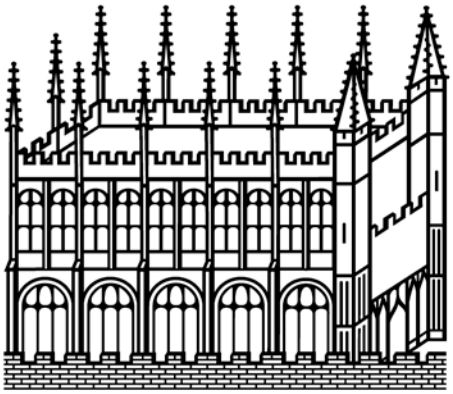

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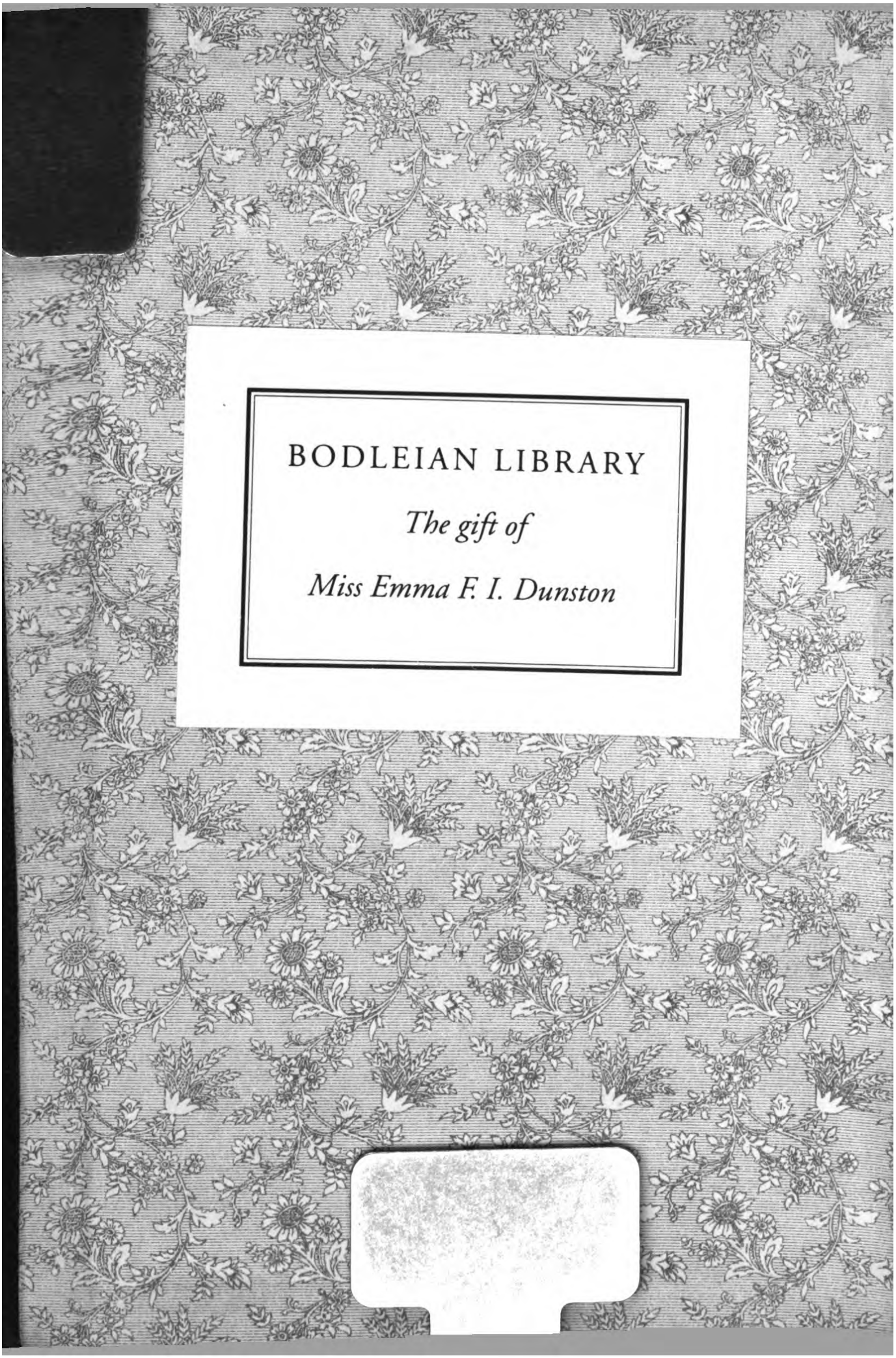
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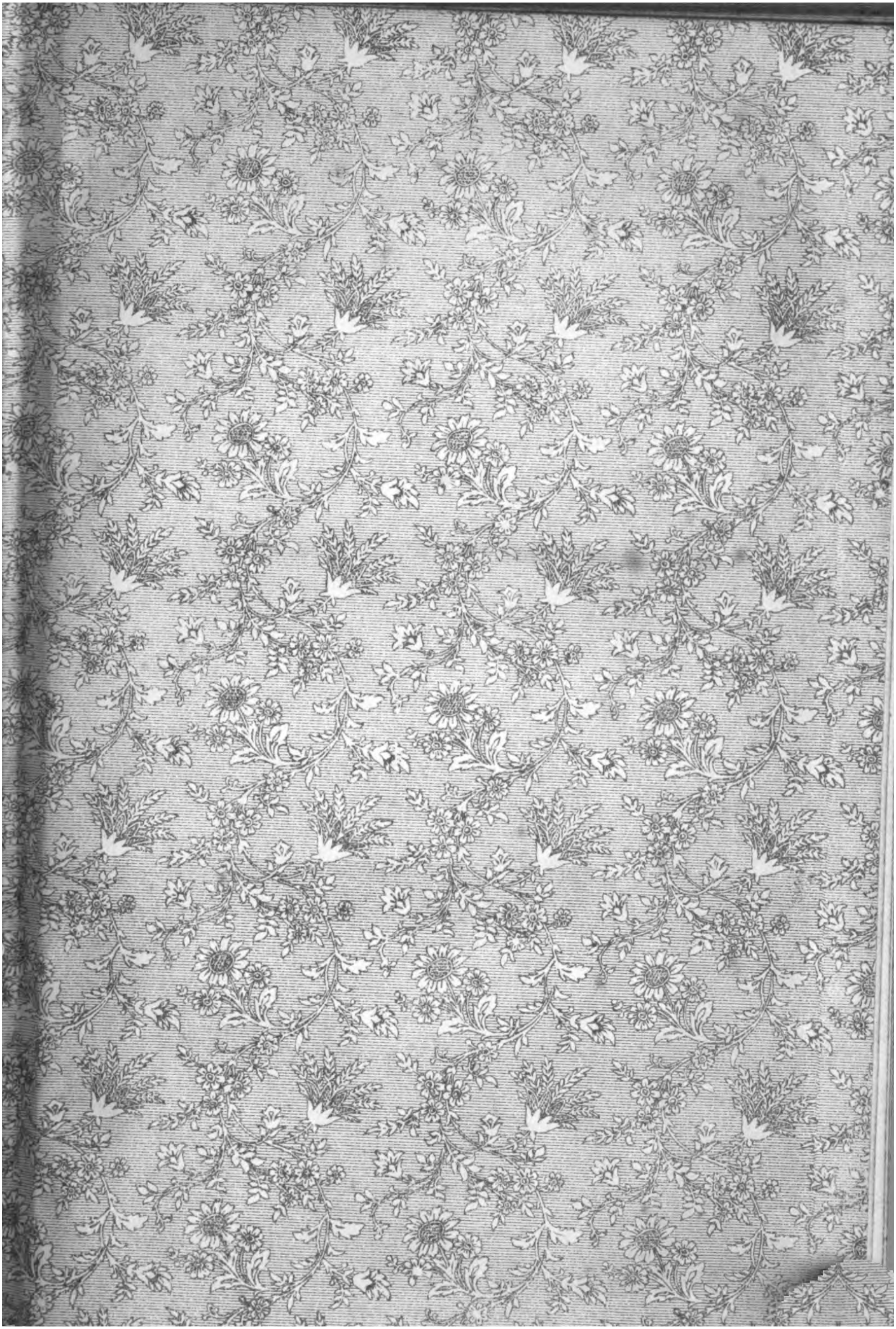

Dunstan c 797 b/6

DANIEL DERONDA

BOOK VI.

REVELATIONS

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

BOOK VI.

REVELATIONS.

CHAPTER XLI.

"This, too, is probable, according to that saying of Agathon: 'It is a part of probability that many improbable things will happen.'"—ARISTOTLE: *Poetics.*

IMAGINE the conflict in a mind like Deronda's, given not only to feel strongly but to question actively, on the evening after that interview with Mordecai. To a young man of much duller susceptibilities the adventure might have seemed enough out of the common way to divide his thoughts; but it had stirred Deronda so deeply, that with the usual reaction of his intellect he began to examine the grounds of his emotion, and consider how far he must resist its guidance. The

consciousness that he was half dominated by Mordecai's energetic certitude, and still more by his fervent trust, roused his alarm. It was his characteristic bias to shrink from the moral stupidity of valuing lightly what had come close to him, and of missing blindly in his own life of to-day the crises which he recognised as momentous and sacred in the historic life of men. If he had read of this incident as having happened centuries ago in Rome, Greece, Asia Minor, Palestine, Cairo, to some man young as himself, dissatisfied with his neutral life, and wanting some closer fellowship, some more special duty to give him ardour for the possible consequences of his work, it would have appeared to him quite natural that the incident should have created a deep impression on that far-off man, whose clothing and action would have been seen in his imagination as part of an age chiefly known to us through its more serious effects. Why should he be ashamed of his own agitated feeling merely because he dressed for dinner, wore a white tie, and lived among people who might laugh at his owning any conscience in the matter as the solemn folly of taking himself too seriously?—that bugbear of circles in which the lack of grave emotion passes for wit. From such cowardice before modish ignorance and ob-

tuseness, Deronda shrank. But he also shrank from having his course determined by mere contagion, without consent of reason; or from allowing a reverential pity for spiritual struggle to hurry him along a dimly-seen path.

What, after all, had really happened? He knew quite accurately the answer Sir Hugo would have given: "A consumptive Jew, possessed by a fanaticism which obstacles and hastening death intensified, had fixed on Deronda as the antitype of some visionary image, the offspring of wedded hope and despair: despair of his own life, irrepressible hope in the propagation of his fanatical beliefs. The instance was perhaps odd, exceptional in its form, but substantially it was not rare. Fanaticism was not so common as bankruptcy, but taken in all its aspects it was abundant enough. While Mordecai was waiting on the bridge for the fulfilment of his visions, another man was convinced that he had the mathematical key of the universe which would supersede Newton, and regarded all known physicists as conspiring to stifle his discovery and keep the universe locked; another, that he had the metaphysical key, with just that hair's-breadth of difference from the old wards which would make it fit exactly. Scattered here and there in every direction you might

find a terrible person, with more or less power of speech, and with an eye either glittering or preternaturally dull, on the look-out for the man who must hear him; and in most cases he had volumes which it was difficult to get printed, or if printed to get read. This Mordecai happened to have a more pathetic aspect, a more passionate, penetrative speech than was usual with such monomaniacs: he was more poetical than a social reformer with coloured views of the new moral world in parallelograms, or than an enthusiast in sewage; still he came under the same class. It would be only right and kind to indulge him a little, to comfort him with such help as was practicable· but what likelihood was there that his notions had the sort of value he ascribed to them? In such cases a man of the world knows what to think beforehand. And as to Mordecai's conviction that he had found a new executive self, it might be preparing for him the worst of disappointments—that which presents itself as final."

Deronda's ear caught all these negative whisperings; nay, he repeated them distinctly to himself. It was not the first but it was the most pressing occasion on which he had had to face this question of the family likeness among the heirs of enthu-

siasm, whether prophets or dreamers of dreams, whether the

"Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,"

or the devotees of phantasmal discovery—from the first believer in his own unmanifested inspiration, down to the last inventor of an ideal machine that will achieve perpetual motion. The kinship of human passion, the sameness of mortal scenery, inevitably fill fact with burlesque and parody. Error and folly have had their hecatombs of martyrs. Reduce the grandest type of man hitherto known to an abstract statement of his qualities and efforts, and he appears in dangerous company: say that, like Copernicus and Galileo, he was immovably convinced in the face of hissing incredulity; but so is the contriver of perpetual motion. We cannot fairly try the spirits by this sort of test. If we want to avoid giving the dose of hemlock or the sentence of banishment in the wrong case, nothing will do but a capacity to understand the subject-matter on which the immovable man is convinced, and fellowship with human travail, both near and afar, to hinder us from scanning any deep experience lightly. Shall we say, "Let the ages try the spirits, and see what they are worth"? Why, we are the beginning of the ages, which can only be just by virtue

of just judgments in separate human breasts—separate yet combined. Even steam-engines could not have got made without that condition, but must have stayed in the mind of James Watt.

This track of thinking was familiar enough to Deronda to have saved him from any contemptuous prejudgment of Mordecai, even if their communication had been free from that peculiar claim on himself strangely ushered in by some long-growing preparation in the Jew's agitated mind. This claim, indeed, considered in what is called a rational way, might seem justifiably dismissed as illusory and even preposterous; but it was precisely what turned Mordecai's hold on him from an appeal to his ready sympathy into a clutch on his struggling conscience. Our consciences are not all of the same pattern, an inner deliverance of fixed laws: they are the voice of sensibilities as various as our memories (which also have their kinship and likeness). And Deronda's conscience included sensibilities beyond the common, enlarged by his early habit of thinking himself imaginatively into the experience of others.

What was the claim this eager soul made upon him?—"You must believe my beliefs—be moved by my reasons—hope my hopes—see the vision I

point to—behold a glory where I behold it!" To take such a demand in the light of an obligation in any direct sense would have been preposterous —to have seemed to admit it would have been dishonesty; and Deronda, looking on the agitation of those moments, felt thankful that in the midst of his compassion he had preserved himself from the bondage of false concessions. The claim hung, too, on a supposition which might be—nay, probably was—in discordance with the full fact: the supposition that he, Deronda, was of Jewish blood. Was there ever a more hypothetic appeal?

But since the age of thirteen Deronda had associated the deepest experience of his affections with what was a pure supposition, namely, that Sir Hugo was his father: that was a hypothesis which had been the source of passionate struggle within him; by its light he had been accustomed to subdue feelings and to cherish them. He had been well used to find a motive in a conception which might be disproved; and he had been also used to think of some revelation that might influence his view of the particular duties belonging to him. To be in a state of suspense which was also one of emotive activity and scruple, was a familiar attitude of his conscience.

