But I daresay you have seen something of this. He treats me with the easiest familiarity, and seems in general to look at me as a second-hand Christian commodity, likely to come down in price; remarking on my disadvantages with a frankness which seems to imply some thoughts of future purchase. It is pretty, though, to see the change in him if Mirah happens to come in. He turns child suddenly—his age usually strikes one as being like the Israelitish garments in the desert, perhaps near forty, yet with an air of recent production. But, with Mirah, he reminds me of the dogs that have been brought up by women, and remain manageable by them only.

Still, the dog is fond of Mordecai too, and brings sugar-plums to share with him, filling his own mouth to rather an embarrassing extent, and watching how Mordecai deals with a smaller supply. Judging from this modern Jacob at the age of six, my astonishment is that his race has not bought us all up long ago, and pocketed our feebler generations in the form of stock and scrip, as so much slave property. There is one Jewess I should not mind being slave to. But I wish I did not imagine that Mirah gets a little sadder, and tries all the while to hide it. It is natural enough, of course, while she has to watch the slow death of this brother, whom she has taken to worshipping with such looks of loving devoutness that I am ready to wish myself in his place.

For the rest, we are a little merrier than usual. Rex Gascoigne—you remember a head you admired among my sketches, a fellow with a good upper lip, reading law—has got some rooms in town now not far off us, and has had a neat sister (upper lip also good) staying with him the last fortnight. I have introduced them both to my mother and the girls, who have found out from Miss Gascoigne that she is cousin to your Vandyke duchess!!! I put the notes of exclamation to mark the surprise that the information at first

produced on my feeble understanding. On reflection I discovered that there was not the least ground for surprise, unless I had beforehand believed that nobody could be anybody's cousin without my knowing it. This sort of surprise, I take it, depends on a liveliness of the spine, with a more or less constant nullity of brain. There was a fellow I used to meet at Rome who was in an effervescence of surprise at contact with the simplest information. Tell him what you would —that you were fond of easy boots — he would always say, "No! *are* you?" with the same energy of wonder: the very fellow of whom pastoral Browne wrote prophetically—

> "A wretch so empty that if e'er there be
> In nature found the least vacuity
> 'Twill be in him."

I have accounted for it all — he had a lively spine.

However, this cousinship with the duchess came out by chance one day that Mirah was with them at home and they were talking about the Mallingers. *Apropos;* I am getting so important that I have rival invitations. Gascoigne wants me to go down with him to his father's rectory in August and see the country round there. But I think self-interest well understood will take me

to Topping Abbey, for Sir Hugo has invited me and proposes—God bless him for his rashness!—that I should make a picture of his three daughters sitting on a bank—as he says, in the Gainsborougn style. He came to my studio the other day and recommended me to apply myself to portrait. Of course I know what that means.—"My good fellow, your attempts at the historic and poetic are simply pitiable. Your brush is just that of a successful portrait-painter—it has a little truth and a great facility in falsehood—your idealism will never do for gods and goddesses and heroic story, but it may fetch a high price as flattery. Fate, my friend, has made you the hinder wheel—*rota posterior curras, et in axe secundo*—run behind, because you can't help it."—What great effort it evidently costs our friends to give us these candid opinions! I have even known a man take the trouble to call, in order to tell me that I had irretrievably exposed my want of judgment in treating my subject, and that if I had asked him he would have lent me his own judgment. Such was my ingratitude and my readiness at composition, that even while he was speaking I inwardly sketched a Last Judgment with that candid friend's physiognomy on the left. But all this is away from Sir Hugo, whose manner of implying that one's

gifts are not of the highest order is so exceedingly good-natured and comfortable that I begin to feel it an advantage not to be among those poor fellows at the tip-top. And his kindness to me tastes all the better because it comes out of his love for you, old boy. His chat is uncommonly amusing. By the way, he told me that your Vandyke duchess is gone with her husband yachting to the Mediterranean. I bethink me that it is possible to land from a yacht, or to be taken on to a yacht from the land. Shall you by chance have an opportunity of continuing your theological discussion with the fair Supralapsarian—I think you said her tenets were of that complexion? Is Duke Alphonso also theological?—perhaps an Arian who objects to triplicity. (Stage direction. While D. is reading, a profound scorn gathers in his face till at the last word he flings down the letter, grasps his coat-collar in a statuesque attitude and so remains, with a look generally tremendous, throughout the following soliloquy, "O night, O blackness, &c. &c.")

Excuse the brevity of this letter. You are not used to more from me than a bare statement of facts without comment or digression. One fact I have omitted—that the Klesmers on the eve of departure have behaved magnificently, shining

forth as might be expected from the planets of genius and fortune in conjunction. Mirah is rich with their oriental gifts.

What luck it will be if you come back and present yourself at the Abbey while I am there! I am going to behave with consummate discretion and win golden opinions. But I shall run up to town now and then, just for a peep into Gan Eden. You see how far I have got in Hebrew lore—up with my Lord Bolingbroke, who knew no Hebrew, but "understood that sort of learning and what is writ about it." If Mirah commanded, I would go to a depth below the tri-literal roots. Already it makes no difference to me whether the points are there or not. But while her brother's life lasts I suspect she would not listen to a lover, even one whose "hair is like a flock of goats on Mount Gilead"—and I flatter myself that few heads would bear that trying comparison better than mine. So I stay with my hope among the orchard-blossoms.—Your devoted

HANS MEYRICK.

Some months before, this letter from Hans would have divided Deronda's thoughts irritatingly: its romancing about Mirah would have had an unpleasant edge, scarcely anointed with any

commiseration for his friend's probable disappointment. But things had altered since March. Mirah was no longer so critically placed with regard to the Meyricks, and Deronda's own position had been undergoing a change which had just been crowned by the revelation of his birth. The new opening towards the future, though he would not trust in any definite visions, inevitably shed new lights, and influenced his mood towards past and present; hence, what Hans called his hope now seemed to Deronda, not a mischievous unreasonableness which roused his indignation, but an unusually persistent bird-dance of an extravagant fancy, and he would have felt quite able to pity any consequent suffering of his friend's, if he had believed in the suffering as probable. But some of the busy thought filling that long day, which passed without his receiving any new summons from his mother, was given to the argument that Hans Meyrick's nature was not one in which love could strike the deep roots that turn disappointment into sorrow: it was too restless, too readily excitable by novelty, too ready to turn itself into imaginative material, and wear its grief as a fantastic costume. "Already he is beginning to play at love: he is taking the whole affair as a comedy," said Deronda to himself; "he knows

very well that there is no chance for him. Just like him—never opening his eyes on any possible objection I could have to receive his outpourings about Mirah. Poor old Hans! If we were under a fiery hail together he would howl like a Greek, and if I did not howl too it would never occur to him that I was as badly off as he. And yet he is tender-hearted and affectionate in intention, and I can't say that he is not active in imagining what goes on in other people — but then he always imagines it to fit his own inclination."

With this touch of causticity Deronda got rid of the slight heat at present raised by Hans's *naïve* expansiveness. The nonsense about Gwendolen, conveying the fact that she was gone yachting with her husband, only suggested a disturbing sequel to his own strange parting with her. But there was one sentence in the letter which raised a more immediate, active anxiety. Hans's suspicion of a hidden sadness in Mirah was not in the direction of his wishes, and hence, instead of distrusting his observation here, Deronda began to conceive a cause for the sadness. Was it some event that had occurred during his absence, or only the growing fear of some event? Was it something, perhaps alterable, in the new position which had been made for her? Or—had

Mordecai, against his habitual resolve, communicated to her those peculiar cherished hopes about him, Deronda, and had her quickly sensitive nature been hurt by the discovery that her brother's will or tenacity of visionary conviction had acted coercively on their friendship—been hurt by the fear that there was more of pitying self-suppression than of equal regard in Deronda's relation to him? For amidst all Mirah's quiet renunciation, the evident thirst of soul with which she received the tribute of equality implied a corresponding pain if she found that what she had taken for a purely reverential regard towards her brother had its mixture of condescension.

In this last conjecture of Deronda's he was not wrong as to the quality in Mirah's nature on which he was founding—the latent protest against the treatment she had all her life been subject to until she met him. For that gratitude which would not let her pass by any notice of their acquaintance without insisting on the depth of her debt to him, took half its fervour from the keen comparison with what others had thought enough to render to her. Deronda's affinity in feeling enabled him to penetrate such secrets. But he was not near the truth in admitting the idea that Mordecai had broken his characteristic

reticence. To no soul but Deronda himself had he yet breathed the history of their relation to each other, or his confidence about his friend's origin: it was not only that these subjects were for him too sacred to be spoken of without weighty reason, but that he had discerned Deronda's shrinking at any mention of his birth; and the severity of reserve which had hindered Mordecai from answering a question on a private affair of the Cohen family told yet more strongly here.

"Ezra, how is it?" Mirah one day said to him—"I am continually going to speak to Mr Deronda as if he were a Jew?"

He smiled at her quietly, and said, "I suppose it is because he treats us as if he were our brother. But he loves not to have the difference of birth dwelt upon."

"He has never lived with his parents, Mr Hans says," continued Mirah, to whom this was necessarily a question of interest about every one for whom she had a regard.

"Seek not to know such things from Mr Hans," said Mordecai, gravely, laying his hand on her curls, as he was wont. "What Daniel Deronda wishes us to know about himself is for him to tell us."

And Mirah felt herself rebuked, as Deronda

had done. But to be rebuked in this way by Mordecai made her rather proud.

"I see no one so great as my brother," she said to Mrs Meyrick one day that she called at the Chelsea house on her way home, and, according to her hope found the little mother alone. "It is difficult to think that he belongs to the same world as those people I used to live amongst. I told you once that they made life seem like a madhouse; but when I am with Ezra he makes me feel that his life is a great good, though he has suffered so much; not like me, who wanted to die because I had suffered a little, and only for a little while. His soul is so full, it is impossible for him to wish for death as I did. I get the same sort of feeling from him that I got yesterday, when I was tired, and came home through the park after the sweet rain had fallen and the sunshine lay on the grass and flowers. Everything in the sky and under the sky looked so pure and beautiful that the weariness and trouble and folly seemed only a small part of what is, and I became more patient and hopeful."

A dove-like note of melancholy in this speech caused Mrs Meyrick to look at Mirah with new examination. After laying down her hat and pushing her curls flat, with an air of fatigue, she had

placed herself on a chair opposite her friend in her habitual attitude, her feet and hands just crossed: and at a distance she might have seemed a coloured statue of serenity. But Mrs Meyrick discerned a new look of suppressed suffering in her face, which corresponded to the hint that to be patient and hopeful required some extra influence.

"Is there any fresh trouble on your mind, my dear?" said Mrs Meyrick, giving up her needlework as a sign of concentrated attention.

Mirah hesitated before she said, "I am too ready to speak of troubles, I think. It seems unkind to put anything painful into other people's minds, unless one were sure it would hinder something worse. And perhaps I am too hasty and fearful."

"Oh, my dear, mothers are made to like pain and trouble for the sake of their children. Is it because the singing lessons are so few, and are likely to fall off when the season comes to an end? Success in these things can't come all at once." Mrs Meyrick did not believe that she was touching the real grief; but a guess that could be corrected would make an easier channel for confidence.

"No, not that," said Mirah, shaking her head gently. "I have been a little disappointed because so many ladies said they wanted me to give them

or their daughters lessons, and then I never heard of them again. But perhaps after the holidays I shall teach in some schools. Besides, you know, I am as rich as a princess now. I have not touched the hundred pounds that Mrs Klesmer gave me; and I should never be afraid that Ezra would be in want of anything, because there is Mr Deronda, and he said, 'It is the chief honour of my life that your brother will share anything with me.' Oh no! Ezra and I can have no fears for each other about such things as food and clothing."

"But there is some other fear on your mind," said Mrs Meyrick, not without divination—"a fear of something that may disturb your peace? Don't be forecasting evil, dear child, unless it is what you can guard against. Anxiety is good for nothing if we can't turn it into a defence. But there's no defence against all the things that might be. Have you any more reason for being anxious now than you had a month ago?"

"Yes, I have," said Mirah. "I have kept it from Ezra. I have not dared to tell him. Pray forgive me that I can't do without telling you. I *have* more reason for being anxious. It is five days ago now. I am quite sure I saw my father."

Mrs Meyrick shrank into smaller space, packing her arms across her chest and leaning forward—to

hinder herself from pelting that father with her worst epithets.

"The year has changed him," Mirah went on. "He had already been much altered and worn in the time before I left him. You remember I said how he used sometimes to cry. He was always excited one way or the other. I have told Ezra everything that I told you, and he says that my father had taken to gambling, which makes people easily distressed, and then again exalted. And now—it was only a moment that I saw him—his face was more haggard, and his clothes were shabby. He was with a much worse-looking man, who carried something, and they were hurrying along after an omnibus."

"Well, child, he did not see you, I hope?"

"No. I had just come from Mrs Raymond's, and I was waiting to cross near the Marble Arch. Soon he was on the omnibus and gone out of sight. It was a dreadful moment. My old life seemed to have come back again, and it was worse than it had ever been before. And I could not help feeling it a new deliverance that he was gone out of sight without knowing that I was there. And yet it hurt me that I was feeling so—it seemed hateful in me—almost like words I once had to speak in a play, that 'I had warmed my

hands in the blood of my kindred.' For where might my father be going? What may become of him? And his having a daughter who would own him in spite of all, might have hindered the worst. Is there any pain like seeing what ought to be the best things in life turned into the worst? All those opposite feelings were meeting and pressing against each other, and took up all my strength. No one could act that. Acting is slow and poor to what we go through within. I don't know how I called a cab. I only remember that I was in it when I began to think, 'I cannot tell Ezra; he must not know.'"