And now, suppose that wish-begotten belief in

his Jewish birth, and that extravagant demand of discipleship, to be the foreshadowing of an actual discovery and a genuine spiritual result: suppose that Mordecai's ideas made a real conquest over Deronda's conviction? Nay, it was conceivable that as Mordecai needed and believed that he had found an active replenishment of himself, so Deronda might receive from Mordecai's mind the complete ideal shape of that personal duty and citizenship which lay in his own thought like sculptured fragments certifying some beauty yearned after but not traceable by divination.

As that possibility presented itself in his meditations, he was aware that it would be called dreamy, and began to defend it. If the influence he imagined himself submitting to had been that of some honoured professor, some authority in a seat of learning, some philosopher who had been accepted as a voice of the age, would a thorough receptiveness towards direction have been ridiculed? Only by those who hold it a sign of weakness to be obliged for an idea, and prefer to hint that they have implicitly held in a more correct form whatever others have stated with a sadly short-coming explicitness. After all, what was there but vulgarity in taking the fact that Mordecai was a poor Jewish workman, and that he

was to be met perhaps on a sanded floor in the parlour of the *Hand and Banner*, as a reason for determining beforehand that there was not some spiritual force within him that might have a determining effect on a white-handed gentleman? There is a legend told of the Emperor Domitian, that having heard of a Jewish family, of the house of David, whence the ruler of the world was to spring, he sent for its members in alarm, but quickly released them on observing that they had the hands of work-people—being of just the opposite opinion with that Rabbi who stood waiting at the gate of Rome in confidence that the Messiah would be found among the destitute who entered there. Both Emperor and Rabbi were wrong in their trust of outward signs: poverty and poor clothes are no sign of inspiration, said Deronda to his inward objector, but they have gone with it in some remarkable cases. And to regard discipleship as out of the question because of them, would be mere dulness of imagination.

A more plausible reason for putting discipleship out of the question was the strain of visionary excitement in Mordecai, which turned his wishes into overmastering impressions, and made him read outward facts as fulfilment. Was such a temper of mind likely to accompany that wise

estimate of consequences which is the only safeguard from fatal error, even to ennobling motive? But it remained to be seen whether that rare conjunction existed or not in Mordecai: perhaps his might be one of the natures where a wise estimate of consequences is fused in the fires of that passionate belief which determines the consequences it believes in. The inspirations of the world have come in that way too: even strictly-measuring science could hardly have got on without that forecasting ardour which feels the agitations of discovery beforehand, and has a faith in its preconception that surmounts many failures of experiment. And in relation to human motives and actions, passionate belief has a fuller efficacy. Here enthusiasm may have the validity of proof, and, happening in one soul, give the type of what will one day be general.

At least, Deronda argued, Mordecai's visionary excitability was hardly a reason for concluding beforehand that he was not worth listening to except for pity's sake. Suppose he had introduced himself as one of the strictest reasoners: do they form a body of men hitherto free from false conclusions and illusory speculations? The driest argument has its hallucinations, too hastily concluding that its net will now at last be large

enough to hold the universe. Men may dream in demonstrations, and cut out an illusory world in the shape of axioms, definitions, and propositions, with a final exclusion of fact signed Q.E.D. No formulas for thinking will save us mortals from mistake in our imperfect apprehension of the matter to be thought about. And since the unemotional intellect may carry us into a mathematical dreamland where nothing is but what is not, perhaps an emotional intellect may have absorbed into its passionate vision of possibilities some truth of what will be—the more comprehensive massive life feeding theory with new material, as the sensibility of the artist seizes combinations which science explains and justifies. At any rate, presumptions to the contrary are not to be trusted. We must be patient with the inevitable makeshift of our human thinking, whether in its sum total or in the separate minds that have made the sum. Columbus had some impressions about himself which we call superstitions, and used some arguments which we disapprove; but he had also some true physical conceptions, and he had the passionate patience of genius to make them tell on mankind. The world has made up its mind rather contemptuously about those who were deaf to Columbus.

"My contempt for them binds me to see that I don't adopt their mistake on a small scale," said Deronda, "and make myself deaf with the assumption that there cannot be any momentous relation between this Jew and me, simply because he has clad it in illusory notions. What I can be to him, or he to me, may not at all depend on his persuasion about the way we came together. To me the way seems made up of plainly discernible links. If I had not found Mirah, it is probable that I should not have begun to be specially interested in the Jews, and certainly I should not have gone on that loitering search after an Ezra Cohen which made me pause at Ram's book-shop and ask the price of *Maimon*. Mordecai, on his side, had his visions of a disciple, and he saw me by their light; I corresponded well enough with the image his longing had created. He took me for one of his race. Suppose that his impression —the elderly Jew at Frankfort seemed to have something like it—suppose, in spite of all presumptions to the contrary, that his impression should somehow be proved true, and that I should come actually to share any of the ideas he is devoted to? This is the only question which really concerns the effect of our meeting on my life.

"But if the issue should be quite different?—well, there will be something painful to go through. I shall almost inevitably have to be an active cause of that poor fellow's crushing disappointment. Perhaps this issue is the one I had need prepare myself for. I fear that no tenderness of mine can make his suffering lighter. Would the alternative—that I should not disappoint him—be less painful to me?"

Here Deronda wavered. Feelings had lately been at work within him which had very much modified the reluctance he would formerly have had to think of himself as probably a Jew. And, if you like, he was romantic. That young energy and spirit of adventure which have helped to create the world-wide legends of youthful heroes going to seek the hidden tokens of their birth and its inheritance of tasks, gave him a certain quivering interest in the bare possibility that he was entering on a like track—all the more because the track was one of thought as well as action.

"The bare possibility." He could not admit it to be more. The belief that his father was an Englishman only grew firmer under the weak assaults of unwarranted doubt. And that a moment should ever come in which that belief was declared a delusion, was something of which

Deronda would not say, "I should be glad." His lifelong affection for Sir Hugo, stronger than all his resentment, made him shrink from admitting that wish.

Which way soever the truth might lie, he repeated to himself what he had said to Mordecai—that he could not without farther reason undertake to hasten its discovery. Nay, he was tempted now to regard his uncertainty as a condition to be cherished for the present. If further intercourse revealed nothing but illusions as what he was expected to share in, the want of any valid evidence that he was a Jew might save Mordecai the worst shock in the refusal of fraternity. It might even be justifiable to use the uncertainty on this point in keeping up a suspense which would induce Mordecai to accept those offices of friendship that Deronda longed to urge on him.

These were the meditations that busied Deronda in the interval of four days before he could fulfil his promise to call for Mordecai at Ezra Cohen's, Sir Hugo's demands on him often lasting to an hour so late as to put the evening expedition to Holborn out of the question.

CHAPTER XLII.

"Wenn es eine Stufenleiter von Leiden giebt, so hat Israel die höchste Staffel erstiegen; wenn die Dauer der Schmerzen und die Geduld, mit welcher sie ertragen werden, adeln, so nehmen es die Juden mit den Hochgeborenen aller Länder auf; wenn eine Literatur reich genannt wird, die wenige klassische Trauerspiele besitzt, welcher Platz gehührt dann einer Tragödie die anderthalb Jahrtausende währt, gedichtet und dargestellt von den Helden selber?"—ZUNZ: *Die Synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters.*

"IF there are ranks in suffering, Israel takes precedence of all the nations—if the duration of sorrows and the patience with which they are borne ennoble, the Jews are among the aristocracy of every land—if a literature is called rich in the possession of a few classic tragedies, what shall we say to a National Tragedy lasting for fifteen hundred years, in which the poets and the actors were also the heroes?"

Deronda had lately been reading that passage of Zunz, and it occurred to him by way of contrast when he was going to the Cohens, who certainly bore no obvious stamp of distinction in sorrow or in any other form of aristocracy. Ezra

Cohen was not clad in the sublime pathos of the martyr, and his taste for money-getting seemed to be favoured with that success which has been the most exasperating difference in the greed of Jews during all the ages of their dispersion. This Jeshurun of a pawnbroker was not a symbol of the great Jewish tragedy; and yet, was there not something typical in the fact that a life like Mordecai's—a frail incorporation of the national consciousness, breathing with difficult breath—was nested in the self-gratulating ignorant prosperity of the Cohens?

Glistening was the gladness in their faces when Deronda reappeared among them. Cohen himself took occasion to intimate that although the diamond ring, let alone a little longer, would have bred more money, he did not mind *that*—not a sixpence—when compared with the pleasure of the women and children in seeing a young gentleman whose first visit had been so agreeable that they had "done nothing but talk of it ever since." Young Mrs Cohen was very sorry that baby was asleep, and then very glad that Adelaide was not yet gone to bed, entreating Deronda not to stay in the shop but to go forthwith into the parlour to see "mother and the children." He willingly accepted the invitation, having provided himself

with portable presents; a set of paper figures for Adelaide, and an ivory cup and ball for Jacob.

The grandmother had a pack of cards before her and was making "plates" with the children. A plate had just been thrown down and kept itself whole.

"Stop!" said Jacob, running up to Deronda as he entered. "Don't tread on my plate. Stop and see me throw it up again."

Deronda complied, exchanging a smile of understanding with the grandmother, and the plate bore several tossings before it came to pieces; then the visitor was allowed to come forward and seat himself. He observed that the door from which Mordecai had issued on the former visit was now closed, but he wished to show his interest in the Cohens before disclosing a yet stronger interest in their singular inmate.

It was not until he had Adelaide on his knee, and was setting up the paper figures in their dance on the table, while Jacob was already practising with the cup and ball, that Deronda said—

"Is Mordecai in just now?"

"Where is he, Addy?" said Cohen, who had seized an interval of business to come and look on.

"In the workroom there," said his wife, nodding towards the closed door.

"The fact is, sir," said Cohen, "we don't know what's come to him this last day or two. He's always what I may call a little touched, you know"—here Cohen pointed to his own forehead—"not quite to say rational in all things, like you and me; but he's mostly wonderful regular and industrious as far as a poor creature can be, and takes as much delight in the boy as anybody could. But this last day or two he's been moving about like a sleep-walker, or else sitting as still as a wax figure."

"It's the disease, poor dear creature," said the grandmother, tenderly. "I doubt whether he can stand long against it."

"No; I think it's only something he's got in his head," said Mrs Cohen the younger. "He's been turning over writing continually, and when I speak to him it takes him ever so long to hear and answer."

"You may think us a little weak ourselves," said Cohen, apologetically. "But my wife and mother wouldn't part with him if he was a still worse encumbrance. It isn't that we don't know the long and short of matters, but it's our principle. There's fools do business at a loss and don't know it. I'm not one of 'em."

"Oh, Mordecai carries a blessing inside him," said the grandmother.

"He's got something the matter inside him," said Jacob, coming up to correct this erratum of his grandmother's. "He said he couldn't talk to me, and he wouldn't have a bit o' bun."

"So far from wondering at your feeling for him," said Deronda, "I already feel something of the same sort myself. I have lately talked to him at Ram's book-shop—in fact, I promised to call for him here, that we might go out together."

"That's it, then!" said Cohen, slapping his knee. "He's been expecting you, and it's taken hold of him. I suppose he talks about his learning to you. It's uncommonly kind of *you*, sir; for I don't suppose there's much to be got out of it, else it wouldn't have left him where he is. But there's the shop." Cohen hurried out, and Jacob, who had been listening inconveniently near to Deronda's elbow, said to him with obliging familiarity, "I'll call Mordecai for you, if you like."

"No, Jacob," said his mother; "open the door for the gentleman, and let him go in himself. Hush! Don't make a noise."

Skilful Jacob seemed to enter into the play, and turned the handle of the door as noiselessly as

possible, while Deronda went behind him and stood on the threshold. The small room was lit only by a dying fire and one candle with a shade over it. On the board fixed under the window, various objects of jewellery were scattered: some books were heaped in the corner beyond them. Mordecai was seated on a high chair at the board with his back to the door, his hands resting on each other and on the board, a watch propped on a stand before him. He was in a state of expectation as sickening as that of a prisoner listening for the delayed deliverance — when he heard Deronda's voice saying, "I am come for you. Are you ready?"

Immediately he turned without speaking, seized his furred cap which lay near, and moved to join Deronda. It was but a moment before they were both in the sitting-room, and Jacob, noticing the change in his friend's air and expression, seized him by the arm and said, "See my cup and ball!" sending the ball up close to Mordecai's face, as something likely to cheer a convalescent. It was a sign of the relieved tension in Mordecai's mind that he could smile and say, "Fine, fine!"

"You have forgotten your greatcoat and comforter," said young Mrs Cohen, and he went back into the workroom and got them.

"He's come to life again, do you see?" said Cohen, who had re-entered—speaking in an undertone. "I told you so: I'm mostly right." Then in his usual voice, "Well, sir, we mustn't detain you now, I suppose; but I hope this isn't the last time we shall see you."

"Shall you come again?" said Jacob, advancing. "See, I can catch the ball; I'll bet I catch it without stopping, if you come again."

"He has clever hands," said Deronda, looking at the grandmother. "Which side of the family does he get them from?"

But the grandmother only nodded towards her son, who said promptly, "My side. My wife's family are not in that line. But, bless your soul! ours is a sort of cleverness as good as gutta percha; you can twist it which way you like. There's nothing some old gentlemen won't do if you set 'em to it." Here Cohen winked down at Jacob's back, but it was doubtful whether this judicious allusiveness answered its purpose, for its subject gave a nasal whinnying laugh and stamped about singing "Old gentlemen, old gentlemen," in chiming cadence.

Deronda thought, "I shall never know anything decisive about these people until I ask Cohen point-blank whether he lost a sister named

Mirah when she was six years old." The decisive moment did not yet seem easy for him to face. Still his first sense of repulsion at the commonness of these people was beginning to be tempered with kindlier feeling. However unrefined their airs and speech might be, he was forced to admit some moral refinement in their treatment of the consumptive workman, whose mental distinction impressed them chiefly as a harmless, silent raving.

"The Cohens seem to have an affection for you," said Deronda, as soon as he and Mordecai were off the doorstep.

"And I for them," was the immediate answer. "They have the heart of the Israelite within them, though they are as the horse and the mule, without understanding beyond the narrow path they tread."

"I have caused you some uneasiness, I fear," said Deronda, "by my slowness in fulfilling my promise. I wished to come yesterday, but I found it impossible."

"Yes—yes, I trusted you. But it is true I have been uneasy, for the spirit of my youth has been stirred within me, and this body is not strong enough to bear the beating of its wings. I am as a man bound and imprisoned through long years:

behold him brought to speech of his fellow and his limbs set free: he weeps, he totters, the joy within him threatens to break and overthrow the tabernacle of flesh."

"You must not speak too much in this evening air," said Deronda, feeling Mordecai's words of reliance like so many cords binding him painfully. "Cover your mouth with the woollen scarf. We are going to the *Hand and Banner*, I suppose, and shall be in private there?"

"No, that is my trouble that you did not come yesterday. For this is the evening of the club I spoke of, and we might not have any minutes alone until late, when all the rest are gone. Perhaps we had better seek another place. But I am used to that only. In new places the outer world presses on me and narrows the inward vision. And the people there are familiar with my face."

"I don't mind the club if I am allowed to go in," said Deronda. "It is enough that you like this place best. If we have not enough time, I will come again. What sort of club is it?"

"It is called, 'The Philosophers.' They are few—like the cedars of Lebanon—poor men given to thought. But none so poor as I am: and sometimes visitors of higher worldly rank have

been brought. We are allowed to introduce a friend, who is interested in our topics. Each orders beer or some other kind of drink, in payment for the room. Most of them smoke. I have gone when I could, for there are other men of my race who come, and sometimes I have broken silence. I have pleased myself with a faint likeness between these poor philosophers and the Masters who handed down the thought of our race—the great Transmitters, who laboured with their hands for scant bread, but preserved and enlarged for us the heritage of memory, and saved the soul of Israel alive as a seed among the tombs. The heart pleases itself with faint resemblances."

"I shall be very glad to go and sit among them, if that will suit you. It is a sort of meeting I should like to join in," said Deronda, not without relief in the prospect of an interval before he went through the strain of his next private conversation with Mordecai.

In three minutes they had opened the glazed door with the red curtain, and were in the little parlour, hardly much more than fifteen feet square, where the gaslight shone through a slight haze of smoke on what to Deronda was a new and striking scene. Half-a-dozen men of various ages, from between twenty and thirty to fifty, all shab-

bily dressed, most of them with clay pipes in their mouths, were listening with a look of concentrated intelligence to a man in a pepper-and-salt dress, with blond hair, short nose, broad forehead and general breadth, who, holding his pipe slightly uplifted in the left hand, and beating his knee with the right, was just finishing a quotation from Shelley (the comparison of the avalanche in his "Prometheus Unbound")—

> "As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
> Is loosened, and the nations echo round."

The entrance of the new-comers broke the fixity of attention, and called for a rearrangement of seats in the too narrow semicircle round the fireplace and the table holding the glasses, spare pipes, and tobacco. This was the soberest of clubs; but sobriety is no reason why smoking and "taking something" should be less imperiously needed as a means of getting a decent status in company and debate. Mordecai was received with welcoming voices which had a slight cadence of compassion in them, but naturally all glances passed immediately to his companion.

"I have brought a friend who is interested in our subjects," said Mordecai. "He has travelled and studied much."

"Is the gentleman anonymous? Is he a Great

Unknown?" said the broad-chested quoter of Shelley, with a humorous air.

"My name is Daniel Deronda. I am unknown, but not in any sense great." The smile breaking over the stranger's grave face as he said this was so agreeable, that there was a general indistinct murmur, equivalent to a "Hear, hear," and the broad man said—

"You recommend the name, sir, and are welcome. Here, Mordecai, come to this corner against me," he added, evidently wishing to give the coziest place to the one who most needed it.

Deronda was well satisfied to get a seat on the opposite side, where his general survey of the party easily included Mordecai, who remained an eminently striking object in this group of sharply-characterised figures, more than one of whom, even to Daniel's little exercised discrimination, seemed probably of Jewish descent.

In fact, pure English blood (if leech or lancet can furnish us with the precise product) did not declare itself predominantly in the party at present assembled. Miller, the broad man, an exceptional second-hand bookseller who knew the insides of books, had at least grand-parents who called themselves German, and possibly far-away ancestors who denied themselves to be Jews;

Buchan, the saddler, was Scotch ; Pash, the watch-maker, was a small, dark, vivacious, triple-baked Jew; Gideon, the optical instrument maker, was a Jew of the red-haired, generous-featured type easily passing for Englishmen of unusually cordial manners ; and Croop, the dark-eyed shoemaker, was probably more Celtic than he knew. Only three would have been discernible everywhere as Englishmen: the wood-inlayer Goodwin, well-built, open-faced, pleasant-voiced ; the florid laboratory assistant Marrables ; and Lilly, the pale, neat-faced copying clerk, whose light-brown hair was set up in a small parallelogram above his well-filled forehead, and whose shirt, taken with an otherwise seedy costume, had a freshness that might be called insular, and perhaps even something narrower.

Certainly a company select of the select among poor men, being drawn together by a taste not prevalent even among the privileged heirs of learning and its institutions ; and not likely to amuse any gentleman in search of crime or low comedy as the ground of interest in people whose weekly income is only divisible into shillings. Deronda, even if he had not been more than usually inclined to gravity under the influence of what was pending between him and Mordecai, would not have set himself to find food for laughter

in the various shades of departure from the tone of polished society sure to be observable in the air and talk of these men who had probably snatched knowledge as most of us snatch indulgences, making the utmost of scant opportunity. He looked around him with the quiet air of respect habitual to him among equals, ordered whisky and water, and offered the contents of his cigar-case, which, characteristically enough, he always carried and hardly ever used for his own behoof, having reasons for not smoking himself, but liking to indulge others. Perhaps it was his weakness to be afraid of seeming strait-laced, and turning himself into a sort of diagram instead of a growth which can exercise the guiding attraction of fellowship. That he made a decidedly winning impression on the company was proved by their showing themselves no less at ease than before, and desirous of quickly resuming their interrupted talk.

"This is what I call one of our touch and go nights, sir," said Miller, who was implicitly accepted as a sort of moderator—addressing Deronda by way of explanation, and nodding toward each person whose name he mentioned. "Sometimes we stick pretty close to the point. But to-night our friend Pash, there, brought up the law of progress, and we got on statistics; then

Lilly, there, saying we knew well enough before counting that in the same state of society the same sort of things would happen, and it was no more wonder that quantities should remain the same than that qualities should remain the same, for in relation to society numbers are qualities—the number of drunkards is a quality in society—the numbers are an index to the qualities, and give us no instruction, only setting us to consider the causes of difference between different social states —Lilly saying this, we went off on the causes of social change, and when you came in I was going upon the power of ideas, which I hold to be the main transforming cause."

"I don't hold with you there, Miller," said Goodwin, the inlayer, more concerned to carry on the subject than to wait for a word from the new guest. "For either you mean so many sorts of things by ideas that I get no knowledge by what you say, any more than if you said light was a cause; or else you mean a particular sort of ideas, and then I go against your meaning as too narrow. For, look at it in one way, all actions men put a bit of thought into are ideas—say, sowing seed, or making a canoe, or baking clay; and such ideas as these work themselves into life and go on growing with it, but they can't go apart from the material

that set them to work and makes a medium for them. It's the nature of wood and stone yielding to the knife that raises the idea of shaping them, and with plenty of wood and stone the shaping will go on. I look at it, that such ideas as are mixed straight away with all the other elements of life are powerful along with 'em. The slower the mixing, the less power they have. And as to the causes of social change, I look at it in this way—ideas are a sort of parliament, but there's a commonwealth outside, and a good deal of the commonwealth is working at change without knowing what the parliament is doing."

"But if you take ready mixing as your test of power," said Pash, "some of the least practical ideas beat everything. They spread without being understood, and enter into the language without being thought of."

"They may act by changing the distribution of gases," said Marrables; "instruments are getting so fine now, men may come to register the spread of a theory by observed changes in the atmosphere and corresponding changes in the nerves."

"Yes," said Pash, his dark face lighting up rather impishly, "there is the idea of nationalities; I daresay the wild asses are snuffing it, and getting more gregarious."

"You don't share that idea?" said Deronda, finding a piquant incongruity between Pash's sarcasm and the strong stamp of race on his features.

"Say rather, he does not share that spirit," said Mordecai, who had turned a melancholy glance on Pash. "Unless nationality is a feeling, what force can it have as an idea?"

"Granted, Mordecai," said Pash, quite good-humouredly. "And as the feeling of nationality is dying, I take the idea to be no better than a ghost, already walking to announce the death."

"A sentiment may seem to be dying and yet revive into strong life," said Deronda. "Nations have revived. We may live to see a great outburst of force in the Arabs, who are being inspired with a new zeal."

"Amen, amen," said Mordecai, looking at Deronda with a delight which was the beginning of recovered energy: his attitude was more upright, his face was less worn.

"That may hold with backward nations," said Pash, "but with us in Europe the sentiment of nationality is destined to die out. It will last a little longer in the quarters where oppression lasts, but nowhere else. The whole current of progress is setting against it."

"Ay," said Buchan, in a rapid thin Scotch tone which was like the letting in of a little cool air on the conversation, "ye've done well to bring us round to the point. Ye're all agreed that societies change—not always and everywhere—but on the whole and in the long-run. Now, with all deference, I would beg t'observe that we have got to examine the nature of changes before we have a warrant to call them progress, which word is supposed to include a bettering, though I apprehend it to be ill chosen for that purpose, since mere motion onward may carry us to a bog or a precipice. And the questions I would put are three: Is all change in the direction of progress? if not, how shall we discern which change is progress and which not? and thirdly, how far and in what ways can we act upon the course of change so as to promote it where it is beneficial, and divert it where it is injurious?"

But Buchan's attempt to impose his method on the talk was a failure. Lilly immediately said—

"Change and progress are merged in the idea of development. The laws of development are being discovered, and changes taking place according to them are necessarily progressive; that is to say, if we have any notion of progress or improvement opposed to them, the notion is a mistake."

"I really can't see how you arrive at that sort of certitude about changes by calling them development," said Deronda. "There will still remain the degrees of inevitableness in relation to our own will and acts, and the degrees of wisdom in hastening or retarding; there will still remain the danger of mistaking a tendency which should be resisted for an inevitable law that we must adjust ourselves to,—which seems to me as bad a superstition or false god as any that has been set up without the ceremonies of philosophising."

"That is a truth," said Mordecai. "Woe to the men who see no place for resistance in this generation! I believe in a growth, a passage, and a new unfolding of life whereof the seed is more perfect, more charged with the elements that are pregnant with diviner form. The life of a people grows, it is knit together and yet expanded, in joy and sorrow, in thought and action; it absorbs the thought of other nations into its own forms, and gives back the thought as new wealth to the world; it is a power and an organ in the great body of the nations. But there may come a check, an arrest; memories may be stifled, and love may be faint for the lack of them; or memories may shrink into withered relics—the soul of a people, whereby they know themselves to be one, may

seem to be dying for want of common action. But who shall say, 'The fountain of their life is dried up, they shall for ever cease to be a nation'? Who shall say it? Not he who feels the life of his people stirring within his own. Shall he say, 'That way events are wending, I will not resist'? His very soul is resistance, and is as a seed of fire that may enkindle the souls of multitudes, and make a new pathway for events."

"I don't deny patriotism," said Gideon, "but we all know you have a particular meaning, Mordecai. You know Mordecai's way of thinking, I suppose." Here Gideon had turned to Deronda, who sat next to him; but without waiting for an answer, he went on. "I'm a rational Jew myself. I stand by my people as a sort of family relations, and I am for keeping up our worship in a rational way. I don't approve of our people getting baptised, because I don't believe in a Jew's conversion to the Gentile part of Christianity. And now we have political equality, there's no excuse for a pretence of that sort. But I am for getting rid of all our superstitions and exclusiveness. There's no reason now why we shouldn't melt gradually into the populations we live among. That's the order of the day in point of progress. I would as soon my children married Christians as Jews. And

I'm for the old maxim, 'A man's country is where he's well off.'"

"That country's not so easy to find, Gideon," said the rapid Pash, with a shrug and grimace. "You get ten shillings a-week more than I do, and have only half the number of children. If somebody will introduce a brisk trade in watches among the 'Jerusalem wares,' I'll go—eh, Mordecai, what do you say?"

Deronda, all ear for these hints of Mordecai's opinion, was inwardly wondering at his persistence in coming to this club. For an enthusiastic spirit to meet continually the fixed indifference of men familiar with the object of his enthusiasm is the acceptance of a slow martyrdom, beside which the fate of a missionary tomahawked without any considerate rejection of his doctrines seems hardly worthy of compassion. But Mordecai gave no sign of shrinking: this was a moment of spiritual fulness, and he cared more for the utterance of his faith than for its immediate reception. With a fervour which had no temper in it, but seemed rather the rush of feeling in the opportunity of speech, he answered Pash:—

"What I say is, let every man keep far away from the brotherhood and the inheritance he despises. Thousands on thousands of our race have

mixed with the Gentile as Celt with Saxon, and they may inherit the blessing that belongs to the Gentile. You cannot follow them. You are one of the multitudes over this globe who must walk among the nations and be known as Jews, and with words on their lips which mean, 'I wish I had not been born a Jew, I disown any bond with the long travail of my race, I will outdo the Gentile in mocking at our separateness,' they all the while feel breathing on them the breath of contempt because they are Jews, and they will breathe it back poisonously. Can a fresh-made garment of citizenship weave itself straightway into the flesh and change the slow deposit of eighteen centuries? What is the citizenship of him who walks among a people he has no hearty kindred and fellowship with, and has lost the sense of brotherhood with his own race? It is a charter of selfish ambition and rivalry in low greed. He is an alien in spirit, whatever he may be in form; he sucks the blood of mankind, he is not a man. Sharing in no love, sharing in no subjection of the soul, he mocks at all. Is it not truth I speak, Pash?"

"Not exactly, Mordecai," said Pash, "if you mean that I think the worse of myself for being a Jew. What I thank our fathers for is that there

are fewer blockheads among us than among other races. But perhaps you are right in thinking the Christians don't like me so well for it."

"Catholics and Protestants have not liked each other much better," said the genial Gideon. "We must wait patiently for prejudices to die out. Many of our people are on a footing with the best, and there's been a good filtering of our blood into high families. I am for making our expectations rational."

"And so am I!" said Mordecai, quickly, leaning forward with the eagerness of one who pleads in some decisive crisis, his long thin hands clasped together on his lap. "I too claim to be a rational Jew. But what is it to be rational—what is it to feel the light of the divine reason growing stronger within and without? It is to see more and more of the hidden bonds that bind and consecrate change as a dependent growth—yea, consecrate it with kinship: the past becomes my parent, and the future stretches towards me the appealing arms of children. Is it rational to drain away the sap of special kindred that makes the families of man rich in interchanged wealth, and various as the forests are various with the glory of the cedar and the palm? When it is rational to say, 'I know not my father or my mother, let my chil-

dren be aliens to me, that no prayer of mine may touch them,' then it will be rational for the Jew to say, 'I will seek to know no difference between me and the Gentile, I will not cherish the prophetic consciousness of our nationality—let the Hebrew cease to be, and let all his memorials be antiquarian trifles, dead as the wall-paintings of a conjectured race. Yet let his child learn by rote the speech of the Greek, where he adjures his fellow-citizens by the bravery of those who fought foremost at Marathon—let him learn to say, that was noble in the Greek, that is the spirit of an immortal nation! But the Jew has no memories that bind him to action; let him laugh that his nation is degraded from a nation; let him hold the monuments of his law which carried within its frame the breath of social justice, of charity, and of household sanctities—let him hold the energy of the prophets, the patient care of the Masters, the fortitude of martyred generations, as mere stuff for a professorship. The business of the Jew in all things is to be even as the rich Gentile.'"