"You are afraid of grieving him?" Mrs Meyrick asked, when Mirah had paused a little.

"Yes—and there is something more," said Mirah, hesitatingly, as if she were examining her feeling before she would venture to speak of it. "I want to tell you; I could not tell any one else. I could not have told my own mother; I should have closed it up before her. I feel shame for my father, and it is perhaps strange—but the shame is greater before Ezra than before any one else in the world. He desired me to tell him all about my life, and I obeyed him. But it is always like a smart to me to know that those things about my father are in Ezra's mind. And

—can you believe it?—when the thought haunts me how it would be if my father were to come and show himself before us both, what seems as if it would scorch me most is seeing my father shrinking before Ezra. That is the truth. I don't know whether it is a right feeling. But I can't help thinking that I would rather try to maintain my father in secret, and bear a great deal in that way, if I could hinder him from meeting my brother."

"You must not encourage that feeling, Mirah," said Mrs Meyrick, hastily. "It would be very dangerous; it would be wrong. You must not have concealments of that sort."

"But ought I now to tell Ezra that I have seen my father?" said Mirah, with deprecation in her tone.

"No," Mrs Meyrick answered, dubitatively. "I don't know that it is necessary to do that. Your father may go away with the birds. It is not clear that he came after you; you may never see him again. And then your brother will have been spared a useless anxiety. But promise me that if your father sees you—gets hold of you in any way again—you will let us all know. Promise me that solemnly, Mirah. I have a right to ask it."

Mirah reflected a little, then leaned forward to put her hands in Mrs Meyrick's, and said, "Since you ask it, I do promise. I will bear this feeling of shame. I have been so long used to think that I must bear that sort of inward pain. But the shame for my father burns me more when I think of his meeting Ezra." She was silent a moment or two, and then said, in a new tone of yearning compassion, "And we are his children —and he was once young like us—and my mother loved him. Oh! I cannot help seeing it all close, and it hurts me like a cruelty."

Mirah shed no tears: the discipline of her whole life had been against indulgence in such manifestation, which soon falls under the control of strong motives; but it seemed that the more intense expression of sorrow had entered into her voice. Mrs Meyrick, with all her quickness and loving insight, did not quite understand that filial feeling in Mirah which had active roots deep below her indignation for the worst offences. She could conceive that a mother would have a clinging pity and shame for a reprobate son, but she was out of patience with what she held an exaggerated susceptibility on behalf of this father, whose reappearance inclined her to wish him under the care of a turnkey. Mirah's pro-

mise, however, was some security against her weakness.

That incident was the only reason that Mirah herself could have stated for the hidden sadness which Hans had divined. Of one element in her changed mood she could have given no definite account: it was something as dim as the sense of approaching weather-change, and had extremely slight external promptings, such as we are often ashamed to find all we can allege in support of the busy constructions that go on within us, not only without effort but even against it, under the influence of any blind emotional stirring. Perhaps the first leaven of uneasiness was laid by Gwendolen's behaviour on that visit which was entirely superfluous as a means of engaging Mirah to sing, and could have no other motive than the excited and strange questioning about Deronda. Mirah had instinctively kept the visit a secret, but the active remembrance of it had raised a new susceptibility in her, and made her alive as she had never been before to the relations Deronda must have with that society which she herself was getting frequent glimpses of without belonging to it. Her peculiar life and education had produced in her an extraordinary mixture of unworldliness, with know-

ledge of the world's evil, and even this knowledge was a strange blending of direct observation with the effects of reading and theatrical study. Her memory was furnished with abundant passionate situation and intrigue, which she never made emotionally her own, but felt a repelled aloofness from, as she had done from the actual life around her. Some of that imaginative knowledge began now to weave itself around Mrs Grandcourt; and though Mirah would admit no position likely to affect her reverence for Deronda, she could not avoid a new painfully vivid association of his general life with a world away from her own, where there might be some involvement of his feeling and action with a woman like Gwendolen, who was increasingly repugnant to her—increasingly, even after she had ceased to see her; for liking and disliking can grow in meditation as fast as in the more immediate kind of presence. Any disquietude consciously due to the idea that Deronda's deepest care might be for something remote not only from herself but even from his friendship for her brother, she would have checked with rebuking questions:—What was she but one who had shared his generous kindness with many others? and his attachment to her brother, was

it not begun late to be soon ended? Other ties had come before, and others would remain after this had been cut by swift-coming death. But her uneasiness had not reached that point of self-recognition in which she would have been ashamed of it as an indirect, presumptuous claim on Deronda's feeling. That she or any one else should think of him as her possible lover was a conception which had never entered her mind; indeed it was equally out of the question with Mrs Meyrick and the girls, who with Mirah herself regarded his intervention in her life as something exceptional, and were so impressed by his mission as her deliverer and guardian that they would have held it an offence to hint at his holding any other relation towards her: a point of view which Hans also had readily adopted. It is a little hard upon some men that they appear to sink for us in becoming lovers. But precisely to this innocence of the Meyricks was owing the disturbance of Mirah's unconsciousness. The first occasion could hardly have been more trivial, but it prepared her emotive nature for a deeper effect from what happened afterwards.

It was when Anna Gascoigne, visiting the Meyricks, was led to speak of her cousinship with

Gwendolen. The visit had been arranged that Anna might see Mirah; the three girls were at home with their mother, and there was naturally a flux of talk among six feminine creatures, free from the presence of a distorting male standard. Anna Gascoigne felt herself much at home with the Meyrick girls, who knew what it was to have a brother, and to be generally regarded as of minor importance in the world; and she had told Rex that she thought the University very nice, because brothers made friends there whose families were not rich and grand, and yet (like the University) were very nice. The Meyricks seemed to her almost alarmingly clever, and she consulted them much on the best mode of teaching Lotta, confiding to them that she herself was the least clever of her family. Mirah had lately come in, and there was a complete bouquet of young faces round the tea-table—Hafiz, seated a little aloft with large eyes on the alert, regarding the whole scene as an apparatus for supplying his allowance of milk.

"Think of our surprise, Mirah," said Kate. "We were speaking of Mr Deronda and the Mallingers, and it turns out that Miss Gascoigne knows them."

"I only know about them," said Anna, a little

flushed with excitement, what she had heard and now saw of the lovely Jewess being an almost startling novelty to her. "I have not even seen them. But some months ago, my cousin married Sir Hugo Mallinger's nephew, Mr Grandcourt, who lived in Sir Hugo's place at Diplow, near us."

"There!" exclaimed Mab, clasping her hands. "Something must come of that. Mrs Grandcourt, the Vandyke duchess, is your cousin?"

"Oh yes; I was her bridesmaid," said Anna. "Her mamma and mine are sisters. My aunt was much richer before last year, but then she and mamma lost all their fortune. Papa is a clergyman, you know, so it makes very little difference to us, except that we keep no carriage, and have no dinner-parties—and I like it better. But it was very sad for poor Aunt Davilow, for she could not live with us, because she has four daughters besides Gwendolen; but then, when she married Mr Grandcourt, it did not signify so much, because of his being so rich."

"Oh, this finding out relationships is delightful!" said Mab. "It is like a Chinese puzzle that one has to fit together. I feel sure something wonderful may be made of it, but I can't tell what."

"Dear me, Mab!" said Amy, "relationships must branch out. The only difference is, that we

happen to know some of the people concerned. Such things are going on every day."

"And pray, Amy, why do you insist on the number nine being so wonderful?" said Mab. "I am sure that is happening every day. Never mind, Miss Gascoigne; please go on. And Mr Deronda?—have you never seen Mr Deronda? You *must* bring him in."

"No, I have not seen him," said Anna; "but he was at Diplow before my cousin was married, and I have heard my aunt speaking of him to papa. She said what you have been saying about him—only, not so much: I mean, about Mr Deronda living with Sir Hugo Mallinger, and being so nice, she thought. We talk a great deal about every one who comes near Pennicote, because it is so seldom there is any one new. But I remember, when I asked Gwendolen what she thought of Mr Deronda, she said, 'Don't mention it, Anna; but I think his hair is dark.' That was her droll way of answering; she was always so lively. It is really rather wonderful that I should come to hear so much about him, all through Mr Hans knowing Rex, and then my having the pleasure of knowing you," Anna ended, looking at Mrs Meyrick, with a shy grace.

"The pleasure is on our side too; but the won-

der would have been, if you had come to this house without hearing of Mr Deronda—wouldn't it, Mirah?" said Mrs Meyrick.

Mirah smiled acquiescently, but had nothing to say. A confused discontent took possession of her at the mingling of names and images to which she had been listening.

"My son calls Mrs Grandcourt the Vandyke duchess," continued Mrs Meyrick, turning again to Anna; "he thinks her so striking and picturesque."

"Yes," said Anna. "Gwendolen was always so beautiful—people fell dreadfully in love with her. I thought it a pity, because it made them unhappy."

"And how do you like Mr Grandcourt, the happy lover?" said Mrs Meyrick, who, in her way, was as much interested as Mab in the hints she had been hearing of vicissitude in the life of a widow with daughters.

"Papa approved of Gwendolen's accepting him, and my aunt says he is very generous," said Anna, beginning with a virtuous intention of repressing her own sentiments; but then, unable to resist a rare occasion for speaking them freely, she went on—"else I should have thought he was not very nice—rather proud, and not at all lively,

like Gwendolen. I should have thought some one younger and more lively would have suited her better. But, perhaps, having a brother who seems to us better than any one makes us think worse of others."

"Wait till you see Mr Deronda," said Mab, nodding significantly. "Nobody's brother will do after him."

"Our brothers *must* do for people's husbands," said Kate, curtly, "because they will not get Mr Deronda. No woman will do for him to marry."

"No woman ought to want him to marry him," said Mab, with indignation. "*I* never should. Fancy finding out that he had a tailor's bill, and used boot-hooks, like Hans. Who ever thought of his marrying?"

"I have," said Kate. "When I drew a wedding for a frontispiece to 'Hearts and Diamonds,' I made a sort of likeness of him for the bridegroom, and I went about looking for a grand woman who would do for his countess, but I saw none that would not be poor creatures by the side of him."

"You should have seen this Mrs Grandcourt then," said Mrs Meyrick. "Hans says that she and Mr Deronda set each other off when they are side by side. She is tall and fair. But you know her,

Mirah—you can always say something descriptive. What do *you* think of Mrs Grandcourt?"

"I think she is like the *Princess of Eboli* in *Don Carlos*," said Mirah, with a quick intensity. She was pursuing an association in her own mind not intelligible to her hearers—an association with a certain actress as well as the part she represented.

"Your comparison is a riddle for me, my dear," said Mrs Meyrick, smiling.

"You said that Mrs Grandcourt was tall and fair," continued Mirah, slightly paler. "That is quite true."

Mrs Meyrick's quick eye and ear detected something unusual, but immediately explained it to herself. Fine ladies had often wounded Mirah by caprices of manner and intention.

"Mrs Grandcourt had thought of having lessons from Mirah," she said, turning to Anna. "But many have talked of having lessons, and then have found no time. Fashionable ladies have too much work to do."

And the chat went on without further insistance on the *Princess of Eboli*. That comparison escaped Mirah's lips under the urgency of a pang unlike anything she had felt before. The conversation from the beginning had revived unpleasant

impressions, and Mrs Meyrick's suggestion of Gwendolen's figure by the side of Deronda's had the stinging effect of a voice outside her, confirming her secret conviction that this tall and fair woman had some hold on his lot. For a long while afterwards she felt as if she had had a jarring shock through her frame.

In the evening, putting her cheek against her brother's shoulder as she was sitting by him, while he sat propped up in bed under a new difficulty of breathing, she said—

"Ezra, does it ever hurt your love for Mr Deronda that so much of his life was all hidden away from you,—that he is amongst persons and cares about persons who are all so unlike us—I mean, unlike you?"

"No, assuredly no," said Mordecai. "Rather, it is a precious thought to me that he has a preparation which I lacked, and is an accomplished Egyptian." Then, recollecting that his words had a reference which his sister must not yet understand, he added, "I have the more to give him, since his treasure differs from mine. That is a blessedness in friendship."

Mirah mused a little.

"Still," she said, "it would be a trial to your love for him if that other part of his life were like a

crowd in which he had got entangled, so that he was carried away from you—I mean in his thoughts, and not merely carried out of sight as he is now—and not merely for a little while, but continually. How should you bear that? Our religion commands us to bear. But how should you bear it?"

"Not well, my sister—not well; but it will never happen," said Mordecai, looking at her with a tender smile. He thought that her heart needed comfort on his account.

Mirah said no more. She mused over the difference between her own state of mind and her brother's, and felt her comparative pettiness. Why could she not be completely satisfied with what satisfied his larger judgment? She gave herself no fuller reason than a painful sense of unfitness—in what? Airy possibilities to which she could give no outline, but to which one name and one figure gave the wandering persistency of a blot in her vision. Here lay the vaguer source of the hidden sadness rendered noticeable to Hans by some diminution of that sweet ease, that ready joyousness of response in her speech and smile, which had come with the new sense of freedom and safety, and had made her presence like the freshly-opened daisies and clear bird-notes after

the rain. She herself regarded her uneasiness as a sort of ingratitude and dulness of sensibility towards the great things that had been given her in her new life; and whenever she threw more energy than usual into her singing, it was the energy of indignation against the shallowness of her own content. In that mood she once said, "Shall I tell you what is the difference between you and me, Ezra? You are a spring in the drought, and I am an acorn-cup; the waters of heaven fill me, but the least little shake leaves me empty."