Mordecai threw himself back in his chair, and there was a moment's silence. Not one member of the club shared his point of view or his emotion; but his whole personality and speech had on them the effect of a dramatic representation which

had some pathos in it, though no practical consequences; and usually he was at once indulged and contradicted. Deronda's mind went back on what must have been the tragic pressure of outward conditions hindering this man, whose force he felt to be telling on himself, from making any world for his thought in the minds of others—like a poet among people of a strange speech, who may have a poetry of their own, but have no ear for his cadence, no answering thrill to his discovery of latent virtues in his mother tongue.

The cool Buchan was the first to speak, and hint the loss of time. "I submit," said he, "that ye're travelling away from the questions I put concerning progress."

"Say they're levanting, Buchan," said Miller, who liked his joke, and would not have objected to be called Voltairian. "Never mind. Let us have a Jewish night; we've not had one for a long while. Let us take the discussion on Jewish ground. I suppose we've no prejudice here; we're all philosophers; and we like our friends Mordecai, Pash, and Gideon, as well as if they were no more kin to Abraham than the rest of us. We're all related through Adam, until further showing to the contrary, and if you look into history we've all got some discreditable forefathers. So I mean

no offence when I say I don't think any great things of the part the Jewish people have played in the world. What then? I think they were iniquitously dealt by in past times. And I suppose we don't want any men to be maltreated, white, black, brown, or yellow—I know I've just given my half-crown to the contrary. And that reminds me, I've a curious old German book—I can't read it myself, but a friend was reading out of it to me the other day—about the prejudices against the Jews, and the stories used to be told against 'em, and what do you think one was? Why, that they're punished with a bad odour in their bodies; and *that*, says the author, date 1715 (I've just been pricing and marking the book this very morning)—that is true, for the ancients spoke of it. But then, he says, the other things are fables, such as that the odour goes away all at once when they're baptised, and that every one of the ten tribes, mind you, all the ten being concerned in the crucifixion, has got a particular punishment over and above the smell:—Asher, I remember, has the right arm a handbreadth shorter than the left, and Naphthali has pigs' ears and a smell of live pork. What do you think of that? There's been a good deal of fun made of rabbinical fables, but in point of fables my opinion

is, that all over the world it's six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. However, as I said before, I hold with the philosophers of the last century that the Jews have played no great part as a people, though Pash will have it they're clever enough to beat all the rest of the world. But if so, I ask, why haven't they done it?"

"For the same reason that the cleverest men in the country don't get themselves or their ideas into Parliament," said the ready Pash; "because the blockheads are too many for 'em."

"That is a vain question," said Mordecai, "whether our people would beat the rest of the world. Each nation has its own work, and is a member of the world, enriched by the work of each. But it is true, as Jehuda-ha-Levi first said, that Israel is the heart of mankind, if we mean by heart the core of affection which binds a race and its families in dutiful love, and the reverence for the human body which lifts the needs of our animal life into religion, and the tenderness which is merciful to the poor and weak and to the dumb creature that wears the yoke for us."

"They're not behind any nation in arrogance," said Lilly; "and if they have got in the rear, it has not been because they were over-modest."

"Oh, every nation brags in its turn," said Miller.

"Yes," said Pash, "and some of them in the Hebrew text."

"Well, whatever the Jews contributed at one time, they are a stand-still people," said Lilly. "They are the type of obstinate adherence to the superannuated. They may show good abilities when they take up liberal ideas, but as a race they have no development in them."

"That is false!" said Mordecai, leaning forward again with his former eagerness. "Let their history be known and examined; let the seed be sifted, let its beginning be traced to the weed of the wilderness—the more glorious will be the energy that transformed it. Where else is there a nation of whom it may be as truly said that their religion and law and moral life mingled as the stream of blood in the heart and made one growth—where else a people who kept and enlarged their spiritual store at the very time when they were hunted with a hatred as fierce as the forest-fires that chase the wild beast from his covert? There is a fable of the Roman, that swimming to save his life he held the roll of his writings between his teeth and saved them from the waters. But how much more than that is true of our race? They struggled to keep their place among the nations like heroes—yea,

when the hand was hacked off, they clung with the teeth; but when the plough and the harrow had passed over the last visible signs of their national covenant, and the fruitfulness of their land was stifled with the blood of the sowers and planters, they said, 'The spirit is alive, let us make it a lasting habitation—lasting because movable—so that it may be carried from generation to generation, and our sons unborn may be rich in the things that have been, and possess a hope built on an unchangeable foundation.' They said it and they wrought it, though often breathing with scant life, as in a coffin, or as lying wounded amid a heap of slain. Hooted and scared like the unowned dog, the Hebrew made himself envied for his wealth and wisdom, and was bled of them to fill the bath of Gentile luxury; he absorbed knowledge, he diffused it; his dispersed race was a new Phœnicia working the mines of Greece and carrying their products to the world. The native spirit of our tradition was not to stand still, but to use records as a seed, and draw out the compressed virtues of law and prophecy; and while the Gentile, who had said, 'What is yours is ours, and no longer yours,' was reading the letter of our law as a dark inscription, or was turning its parchments into shoe-soles for

an army rabid with lust and cruelty, our Masters were still enlarging and illuminating with fresh-fed interpretation. But the dispersion was wide, the yoke of oppression was a spiked torture as well as a load; the exile was forced afar among brutish people, where the consciousness of his race was no clearer to him than the light of the sun to our fathers in the Roman persecution, who had their hiding-place in a cave, and knew not that it was day save by the dimmer burning of their candles. What wonder that multitudes of our people are ignorant, narrow, superstitious? What wonder?"

Here Mordecai, whose seat was next the fire-place, rose and leaned his arm on the little shelf; his excitement had risen, though his voice, which had begun with unusual strength, was getting hoarser.

"What wonder? The night is unto them, that they have no vision; in their darkness they are unable to divine; the sun is gone down over the prophets, and the day is dark above them; their observances are as nameless relics. But which among the chief of the Gentile nations has not an ignorant multitude? They scorn our people's ignorant observance; but the most accursed ignorance is that which has no observance—sunk to

the cunning greed of the fox, to which all law is no more than a trap or the cry of the worrying hound. There is a degradation deep down below the memory that has withered into superstition. In the multitudes of the ignorant on three continents who observe our rites and make the confession of the divine Unity, the soul of Judaism is not dead. Revive the organic centre: let the unity of Israel which has made the growth and form of its religion be an outward reality. Looking towards a land and a polity, our dispersed people in all the ends of the earth may share the dignity of a national life which has a voice among the peoples of the East and the West—which will plant the wisdom and skill of our race so that it may be, as of old, a medium of transmission and understanding. Let that come to pass, and the living warmth will spread to the weak extremities of Israel, and superstition will vanish, not in the lawlessness of the renegade, but in the illumination of great facts which widen feeling, and make all knowledge alive as the young offspring of beloved memories."

Mordecai's voice had sunk, but with the hectic brilliancy of his gaze it was not the less impressive. His extraordinary excitement was certainly due to Deronda's presence: it was to Deronda that he

was speaking, and the moment had a testamentary solemnity for him which rallied all his powers. Yet the presence of those other familiar men promoted expression, for they embodied the indifference which gave a resistant energy to his speech. Not that he looked at Deronda: he seemed to see nothing immediately around him, and if any one had grasped him he would probably not have known it. Again the former words came back to Deronda's mind,—"You must hope my hopes—see the vision I point to—behold a glory where I behold it." They came now with gathered pathos. Before him stood, as a living, suffering reality, what hitherto he had only seen as an effort of imagination, which, in its comparative faintness, yet carried a suspicion of being exaggerated: a man steeped in poverty and obscurity, weakened by disease, consciously within the shadow of advancing death, but living an intense life in an invisible past and future, careless of his personal lot, except for its possibly making some obstruction to a conceived good which he would never share except as a brief inward vision—a day afar off, whose sun would never warm him, but into which he threw his soul's desire, with a passion often wanting to the personal motives of healthy youth. It was something more than a grandiose

transfiguration of the parental love that toils, renounces, endures, resists the suicidal promptings of despair—all because of the little ones, whose future becomes present to the yearning gaze of anxiety.

All eyes were fixed on Mordecai as he sat down again, and none with unkindness; but it happened that the one who felt the most kindly was the most prompted to speak in opposition. This was the genial and rational Gideon, who also was not without a sense that he was addressing the guest of the evening. He said—

"You have your own way of looking at things, Mordecai, and, as you say, your own way seems to you rational. I know you don't hold with the restoration to Judea by miracle, and so on; but you are as well aware as I am that the subject has been mixed with a heap of nonsense both by Jews and Christians. And as to the connection of our race with Palestine, it has been perverted by superstition till it's as demoralising as the old poor-law. The raff and scum go there to be maintained like able-bodied paupers, and to be taken special care of by the angel Gabriel when they die. It's no use fighting against facts. We must look where they point; that's what I call rationality. The most learned and liberal men among us who are attached to our religion are for clearing

our liturgy of all such notions as a literal fulfilment of the prophecies about restoration, and so on. Prune it of a few useless rites and literal interpretations of that sort, and our religion is the simplest of all religions, and makes no barrier, but a union, between us and the rest of the world."

"As plain as a pike-staff," said Pash, with an ironical laugh. "You pluck it up by the roots, strip off the leaves and bark, shave off the knots, and smooth it at top and bottom; put it where you will, it will do no harm, it will never sprout. You may make a handle of it, or you may throw it on the bonfire of scoured rubbish. I don't see why our rubbish is to be held sacred any more than the rubbish of Brahmanism or Bouddhism."

"No," said Mordecai, "no, Pash, because you have lost the heart of the Jew. Community was felt before it was called good. I praise no superstition, I praise the living fountains of enlarging belief. What is growth, completion, development? You began with that question, I apply it to the history of our people. I say that the effect of our separateness will not be completed and have its highest transformation unless our race takes on again the character of a nationality. That is the fulfilment of the religious trust that moulded them

into a people, whose life has made half the inspiration of the world. What is it to me that the ten tribes are lost untraceably, or that multitudes of the children of Judah have mixed themselves with the Gentile populations as a river with rivers? Behold our people still! Their skirts spread afar; they are torn and soiled and trodden on; but there is a jewelled breastplate. Let the wealthy men, the monarchs of commerce, the learned in all knowledge, the skilful in all arts, the speakers, the political counsellors, who carry in their veins the Hebrew blood which has maintained its vigour in all climates, and the pliancy of the Hebrew genius for which difficulty means new device—let them say, 'we will lift up a standard, we will unite in a labour hard but glorious like that of Moses and Ezra, a labour which shall be a worthy fruit of the long anguish whereby our fathers maintained their separateness, refusing the ease of falsehood.' They have wealth enough to redeem the soil from debauched and paupered conquerors; they have the skill of the statesman to devise, the tongue of the orator to persuade. And is there no prophet or poet among us to make the ears of Christian Europe tingle with shame at the hideous obloquy of Christian strife which the Turk gazes at as at the fighting of beasts to which

he has lent an arena? There is store of wisdom among us to found a new Jewish polity, grand, simple, just, like the old—a republic where there is equality of protection, an equality which shone like a star on the forehead of our ancient community, and gave it more than the brightness of Western freedom amid the despotisms of the East. Then our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and brain to watch and guide and execute; the outraged Jew shall have a defence in the court of nations, as the outraged Englishman or American. And the world will gain as Israel gains. For there will be a community in the van of the East which carries the culture and the sympathies of every great nation in its bosom; there will be a land set for a halting-place of enmities, a neutral ground for the East as Belgium is for the West. Difficulties? I know there are difficulties. But let the spirit of sublime achievement move in the great among our people, and the work will begin."

"Ay, we may safely admit that, Mordecai," said Pash. "When there are great men on 'Change, and high-flying professors converted to your doctrine, difficulties will vanish like smoke."

Deronda, inclined by nature to take the side of those on whom the arrows of scorn were falling,

could not help replying to Pash's outfling, and said—

"If we look back to the history of efforts which have made great changes, it is astonishing how many of them seemed hopeless to those who looked on in the beginning. Take what we have all heard and seen something of—the effort after the unity of Italy, which we are sure soon to see accomplished to the very last boundary. Look into Mazzini's account of his first yearning, when he was a boy, after a restored greatness and a new freedom to Italy, and of his first efforts as a young man to rouse the same feelings in other young men, and get them to work towards a united nationality. Almost everything seemed against him: his countrymen were ignorant or indifferent, governments hostile, Europe incredulous. Of course the scorners often seemed wise. Yet you see the prophecy lay with him. As long as there is a remnant of national consciousness, I suppose nobody will deny that there may be a new stirring of memories and hopes which may inspire arduous action."

"Amen," said Mordecai, to whom Deronda's words were a cordial. "What is needed is the leaven—what is needed is the seed of fire. The heritage of Israel is beating in the pulses of mil-

lions; it lives in their veins as a power without understanding, like the morning exultation of herds; it is the inborn half of memory, moving as in a dream among writings on the walls, which it sees dimly but cannot divide into speech. Let the torch of visible community be lit! Let the reason of Israel disclose itself in a great outward deed, and let there be another great migration, another choosing of Israel to be a nationality whose members may still stretch to the ends of the earth, even as the sons of England and Germany, whom enterprise carries afar, but who still have a national hearth and a tribunal of national opinion. Will any say 'It cannot be'? Baruch Spinoza had not a faithful Jewish heart, though he had sucked the life of his intellect at the breasts of Jewish tradition. He laid bare his father's nakedness and said, 'They who scorn him have the higher wisdom.' Yet Baruch Spinoza confessed, he saw not why Israel should not again be a chosen nation. Who says that the history and literature of our race are dead? Are they not as living as the history and literature of Greece and Rome, which have inspired revolutions, enkindled the thought of Europe, and made the unrighteous powers tremble? These were an inheritance dug from the tomb. Ours is an inheritance that has

never ceased to quiver in millions of human frames."

Mordecai had stretched his arms upward, and his long thin hands quivered in the air for a moment after he had ceased to speak. Gideon was certainly a little moved, for though there was no long pause before he made a remark in objection, his tone was more mild and deprecatory than before; Pash, meanwhile, pressing his lips together, rubbing his black head with both his hands and wrinkling his brow horizontally, with the expression of one who differs from every speaker, but does not think it worth while to say so. There is a sort of human paste that when it comes near the fire of enthusiasm is only baked into harder shape.

"It may seem well enough on one side to make so much of our memories and inheritance as you do, Mordecai," said Gideon · "but there's another side. It isn't all gratitude and harmless glory. Our people have inherited a good deal of hatred. There's a pretty lot of curses still flying about, and stiff settled rancour inherited from the times of persecution. How will you justify keeping one sort of memory and throwing away the other? There are ugly debts standing on both sides."