"Why, what has shaken thee?" said Mordecai. He fell into this antique form of speech habitually in talking to his sister and to the Cohen children.

"Thoughts," said Mirah; "thoughts that come like the breeze and shake me—bad people, wrong things, misery—and how they might touch our life."

"We must take our portion, Mirah. It is there. On whose shoulder would we lay it, that we might be free?"

The one voluntary sign that she made of her inward care was this distant allusion.

CHAPTER LIII.

"My desolation does begin to make
A better life."
—SHAKESPEARE: *Antony and Cleopatra.*

BEFORE Deronda was summoned to a second interview with his mother, a day had passed in which she had only sent him a message to say that she was not yet well enough to receive him again; but on the third morning he had a note saying, "I leave to-day. Come and see me at once."

He was shown into the same room as before; but it was much darkened with blinds and curtains. The Princess was not there, but she presently entered, dressed in a loose wrap of some soft silk, in colour a dusky orange, her head again with black lace floating about it, her arms showing themselves bare from under her wide sleeves. Her face seemed even more impressive in the sombre light, the eyes larger, the lines

more vigorous. You might have imagined her a sorceress who would stretch forth her wonderful hand and arm to mix youth-potions for others, but scorned to mix them for herself, having had enough of youth.

She put her arms on her son's shoulders at once, and kissed him on both cheeks, then seated herself among her cushions with an air of assured firmness and dignity unlike her fitfulness in their first interview, and told Deronda to sit down by her. He obeyed, saying, "You are quite relieved now, I trust?"

"Yes, I am at ease again. Is there anything more that you would like to ask me?" she said, with the manner of a queen rather than of a mother.

"Can I find the house in Genoa where you used to live with my grandfather?" said Deronda.

"No," she answered, with a deprecating movement of her arm, "it is pulled down—not to be found. But about our family, and where my father lived at various times—you will find all that among the papers in the chest, better than I can tell you. My father, I told you, was a physician. My mother was a Morteira. I used to hear all those things without listening. You will find them all. I was born amongst them

without my will. I banished them as soon as I could."

Deronda tried to hide his pained feeling, and said, "Anything else that I should desire to know from you could only be what it is some satisfaction to your own feeling to tell me."

"I think I have told you everything that could be demanded of me," said the Princess, looking coldly meditative. It seemed as if she had exhausted her emotion in their former interview. The fact was, she had said to herself, "I have done it all. I have confessed all. I will not go through it again. I will save myself from agitation." And she was acting out that theme.

But to Deronda's nature the moment was cruel: it made the filial yearning of his life a disappointed pilgrimage to a shrine where there were no longer the symbols of sacredness. It seemed that all the woman lacking in her was present in him as he said, with some tremor in his voice—

"Then are we to part, and I never be anything to you?"

"It is better so," said the Princess, in a softer, mellower voice. "There could be nothing but hard duty for you, even if it were possible for you to take the place of my son. You would not love me. Don't deny it," she said, abruptly, putting

up her hand. "I know what is the truth. You don't like what I did. You are angry with me. You think I robbed you of something. You are on your grandfather's side, and you will always have a condemnation of me in your heart."

Deronda felt himself under a ban of silence. He rose from his seat by her, preferring to stand, if he had to obey that imperious prohibition of any tenderness. But his mother now looked up at him with a new admiration in her glance, saying—

"You are wrong to be angry with me. You are the better for what I did." After pausing a little, she added, abruptly, "And now tell me what you shall do."

"Do you mean now, immediately," said Deronda; "or as to the course of my future life?"

"I mean in the future. What difference will it make to you that I have told you about your birth?"

"A very great difference," said Deronda, emphatically. "I can hardly think of anything that would make a greater difference."

"What shall you do, then?" said the Princess, with more sharpness. "Make yourself just like your grandfather—be what he wished you—turn yourself into a Jew like him?"

"That is impossible. The effect of my educa-

tion can never be done away with. The Christian sympathies in which my mind was reared can never die out of me," said Deronda, with increasing tenacity of tone. "But I consider it my duty—it is the impulse of my feeling—to identify myself, as far as possible, with my hereditary people, and if I can see any work to be done for them that I can give my soul and hand to, I shall choose to do it."

His mother had her eyes fixed on him with a wondering speculation, examining his face as if she thought that by close attention she could read a difficult language there. He bore her gaze very firmly, sustained by a resolute opposition, which was the expression of his fullest self. She bent towards him a little, and said, with a decisive emphasis—

"You are in love with a Jewess."

Deronda coloured and said, "My reasons would be independent of any such fact."

"I know better. I have seen what men are," said the Princess, peremptorily. "Tell me the truth. She is a Jewess who will not accept any one but a Jew. There *are* a few such," she added, with a touch of scorn.

Deronda had that objection to answer which we all have known in speaking to those who are too

certain of their own fixed interpretations to be enlightened by anything we may say. But besides this, the point immediately in question was one on which he felt a repugnance either to deny or affirm. He remained silent, and she presently said—

"You love her as your father loved me, and she draws you after her as I drew him."

Those words touched Deronda's filial imagination, and some tenderness in his glance was taken by his mother as an assent. She went on with rising passion. "But I was leading him the other way. And now your grandfather is getting his revenge."

"Mother," said Deronda, remonstrantly, "don't let us think of it in that way. I will admit that there may come some benefit from the education you chose for me. I prefer cherishing the benefit with gratitude, to dwelling with resentment on the injury. I think it would have been right that I should have been brought up with the consciousness that I was a Jew, but it must always have been a good to me to have as wide an instruction and sympathy as possible. And now, you have restored me my inheritance—events have brought a fuller restitution than you could have made—you have been saved from robbing my

people of my service and me of my duty: can you not bring your whole soul to consent to this?"

Deronda paused in his pleading: his mother looked at him listeningly, as if the cadence of his voice were taking her ear, yet she shook her head slowly. He began again even more urgently.

"You have told me that you sought what you held the best for me: open your heart to relenting and love towards my grandfather, who sought what he held the best for you."

"Not for me, no," she said, shaking her head with more absolute denial, and folding her arms tightly. "I tell you, he never thought of his daughter except as an instrument. Because I had wants outside his purpose, I was to be put in a frame and tortured. If that is the right law for the world, I will not say that I love it. If my acts were wrong—if it is God who is exacting from me that I should deliver up what I withheld—who is punishing me because I deceived my father and did not warn him that I should contradict his trust — well, I have told everything. I have done what I could. And *your* soul consents. That is enough. I have after all been the instrument my father wanted.—'I desire a grandson who shall have a true Jewish heart. Every

Jew should rear his family as if he hoped that a Deliverer might spring from it.' "

In uttering these last sentences the Princess narrowed her eyes, waved her head up and down, and spoke slowly with a new kind of chest-voice, as if she were quoting unwillingly.

"Were those my grandfather's words?" said Deronda.

"Yes, yes; and you will find them written. I wanted to thwart him," said the Princess, with a sudden outburst of the passion she had shown in the former interview. Then she added more slowly, "You would have me love what I have hated from the time I was so high"—here she held her left hand a yard from the floor.—"That can never be. But what does it matter? His yoke has been on me, whether I loved it or not. You are the grandson he wanted. You speak as men do—as if you felt yourself wise. What does it all mean?"

Her tone was abrupt and scornful. Deronda, in his pained feeling, and under the solemn urgency of the moment, had to keep a clutching remembrance of their relationship, lest his words should become cruel. He began in a deep, entreating tone.

"Mother, don't say that I feel myself wise.

We are set in the midst of difficulties. I see no other way to get any clearness than by being truthful—not by keeping back facts which may—which should carry obligation within them—which should make the only guidance towards duty. No wonder if such facts come to reveal themselves in spite of concealments. The effects prepared by generations are likely to triumph over a contrivance which would bend them all to the satisfaction of self. Your will was strong, but my grandfather's trust which you accepted and did not fulfil—what you call his yoke—is the expression of something stronger, with deeper, farther-spreading roots, knit into the foundations of sacredness for all men. You renounced me—you still banish me—as a son"—there was an involuntary movement of indignation in Deronda's voice—"But that stronger Something has determined that I shall be all the more the grandson whom also you willed to annihilate."

His mother was watching him fixedly, and again her face gathered admiration. After a moment's silence she said, in a low persuasive tone—

"Sit down again," and he obeyed, placing himself beside her. She laid her hand on his shoulder and went on.

"You rebuke me. Well—I am the loser. And

you are angry because I banish you. What could you do for me but weary your own patience? Your mother is a shattered woman. My sense of life is little more than a sense of what was—except when the pain is present. You reproach me that I parted with you. I had joy enough without you then. Now you are come back to me, and I cannot make you a joy. Have you the cursing spirit of the Jew in you? Are you not able to forgive me? Shall you be glad to think that I am punished because I was not a Jewish mother to you?"

"How can you ask me that?" said Deronda remonstrantly. "Have I not besought you that I might now at least be a son to you? My grief is that you have declared me helpless to comfort you. I would give up much that is dear for the sake of soothing your anguish."

"You shall give up nothing," said his mother, with the hurry of agitation. "You shall be happy. You shall let me think of you as happy. I shall have done you no harm. You have no reason to curse me. You shall feel for me as they feel for the dead whom they say prayers for—you shall long that I may be freed from all suffering—from all punishment. And I shall see you instead of always seeing your grandfather. Is any harm

come to him because the eleven years went by with no wretched *Kaddish* said for him? I cannot tell:—if you think *Kaddish* will help me—say it, say it. You will come between me and the dead. When I am in your mind, you will look as you do now—always as if you were a tender son,—always—as if I had been a tender mother."

She seemed resolved that her agitation should not conquer her, but he felt her hand trembling on his shoulder. Deep, deep compassion hemmed in all words. With a face of beseeching he put his arm round her and pressed her head tenderly under his. They sat so for some moments. Then she lifted her head again and rose from her seat with a great sigh, as if in that breath she were dismissing a weight of thoughts. Deronda, standing in front of her, felt that the parting was near. But one of her swift alternations had come upon his mother.

"Is she beautiful?" she said, abruptly.

"Who?" said Deronda, changing colour.

"The woman you love."

It was not a moment for deliberate explanation. He was obliged to say, "Yes."

"Not ambitious?"

"No, I think not."

"Not one who must have a path of her own?"

"I think her nature is not given to make great claims."

"She is not like that?" said the Princess, taking from her wallet a miniature with jewels round it, and holding it before her son. It was her own in all the fire of youth, and as Deronda looked at it with admiring sadness, she said, "Had I not a rightful claim to be something more than a mere daughter and mother? The voice and the genius matched the face. Whatever else was wrong, acknowledge that I had a right to be an artist, though my father's will was against it. My nature gave me a charter."

"I do acknowledge that," said Deronda, looking from the miniature to her face, which even in its worn pallor had an expression of living force beyond anything that the pencil could show.

"Will you take the portrait?" said the Princess, more gently. "If she is a kind woman, teach her to think of me kindly."

"I shall be grateful for the portrait," said Deronda, "but—I ought to say, I have no assurance that she whom I love will have any love for me. I have kept silence."

"Who and what is she?" said the mother. The question seemed a command.

"She was brought up as a singer for the stage,"

said Deronda, with inward reluctance. "Her father took her away early from her mother, and her life has been unhappy. She is very young — only twenty. Her father wished to bring her up in disregard—even in dislike of her Jewish origin, but she has clung with all her affection to the memory of her mother and the fellowship of her people."

"Ah! like you. She is attached to the Judaism she knows nothing of," said the Princess, peremptorily. "That is poetry — fit to last through an opera night. Is she fond of her artist's life—is her singing worth anything?"

"Her singing is exquisite. But her voice is not suited to the stage. I think that the artist's life has been made repugnant to her."

"Why, she is made for you, then. Sir Hugo said you were bitterly against being a singer, and I can see that you would never have let yourself be merged in a wife, as your father was."

"I repeat," said Deronda, emphatically—"I repeat that I have no assurance of her love for me, of the possibility that we can ever be united. Other things—painful issues may lie before me. I have always felt that I should prepare myself to renounce, not cherish that prospect. But I suppose I might feel so of happiness in general.

Whether it may come or not, one should try and prepare one's self to do without it."

"Do you feel in that way?" said his mother, laying her hands on his shoulders, and perusing his face, while she spoke in a low meditative tone, pausing between her sentences. "Poor boy! . . . I wonder how it would have been if I had kept you with me . . . whether you would have turned your heart to the old things . . . against mine . . . and we should have quarrelled . . . your grandfather would have been in you . . . and you would have hampered my life with your young growth from the old root."

"I think my affection might have lasted through all our quarrelling," said Deronda, saddened more and more, "and that would not have hampered—surely it would have enriched your life."

"Not then, not then . . . I did not want it then . . . I might have been glad of it now," said the mother, with a bitter melancholy, "if I could have been glad of anything."

"But you love your other children, and they love you?" said Deronda, anxiously.

"Oh yes," she answered, as to a question about a matter of course, while she folded her arms again. "But," . . . she added in a deeper tone, . . . "I am not a loving woman. That is the truth. It

is a talent to love—I lacked it. Others have loved me—and I have acted their love. I know very well what love makes of men and women—it is subjection. It takes another for a larger self, enclosing this one,"—she pointed to her own bosom. "I was never willingly subject to any man. Men have been subject to me."

"Perhaps the man who was subject was the happier of the two," said Deronda—not with a smile, but with a grave, sad sense of his mother's privation.