"I justify the choice as all other choice is justi-

fied," said Mordecai. "I cherish nothing for the Jewish nation, I seek nothing for them, but the good which promises good to all the nations. The spirit of our religious life, which is one with our national life, is not hatred of aught but wrong. The Masters have said, an offence against man is worse than an offence against God. But what wonder if there is hatred in the breasts of Jews, who are children of the ignorant and oppressed—what wonder, since there is hatred in the breasts of Christians? Our national life was a growing light. Let the central fire be kindled again, and the light will reach afar. The degraded and scorned of our race will learn to think of their sacred land, not as a place for saintly beggary to await death in loathsome idleness, but as a republic where the Jewish spirit manifests itself in a new order founded on the old, purified, enriched by the experience our greatest sons have gathered from the life of the ages. How long is it?—only two centuries since a vessel carried over the ocean the beginning of the great North American nation. The people grew like meeting waters—they were various in habit and sect—there came a time, a century ago, when they needed a polity, and there were heroes of peace among them. What had they to form a polity

with but memories of Europe, corrected by the vision of a better? Let our wise and wealthy show themselves heroes. They have the memories of the East and West, and they have the full vision of a better. A new Persia with a purified religion magnified itself in art and wisdom. So will a new Judæa, poised between East and West —a covenant of reconciliation. Will any say, the prophetic vision of your race has been hopelessly mixed with folly and bigotry; the angel of progress has no message for Judaism—it is a half-buried city for the paid workers to lay open—the waters are rushing by it as a forsaken field? I say that the strongest principle of growth lies in human choice. The sons of Judah have to choose that God may again choose them. The Messianic time is the time when Israel shall will the planting of the national ensign. The Nile overflowed and rushed onward: the Egyptian could not choose the overflow, but he chose to work and make channels for the fructifying waters, and Egypt became the land of corn. Shall man, whose soul is set in the royalty of discernment and resolve, deny his rank and say, I am an onlooker, ask no choice or purpose of me? That is the blasphemy of this time. The divine principle of our race is action, choice, resolved

memory. Let us contradict the blasphemy, and help to will our own better future and the better future of the world—not renounce our higher gift and say, 'Let us be as if we were not among the populations;' but choose our full heritage, claim the brotherhood of our nation, and carry into it a new brotherhood with the nations of the Gentiles. The vision is there; it will be fulfilled."

With the last sentence, which was no more than a loud whisper, Mordecai let his chin sink on his breast and his eyelids fall. No one spoke. It was not the first time that he had insisted on the same ideas, but he was seen to-night in a new phase. The quiet tenacity of his ordinary self differed as much from his present exaltation of mood as a man in private talk, giving reasons for a revolution of which no sign is discernible, differs from one who feels himself an agent in a revolution begun. The dawn of fulfilment brought to his hope by Deronda's presence had wrought Mordecai's conception into a state of impassioned conviction, and he had found strength in his excitement to pour forth the unlocked floods of emotive argument, with a sense of haste as at a crisis which must be seized. But now there had come with the quiescence of fatigue a sort of thankful wonder that he had spoken—a con-

templation of his life as a journey which had come at last to this bourne. After a great excitement, the ebbing strength of impulse is apt to leave us in this aloofness from our active self. And in the moments after Mordecai had sunk his head, his mind was wandering along the paths of his youth, and all the hopes which had ended in bringing him hither.

Every one felt that the talk was ended, and the tone of phlegmatic discussion made unseasonable by Mordecai's high-pitched solemnity. It was as if they had come together to hear the blowing of the *shophar*, and had nothing to do now but to disperse. The movement was unusually general, and in less than ten minutes the room was empty of all except Mordecai and Deronda. "Good-nights" had been given to Mordecai, but it was evident he had not heard them, for he remained rapt and motionless. Deronda would not disturb this needful rest, but waited for a spontaneous movement.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"My spirit is too weak; mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky."

—KEATS.

AFTER a few minutes the unwonted stillness had penetrated Mordecai's consciousness, and he looked up at Deronda, not in the least with bewilderment and surprise, but with a gaze full of reposing satisfaction. Deronda rose and placed his chair nearer, where there could be no imagined need for raising the voice. Mordecai felt the action as a patient feels the gentleness that eases his pillow. He began to speak in a low tone, as if he were only thinking articulately, not trying to reach an audience.

"In the doctrine of the Cabbala, souls are born again and again in new bodies till they are perfected and purified, and a soul liberated from a worn-out body may join the fellow-soul that needs

it, that they may be perfected together, and their earthly work accomplished. Then they will depart from the mortal region, and leave place for new souls to be born out of the store in the eternal bosom. It is the lingering imperfection of the souls already born into the mortal region that hinders the birth of new souls and the preparation of the Messianic time:—thus the mind has given shape to what is hidden, as the shadow of what is known, and has spoken truth, though it were only in parable. When my long-wandering soul is liberated from this weary body, it will join yours, and its work will be perfected."

Mordecai's pause seemed an appeal which Deronda's feeling would not let him leave unanswered. He tried to make it truthful; but for Mordecai's ear it was inevitably filled with unspoken meanings. He only said—

"Everything I can in conscience do to make your life effective I will do."

"I know it," said Mordecai, in the tone of quiet certainty which dispenses with further assurance. "I heard it. You see it all—you are by my side on the mount of vision, and behold the paths of fulfilment which others deny."

He was silent a moment or two, and then went on meditatively—

"You will take up my life where it was broken. I feel myself back in that day when my life was broken. The bright morning sun was on the quay —it was at Trieste—the garments of men from all nations shone like jewels—the boats were pushing off—the Greek vessel that would land us at Beyrout was to start in an hour. I was going with a merchant as his clerk and companion. I said, I shall behold the lands and people of the East, and I shall speak with a fuller vision. I breathed then as you do, without labour; I had the light step and the endurance of youth; I could fast, I could sleep on the hard ground. I had wedded poverty, and I loved my bride—for poverty to me was freedom. My heart exulted as if it had been the heart of Moses ben Maimon, strong with the strength of threescore years, and knowing the work that was to fill them. It was the first time I had been south: the soul within me felt its former sun; and standing on the quay, where the ground I stood on seemed to send forth light, and the shadows had an azure glory as of spirits become visible, I felt myself in the flood of a glorious life, wherein my own small year-counted existence seemed to melt, so that I knew it not; and a great sob arose within me as at the rush of waters that were too strong a bliss. So I stood

there awaiting my companion; and I saw him not till he said: 'Ezra, I have been to the post, and there is your letter.'"

"Ezra!" exclaimed Deronda, unable to contain himself.

"Ezra," repeated Mordecai, affirmatively, engrossed in memory. "I was expecting a letter; for I wrote continually to my mother. And that sound of my name was like the touch of a wand that recalled me to the body wherefrom I had been released as it were to mingle with the ocean of human existence, free from the pressure of individual bondage. I opened the letter; and the name came again as a cry that would have disturbed me in the bosom of heaven, and made me yearn to reach where that sorrow was.—"Ezra, my son!"

Mordecai paused again, his imagination arrested by the grasp of that long-past moment. Deronda's mind was almost breathlessly suspended on what was coming. A strange possibility had suddenly presented itself. Mordecai's eyes were cast down in abstracted contemplation, and in a few moments he went on—

"She was a mother of whom it might have come —yea, might have come to be said, 'Her children arise up and call her blessed.' In her I understood

the meaning of that Master who, perceiving the footsteps of his mother, rose up and said, 'The majesty of the Eternal cometh near!' And that letter was her cry from the depths of anguish and desolation—the cry of a mother robbed of her little one. I was her eldest. Death had taken four babes, one after the other. Then came late my little sister, who was more than all the rest the desire of her mother's eyes; and the letter was a piercing cry to me—'Ezra, my son, I am robbed of her. He has taken her away, and left disgrace behind. They will never come again.'"—Here Mordecai lifted his eyes suddenly, laid his hand on Deronda's arm, and said, "Mine was the lot of Israel. For the sin of the father my soul must go into exile. For the sin of the father the work was broken, and the day of fulfilment delayed. She who bore me was desolate, disgraced, destitute. I turned back. On the instant I turned—her spirit, and the spirit of her fathers, who had worthy Jewish hearts, moved within me, and drew me. God, in whom dwells the universe, was within me as the strength of obedience. I turned and travelled with hardship—to save the scant money which she would need. I left the sunshine, and travelled into freezing cold. In the last stage I spent a night in exposure to cold and snow. And that was the beginning of this slow death."

Mordecai let his eyes wander again and removed his hand. Deronda resolutely repressed the questions which urged themselves within him. While Mordecai was in this state of emotion, no other confidence must be sought than what came spontaneously: nay, he himself felt a kindred emotion which made him dread his own speech as too momentous.

"But I worked. We were destitute—everything had been seized. And she was ill: the clutch of anguish was too strong for her, and wrought with some lurking disease. At times she could not stand for the beating of her heart, and the images in her brain became as chambers of terror, where she beheld my sister reared in evil. In the dead of night I heard her crying for her child. Then I rose, and we stretched forth our arms together and prayed. We poured forth our souls in desire that Mirah might be delivered from evil."

"Mirah?" Deronda repeated, wishing to assure himself that his ears had not been deceived by a forecasting imagination. "Did you say Mirah?"

"That was my little sister's name. After we had prayed for her my mother would rest awhile. It lasted hardly four years, and in the minutes before she died, we were praying the same prayer—

I aloud, she silently. Her soul went out upon its wings."

Have you never since heard of your sister?" said Deronda, as quietly as he could.

"Never. Never have I heard whether she was delivered according to our prayer. I know not, I know not. Who shall say where the pathways lie? The poisonous will of the wicked is strong. It poisoned my life—it is slowly stifling this breath. Death delivered my mother, and I felt it a blessedness that I was alone in the winters of suffering. But what are the winters now?—they are far off"—here Mordecai again rested his hand on Deronda's arm, and looked at him with that joy of the hectic patient which pierces us to sadness—"there is nothing to wail in the withering of my body. The work will be the better done. Once I said, the work of this beginning is mine, I am born to do it. Well, I shall do it. I shall live in you. I shall live in you."

His grasp had become convulsive in its force, and Deronda, agitated as he had never been before—the certainty that this was Mirah's brother suffusing his own strange relation to Mordecai with a new solemnity and tenderness—felt his strong young heart beating faster and his lips paling. He shrank from speech. He feared, in

Mordecai's present state of exaltation (already an alarming strain on his feeble frame) to utter a word of revelation about Mirah. He feared to make an answer below that high pitch of expectation which resembled a flash from a dying fire, making watchers fear to see it dying the faster. His dominant impulse was to do as he had once done before: he laid his firm gentle hand on the hand that grasped him. Mordecai's, as if it had a soul of its own—for he was not distinctly willing to do what he did—relaxed its grasp, and turned upward under Deronda's. As the two palms met and pressed each other, Mordecai recovered some sense of his surroundings, and said—

"Let us go now. I cannot talk any longer."

And in fact they parted at Cohen's door without having spoken to each other again—merely with another pressure of the hands.

Deronda felt a weight on him which was half joy, half anxiety. The joy of finding in Mirah's brother a nature even more than worthy of that relation to her, had the weight of solemnity and sadness: the reunion of brother and sister was in reality the first stage of a supreme parting—like that farewell kiss which resembles greeting, that last glance of love which becomes the sharpest pang of sorrow. Then there was the weight of

anxiety about the revelation of the fact on both sides, and the arrangements it would be desirable to make beforehand. I suppose we should all have felt as Deronda did, without sinking into snobbishness or the notion that the primal duties of life demand a morning and an evening suit, that it was an admissible desire to free Mirah's first meeting with her brother from all jarring outward conditions. His own sense of deliverance from the dreaded relationship of the other Cohens, notwithstanding their good-nature, made him resolve if possible to keep them in the background for Mirah, until her acquaintance with them would be an unmarred rendering of gratitude for any kindness they had shown towards her brother. On all accounts he wished to give Mordecai surroundings not only more suited to his frail bodily condition, but less of a hindrance to easy intercourse, even apart from the decisive prospect of Mirah's taking up her abode with her brother, and tending him through the precious remnant of his life. In the heroic drama, great recognitions are not encumbered with these details; and certainly Deronda had as reverential an interest in Mordecai and Mirah as he could have had in the offspring of Agamemnon; but he was caring for destinies still moving in the dim streets of our earthly life,

not yet lifted among the constellations, and his task presented itself to him as difficult and delicate, especially in persuading Mordecai to change his abode and habits. Concerning Mirah's feeling and resolve he had no doubt: there would be a complete union of sentiment towards the departed mother, and Mirah would understand her brother's greatness. Yes, greatness: that was the word which Deronda now deliberately chose to signify the impression that Mordecai made on him. He said to himself, perhaps rather defiantly towards the more negative spirit within him, that this man, however erratic some of his interpretations might be—this consumptive Jewish workman in threadbare clothing, lodged by charity, delivering himself to hearers who took his thoughts without attaching more consequences to them than the Flemings to the ethereal chimes ringing above their market-places—had the chief elements of greatness: a mind consciously, energetically moving with the larger march of human destinies, but not the less full of conscience and tender heart for the footsteps that tread near and need a leaning-place; capable of conceiving and choosing a life's task with far-off issues, yet capable of the unapplauded heroism which turns off the road of achievement at the call of the nearer duty whose

effect lies within the beatings of the hearts that are close to us, as the hunger of the unfledged bird to the breast of its parent.

Deronda to-night was stirred with the feeling that the brief remnant of this fervid life had become his charge. He had been peculiarly wrought on by what he had seen at the club of the friendly indifference which Mordecai must have gone on encountering. His own experience of the small room that ardour can make for itself in ordinary minds had had the effect of increasing his reserve; and while tolerance was the easiest attitude to him, there was another bent in him also capable of becoming a weakness—the dislike to appear exceptional or to risk an ineffective insistance on his own opinion. But such caution appeared contemptible to him just now, when he for the first time saw in a complete picture and felt as a reality the lives that burn themselves out in solitary enthusiasm: martyrs of obscure circumstance, exiled in the rarity of their own minds, whose deliverances in other ears are no more than a long passionate soliloquy—unless perhaps at last, when they are nearing the invisible shores, signs of recognition and fulfilment may penetrate the cloud of loneliness; or perhaps it may be with them as with the dying Copernicus made to touch the first

printed copy of his book when the sense of touch was gone, seeing it only as a dim object through the deepening dusk.