"Perhaps—but I *was* happy—for a few years I was happy. If I had not been afraid of defeat and failure, I might have gone on. I miscalculated. What then? It is all over. Another life! Men talk of 'another life,' as if it only began on the other side of the grave. I have long entered on another life." With the last words she raised her arms till they were bare to the elbow, her brow was contracted in one deep fold, her eyes were closed, her voice was smothered: in her dusky flame-coloured garment, she looked like a dreamed visitant from some region of departed mortals.

Deronda's feeling was wrought to a pitch of acuteness in which he was no longer quite master of himself. He gave an audible sob. His

mother, opening her eyes, and letting her hands again rest on his shoulders, said—

"Good-bye, my son, good-bye. We shall hear no more of each other. Kiss me."

He clasped his arms round her neck, and they kissed each other.

Deronda did not know how he got out of the room. He felt an older man. All his boyish yearnings and anxieties about his mother had vanished. He had gone through a tragic experience which must for ever solemnise his life, and deepen the significance of the acts by which he bound himself to others.

CHAPTER LIV.

"The unwilling brain
Feigns often what it would not; and we trust
Imagination with such phantasies
As the tongue dares not fashion into words;
Which have no words, their horror makes them dim
To the mind's eye."

—SHELLEY.

MADONNA PIA, whose husband, feeling himself injured by her, took her to his castle amid the swampy flats of the Maremma and got rid of her there, makes a pathetic figure in Dante's Purgatory, among the sinners who repented at the last and desire to be remembered compassionately by their fellow-countrymen. We know little about the grounds of mutual discontent between the Siennese couple, but we may infer with some confidence that the husband had never been a very delightful companion, and that on the flats of the Maremma his disagreeable manners had a background which threw them out remarkably; whence in his desire to punish his wife to the uttermost, the nature of things was so far against

him that in relieving himself of her he could not avoid making the relief mutual. And thus, without any hardness to the poor Tuscan lady who had her deliverance long ago, one may feel warranted in thinking of her with a less sympathetic interest than of the better known Gwendolen who, instead of being delivered from her errors on earth and cleansed from their effect in purgatory, is at the very height of her entanglement in those fatal meshes which are woven within more closely than without, and often make the inward torture disproportionate to what is discernible as outward cause.

In taking his wife with him on a yachting expedition, Grandcourt had no intention to get rid of her; on the contrary, he wanted to feel more securely that she was his to do as he liked with, and to make her feel it also. Moreover, he was himself very fond of yachting: its dreamy do-nothing absolutism, unmolested by social demands, suited his disposition, and he did not in the least regard it as an equivalent for the dreariness of the Maremma. He had his reasons for carrying Gwendolen out of reach, but they were not reasons that can seem black in the mere statement. He suspected a growing spirit of opposition in her, and his feeling about the senti-

mental inclination she betrayed for Deronda was what in another man he would have called jealousy. In himself it seemed merely a resolution to put an end to such foolery as must have been going on in that prearranged visit of Deronda's which he had divined and interrupted.

And Grandcourt might have pleaded that he was perfectly justified in taking care that his wife should fulfil the obligations she had accepted. Her marriage was a contract where all the ostensible advantages were on her side, and it was only one of those advantages that her husband should use his power to hinder her from any injurious self-committal or unsuitable behaviour. He knew quite well that she had not married him —had not overcome her repugnance to certain facts—out of love to him personally; he had won her by the rank and luxuries he had to give her, and these she had got: he had fulfilled his side of the contract.

And Gwendolen, we know, was thoroughly aware of the situation. She could not excuse herself by saying that there had been a tacit part of the contract on her side—namely, that she meant to rule and have her own way. With all her early indulgence in the disposition to dominate, she was not one of the narrow-brained

women who through life regard all their own selfish demands as rights, and every claim upon themselves as an injury. She had a root of conscience in her, and the process of purgatory had begun for her on the green earth: she knew that she had been wrong.

But now enter into the soul of this young creature as she found herself, with the blue Mediterranean dividing her from the world, on the tiny plank-island of a yacht, the domain of the husband to whom she felt that she had sold herself, and had been paid the strict price—nay, paid more than she had dared to ask in the handsome maintenance of her mother:—the husband to whom she had sold her truthfulness and sense of justice, so that he held them throttled into silence, collared and dragged behind him to witness what he would, without remonstrance.

What had she to complain of? The yacht was of the prettiest; the cabin fitted up to perfection, smelling of cedar, soft-cushioned, hung with silk, expanded with mirrors; the crew such as suited an elegant toy, one of them having even ringlets, as well as a bronze complexion and fine teeth; and Mr Lush was not there, for he had taken his way back to England as soon as he had seen all and everything on board. Moreover, Gwendolen

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herself liked the sea: it did not make her ill; and to observe the rigging of the vessel and forecast the necessary adjustments was a sort of amusement that might have gratified her activity and enjoyment of imaginary rule; the weather was fine, and they were coasting southward, where even the rain-furrowed, heat-cracked clay becomes gem-like with purple shadows, and where one may float between blue and blue in an open-eyed dream that the world has done with sorrow.

But what can still that hunger of the heart which sickens the eye for beauty, and makes sweet-scented ease an oppression? What sort of Moslem paradise would quiet the terrible fury of moral repulsion and cowed resistance which, like an eating pain intensifying into torture, concentrates the mind in that poisonous misery? While Gwendolen, throned on her cushions at evening, and beholding the glory of sea and sky softening as if with boundless love around her, was hoping that Grandcourt in his march up and down was not going to pause near her, not going to look at her or speak to her, some woman under a smoky sky, obliged to consider the price of eggs in arranging her dinner, was listening for the music of a footstep that would remove all risk from her foretaste of joy; some couple, bending, cheek by

cheek, over a bit of work done by the one and delighted in by the other, were reckoning the earnings that would make them rich enough for a holiday among the furze and heather.

Had Grandcourt the least conception of what was going on in the breast of this wife? He conceived that she did not love him: but was that necessary? She was under his power, and he was not accustomed to soothe himself, as some cheerfully-disposed persons are, with the conviction that he was very generally and justly beloved. But what lay quite away from his conception was, that she could have any special repulsion for him personally. How could she? He himself knew what personal repulsion was—nobody better: his mind was much furnished with a sense of what brutes his fellow-creatures were, both masculine and feminine; what odious familiarities they had, what smirks, what modes of flourishing their handkerchiefs, what costume, what lavender-water, what bulging eyes, and what foolish notions of making themselves agreeable by remarks which were not wanted. In this critical view of mankind there was an affinity between him and Gwendolen before their marriage, and we know that she had been attractingly wrought upon by the refined negations he presented to her. Hence

he understood her repulsion for Lush. But how was he to understand or conceive her present repulsion for Henleigh Grandcourt? Some men bring themselves to believe, and not merely maintain, the non-existence of an external world; a few others believe themselves objects of repulsion to a woman without being told so in plain language. But Grandcourt did not belong to this eccentric body of thinkers. He had all his life had reason to take a flattering view of his own attractiveness, and to place himself in fine antithesis to the men who, he saw at once, must be revolting to a woman of taste. He had no idea of a moral repulsion, and could not have believed, if he had been told it, that there may be a resentment and disgust which will gradually make beauty more detestable than ugliness, through exasperation at that outward virtue in which hateful things can flaunt themselves or find a supercilious advantage.

How, then, could Grandcourt divine what was going on in Gwendolen's breast?

For their behaviour to each other scandalised no observer—not even the foreign maid warranted against sea-sickness; nor Grandcourt's own experienced valet; still less the picturesque crew, who regarded them as a model couple in high

life. Their companionship consisted chiefly in a well-bred silence. Grandcourt had no humorous observations at which Gwendolen could refuse to smile, no chit-chat to make small occasions of dispute. He was perfectly polite in arranging an additional garment over her when needful, and in handing her any object that he perceived her to need, and she could not fall into the vulgarity of accepting or rejecting such politeness rudely.

Grandcourt put up his telescope and said, "There's a plantation of sugar-canes at the foot of that rock: should you like to look?"

Gwendolen said, "Yes, please," remembering that she must try and interest herself in sugar-canes as something outside her personal affairs. Then Grandcourt would walk up and down and smoke for a long while, pausing occasionally to point out a sail on the horizon, and at last would seat himself and look at Gwendolen with his narrow, immovable gaze, as if she were part of the complete yacht; while she, conscious of being looked at, was exerting her ingenuity not to meet his eyes. At dinner he would remark that the fruit was getting stale, and they must put in somewhere for more; or, observing that she did not drink the wine, he asked her if she would like any other kind better. A lady was obliged

to respond to these things suitably; and even if she had not shrunk from quarrelling on other grounds, quarrelling with Grandcourt was impossible: she might as well have made angry remarks to a dangerous serpent ornamentally coiled in her cabin without invitation. And what sort of dispute could a woman of any pride and dignity begin on a yacht?

Grandcourt had an intense satisfaction in leading his wife captive after this fashion: it gave their life on a small scale a royal representation and publicity in which everything familiar was got rid of, and everybody must do what was expected of them whatever might be their private protest—the protest (kept strictly private) adding to the piquancy of despotism.

To Gwendolen, who even in the freedom of her maiden time had had very faint glimpses of any heroism or sublimity, the medium that now thrust itself everywhere before her view was this husband and her relation to him. The beings closest to us, whether in love or hate, are often virtually our interpreters of the world, and some feather-headed gentleman or lady whom in passing we regret to take as legal tender for a human being may be acting as a melancholy theory of life in the minds of those who live with

them—like a piece of yellow and wavy glass that distorts form and makes colour an affliction. Their trivial sentences, their petty standards, their low suspicions, their loveless *ennui*, may be making somebody else's life no better than a promenade through a pantheon of ugly idols. Gwendolen had that kind of window before her, affecting the distant equally with the near. Some unhappy wives are soothed by the possibility that they may become mothers; but Gwendolen felt that to desire a child for herself would have been a consenting to the completion of the injury she had been guilty of. She was reduced to dread lest she should become a mother. It was not the image of a new sweetly-budding life that came as a vision of deliverance from the monotony of distaste: it was an image of another sort. In the irritable, fluctuating stages of despair, gleams of hope came in the form of some possible accident. To dwell on the benignity of accident was a refuge from worse temptation.

The embitterment of hatred is often as unaccountable to onlookers as the growth of devoted love, and it not only seems but is really out of direct relation with any outward causes to be alleged. Passion is of the nature of seed, and finds nourishment within, tending to a predominance

which determines all currents towards itself, and makes the whole life its tributary. And the intensest form of hatred is that rooted in fear, which compels to silence and drives vehemence into a constructive vindictiveness, an imaginary annihilation of the detested object, something like the hidden rites of vengeance with which the persecuted have made a dark vent for their rage, and soothed their suffering into dumbness. Such hidden rites went on in the secrecy of Gwendolen's mind, but not with soothing effect—rather with the effect of a struggling terror. Side by side with the dread of her husband had grown the self-dread which urged her to flee from the pursuing images wrought by her pent-up impulse. The vision of her past wrong-doing, and what it had brought on her, came with a pale ghastly illumination over every imagined deed that was a rash effort at freedom, such as she had made in her marriage. Moreover, she had learned to see all her acts through the impression they would make on Deronda: whatever relief might come to her, she could not sever it from the judgment of her that would be created in his mind. Not one word of flattery, of indulgence, of dependence on her favour, could be fastened on by her in all their intercourse, to weaken his restraining power over

her (in this way Deronda's effort over himself was repaid); and amid the dreary uncertainties of her spoiled life the possible remedies that lay in his mind, nay, the remedy that lay in her feeling for him, made her only hope. He seemed to her a terrible-browed angel from whom she could not think of concealing any deed so as to win an ignorant regard from him: it belonged to the nature of their relation that she should be truthful, for his power over her had begun in the raising of a self-discontent which could be satisfied only by genuine change. But in no concealment had she now any confidence: her vision of what she had to dread took more decidedly than ever the form of some fiercely impulsive deed, committed as in a dream that she would instantaneously wake from to find the effects real though the images had been false: to find death under her hands, but instead of darkness, daylight; instead of satisfied hatred, the dismay of guilt; instead of freedom, the palsy of a new terror—a white dead face from which she was for ever trying to flee and for ever held back. She remembered Deronda's words: they were continually recurring in her thought—

"Turn your fear into a safeguard. Keep your dread fixed on the idea of increasing your remorse. . . Take your fear as a safeguard. It is like

quickness of hearing. It may make consequences passionately present to you."

And so it was. In Gwendolen's consciousness Temptation and Dread met and stared like two pale phantoms, each seeing itself in the other—each obstructed by its own image; and all the while her fuller self beheld the apparitions and sobbed for deliverance from them.

Inarticulate prayers, no more definite than a cry, often swept out from her into the vast silence, unbroken except by her husband's breathing or the plash of the wave or the creaking of the masts; but if ever she thought of definite help, it took the form of Deronda's presence and words, of the sympathy he might have for her, of the direction he might give her. It was sometimes after a white-lipped, fierce-eyed temptation with murdering fingers had made its demon-visit that these best moments of inward crying and clinging for rescue would come to her, and she would lie with wide-open eyes in which the rising tears seemed a blessing, and the thought, "I will not mind if I can keep from getting wicked," seemed an answer to the indefinite prayer.

So the days passed, taking them with light breezes beyond and about the Balearic Isles, and then to Sardinia, and then with gentle change

persuading them northward again towards Corsica. But this floating, gently-wafted existence, with its apparently peaceful influences, was becoming as bad as a nightmare to Gwendolen.

"How long are we to be yachting?" she ventured to ask one day after they had been touching at Ajaccio, and the mere fact of change in going ashore had given her a relief from some of the thoughts which seemed now to cling about the very rigging of the vessel, mix with the air in the red silk cabin below, and make the smell of the sea odious.

"What else should we do?" said Grandcourt. "I'm not tired of it. I don't see why we shouldn't stay out any length of time. There's less to bore one in this way. And where would you go to? I'm sick of foreign places. And we shall have enough of Ryelands. Would you rather be at Ryelands?"

"Oh no," said Gwendolen, indifferently, finding all places alike undesirable as soon as she imagined herself and her husband in them. "I only wondered how long you would like this."

"I like yachting longer than I like anything else," said Grandcourt; "and I had none last year. I suppose you are beginning to tire of it.

Women are so confoundedly whimsical. They expect everything to give way to them."

"Oh dear, no!" said Gwendolen, letting out her scorn in a flute-like tone. "I never expect you to give way."

"Why should I?" said Grandcourt, with his inward voice, looking at her, and then choosing an orange—for they were at table.

She made up her mind to a length of yachting that she could not see beyond; but the next day, after a squall which had made her rather ill for the first time, he came down to her and said—

"There's been the devil's own work in the night. The skipper says we shall have to stay at Genoa for a week while things are set right."

"Do you mind that?" said Gwendolen, who lay looking very white amidst her white drapery.

"I should think so. Who wants to be broiling at Genoa?"

"It will be a change," said Gwendolen, made a little incautious by her languor.

"*I* don't want any change. Besides, the place is intolerable; and one can't move along the roads. I shall go out in a boat, as I used to do, and manage it myself. One can get rid of a few hours every day in that way, instead of stiving in a damnable hotel."

Here was a prospect which held hope in it. Gwendolen thought of hours when she would be alone, since Grandcourt would not want to take her in the said boat, and in her exultation at this unlooked-for relief, she had wild, contradictory fancies of what she might do with her freedom —that "running away" which she had already innumerable times seen to be a worse evil than any actual endurance, now finding new arguments as an escape from her worst self. Also, visionary relief on a par with the fancy of a prisoner that the night wind may blow down the wall of his prison and save him from desperate devices, insinuated itself as a better alternative, lawful to wish for.

The fresh current of expectation revived her energies, and enabled her to take all things with an air of cheerfulness and alacrity that made a change marked enough to be noticed by her husband. She watched through the evening lights to the sinking of the moon with less of awed loneliness than was habitual to her—nay, with a vague impression that in this mighty frame of things there might be some preparation of rescue for her. Why not?—since the weather had just been on her side. This possibility of hoping, after her long fluctuation amid fears, was like a

first return of hunger to the long-languishing patient.

She was waked the next morning by the casting of the anchor in the port of Genoa—waked from a strangely-mixed dream in which she felt herself escaping over the Mont Cenis, and wondering to find it warmer even in the moonlight on the snow, till suddenly she met Deronda, who told her to go back.

In an hour or so from that dream she actually met Deronda. But it was on the palatial staircase of the *Italia*, where she was feeling warm in her light woollen dress and straw hat; and her husband was by her side.

There was a start of surprise in Deronda before he could raise his hat and pass on. The moment did not seem to favour any closer greeting, and the circumstances under which they had last parted made him doubtful whether Grandcourt would be civilly inclined to him.

The doubt might certainly have been changed into a disagreeable certainty, for Grandcourt on this unaccountable appearance of Deronda at Genoa of all places, immediately tried to conceive how there could have been an arrangement between him and Gwendolen. It is true that before they were well in their rooms, he had seen how difficult

it was to shape such an arrangement with any probability, being too cool-headed to find it at once easily credible that Gwendolen had not only while in London hastened to inform Deronda of the yachting project, but had posted a letter to him from Marseilles or Barcelona, advising him to travel to Genoa in time for the chance of meeting her there, or of receiving a letter from her telling of some other destination—all which must have implied a miraculous foreknowledge in her, and in Deronda a bird-like facility in flying about and perching idly. Still he was there, and though Grandcourt would not make a fool of himself by fabrications that others might call preposterous, he was not, for all that, disposed to admit fully that Deronda's presence was so far as Gwendolen was concerned a mere accident. It was a disgusting fact; that was enough; and no doubt she was well pleased. A man out of temper does not wait for proofs before feeling towards all things animate and inanimate as if they were in a conspiracy against him, but at once thrashes his horse or kicks his dog in consequence. Grandcourt felt towards Gwendolen and Deronda as if he knew them to be in a conspiracy against him, and here was an event in league with them. What he took for clearly certain—and so far he divined the

truth—was that Gwendolen was now counting on an interview with Deronda whenever her husband's back was turned.

As he sat taking his coffee at a convenient angle for observing her, he discerned something which he felt sure was the effect of a secret delight—some fresh ease in moving and speaking, some peculiar meaning in her eyes, whatever she looked on. Certainly her troubles had not marred her beauty. Mrs Grandcourt was handsomer than Gwendolen Harleth: her grace and expression were informed by a greater variety of inward experience, giving new play to the facial muscles, new attitudes in movement and repose; her whole person and air had the nameless something which often makes a woman more interesting after marriage than before, less confident that all things are according to her opinion, and yet with less of deer-like shyness—more fully a human being.

This morning the benefits of the voyage seemed to be suddenly revealing themselves in a new elasticity of mien. As she rose from the table and put her two heavily-jewelled hands on each side of her neck, according to her wont, she had no art to conceal that sort of joyous expectation which makes the present more bearable than usual, just as when a man means to go out he finds it easier

to be amiable to the family for a quarter of an hour beforehand. It is not impossible that a terrier whose pleasure was concerned would perceive those amiable signs and know their meaning—know why his master stood in a peculiar way, talked with alacrity, and even had a peculiar gleam in his eye, so that on the least movement towards the door, the terrier would scuttle to be in time. And, in dog fashion, Grandcourt discerned the signs of Gwendolen's expectation, interpreting them with the narrow correctness which leaves a world of unknown feeling behind.

"A—just ring, please, and tell Gibbs to order some dinner for us at three," said Grandcourt, as he too rose, took out a cigar, and then stretched his hand towards the hat that lay near. "I'm going to send Angus to find me a little sailing-boat for us to go out in; one that I can manage, with you at the tiller. It's uncommonly pleasant these fine evenings—the least boring of anything we can do."

Gwendolen turned cold: there was not only the cruel disappointment—there was the immediate conviction that her husband had determined to take her because he would not leave her out of his sight; and probably this dual solitude in a boat was the more attractive to him because

it would be wearisome to her. They were not on the plank-island; she felt it the more possible to begin a contest. But the gleaming content had died out of her. There was a change in her like that of a glacier after sunset.

"I would rather not go in the boat," she said. "Take some one else with you."

"Very well; if you don't go, I shall not go," said Grandcourt. "We shall stay suffocating here, that's all."

"I can't bear going in a boat," said Gwendolen, angrily.

"That is a sudden change," said Grandcourt, with a slight sneer. "But since you decline, we shall stay indoors."

He laid down his hat again, lit his cigar, and walked up and down the room, pausing now and then to look out of the windows. Gwendolen's temper told her to persist. She knew very well now that Grandcourt would not go without her; but if he must tyrannise over her, he should not do it precisely in the way he would choose. She would oblige him to stay in the hotel. Without speaking again she passed into the adjoining bedroom, and threw herself into a chair with her anger, seeing no purpose or issue—only feeling that the wave of evil had rushed back upon her,

and dragged her away from her momentary breathing-place.

Presently Grandcourt came in with his hat on, but threw it off and sat down sideways on a chair nearly in front of her, saying, in his superficial drawl—

"Have you come round yet? or do you find it agreeable to be out of temper? You make things uncommonly pleasant for me."

"Why do you want to make them unpleasant for *me?*" said Gwendolen, getting helpless again, and feeling the hot tears rise.

"Now, will you be good enough to say what it is you have to complain of?" said Grandcourt, looking into her eyes, and using his most inward voice. "Is it that I stay indoors when you stay?"

She could give no answer. The sort of truth that made any excuse for her anger could not be uttered. In the conflict of despair and humiliation she began to sob, and the tears rolled down her cheeks—a form of agitation which she had never shown before in her husband's presence.

"I hope this is useful," said Grandcourt, after a moment or two. "All I can say is, it's most confoundedly unpleasant. What the devil women can see in this kind of thing, I don't know. *You*

see something to be got by it, of course. All I can see is, that we shall be shut up here when we might have been having a pleasant sail."

"Let us go, then," said Gwendolen, impetuously, "Perhaps we shall be drowned." She began to sob again.

This extraordinary behaviour, which had evidently some relation to Deronda, gave more definiteness to Grandcourt's conclusions. He drew his chair quite close in front of her, and said, in a low tone, "Just be quiet and listen, will you?"

There seemed to be a magical effect in this close vicinity. Gwendolen shrank and ceased to sob. She kept her eyelids down, and clasped her hands tightly.

"Let us understand each other," said Grandcourt, in the same tone. "I know very well what this nonsense means. But if you suppose I am going to let you make a fool of me, just dismiss that notion from your mind. What are you looking forward to, if you can't behave properly as my wife? There is disgrace for you, if you like to have it, but I don't know anything else; and as to Deronda, it's quite clear that he hangs back from you."

"It is all false!" said Gwendolen, bitterly.

"You don't in the least imagine what is in my mind. I have seen enough of the disgrace that comes in that way. And you had better leave me at liberty to speak with any one I like. It would be better for you."

"You will allow me to judge of that," said Grandcourt, rising and moving to a little distance towards the window, but standing there playing with his whiskers as if he were awaiting something.

Gwendolen's words had so clear and tremendous a meaning for herself, that she thought they must have expressed it to Grandcourt, and had no sooner uttered them than she dreaded their effect. But his soul was garrisoned against presentiments and fears: he had the courage and confidence that belong to domination, and he was at that moment feeling perfectly satisfied that he held his wife with bit and bridle. By the time they had been married a year she would cease to be restive. He continued standing with his air of indifference, till she felt her habitual stifling consciousness of having an immovable obstruction in her life, like the nightmare of beholding a single form that serves to arrest all passage though the wide country lies open.

"What decision have you come to?" he said,

presently, looking at her. "What orders shall I give?"

"Oh, let us go," said Gwendolen. The walls had begun to be an imprisonment, and while there was breath in this man he would have the mastery over her. His words had the power of thumbscrews and the cold touch of the rack. To resist was to act like a stupid animal unable to measure results.

So the boat was ordered. She even went down to the quay again with him to see it before midday. Grandcourt had recovered perfect quietude of temper, and had a scornful satisfaction in the attention given by the nautical groups to the *milord*, owner of the handsome yacht which had just put in for repairs, and who being an Englishman was naturally so at home on the sea that he could manage a sail with the same ease that he could manage a horse. The sort of exultation he had discerned in Gwendolen this morning she now thought that she discerned in him; and it was true that he had set his mind on this boating, and carried out his purpose as something that people might not expect him to do, with the gratified impulse of a strong will which had nothing better to exert itself upon. He had remarkable physical courage, and was proud of it—or rather he had a

great contempt for the coarser, bulkier men who generally had less. Moreover, he was ruling that Gwendolen should go with him.

And when they came down again at five o'clock, equipped for their boating, the scene was as good as a theatrical representation for all beholders. This handsome, fair-skinned English couple manifesting the usual eccentricity of their nation, both of them proud, pale, and calm, without a smile on their faces, moving like creatures who were fulfilling a supernatural destiny—it was a thing to go out and see, a thing to paint. The husband's chest, back, and arms, showed very well in his close-fitting dress, and the wife was declared to be like a statue.

Some suggestions were proffered concerning a possible change in the breeze, and the necessary care in putting about, but Grandcourt's manner made the speakers understand that they were too officious, and that he knew better than they.

Gwendolen, keeping her impassible air, as they moved away from the strand, felt her imagination obstinately at work. She was not afraid of any outward dangers — she was afraid of her own wishes, which were taking shapes possible and impossible, like a cloud of demon-faces. She was afraid of her own hatred, which under the

cold iron touch that had compelled her to-day had gathered a fierce intensity. As she sat guiding the tiller under her husband's eyes, doing just what he told her, the strife within her seemed like her own effort to escape from herself. She clung to the thought of Deronda: she persuaded herself that he would not go away while she was there—he knew that she needed help. The sense that he was there would save her from acting out the evil within. And yet quick, quick, came images, plans of evil that would come again and seize her in the night, like furies preparing the deed that they would straightway avenge.

They were taken out of the port and carried eastward by a gentle breeze. Some clouds tempered the sunlight, and the hour was always deepening towards the supreme beauty of evening. Sails larger and smaller changed their aspect like sensitive things, and made a cheerful companionship, alternately near and far. The grand city shone more vaguely, the mountains looked out above it, and there was stillness as in an island sanctuary. Yet suddenly Gwendolen let her hands fall, and said in a scarcely audible tone, "God help me!"

"What is the matter?" said Grandcourt, not distinguishing the words.

"Oh, nothing," said Gwendolen, rousing herself from her momentary forgetfulness and resuming the ropes.

"Don't you find this pleasant?" said Grandcourt.

"Very."

"You admit now we couldn't have done anything better?"

"No—I see nothing better. I think we shall go on always, like the Flying Dutchman," said Gwendolen, wildly.

Grandcourt gave her one of his narrow, examining glances, and then said, "If you like, we can go to Spezia in the morning, and let them take us up there."

"No; I shall like nothing better than this."

"Very well; we'll do the same to-morrow. But we must be turning in soon. I shall put about."