Deronda had been brought near to one of those spiritual exiles, and it was in his nature to feel the relation as a strong claim, nay, to feel his imagination moving without repugnance in the direction of Mordecai's desires. With all his latent objection to schemes only definite in their generality and nebulous in detail—in the poise of his sentiments he felt at one with this man who had made a visionary selection of him: the lines of what may be called their emotional theory touched. He had not the Jewish consciousness, but he had a yearning, grown the stronger for the denial which had been his grievance, after the obligation of avowed filial and social ties. His feeling was ready for difficult obedience. In this way it came that he set about his new task ungrudgingly; and again he thought of Mrs Meyrick as his chief helper. To her first he must make known the discovery of Mirah's brother, and with her he must consult on all preliminaries of bringing the mutually lost together. Happily the best quarter for a consumptive patient did not lie too far off the small house at Chelsea, and the first office Deronda had to perform for this Hebrew prophet who claimed

him as a spiritual inheritor, was to get him a healthy lodging. Such is the irony of earthly mixtures, that the heroes have not always had carpets and tea-cups of their own; and, seen through the open window by the mackerel-vendor, may have been invited with some hopefulness to pay three hundred per cent in the form of fourpence. However, Deronda's mind was busy with a prospective arrangement for giving a furnished lodging some faint likeness to a refined home by dismantling his own chambers of his best old books in vellum, his easiest chair, and the bas-reliefs of Milton and Dante.

But was not Mirah to be there? What furniture can give such finish to a room as a tender woman's face?—and is there any harmony of tints that has such stirrings of delight as the sweet modulations of her voice? Here is one good, at least, thought Deronda, that comes to Mordecai from his having fixed his imagination on me. He has recovered a perfect sister, whose affection is waiting for him.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Fairy folk a-listening
Hear the seed sprout in the spring,
And for music to their dance
Hear the hedgerows wake from trance,
Sap that trembles into buds
Sending little rhythmic floods
Of fairy sound in fairy ears.
Thus all beauty that appears
Has birth as sound to finer sense
And lighter-clad intelligence.

AND Gwendolen?—She was thinking of Deronda much more than he was thinking of her—often wondering what were his ideas "about things," and how his life was occupied. But a lap-dog would be necessarily at a loss in framing to itself the motives and adventures of doghood at large; and it was as far from Gwendolen's conception that Deronda's life could be determined by the historical destiny of the Jews, as that he could rise into the air on a brazen horse, and so vanish from her horizon in the form of a twinkling star.

With all the sense of inferiority that had been

forced upon her, it was inevitable that she should imagine a larger place for herself in his thoughts than she actually possessed. They must be rather old and wise persons who are not apt to see their own anxiety or elation about themselves reflected in other minds; and Gwendolen, with her youth and inward solitude, may be excused for dwelling on signs of special interest in her shown by the one person who had impressed her with the feeling of submission, and for mistaking the colour and proportion of those signs in the mind of Deronda.

Meanwhile, what would he tell her that she ought to do? "He said, I must get more interest in others, and more knowledge, and that I must care about the best things—but how am I to begin?" She wondered what books he would tell her to take up to her own room, and recalled the famous writers that she had either not looked into or had found the most unreadable, with a half-smiling wish that she could mischievously ask Deronda if they were not the books called "medicine for the mind." Then she repented of her sauciness, and when she was safe from observation carried up a miscellaneous selection—Descartes, Bacon, Locke, Butler, Burke, Guizot—knowing, as a clever young lady of education, that these authors

were ornaments of mankind, feeling sure that Deronda had read them, and hoping that by dipping into them all in succession, with her rapid understanding she might get a point of view nearer to his level.

But it was astonishing how little time she found for these vast mental excursions. Constantly she had to be on the scene as Mrs Grandcourt, and to feel herself watched in that part by the exacting eyes of a husband who had found a motive to exercise his tenacity—that of making his marriage answer all the ends he chose, and with the more completeness the more he discerned any opposing will in her. And she herself, whatever rebellion might be going on within her, could not have made up her mind to failure in her representation. No feeling had yet reconciled her for a moment to any act, word, or look that would be a confession to the world; and what she most dreaded in herself was any violent impulse that would make an involuntary confession: it was the will to be silent in every other direction that had thrown the more impetuosity into her confidences towards Deronda, to whom her thought continually turned as a help against herself. Her riding, her hunting, her visiting and receiving of visits, were all performed in a spirit of achievement which served

instead of zest and young gladness, so that all round Diplow, in those weeks of the New Year, Mrs Grandcourt was regarded as wearing her honours with triumph.

"She disguises it under an air of taking everything as a matter of course," said Mrs Arrowpoint. "A stranger might suppose that she had condescended rather than risen. I always noticed that doubleness in her."

To her mother most of all Gwendolen was bent on acting complete satisfaction, and poor Mrs Davilow was so far deceived that she took the unexpected distance at which she was kept, in spite of what she felt to be Grandcourt's handsome behaviour in providing for her, as a comparative indifference in her daughter, now that marriage had created new interests. To be fetched to lunch and then to dinner along with the Gascoignes, to be driven back soon after breakfast the next morning, and to have brief calls from Gwendolen in which her husband waited for her outside either on horseback or sitting in the carriage, was all the intercourse allowed to the mother.

The truth was, that the second time Gwendolen proposed to invite her mother with Mr and Mrs Gascoigne, Grandcourt had at first been silent, and then drawled, "We can't be having *those people*

always. Gascoigne talks too much. Country clergy are always bores—with their confounded fuss about everything."

That speech was full of foreboding for Gwendolen. To have her mother classed under "those people" was enough to confirm the previous dread of bringing her too near. Still, she could not give the true reasons—she could not say to her mother, "Mr Grandcourt wants to recognise you as little as possible; and besides, it is better you should not see much of my married life, else you might find out that I am miserable." So she waived as lightly as she could every allusion to the subject; and when Mrs Davilow again hinted the possibility of her having a house close to Ryelands, Gwendolen said, "It would not be so nice for you as being near the Rectory here, mamma. We shall perhaps be very little at Ryelands. You would miss my aunt and uncle."

And all the while this contemptuous veto of her husband's on any intimacy with her family, making her proudly shrink from giving them the aspect of troublesome pensioners, was rousing more inward inclination towards them. She had never felt so kindly towards her uncle, so much disposed to look back on his cheerful, complacent activity and spirit of kind management, even when

mistaken, as more of a comfort than the neutral loftiness which was every day chilling her. And here perhaps she was unconsciously finding some of that mental enlargement which it was hard to get from her occasional dashes into difficult authors, who instead of blending themselves with her daily agitations required her to dismiss them.

It was a delightful surprise one day when Mr and Mrs Gascoigne were at Offendene to see Gwendolen ride up without her husband—with the groom only. All, including the four girls and Miss Merry, seated in the dining-room at lunch, could see the welcome approach; and even the elder ones were not without something of Isabel's romantic sense that the beautiful sister on the splendid chesnut, which held its head as if proud to bear her, was a sort of Harriet Byron or Miss Wardour reappearing out of her "happiness ever after."

Her uncle went to the door to give her his hand, and she sprang from her horse with an air of alacrity which might well encourage that notion of guaranteed happiness; for Gwendolen was particularly bent to-day on setting her mother's heart at rest, and her unusual sense of freedom in being able to make this visit alone enabled her to bear up under the pressure of painful facts which were

urging themselves anew. The seven family kisses were not so tiresome as they used to be.

"Mr Grandcourt is gone out, so I determined to fill up the time by coming to you, mamma," said Gwendolen, as she laid down her hat and seated herself next to her mother; and then looking at her with a playfully monitory air, "That is a punishment to you for not wearing better lace on your head. You didn't think I should come and detect you—you dreadfully careless-about-yourself mamma!" She gave a caressing touch to the dear head.

"Scold me, dear," said Mrs Davilow, her delicate worn face flushing with delight. "But I wish there were something you could eat after your ride—instead of these scraps. Let Jocosa make you a cup of chocolate in your old way. You used to like that."

Miss Merry immediately rose and went out, though Gwendolen said, "Oh no, a piece of bread, or one of those hard biscuits. I can't think about eating. I am come to say good-bye."

"What! going to Ryelands again?" said Mr Gascoigne.

"No, we are going to town," said Gwendolen, beginning to break up a piece of bread, but puting no morsel into her mouth.

"It is rather early to go to town," said Mrs Gascoigne, "and Mr Grandcourt not in Parliament."

"Oh, there is only one more day's hunting to be had, and Henleigh has some business in town with lawyers, I think," said Gwendolen. "I am very glad. I shall like to go to town."

"You will see your house in Grosvenor Square," said Mrs Davilow. She and the girls were devouring with their eyes every movement of their goddess, soon to vanish.

"Yes," said Gwendolen, in a tone of assent to the interest of that expectation. "And there is so much to be seen and done in town."

"I wish, my dear Gwendolen," said Mr Gascoigne, in a tone of cordial advice, "that you would use your influence with Mr Grandcourt to induce him to enter Parliament. A man of his position should make his weight felt in politics. The best judges are confident that the Ministry will have to appeal to the country on this question of further Reform, and Mr Grandcourt should be ready for the opportunity. I am not quite sure that his opinions and mine accord entirely; I have not heard him express himself very fully. But I don't look at the matter from that point of view. I am thinking of your husband's standing in the

country. And he is now come to that stage of life when a man like him should enter into public affairs. A wife has great influence with her husband. Use yours in that direction, my dear."

The Rector felt that he was acquitting himself of a duty here, and giving something like the aspect of a public benefit to his niece's match. To Gwendolen the whole speech had the flavour of bitter comedy. If she had been merry, she must have laughed at her uncle's explanation to her that he had not heard Grandcourt express himself very fully on politics. And the wife's great influence! General maxims about husbands and wives seemed now of a precarious usefulness. Gwendolen herself had once believed in her future influence as an omnipotence in managing—she did not know exactly what. But her chief concern at present was to give an answer that would be felt appropriate.

"I should be very glad, uncle. But I think Mr Grandcourt would not like the trouble of an election — at least, unless it could be without his making speeches. I thought candidates always made speeches."

"Not necessarily—to any great extent," said Mr Gascoigne. "A man of position and weight can get on without much of it. A county member

need have very little trouble in that way, and both out of the House and in it is liked the better for not being a speechifier. Tell Mr Grandcourt that I say so."

"Here comes Jocosa with my chocolate after all," said Gwendolen, escaping from a promise to give information that would certainly have been received in a way inconceivable to the good Rector, who, pushing his chair a little aside from the table and crossing his leg, looked as well as felt like a worthy specimen of a clergyman and magistrate giving experienced advice. Mr Gascoigne had come to the conclusion that Grandcourt was a proud man, but his own self-love, calmed through life by the consciousness of his general value and personal advantages, was not irritable enough to prevent him from hoping the best about his niece's husband because her uncle was kept rather haughtily at a distance. A certain aloofness must be allowed to the representative of an old family; you would not expect him to be on intimate terms even with abstractions. But Mrs Gascoigne was less dispassionate on her husband's account, and felt Grandcourt's haughtiness as something a little blameable in Gwendolen.

"Your uncle and Anna will very likely be in town about Easter," she said, with a vague sense

of expressing a slight discontent. "Dear Rex hopes to come out with honours and a fellowship, and he wants his father and Anna to meet him in London, that they may be jolly together, as he says. I shouldn't wonder if Lord Brackenshaw invited them, he has been so very kind since he came back to the Castle."

"I hope my uncle will bring Anna to stay in Grosvenor Square," said Gwendolen, risking herself so far, for the sake of the present moment, but in reality wishing that she might never be obliged to bring any of her family near Grandcourt again. "I am very glad of Rex's good fortune."

"We must not be premature, and rejoice too much beforehand," said the Rector, to whom this topic was the happiest in the world, and altogether allowable, now that the issue of that little affair about Gwendolen had been so satisfactory. "Not but that I am in correspondence with impartial judges, who have the highest hopes about my son, as a singularly clear-headed young man. And of his excellent disposition and principle I have had the best evidence."

"We shall have him a great lawyer some time," said Mrs Gascoigne.

"How very nice!" said Gwendolen, with a

concealed scepticism as to niceness in general, which made the word quite applicable to lawyers.

"Talking of Lord Brackenshaw's kindness," said Mrs Davilow, "you don't know how delightful he has been, Gwendolen. He has begged me to consider myself his guest in this house till I can get another that I like—he did it in the most graceful way. But now a house has turned up. Old Mr Jodson is dead, and we can have his house. It is just what I want; small, but with nothing hideous to make you miserable thinking about it. And it is only a mile from the Rectory. You remember the low white house nearly hidden by the trees, as we turn up the lane to the church?"

"Yes, but you have no furniture, poor mamma," said Gwendolen, in a melancholy tone.

"Oh, I am saving money for that. You know who has made me rather rich, dear," said Mrs Davilow, laying her hand on Gwendolen's. "And Jocosa really makes so little do for housekeeping —it is quite wonderful."

"Oh, please let me go up-stairs with you and arrange my hat, mamma," said Gwendolen, suddenly putting up her hand to her hair, and perhaps creating a desired disarrangement. Her heart was swelling, and she was ready to cry.

Her mother *must* have been worse off, if it had not been for Grandcourt. "I suppose I shall never see all this again," said Gwendolen, looking round her, as they entered the black and yellow bedroom, and then throwing herself into a chair in front of the glass with a little groan as of bodily fatigue. In the resolve not to cry she had become very pale.

"You are not well, dear?" said Mrs Davilow.

"No; that chocolate has made me sick," said Gwendolen, putting up her hand to be taken.

"I should be allowed to come to you if you were ill, darling," said Mrs Davilow, rather timidly, as she pressed the hand to her bosom. Something had made her sure to-day that her child loved her—needed her as much as ever.

"Oh yes," said Gwendolen, leaning her head against her mother, though speaking as lightly as she could. "But you know I never am ill. I am as strong as possible; and you must not take to fretting about me, but make yourself as happy as you can with the girls. They are better children to you than I have been, you know." She turned up her face with a smile.

"You have always been good, my darling. I remember nothing else."

"Why, what did I ever do that was good to you,

except marry Mr Grandcourt?" said Gwendolen, starting up with a desperate resolve to be playful, and keep no more on the perilous edge of agitation. "And I should not have done *that* unless it had pleased myself." She tossed up her chin, and reached her hat.

"God forbid, child! I would not have had you marry for my sake. Your happiness by itself is half mine."

"Very well," said Gwendolen, arranging her hat fastidiously, "then you will please to consider that you are half happy, which is more than I am used to seeing you." With the last words she again turned with her old playful smile to her mother. "Now I am ready; but oh, mamma, Mr Grandcourt gives me a quantity of money, and expects me to spend it, and I can't spend it; and you know I can't bear charity children and all that; and here are thirty pounds. I wish the girls would spend it for me on little things for themselves when you go to the new house. Tell them so." Gwendolen put the notes into her mother's hand and looked away hastily, moving towards the door.

"God bless you, dear," said Mrs Davilow. "It will please them so that you should have thought of *them* in particular."

"Oh, they are troublesome things; but they don't trouble me now," said Gwendolen, turning and nodding playfully. She hardly understood her own feeling in this act towards her sisters, but at any rate she did not wish it to be taken as anything serious. She was glad to have got out of the bedroom without showing more signs of emotion, and she went through the rest of her visit and all the good-byes with a quiet propriety that made her say to herself sarcastically as she rode away, "I think I am making a very good Mrs Grandcourt."