CHAPTER LV.

"Ritorna a tua scienza
Che vuol, quanto la cosa è più perfetta
Più senta il bene, e così la doglienza."
—DANTE.

WHEN Deronda met Gwendolen and Grandcourt on the staircase, his mind was seriously preoccupied. He had just been summoned to the second interview with his mother.

In two hours after his parting from her he knew that the Princess Halm-Eberstein had left the hotel, and so far as the purpose of his journey to Genoa was concerned he might himself have set off on his way to Mainz, to deliver the letter from Joseph Kalonymos, and get possession of the family chest. But mixed mental conditions, which did not resolve themselves into definite reasons, hindered him from departure. Long after the farewell he was kept passive by a weight of retrospective feeling. He lived again, with the new keenness of emotive memory, through the exciting

scenes which seemed past only in the sense of preparation for their actual presence in his soul. He allowed himself in his solitude to sob, with perhaps more than a woman's acuteness of compassion, over that woman's life so near to his, and yet so remote. He beheld the world changed for him by the certitude of ties that altered the poise of hopes and fears, and gave him a new sense of fellowship, as if under cover of the night he had joined the wrong band of wanderers, and found with the rise of morning that the tents of his kindred were grouped far off. He had a quivering imaginative sense of close relation to the grandfather who had been animated by strong impulses and beloved thoughts, which were now perhaps being roused from their slumber within himself. And through all this passionate meditation Mordecai and Mirah were always present, as beings who clasped hands with him in sympathetic silence.

Of such quick, responsive fibre was Deronda made, under that mantle of self-controlled reserve into which early experience had thrown so much of his young strength.

When the persistent ringing of a bell as a signal reminded him of the hour, he thought of looking into *Bradshaw,* and making the brief

necessary preparations for starting by the next train—thought of it, but made no movement in consequence. Wishes went to Mainz and what he was to get possession of there—to London and the beings there who made the strongest attachments of his life; but there were other wishes that clung in these moments to Genoa, and they kept him where he was, by that force which urges us to linger over an interview that carries a presentiment of final farewell or of overshadowing sorrow. Deronda did not formally say, "I will stay over to-night, because it is Friday, and I should like to go to the evening service at the synagogue where they must all have gone; and besides, I may see the Grandcourts again." But simply, instead of packing and ringing for his bill, he sat doing nothing at all, while his mind went to the synagogue and saw faces there probably little different from those of his grandfather's time, and heard the Spanish-Hebrew liturgy which had lasted through the seasons of wandering generations like a plant with wandering seed, that gives the far-off lands a kinship to the exile's home—while, also, his mind went towards Gwendolen, with anxious remembrance of what had been, and with a half-admitted impression that it would be hardness in him willingly

to go away at once without making some effort, in spite of Grandcourt's probable dislike, to manifest the continuance of his sympathy with her since their abrupt parting.

In this state of mind he deferred departure, ate his dinner without sense of flavour, rose from it quickly to find the synagogue, and in passing the porter asked if Mr and Mrs Grandcourt were still in the hotel, and what was the number of their apartment. The porter gave him the number, but added that they were gone out boating. That information had somehow power enough over Deronda to divide his thoughts with the memories wakened among the sparse *taliths* and keen dark faces of worshippers whose way of taking awful prayers and invocations with the easy familiarity which might be called Hebrew dyed Italian, made him reflect that his grandfather, according to the Princess's hints of his character, must have been almost as exceptional a Jew as Mordecai. But were not men of ardent zeal and far-reaching hope everywhere exceptional?—the men who had the visions which, as Mordecai said, were the creators and feeders of the world—moulding and feeding the more passive life which without them would dwindle and shrivel into the narrow tenacity of insects, unshaken by thoughts

beyond the reaches of their antennæ. Something of a mournful impatience perhaps added itself to the solicitude about Gwendolen (a solicitude that had room to grow in his present release from immediate cares) as an incitement to hasten from the synagogue and choose to take his evening walk towards the quay, always a favourite haunt with him, and just now attractive with the possibility that he might be in time to see the Grandcourts come in from their boating. In this case, he resolved that he would advance to greet them deliberately, and ignore any grounds that the husband might have for wishing him elsewhere.

The sun had set behind a bank of cloud, and only a faint yellow light was giving its farewell kisses to the waves, which were agitated by an active breeze. Deronda, sauntering slowly within sight of what took place on the strand, observed the groups there concentrating their attention on a sailing boat which was advancing swiftly landward, being rowed by two men. Amidst the clamorous talk in various languages, Deronda held it the surer means of getting information not to ask questions, but to elbow his way to the foreground and be an unobstructed witness of what was occurring. Telescopes were being used, and

loud statements made that the boat held somebody who had been drowned. One said it was the *milord* who had gone out in a sailing boat; another maintained that the prostrate figure he discerned was *miladi;* a Frenchman who had no glass would rather say that it was *milord* who had probably taken his wife out to drown her, according to the national practice — a remark which an English skipper immediately commented on in our native idiom (as nonsense which—had undergone a mining operation), and further dismissed by the decision that the reclining figure was a woman. For Deronda, terribly excited by fluctuating fears, the strokes of the oars as he watched them were divided by swift visions of events, possible and impossible, which might have brought about this issue, or this broken-off fragment of an issue, with a worse half undisclosed—if this woman apparently snatched from the waters were really Mrs Grandcourt.

But soon there was no longer any doubt: the boat was being pulled to land, and he saw Gwendolen half raising herself on her hands, by her own effort, under her heavy covering of tarpaulin and pea-jackets—pale as one of the sheeted dead, shivering, with wet hair streaming, a wild amazed consciousness in her eyes, as if she had waked up

in a world where some judgment was impending, and the beings she saw around were coming to seize her. The first rower who jumped to land was also wet through, and ran off; the sailors, close about the boat, hindered Deronda from advancing, and he could only look on while Gwendolen gave scared glances, and seemed to shrink with terror as she was carefully, tenderly helped out, and led on by the strong arms of those rough, bronzed men, her wet clothes clinging about her limbs, and adding to the impediment of her weakness. Suddenly her wandering eyes fell on Deronda, standing before her, and immediately, as if she had been expecting him and looking for him, she tried to stretch out her arms, which were held back by her supporters, saying, in a muffled voice—

"It is come, it is come! He is dead!"

"Hush, hush!" said Deronda, in a tone of authority; "quiet yourself." Then, to the men who were assisting her, "I am a connection of this lady's husband. If you will get her on to the *Italia* as quickly as possible, I will undertake everything else."

He stayed behind to hear from the remaining boatman that her husband had gone down irrecoverably, and that his boat was left floating empty. He and his comrade had heard a cry,

had come up in time to see the lady jump in after her husband, and had got her out fast enough to save her from much damage.

After this, Deronda hastened to the hotel, to assure himself that the best medical help would be provided · and being satisfied on this point, he telegraphed the event to Sir Hugo, begging him to come forthwith, and also to Mr Gascoigne, whose address at the Rectory made his nearest known way of getting the information to Gwendolen's mother. Certain words of Gwendolen's in the past had come back to him with the effectiveness of an inspiration: in moments of agitated confession she had spoken of her mother's presence as a possible help, if she could have had it.

CHAPTER LVI.

"The pang, the curse with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor lift them up to pray."

—COLERIDGE.

DERONDA did not take off his clothes that night. Gwendolen, after insisting on seeing him again before she would consent to be undrest, had been perfectly quiet, and had only asked him, with a whispering, repressed eagerness, to promise that he would come to her when she sent for him in the morning. Still, the possibility that a change might come over her, the danger of a supervening feverish condition, and the suspicion that something in the late catastrophe was having an effect which might betray itself in excited words, acted as a foreboding within him. He mentioned to her attendant that he should keep himself ready to be called if there were any alarming change of symptoms, making it understood by all concerned that he was in communication with her friends in

England, and felt bound meanwhile to take all care on her behalf—a position which it was the easier for him to assume, because he was well known to Grandcourt's valet, the only old servant who had come on the late voyage.

But when fatigue from the strangely various emotion of the day at last sent Deronda to sleep, he remained undisturbed except by the morning dreams which came as a tangled web of yesterday's events, and finally waked him with an image drawn by his pressing anxiety.

Still, it was morning, and there had been no summons—an augury which cheered him while he made his toilet, and reflected that it was too early to send inquiries. Later, he learned that she had passed a too wakeful night, but had shown no violent signs of agitation, and was at last sleeping. He wondered at the force that dwelt in this creature, so alive to dread; for he had an irresistible impression that even under the effects of a severe physical shock she was mastering herself with a determination of concealment. For his own part, he thought that his sensibilities had been blunted by what he had been going through in the meeting with his mother: he seemed to himself now to be only fulfilling claims, and his more passionate sympathy was in

abeyance. He had lately been living so keenly in an experience quite apart from Gwendolen's lot, that his present cares for her were like a revisiting of scenes familiar in the past, and there was not yet a complete revival of the inward response to them.

Meanwhile he employed himself in getting a formal, legally-recognised statement from the fishermen who had rescued Gwendolen. Few details came to light. The boat in which Grandcourt had gone out had been found drifting with its sail loose, and had been towed in. The fishermen thought it likely that he had been knocked overboard by the flapping of the sail while putting about, and that he had not known how to swim; but, though they were near, their attention had been first arrested by a cry which seemed like that of a man in distress, and while they were hastening with their oars, they heard a shriek from the lady, and saw her jump in.

On re-entering the hotel, Deronda was told that Gwendolen had risen, and was desiring to see him. He was shown into a room darkened by blinds and curtains, where she was seated with a white shawl wrapped round her, looking towards the opening door like one waiting uneasily. But her long hair was gathered up and coiled carefully,

and, through all, the blue stars in her ears had kept their place: as she started impulsively to her full height, sheathed in her white shawl, her face and neck not less white, except for a purple line under her eyes, her lips a little apart with the peculiar expression of one accused and helpless, she looked like the unhappy ghost of that Gwendolen Harleth whom Deronda had seen turning with firm lips and proud self-possession from her losses at the gaming-table. The sight pierced him with pity, and the effects of all their past relation began to revive within him.

"I beseech you to rest—not to stand," said Deronda, as he approached her; and she obeyed, falling back into her chair again.

"Will you sit down near me?" she said. "I want to speak very low."

She was in a large arm-chair, and he drew a small one near to her side. The action seemed to touch her peculiarly: turning her pale face full upon his, which was very near, she said, in the lowest audible tone, "You know I am a guilty woman?"

Deronda himself turned paler as he said, "I know nothing." He did not dare to say more.

"He is dead." She uttered this with the same undertoned decision.

"Yes," said Deronda, in a mournful suspense which made him reluctant to speak.

"His face will not be seen above the water again," said Gwendolen, in a tone that was not louder, but of a suppressed eagerness, while she held both her hands clenched.

"No."

"Not by any one else—only by me—a dead face—I shall never get away from it."

It was with an inward voice of desperate self-repression that she spoke these last words, while she looked away from Deronda towards something at a distance from her on the floor. Was she seeing the whole event—her own acts included—through an exaggerating medium of excitement and horror? Was she in a state of delirium into which there entered a sense of concealment and necessity for self-repression? Such thoughts glanced through Deronda as a sort of hope. But imagine the conflict of feeling that kept him silent. She was bent on confession, and he dreaded hearing her confession. Against his better will, he shrank from the task that was laid on him: he wished, and yet rebuked the wish as cowardly, that she could bury her secrets in her own bosom. He was not a priest. He dreaded the weight of this woman's soul flung upon his own with im-

ploring dependence. But she spoke again, hurriedly, looking at him—

"You will not say that I ought to tell the world? you will not say that I ought to be disgraced? I could not do it. I could not bear it. I cannot have my mother know. Not if I were dead. I could not have her know. I must tell you; but you will not say that any one else should know."

"I can say nothing in my ignorance," said Deronda, mournfully, "except that I desire to help you."

"I told you from the beginning—as soon as I could—I told you I was afraid of myself." There was a piteous pleading in the low murmur to which Deronda turned his ear only. Her face afflicted him too much. "I felt a hatred in me that was always working like an evil spirit—contriving things. Everything I could do to free myself came into my mind; and it got worse—all things got worse. That was why I asked you to come to me in town. I thought then I would tell you the worst about myself. I tried. But I could not tell everything. And *he* came in."

She paused, while a shudder passed through her; but soon went on.

"I will tell you everything now. Do you think

a woman who cried, and prayed, and struggled to be saved from herself, could be a murderess?"

"Great God!" said Deronda, in a deep, shaken voice, "don't torture me needlessly. You have not murdered him. You threw yourself into the water with the impulse to save him. Tell me the rest afterwards. This death was an accident that you could not have hindered."

"Don't be impatient with me." The tremor, the childlike beseeching in these words compelled Deronda to turn his head and look at her face. The poor quivering lips went on. "You said—you used to say—you felt more for those who had done something wicked and were miserable; you said they might get better—they might be scourged into something better. If you had not spoken in that way, everything would have been worse. I *did* remember all you said to me. It came to me always. It came to me at the very last—that was the reason why I—— But now, if you cannot bear with me when I tell you everything—if you turn away from me and forsake me, what shall I do? Am I worse than I was when you found me and wanted to make me better? All the wrong I have done was in me then—and more—and more——if you had not come and been patient with me. And now—will you forsake me?"