She believed that her husband was gone to Gadsmere that day—had inferred this, as she had long ago inferred who were the inmates of what he had described as "a dog-hutch of a place in a black country;" and the strange conflict of feeling within her had had the characteristic effect of sending her to Offendene with a tightened resolve—a form of excitement which was native to her.

She wondered at her own contradictions. Why should she feel it bitter to her that Grandcourt showed concern for the beings on whose account she herself was undergoing remorse? Had she not before her marriage inwardly determined to speak and act on their behalf?—and since he

had lately implied that he wanted to be in town because he was making arrangements about his will, she ought to have been glad of any sign that he kept a conscience awake towards those at Gadsmere; and yet, now that she was a wife, the sense that Grandcourt was gone to Gadsmere was like red heat near a burn. She had brought on herself this indignity in her own eyes—this humiliation of being doomed to a terrified silence lest her husband should discover with what sort of consciousness she had married him; and as she had said to Deronda, she "must go on." After the intensest moments of secret hatred towards this husband who from the very first had cowed her, there always came back the spiritual pressure which made submission inevitable. There was no effort at freedom that would not bring fresh and worse humiliation. Gwendolen could dare nothing except in impulsive action—least of all could she dare premeditatedly a vague future in which the only certain condition was indignity. In spite of remorse, it still seemed the worst result of her marriage that she should in any way make a spectacle of herself; and her humiliation was lightened by her thinking that only Mrs Glasher was aware of the fact which caused it. For Gwendolen had never referred the interview at

the Whispering Stones to Lush's agency; her disposition to vague terror investing with shadowy omnipresence any threat of fatal power over her, and so hindering her from imagining plans and channels by which news had been conveyed to the woman who had the poisoning skill of a sorceress. To Gwendolen's mind the secret lay with Mrs Glasher, and there were words in the horrible letter which implied that Mrs Glasher would dread disclosure to the husband, as much as the usurping Mrs Grandcourt.

Something else, too, she thought of as more of a secret from her husband than it really was—namely, that suppressed struggle of desperate rebellion which she herself dreaded. Grandcourt could not indeed fully imagine how things affected Gwendolen: he had no imagination of anything in her but what affected the gratification of his own will; but on this point he had the sensibility which seems like divination. What we see exclusively we are apt to see with some mistake of proportions; and Grandcourt was not likely to be infallible in his judgments concerning this wife who was governed by many shadowy powers, to him non-existent. He magnified her inward resistance, but that did not lessen his satisfaction in the mastery of it.

CHAPTER XLV.

Behold my lady's carriage stop the way,
With powdered lacquey and with champing bay:
She sweeps the matting, treads the crimson stair,
Her arduous function solely "to be there."
Like Sirius rising o'er the silent sea,
She hides her heart in lustre loftily.

So the Grandcourts were in Grosvenor Square in time to receive a card for the musical party at Lady Mallinger's, there being reasons of business which made Sir Hugo know beforehand that his ill-beloved nephew was coming up. It was only the third evening after their arrival, and Gwendolen made rather an absent-minded acquaintance with her new ceilings and furniture, preoccupied with the certainty that she was going to speak to Deronda again, and also to see the Miss Lapidoth who had gone through so much, and was "capable of submitting to anything in the form of duty." For Gwendolen had remembered nearly every word that Deronda had said about Mirah, and especially that phrase, which she repeated to herself

bitterly, having an ill-defined consciousness that her own submission was something very different. She would have been obliged to allow, if any one had said it to her, that what she submitted to could not take the shape of duty, but was submission to a yoke drawn on her by an action she was ashamed of, and worn with a strength of selfish motives that left no weight for duty to carry.

The drawing-rooms in Park Lane, all white, gold, and pale crimson, were agreeably furnished, and not crowded with guests, before Mr and Mrs Grandcourt entered; and more than half an hour of instrumental music was being followed by an interval of movement and chat. Klesmer was there with his wife, and in his generous interest for Mirah he proposed to accompany her singing of Leo's "*O patria mia*," which he had before recommended her to choose, as more distinctive of her than better known music. He was already at the piano, and Mirah was standing there conspicuously, when Gwendolen, magnificent in her pale green velvet and poisoned diamonds, was ushered to a seat of honour well in view of them. With her long sight and self-command she had the rare power of quickly distinguishing persons and objects on entering a full room, and while turning

her glance towards Mirah she did not neglect to exchange a bow and smile with Klesmer as she passed. The smile seemed to each a lightning-flash back on that morning when it had been her ambition to stand as the "little Jewess" was standing, and survey a grand audience from the higher rank of her talent—instead of which she was one of the ordinary crowd in silk and gems, whose utmost performance it must be to admire or find fault. "He thinks I am in the right road now," said the lurking resentment within her.

Gwendolen had not caught sight of Deronda in her passage, and while she was seated acquitting herself in chat with Sir Hugo, she glanced round her with careful ease, bowing a recognition here and there, and fearful lest an anxious-looking exploration in search of Deronda might be observed by her husband, and afterwards rebuked as something "damnably vulgar." But all travelling, even that of a slow gradual glance round a room, brings a liability to undesired encounters, and amongst the eyes that met Gwendolen's, forcing her into a slight bow, were those of the "amateur too fond of Meyerbeer," Mr Lush, whom Sir Hugo continued to find useful as a half-caste among gentlemen. He was standing near her husband, who, however, turned a shoulder towards

him, and was being understood to listen to Lord Pentreath. How was it that at this moment, for the first time, there darted through Gwendolen, like a disagreeable sensation, the idea that this man knew all about her husband's life? He had been banished from her sight, according to her will, and she had been satisfied; he had sunk entirely into the background of her thoughts, screened away from her by the agitating figures that kept up an inward drama in which Lush had no place. Here suddenly he reappeared at her husband's elbow, and there sprang up in her, like an instantaneously fabricated memory in a dream, the sense of his being connected with the secrets that made her wretched. She was conscious of effort in turning her head away from him, trying to continue her wandering survey as if she had seen nothing of more consequence than the picture on the wall, till she discovered Deronda. But he was not looking towards her, and she withdrew her eyes from him, without having got any recognition, consoling herself with the assurance that he must have seen her come in. In fact, he was standing not far from the door with Hans Meyrick, whom he had been careful to bring into Lady Mallinger's list. They were both a little more anxious than was comfortable lest

Mirah should not be heard to advantage. Deronda even felt himself on the brink of betraying emotion, Mirah's presence now being linked with crowding images of what had gone before and was to come after—all centring in the brother whom he was soon to reveal to her; and he had escaped as soon as he could from the side of Lady Pentreath, who had said in her violoncello voice—

"Well, your Jewess is pretty—there's no denying that. But where is her Jewish impudence? She looks as demure as a nun. I suppose she learned that on the stage."

He was beginning to feel on Mirah's behalf something of what he had felt for himself in his seraphic boyish time, when Sir Hugo asked him if he would like to be a great singer—an indignant dislike to her being remarked on in a free and easy way, as if she were an imported commodity disdainfully paid for by the fashionable public; and he winced the more because Mordecai, he knew, would feel that the name "Jewess" was taken as a sort of stamp like the lettering of Chinese silk. In this susceptible mood he saw the Grandcourts enter, and was immediately appealed to by Hans about "that Vandyke duchess of a beauty." Pray excuse Deronda that in this moment he felt a transient renewal of his first re-

pulsion from Gwendolen, as if she and her beauty and her failings were to blame for the undervaluing of Mirah as a woman—a feeling something like class animosity, which affection for what is not fully recognised by others, whether in persons or in poetry, rarely allows us to escape. To Hans admiring Gwendolen with his habitual hyperbole, he answered, with a sarcasm that was not quite good-humoured—

"I thought you could admire no style of woman but your Berenice."

"That is the style I worship—not admire," said Hans. "Other styles of woman I might make myself wicked for, but for Berenice I could make myself—well, pretty good, which is something much more difficult."

"Hush!" said Deronda, under the pretext that the singing was going to begin. He was not so delighted with the answer as might have been expected, and was relieved by Hans's movement to a more advanced spot.

Deronda had never before heard Mirah sing "*O patria mia.*" He knew well Leopardi's fine Ode to Italy (when Italy sat like a disconsolate mother in chains, hiding her face on her knees and weeping), and the few selected words were filled for him with the grandeur of the whole,

which seemed to breathe as inspiration through the music. Mirah singing this, made Mordecai more than ever one presence with her. Certain words not included in the song nevertheless rang within Deronda as harmonies from one invisible—

"Non ti difende
Nessun de' tuoi? L'armi, qua l'armi: io solo
Combatterò, procomberò sol io" *—

they seemed the very voice of that heroic passion which is falsely said to devote itself in vain when it achieves the godlike end of manifesting unselfish love. And that passion was present to Deronda now as the vivid image of a man dying helplessly away from the possibility of battle.

Mirah was equal to his wishes. While the general applause was sounding, Klesmer gave a more valued testimony, audible to her only—"Good, good—the crescendo better than before." But her chief anxiety was to know that she had satisfied Mr Deronda: any failure on her part this evening would have pained her as an especial injury to him. Of course all her prospects were due to what he had done for her; still this occasion of singing in the house that was his home brought a peculiar demand. She looked towards him in the distance, and he could see that she did;

* Do none of thy children defend thee? Arms! bring me arms! alone I will fight, alone I will fall.

but he remained where he was, and watched the stream of emulous admirers closing round her, till presently they parted to make way for Gwendolen, who was taken up to be introduced by Mrs Klesmer. Easier now about "the little Jewess," Daniel relented towards poor Gwendolen in her splendour, and his memory went back, with some penitence for his momentary hardness, over all the signs and confessions that she too needed a rescue, and one much more difficult than that of the wanderer by the river—a rescue for which he felt himself helpless. The silent question—"But is it not cowardly to make that a reason for turning away?" was the form in which he framed his resolve to go near her on the first opportunity, and show his regard for her past confidence, in spite of Sir Hugo's unwelcome hints.

Klesmer, having risen to Gwendolen as she approached, and being included by her in the opening conversation with Mirah, continued near them a little while, looking down with a smile, which was rather in his eyes than on his lips, at the piquant contrast of the two charming young creatures seated on the red divan. The solicitude seemed to be all on the side of the splendid one.

"You must let me say how much I am obliged to you," said Gwendolen. "I had heard from Mr

Deronda that I should have a great treat in your singing, but I was too ignorant to imagine how great."

"You are very good to say so," answered Mirah, her mind chiefly occupied in contemplating Gwendolen. It was like a new kind of stage-experience to her to be close to genuine grand ladies with genuine brilliants and complexions, and they impressed her vaguely as coming out of some unknown drama, in which their parts perhaps got more tragic as they went on.

"We shall all want to learn of you—I, at least," said Gwendolen. "I sing very badly, as Herr Klesmer will tell you"—here she glanced upward to that higher power rather archly, and continued—"but I have been rebuked for not liking to be middling, since I can be nothing more. I think that is a different doctrine from yours?" She was still looking at Klesmer, who said quickly—

"Not if it means that it would be worth while for you to study further, and for Miss Lapidoth to have the pleasure of helping you." With that he moved away, and Mirah, taking everything with *naïve* seriousness, said—

"If you think I could teach you, I shall be very glad. I am anxious to teach, but I have only just

begun. If I do it well, it must be by remembering how my master taught me."

Gwendolen was in reality too uncertain about herself to be prepared for this simple promptitude of Mirah's, and in her wish to change the subject said, with some lapse from the good taste of her first address—

"You have not been long in London, I think? —but you were perhaps introduced to Mr Deronda abroad?"

"No," said Mirah; "I never saw him before I came to England in the summer."

"But he has seen you often and heard you sing a great deal, has he not?" said Gwendolen, led on partly by the wish to hear anything about Deronda, and partly by the awkwardness which besets the readiest person in carrying on a dialogue when empty of matter. "He spoke of you to me with the highest praise. He seemed to know you quite well."

"Oh, I was poor, and needed help," said Mirah, in a new tone of feeling, "and Mr Deronda has given me the best friends in the world. That is the only way he came to know anything about me —because he was sorry for me. I had no friends when I came. I was in distress. I owe everything to him."

Poor Gwendolen, who had wanted to be a struggling artist herself, could nevertheless not escape the impression that a mode of inquiry which would have been rather rude towards herself was an amiable condescension to this Jewess who was ready to give her lessons. The only effect on Mirah, as always on any mention of Deronda, was to stir reverential gratitude and anxiety that she should be understood to have the deepest obligation to him.

But both he and Hans, who were noticing the pair from a distance, would have felt rather indignant if they had known that the conversation had led up to Mirah's representation of herself in this light of neediness. In the movement that prompted her, however, there was an exquisite delicacy, which perhaps she could not have stated explicitly—the feeling that she ought not to allow any one to assume in Deronda a relation of more equality or less generous interest towards her than actually existed. Her answer was delightful to Gwendolen: she thought of nothing but the ready compassion, which in another form she had trusted in and found for herself; and on the signals that Klesmer was about to play she moved away in much content, entirely without presentiment that this Jewish *protégée* would ever make a more important difference in her life than the possible

improvement of her singing—if the leisure and spirits of a Mrs Grandcourt would allow of other lessons than such as the world was giving her at rather a high charge.

With her wonted alternation from resolute care of appearances to some rash indulgence of an impulse, she chose, under the pretext of getting farther from the instrument, not to go again to her former seat, but placed herself on a settee where she could only have one neighbour. She was nearer to Deronda than before: was it surprising that he came up in time to shake hands before the music began—then, that after he had stood a little while by the elbow of the settee at the empty end, the torrent-like confluences of bass and treble seemed, like a convulsion of nature, to cast the conduct of petty mortals into insignificance, and to warrant his sitting down?

But when at the end of Klesmer's playing there came the outburst of talk under which Gwendolen had hoped to speak as she would to Deronda, she observed that Mr Lush was within hearing, leaning against the wall close by them. She could not help her flush of anger, but she tried to have only an air of polite indifference in saying—

"Miss Lapidoth is everything you described her to be."

"You have been very quick in discovering that," said Deronda, ironically.

"I have not found out all the excellences you spoke of—I don't mean that," said Gwendolen; "but I think her singing is charming, and herself too. Her face is lovely—not in the least common; and she is such a complete little person. I should think she will be a great success."

This speech was grating to Deronda, and he would not answer it, but looked gravely before him. She knew that he was displeased with her, and she was getting so impatient under the neighbourhood of Mr Lush, which prevented her from saying any word she wanted to say, that she meditated some desperate step to get rid of it, and remained silent too. That constraint seemed to last a long while, neither Gwendolen nor Deronda looking at the other, till Lush slowly relieved the wall of his weight, and joined some one at a distance.

Gwendolen immediately said, "You despise me for talking artificially."

"No," said Deronda, looking at her coolly; "I think that is quite excusable sometimes. But I did not think what you were last saying was altogether artificial."