Her hands which had been so tightly clenched some minutes before, were now helplessly relaxed and trembling on the arm of her chair. Her quivering lips remained parted as she ceased speaking. Deronda could not answer he was obliged to look away. He took one of her hands, and clasped it as if they were going to walk together like two children: it was the only way in which he could answer, "I will not forsake you." And all the while he felt as if he were putting his name to a blank paper which might be filled up terribly. Their attitude, his averted face with its expression of a suffering which he was solemnly resolved to undergo, might have told half the truth of the situation to a beholder who had suddenly entered.

That grasp was an entirely new experience to Gwendolen: she had never before had from any man a sign of tenderness which her own being had needed, and she interpreted its powerful effect on her into a promise of inexhaustible patience and constancy. The stream of renewed strength made it possible for her to go on as she had begun —with that fitful, wandering confession where the sameness of experience seems to nullify the sense of time or of order in events. She began again in a fragmentary way—

"All sorts of contrivances in my mind—but all

so difficult. And I fought against them—I was terrified at them—I saw his dead face"—here her voice sank almost to a whisper close to Deronda's ear—"ever so long ago I saw it; and I wished him to be dead. And yet it terrified me. I was like two creatures. I could not speak—I wanted to kill—it was as strong as thirst—and then directly—I felt beforehand I had done something dreadful, unalterable—that would make me like an evil spirit. And it came—it came."

She was silent a moment or two, as if her memory had lost itself in a web where each mesh drew all the rest.

"It had all been in my mind when I first spoke to you—when we were at the Abbey. I had done something then. I could not tell you that. It was the only thing I did towards carrying out my thoughts. They went about over everything; but they all remained like dreadful dreams—all but one. I did one act—and I never undid it—it is there still—as long ago as when we were at Rye-lands. There it was—something my fingers longed for among the beautiful toys in the cabinet in my boudoir—small and sharp, like a long willow leaf in a silver sheath. I locked it in the drawer of my dressing-case. I was continually haunted with it, and how I should use it. I fancied myself

putting it under my pillow. But I never did. I never looked at it again. I dared not unlock the drawer: it had a key all to itself; and not long ago, when we were in the yacht, I dropped the key into the deep water. It was my wish to drop it and deliver myself. After that I began to think how I could open the drawer without the key; and when I found we were to stay at Genoa, it came into my mind that I could get it opened privately at the hotel. But then, when we were going up the stairs, I met you; and I thought I should talk to you alone and tell you this—everything I could not tell you in town; and then I was forced to go out in the boat."

A sob had for the first time risen with the last words, and she sank back in her chair. The memory of that acute disappointment seemed for the moment to efface what had come since. Deronda did not look at her, but he said, insistently—

"And it has all remained in your imagination. It has gone on only in your thought. To the last the evil temptation has been resisted?"

There was silence. The tears had rolled down her cheeks. She pressed her handkerchief against them and sat upright. She was summoning her resolution; and again, leaning a little towards Deronda's ear, she began in a whisper—

"No, no; I will tell you everything as God knows it. I will tell you no falsehood; I will tell you the exact truth. What should I do else? I used to think I could never be wicked. I thought of wicked people as if they were a long way off me. Since then I have been wicked. I have felt wicked. And everything has been a punishment to me—all the things I used to wish for—it is as if they had been made red-hot. The very daylight has often been a punishment to me. Because—you know—I ought not to have married. That was the beginning of it. I wronged some one else. I broke my promise. I meant to get pleasure for myself, and it all turned to misery. I wanted to make my gain out of another's loss—you remember?—it was like roulette—and the money burnt into me. And I could not complain. It was as if I had prayed that another should lose and I should win. And I had won. I knew it all—I knew I was guilty. When we were on the sea, and I lay awake at night in the cabin, I sometimes felt that everything I had done lay open without excuse—nothing was hidden—how could anything be known to me only?—it was not my own knowledge, it was God's that had entered into me; and even the stillness—everything held a punishment for me—everything but you. I

always thought that you would not want me to be punished—you would have tried and helped me to be better. And only thinking of that helped me. You will not change—you will not want to punish me now?"

Again a sob had risen.

"God forbid!" groaned Deronda. But he sat motionless.

This long wandering with the poor conscience-stricken one over her past was difficult to bear, but he dared not again urge her with a question. He must let her mind follow its own need. She unconsciously left intervals in her retrospect, not clearly distinguishing between what she said and what she had only an inward vision of. Her next words came after such an interval.

"That all made it so hard when I was forced to go in the boat. Because when I saw you it was an unexpected joy, and I thought I could tell you everything—about the locked-up drawer and what I had not told you before. And if I had told you, and knew it was in your mind, it would have less power over me. I hoped and trusted in that. For after all my struggles and my crying, the hatred and rage, the temptation that frightened me, the longing, the thirst for what I dreaded, always came back. And that disappointment—when I was

quite shut out from speaking to you, and I was driven to go in the boat—brought all the evil back, as if I had been locked in a prison with it and no escape. Oh, it seems so long ago now since I stepped into that boat! I could have given up everything in that moment, to have the forked lightning for a weapon to strike him dead."

Some of the compressed fierceness that she was recalling seemed to find its way into her undertoned utterance. After a little silence she said, with agitated hurry—

"If he were here again, what should I do? I cannot wish him here—and yet I cannot bear his dead face. I was a coward. I ought to have borne contempt. I ought to have gone away—gone and wandered like a beggar rather than stay to feel like a fiend. But turn where I would there was something I could not bear. Sometimes I thought he would kill *me* if I resisted his will. But now—his dead face is there, and I cannot bear it."

Suddenly loosing Deronda's hand, she started up, stretching her arms to their full length upward, and said with a sort of moan—

"I have been a cruel woman! What can *I* do but cry for help? *I* am sinking. Die—die—you

are forsaken—go down, go down into darkness. Forsaken—no pity—*I* shall be forsaken."

She sank in her chair again and broke into sobs. Even Deronda had no place in her consciousness at that moment. He was completely unmanned. Instead of finding, as he had imagined, that his late experience had dulled his susceptibility to fresh emotion, it seemed that the lot of this young creature, whose swift travel from her bright rash girlhood into this agony of remorse he had had to behold in helplessness, pierced him the deeper because it came close upon another sad revelation of spiritual conflict: he was in one of those moments when the very anguish of passionate pity makes us ready to choose that we will know pleasure no more, and live only for the stricken and afflicted. He had risen from his seat while he watched that terrible outburst—which seemed the more awful to him because, even in this supreme agitation, she kept the suppressed voice of one who confesses in secret. At last he felt impelled to turn his back towards her and walk to a distance.

But presently there was stillness. Her mind had opened to the sense that he had gone away from her. When Deronda turned round to approach her again, he saw her face bent towards

him, her eyes dilated, her lips parted. She was an image of timid forlorn beseeching—too timid to entreat in words while he kept himself aloof from her. Was she forsaken by him—now—already? But his eyes met hers sorrowfully—met hers for the first time fully since she had said, "You know I am a guilty woman;" and that full glance in its intense mournfulness seemed to say, "I know it, but I shall all the less forsake you." He sat down by her side again in the same attitude—without turning his face towards her and without again taking her hand.

Once more Gwendolen was pierced, as she had been by his face of sorrow at the Abbey, with a compunction less egoistic than that which urged her to confess, and she said, in a tone of loving regret—

"I make you very unhappy."

Deronda gave an indistinct "Oh," just shrinking together and changing his attitude a little. Then he had gathered resolution enough to say clearly, "There is no question of being happy or unhappy. What I most desire at this moment is what will most help you. Tell me all you feel it a relief to tell."

Devoted as these words were, they widened his spiritual distance from her, and she felt it more

difficult to speak: she had a vague need of getting nearer to that compassion which seemed to be regarding her from a halo of superiority, and the need turned into an impulse to humble herself more. She was ready to throw herself on her knees before him; but no—her wonderfully mixed consciousness held checks on that impulse, and she was kept silent and motionless by the pressure of opposing needs. Her stillness made Deronda at last say—

"Perhaps you are too weary. Shall I go away, and come again whenever you wish it?"

"No, no," said Gwendolen—the dread of his leaving her bringing back her power of speech. She went on with her low-toned eagerness, "I want to tell you what it was that came over me in that boat. I was full of rage at being obliged to go—full of rage—and I could do nothing but sit there like a galley-slave. And then we got away—out of the port—into the deep—and everything was still—and we never looked at each other, only he spoke to order me—and the very light about me seemed to hold me a prisoner and force me to sit as I did. It came over me that when I was a child I used to fancy sailing away into a world where people were not forced to live with any one they did not like—I did not like

my father-in-law to come home. And now, I thought, just the opposite had come to me. I had stept into a boat, and my life was a sailing and sailing away—gliding on and no help—always into solitude with *him*, away from deliverance. And because I felt more helpless than ever, my thoughts went out over worse things—I longed for worse things—I had cruel wishes—I fancied impossible ways of—— I did not want to die myself; I was afraid of our being drowned together. If it had been any use I should have prayed—I should have prayed that something might befall him. I should have prayed that he might sink out of my sight and leave me alone. I knew no way of killing him there, but I did, I did kill him in my thoughts."

She sank into silence for a minute, submerged by the weight of memory which no words could represent.

"But yet all the while I felt that I was getting more wicked. And what had been with me so much, came to me just then—what you once said—about dreading to increase my wrong-doing and my remorse—I should hope for nothing then. It was all like a writing of fire within me. Getting wicked was misery—being shut out for ever from knowing what you—what better lives were. That

had always been coming back to me in the midst of bad thoughts—it came back to me then—but yet with a despair—a feeling that it was no use—evil wishes were too strong. I remember then letting go the tiller and saying 'God help me!' But then I was forced to take it again and go on; and the evil longings, the evil prayers came again and blotted everything else dim, till, in the midst of them—I don't know how it was—he was turning the sail—there was a gust—he was struck—I know nothing—I only know that I saw my wish outside me."

She began to speak more hurriedly, and in more of a whisper.

"I saw him sink, and my heart gave a leap as if it were going out of me. I think I did not move. I kept my hands tight. It was long enough for me to be glad, and yet to think it was no use—he would come up again. And he *was* come—farther off—the boat had moved. It was all like lightning. 'The rope!' he called out in a voice—not his own—I hear it now—and I stooped for the rope—I felt I must—I felt sure he could swim, and he would come back whether or not, and I dreaded him. That was in my mind—he would come back. But he was gone down again, and I had the rope in my hand—no, there

he was again—his face above the water—and he cried again—and I held my hand, and my heart said, 'Die!'—and he sank; and I felt 'It is done—I am wicked, I am lost!'—and I had the rope in my hand—I don't know what I thought—I was leaping away from myself—I would have saved him then. I was leaping from my crime, and there it was—close to me as I fell—there was the dead face—dead, dead. It can never be altered. That was what happened. That was what I did. You know it all. It can never be altered."

She sank back in her chair, exhausted with the agitation of memory and speech. Deronda felt the burden on his spirit less heavy than the foregoing dread. The word "guilty" had held a possibility of interpretations worse than the fact; and Gwendolen's confession, for the very reason that her conscience made her dwell on the determining power of her evil thoughts, convinced him the more that there had been throughout a counterbalancing struggle of her better will. It seemed almost certain that her murderous thought had had no outward effect—that, quite apart from it, the death was inevitable. Still, a question as to the outward effectiveness of a criminal desire dominant enough to impel even a momentary act, cannot alter our judgment of the desire; and

Deronda shrank from putting that question forward in the first instance. He held it likely that Gwendolen's remorse aggravated her inward guilt, and that she gave the character of decisive action to what had been an inappreciably instantaneous glance of desire. But her remorse was the precious sign of a recoverable nature; it was the culmination of that self-disapproval which had been the awakening of a new life within her; it marked her off from the criminals whose only regret is failure in securing their evil wish. Deronda could not utter one word to diminish that sacred aversion to her worst self — that thorn-pressure which must come with the crowning of the sorrowful Better, suffering because of the Worse. All this mingled thought and feeling kept him silent: speech was too momentous to be ventured on rashly. There were no words of comfort that did not carry some sacrilege. If he had opened his lips to speak, he could only have echoed, "It can never be altered—it remains unaltered, to alter other things." But he was silent and motionless—he did not know how long—before he turned to look at her, and saw her sunk back with closed eyes, like a lost, weary, storm-beaten white doe, unable to rise and pursue its unguided way. He rose and stood before her.

The movement touched her consciousness, and she opened her eyes with a slight quivering that seemed like fear.

"You must rest now. Try to rest: try to sleep. And may I see you again this evening—to-morrow—when you have had some rest? Let us say no more now."

The tears came, and she could not answer except by a slight movement of the head. Deronda rang for attendance, spoke urgently of the necessity that she should be got to rest, and then left her.

CHAPTER LVII.

"The unripe grape, the ripe, and the dried. All things are changes, not into nothing, but into that which is not at present."—MARCUS AURELIUS.

Deeds are the pulse of Time, his beating life,
And righteous or unrighteous, being done,
Must throb in after-throbs till Time itself
Be laid in stillness, and the universe
Quiver and breathe upon no mirror more.

IN the evening she sent for him again. It was already near the hour at which she had been brought in from the sea the evening before, and the light was subdued enough with blinds drawn up and windows open. She was seated gazing fixedly on the sea, resting her cheek on her hand, looking less shattered than when he had left her, but with a deep melancholy in her expression which as Deronda approached her passed into an anxious timidity. She did not put out her hand, but said, "How long ago it is!" Then, "Will you sit near me again a little while?"

He placed himself by her side as he had done

before, and seeing that she turned to him with that indefinable expression which implies a wish to say something, he waited for her to speak. But again she looked towards the window silently, and again turned with the same expression, which yet did not issue in speech. There was some fear hindering her, and Deronda, wishing to relieve her timidity, averted his face. Presently he heard her cry imploringly—

"You will not say that any one else should know?"

"Most decidedly not," said Deronda. "There is no action that ought to be taken in consequence. There is no injury that could be righted in that way. There is no retribution that any mortal could apportion justly."

She was so still during a pause, that she seemed to be holding her breath before she said—

"But if I had not had that murderous will —that moment—if I had thrown the rope on the instant — perhaps it would have hindered death?"

"No—I think not," said Deronda, slowly. "If it were true that he could swim, he must have been seized with cramp. With your quickest, utmost effort, it seems impossible that you could have done anything to save him. That momentary

murderous will cannot, I think, have altered the course of events. Its effect is confined to the motives in your own breast. Within ourselves our evil will is momentous, and sooner or later it works its way outside us—it may be in the vitiation that breeds evil acts, but also it may be in the self-abhorrence that stings us into better striving."

"I am saved from robbing others—there are others — they will have everything — they will have what they ought to have. I knew that some time before I left town. You do not suspect me of wrong desires about those things?" She spoke hesitatingly.

"I had not thought of them," said Deronda; "I was thinking too much of the other things."

"Perhaps you don't quite know the beginning of it all," said Gwendolen, slowly, as if she were overcoming her reluctance. "There was some one else he ought to have married. And I knew it, and I told her I would not hinder it. And I went away —that was when you first saw me. But then we became poor all at once, and I was very miserable, and I was tempted. I thought, 'I shall do as I like and make everything right.' I persuaded myself. And it was all different. It was all dreadful. Then came hatred and wicked thoughts.

That was how it all came. I told you I was afraid of myself. And I did what you told me—I did try to make my fear a safeguard. I thought of what would be if I—— I felt what would come—how I should dread the morning—wishing it would be always night—and yet in the darkness always seeing something—seeing death. If you did not know how miserable I was, you might——but now it has all been no use. I can care for nothing but saving the rest from knowing —poor mamma, who has never been happy."

There was silence again before she said with a repressed sob—"You cannot bear to look at me any more. You think I am too wicked. You do not believe that I can become any better—worth anything—worthy enough—I shall always be too wicked to——" The voice broke off helpless.

Deronda's heart was pierced. He turned his eyes on her poor beseeching face and said, "I believe that you may become worthier than you have ever yet been—worthy to lead a life that may be a blessing. No evil dooms us hopelessly except the evil we love, and desire to continue in, and make no effort to escape from. You *have* made efforts—you will go on making them."

"But you were the beginning of them. You must not forsake me," said Gwendolen, leaning

with her clasped hands on the arm of her chair and looking at him, while her face bore piteous traces of the life-experience concentrated in the twenty-four hours—that new terrible life lying on the other side of the deed which fulfils a criminal desire. "I will bear any penance. I will lead any life you tell me. But you must not forsake me. You must be near. If you had been near me—if I could have said everything to you, I should have been different. You will not forsake me?"

"It could never be my impulse to forsake you," said Deronda promptly, with that voice which, like his eyes, had the unintentional effect of making his ready sympathy seem more personal and special than it really was. And in that moment he was not himself quite free from a foreboding of some such self-committing effect. His strong feeling for this stricken creature could not hinder rushing images of future difficulty. He continued to meet her appealing eyes as he spoke, but it was with the painful consciousness that to her ear his words might carry a promise which one day would seem unfulfilled: he was making an indefinite promise to an indefinite hope. Anxieties, both immediate and distant, crowded on his thought, and it was under

their influence that, after a moment's silence, he said—

"I expect Sir Hugo Mallinger to arrive by to-morrow night at least; and I am not without hope that Mrs Davilow may shortly follow him. Her presence will be the greatest comfort to you—it will give you a motive, to save her from unnecessary pain?"

"Yes, yes—I will try. And you will not go away?"

"Not till after Sir Hugo has come."

"But we shall all go to England?"

"As soon as possible," said Deronda, not wishing to enter into particulars.

Gwendolen looked toward the window again with an expression which seemed like a gradual awakening to new thoughts. The twilight was perceptibly deepening, but Deronda could see a movement in her eyes and hands such as accompanies a return of perception in one who has been stunned.

"You will always be with Sir Hugo now?" she said presently, looking at him. "You will always live at the Abbey—or else at Diplow?"

"I am quite uncertain where I shall live," said Deronda, colouring.

She was warned by his changed colour that

she had spoken too rashly, and fell silent. After a little while she began, again looking away—

"It is impossible to think how my life will go on. I think now it would be better for me to be poor and obliged to work."

"New promptings will come as the days pass. When you are among your friends again, you will discern new duties," said Deronda. "Make it a task now to get as well and calm—as much like yourself as you can, before——" He hesitated.

"Before my mother comes," said Gwendolen. "Ah! I must be changed. I have not looked at myself. Should you have known me," she added, turning towards him, "if you had met me now?—should you have known me for the one you saw at Leubronn?"

"Yes, I should have known you," said Deronda, mournfully. "The outside change is not great. I should have seen at once that it was you, and that you had gone through some great sorrow."

"Don't wish now that you had never seen me—don't wish that," said Gwendolen, imploringly, while the tears gathered.

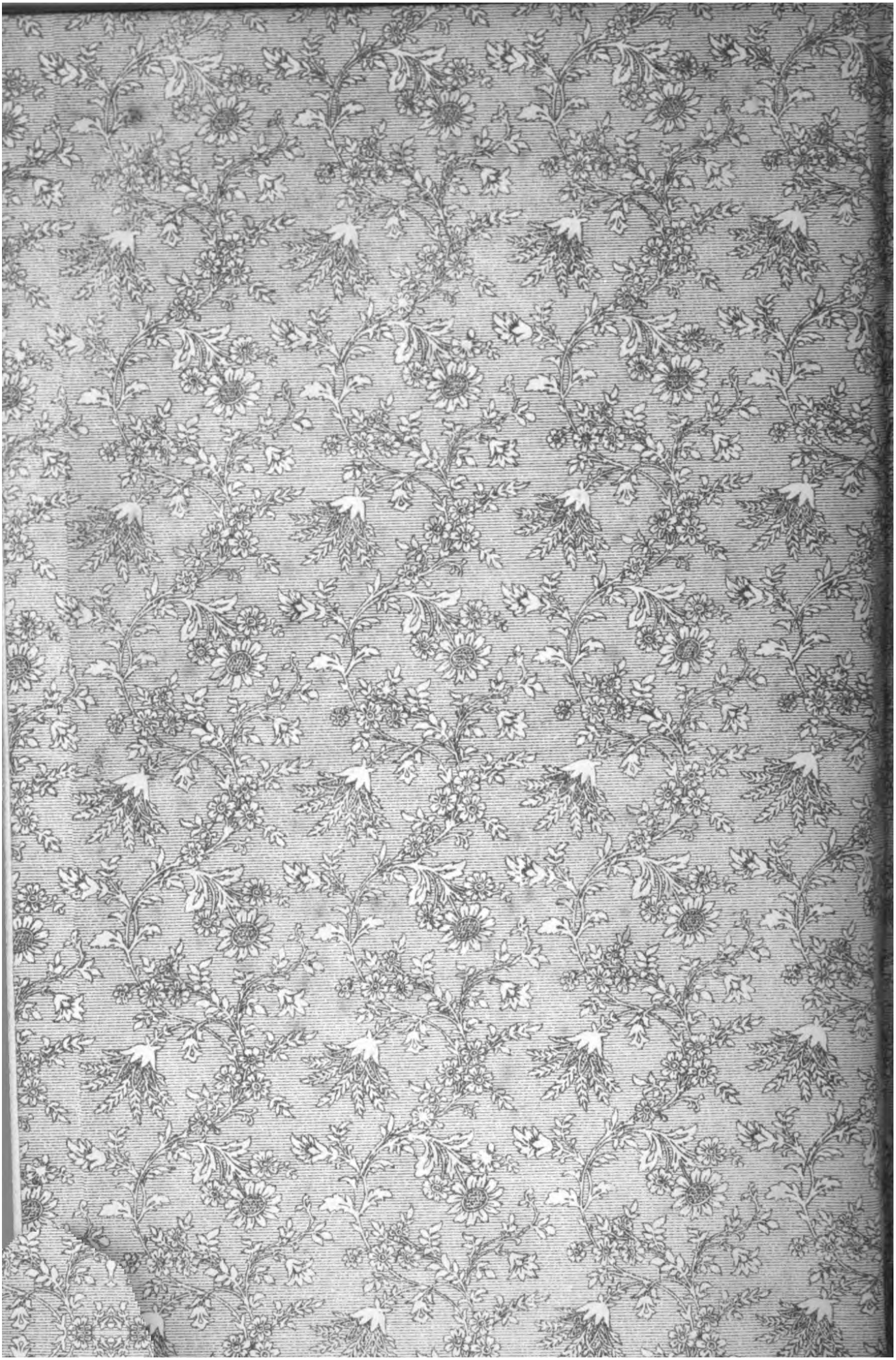
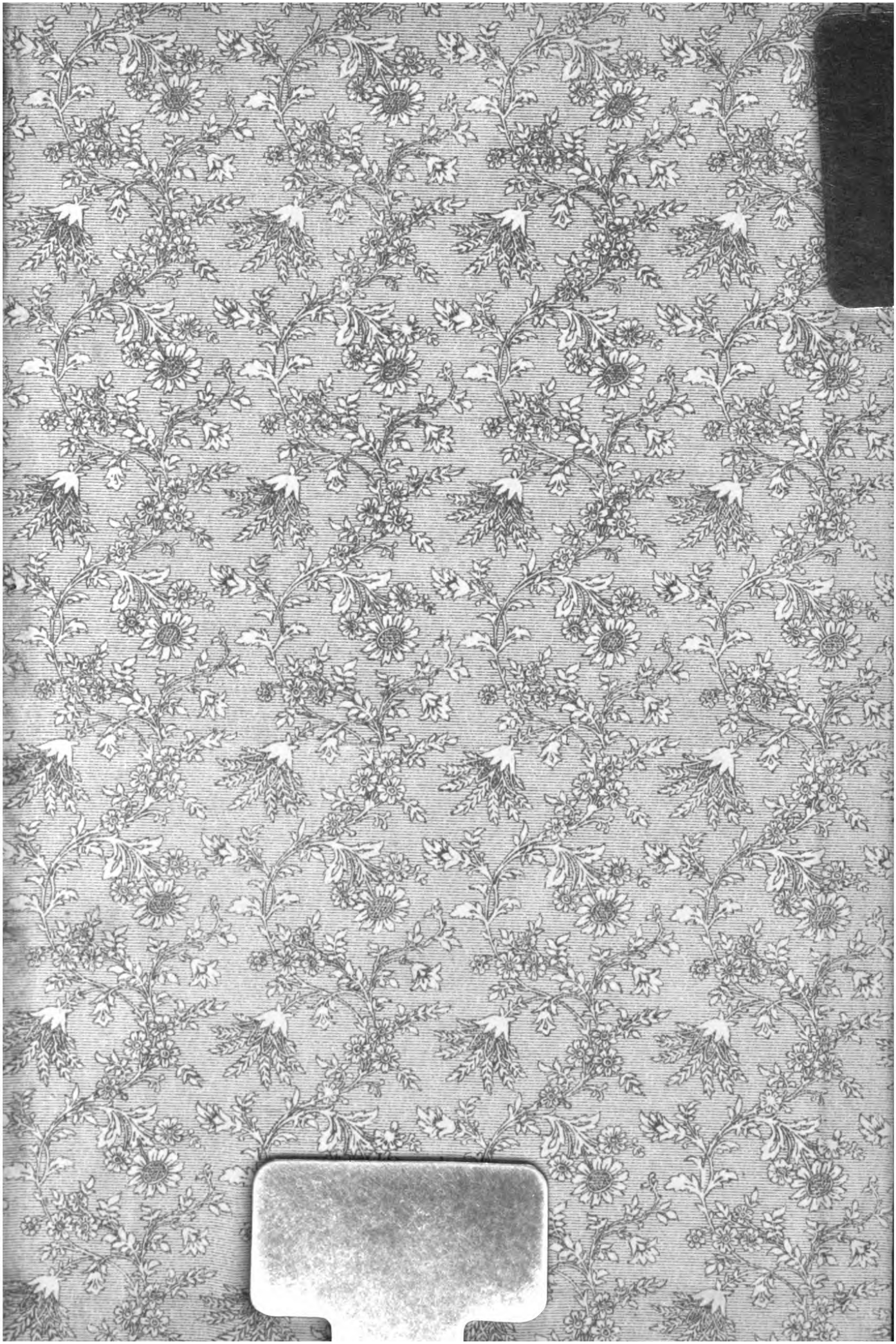
"I should despise myself for wishing it," said Deronda. "How could I know what I was wishing? We must find our duties in what comes to us, not in what we imagine might have been. If

I took to foolish wishing of that sort, I should wish—not that I had never seen you, but that I had been able to save you from this."

"You have saved me from worse," said Gwendolen, in a sobbing voice. "I should have been worse, if it had not been for you. If you had not been good, I should have been more wicked than I am."

"It will be better for me to go now," said Deronda, worn in spirit by the perpetual strain of this scene. "Remember what we said of your task—to get well and calm before other friends come."

He rose as he spoke, and she gave him her hand submissively. But when he had left her she sank on her knees, in hysterical crying. The distance between them was too great. She was a banished soul—beholding a possible life which she had sinned herself away from.

She was found in this way, crushed on the floor. Such grief seemed natural in a poor lady whose husband had been drowned in her presence.

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