"There was something in it that displeased you," said Gwendolen. "What was it?"

"It is impossible to explain such things," said Deronda. "One can never communicate niceties of feeling about words and manner."

"You think I am shut out from understanding them," said Gwendolen, with a slight tremor in her voice, which she was trying to conquer. "Have I shown myself so very dense to everything you have said?" There was an indescribable look of suppressed tears in her eyes, which were turned on him.

"Not at all," said Deronda, with some softening of voice. "But experience differs for different people. We don't all wince at the same things. I have had plenty of proof that you are not dense." He smiled at her.

"But one may feel things and not be able to do anything better for all that," said Gwendolen, not smiling in return—the distance to which Deronda's words seemed to throw her chilling her too much. "I begin to think we can only get better by having people about us who raise good feelings. You must not be surprised at anything in me. I think it is too late for me to alter. I don't know how to set about being wise, as you told me to be."

"I seldom find I do any good by my preaching. I might as well have kept from meddling," said Deronda, thinking rather sadly that his interference

about that unfortunate necklace might end in nothing but an added pain to him in seeing her after all hardened to another sort of gambling than roulette.

"Don't say that," said Gwendolen, hurriedly, feeling that this might be her only chance of getting the words uttered, and dreading the increase of her own agitation. "If you despair of me, I shall despair. Your saying that I should not go on being selfish and ignorant has been some strength to me. If you say you wish you had not meddled—that means, you despair of me and forsake me. And then you will decide for me that I shall not be good. It is you who will decide; because you might have made me different by keeping as near to me as you could, and believing in me."

She had not been looking at him as she spoke, but at the handle of the fan which she held closed. With the last words she rose and left him, returning to her former place, which had been left vacant; while every one was settling into quietude in expectation of Mirah's voice, which presently, with that wonderful, searching quality of subdued song in which the melody seems simply an effect of the emotion, gave forth, *Per pietà non dirmi addio.*

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In Deronda's ear the strain was for the moment a continuance of Gwendolen's pleading—a painful urging of something vague and difficult, irreconcilable with pressing conditions, and yet cruel to resist. However strange the mixture in her of a resolute pride and a precocious air of knowing the world, with a precipitate, guileless indiscretion, he was quite sure now that the mixture existed. Sir Hugo's hints had made him alive to dangers that his own disposition might have neglected; but that Gwendolen's reliance on him was unvisited by any dream of his being a man who could misinterpret her was as manifest as morning, and made an appeal which wrestled with his sense of present dangers, and with his foreboding of a growing incompatible claim on him in her mind. There was a foreshadowing of some painful collision: on the one side the grasp of Mordecai's dying hand on him, with all the ideals and prospects it aroused; on the other this fair creature in silk and gems, with her hidden wound and her self-dread, making a trustful effort to lean and find herself sustained. It was as if he had a vision of himself besought with outstretched arms and cries, while he was caught by the waves and compelled to mount the vessel bound for a far-off coast. That was the strain of excited feeling in

him that went along with the notes of Mirah's song; but when it ceased he moved from his seat with the reflection that he had been falling into an exaggeration of his own importance, and a ridiculous readiness to accept Gwendolen's view of himself, as if he could really have any decisive power over her.

"What an enviable fellow you are," said Hans to him, "sitting on a sofa with that young duchess, and having an interesting quarrel with her!"

"Quarrel with her?" repeated Deronda, rather uncomfortably.

"Oh, about theology, of course; nothing personal. But she told you what you ought to think, and then left you with a grand air which was admirable. Is she an Antinomian?—if so, tell her I am an Antinomian painter, and introduce me. I should like to paint her and her husband. He has the sort of handsome *physique* that the Duke ought to have in *Lucrezia Borgia*—if it could go with a fine baritone, which it can't."

Deronda devoutly hoped that Hans's account of the impression his dialogue with Gwendolen had made on a distant beholder was no more than a bit of fantastic representation, such as was common with him.

And Gwendolen was not without her afterthoughts that her husband's eyes might have been on her, extracting something to reprove—some offence against her dignity as his wife; her consciousness telling her that she had not kept up the perfect air of equability in public which was her own ideal. But Grandcourt made no observation on her behaviour. All he said as they were driving home was—

"Lush will dine with us among the other people to-morrow. You will treat him civilly."

Gwendolen's heart began to beat violently. The words that she wanted to utter, as one wants to return a blow, were, "You are breaking your promise to me—the first promise you made me." But she dared not utter them. She was as frightened at a quarrel as if she had foreseen that it would end with throttling fingers on her neck. After a pause, she said in the tone rather of defeat than resentment—

"I thought you did not intend him to frequent the house again."

"I want him just now. He is useful to me; and he must be treated civilly."

Silence. There may come a moment when even an excellent husband who has dropt smoking

under more or less of a pledge during courtship, for the first time will introduce his cigar-smoke between himself and his wife, with the tacit understanding that she will have to put up with it. Mr Lush was, so to speak, a very large cigar.

If these are the sort of lovers' vows at which Jove laughs, he must have a merry time of it.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"If any one should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I feel it could no otherwise be expressed than by making answer, 'Because it was he; because it was I.' There is, beyond what I am able to say, I know not what inexplicable and inevitable power that brought on this union."—MONTAIGNE: *On Friendship.*

THE time had come to prepare Mordecai for the revelation of the restored sister and for the change of abode which was desirable before Mirah's meeting with her brother. Mrs Meyrick, to whom Deronda had confided everything except Mordecai's peculiar relation to himself, had been active in helping him to find a suitable lodging in Brompton, not many minutes' walk from her own house, so that the brother and sister would be within reach of her motherly care. Her happy mixture of Scottish caution with her Scottish fervour and Gallic liveliness had enabled her to keep the secret close from the girls as well as from Hans, any betrayal to them being likely to reach

Mirah in some way that would raise an agitating suspicion, and spoil the important opening of that work which was to secure her independence, as we rather arbitrarily call one of the more arduous and dignified forms of our dependence. And both Mrs Meyrick and Deronda had more reasons than they could have expressed for desiring that Mirah should be able to maintain herself. Perhaps "the little mother" was rather helped in her secrecy by some dubiousness in her sentiment about the remarkable brother described to her; and certainly, if she felt any joy and anticipatory admiration, it was due to her faith in Deronda's judgment. The consumption was a sorrowful fact that appealed to her tenderness; but how was she to be very glad of an enthusiasm which, to tell the truth, she could only contemplate as Jewish pertinacity, and as rather an undesirable introduction among them all of a man whose conversation would not be more modern and encouraging than that of Scott's Covenanters? Her mind was anything but prosaic, and she had her soberer share of Mab's delight in the romance of Mirah's story and of her abode with them; but the romantic or unusual in real life requires some adaptation. We sit up at night to read about Çakya-Mouni, Saint Francis, or Oliver Cromwell;

but whether we should be glad for any one at all like them to call on us the next morning, still more, to reveal himself as a new relation, is quite another affair. Besides, Mrs Meyrick had hoped, as her children did, that the intensity of Mirah's feeling about Judaism would slowly subside, and be merged in the gradually deepening current of loving interchange with her new friends. In fact, her secret favourite continuation of the romance had been no discovery of Jewish relations, but something much more favourable to the hopes she discerned in Hans. And now—here was a brother who would dip Mirah's mind over again in the deepest dye of Jewish sentiment. She could not help saying to Deronda—

"I am as glad as you are that the pawnbroker is not her brother: there are Ezras and Ezras in the world; and really it is a comfort to think that all Jews are not like those shopkeepers who *will not* let you get out of their shops; and besides, what he said to you about his mother and sister makes me bless him. I am sure he's good. But I never did like anything fanatical. I suppose I heard a little too much preaching in my youth, and lost my palate for it."

"I don't think you will find that Mordecai obtrudes any preaching," said Deronda. "He is

not what I should call fanatical. I call a man fanatical when his enthusiasm is narrow and hoodwinked, so that he has no sense of proportions, and becomes unjust and unsympathetic to men who are out of his own track. Mordecai is an enthusiast: I should like to keep that word for the highest order of minds—those who care supremely for grand and general benefits to mankind. He is not a strictly orthodox Jew, and is full of allowances for others: his conformity in many things is an allowance for the condition of other Jews. The people he lives with are as fond of him as possible, and they can't in the least understand his ideas."

"Oh, well, I can live up to the level of the pawnbroker's mother, and like him for what I see to be good in him; and for what I don't see the merits of, I will take your word. According to your definition, I suppose one might be fanatical in worshipping common-sense; for my husband used to say the world would be a poor place if there were nothing but common-sense in it. However, Mirah's brother will have good bedding —that I have taken care of; and I shall have this extra window pasted up with paper to prevent draughts." (The conversation was taking place in the destined lodging.) "It is a comfort to think

that the people of the house are no strangers to me — no hypocritical harpies. And when the children know, we shall be able to make the rooms much prettier."

"The next stage of the affair is to tell all to Mordecai, and get him to move—which may be a more difficult business," said Deronda.

"And will you tell Mirah before I say anything to the children?" said Mrs Meyrick. But Deronda hesitated, and she went on in a tone of persuasive deliberation—"No, I think not. Let me tell Hans and the girls the evening before, and they will be away the next morning."

"Yes, that will be best. But do justice to my account of Mordecai—or Ezra, as I suppose Mirah will wish to call him: don't assist their imagination by referring to Habakkuk Mucklewrath," said Deronda, smiling, — Mrs Meyrick herself having used the comparison of the Covenanters.

"Trust me, trust me," said the little mother. "I shall have to persuade them so hard to be glad, that I shall convert myself. When I am frightened I find it a good thing to have somebody to be angry with for not being brave: it warms the blood."

Deronda might have been more argumentative or persuasive about the view to be taken of Mirah's

brother, if he had been less anxiously preoccupied with the more important task immediately before him, which he desired to acquit himself of without wounding the Cohens. Mordecai, by a memorable answer, had made it evident that he would be keenly alive to any inadvertence in relation to their feelings. In the interval, he had been meeting Mordecai at the *Hand and Banner*, but now after due reflection he wrote to him saying that he had particular reasons for wishing to see him in his own home the next evening, and would beg to sit with him in his workroom for an hour, if the Cohens would not regard it as an intrusion. He would call with the understanding that if there were any objection, Mordecai would accompany him elsewhere. Deronda hoped in this way to create a little expectation that would have a preparatory effect.

He was received with the usual friendliness, some additional costume in the women and children, and in all the elders a slight air of wondering which even in Cohen was not allowed to pass the bounds of silence — the guest's transactions with Mordecai being a sort of mystery which he was rather proud to think lay outside the sphere of light which enclosed his own understanding. But when Deronda said, "I suppose Mordecai is

at home and expecting me," Jacob, who had profited by the family remarks, went up to his knee and said, "What do you want to talk to Mordecai about?"

"Something that is very interesting to him," said Deronda, pinching the lad's ear, "but that you can't understand."

"Can you say this?" said Jacob, immediately giving forth a string of his rote-learned Hebrew verses with a wonderful mixture of the throaty and the nasal, and nodding his small head at his hearer, with a sense of giving formidable evidence which might rather alter their mutual position.

"No, really," said Deronda, keeping grave; "I can't say anything like it."

"I thought not," said Jacob, performing a dance of triumph with his small scarlet legs, while he took various objects out of the deep pockets of his knickerbockers and returned them thither, as a slight hint of his resources; after which running to the door of the workroom, he opened it wide, set his back against it, and said, "Mordecai, here's the young swell"—a copying of his father's phrase which seemed to him well fitted to cap the recitation of Hebrew.

He was called back with hushes by mother and

grandmother, and Deronda, entering and closing the door behind him, saw that a bit of carpet had been laid down, a chair placed, and the fire and lights attended to, in sign of the Cohens' respect. As Mordecai rose to greet him, Deronda was struck with the air of solemn expectation in his face, such as would have seemed perfectly natural if his letter had declared that some revelation was to be made about the lost sister. Neither of them spoke till Deronda, with his usual tenderness of manner, had drawn the vacant chair from the opposite side of the hearth and had seated himself near to Mordecai, who then said, in a tone of fervid certainty—

"You are come to tell me something that my soul longs for."

"It is true that I have something very weighty to tell you—something, I trust, that you will rejoice in," said Deronda, on his guard against the probability that Mordecai had been preparing himself for something quite different from the fact.

"It is all revealed—it is made clear to you," said Mordecai, more eagerly, leaning forward with clasped hands. "You are even as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother—the heritage is yours—there is no doubt to divide us."

"I have learned nothing new about myself," said Deronda. The disappointment was inevitable: it was better not to let the feeling be strained longer in a mistaken hope.

Mordecai sank back in his chair, unable for the moment to care what was really coming. The whole day his mind had been in a state of tension towards one fulfilment. The reaction was sickening, and he closed his eyes.

"Except," Deronda went on gently after a pause,—"except that I had really some time ago come into another sort of hidden connection with you, besides what you have spoken of as existing in your own feeling."

The eyes were not opened, but there was a fluttering in the lids.

"I had made the acquaintance of one in whom you are interested."

Mordecai opened his eyes and fixed them in a quiet gaze on Deronda: the former painful check repressed all activity of conjecture.

"One who is closely related to your departed mother," Deronda went on, wishing to make the disclosure gradual; but noticing a shrinking movement in Mordecai, he added—"whom she and you held dear above all others."

Mordecai, with a sudden start, laid a spasmodic

grasp on Deronda's wrist: there was a great terror in him. And Deronda divined it. A tremor was perceptible in his clear tones as he said—

"What was prayed for has come to pass: Mirah has been delivered from evil."

Mordecai's grasp relaxed a little, but he was panting with a sort of tearless sob.

Deronda went on: "Your sister is worthy of the mother you honoured."

He waited there, and Mordecai, throwing himself backward in his chair, again closed his eyes, uttering himself almost inaudibly for some minutes in Hebrew, and then subsiding into a happy-looking silence. Deronda, watching the expression in his uplifted face, could have imagined that he was speaking with some beloved object: there was a new suffused sweetness, something like that on the faces of the beautiful dead. For the first time Deronda thought he discerned a family resemblance to Mirah.

Presently, when Mordecai was ready to listen, the rest was told. But in accounting for Mirah's flight he made the statements about the father's conduct as vague as he could, and threw the emphasis on her yearning to come to England as the place where she might find her mother. Also

he kept back the fact of Mirah's intention to drown herself, and his own part in rescuing her; merely describing the home she had found with friends of his, whose interest in her and efforts for her he had shared. What he dwelt on finally was Mirah's feeling about her mother and brother; and in relation to this he tried to give every detail.

"It was in search of them," said Deronda, smiling, "that I turned into this house: the name Ezra Cohen was just then the most interesting name in the world to me. I confess I had a fear for a long while. Perhaps you will forgive me now for having asked you that question about the elder Mrs Cohen's daughter. I cared very much what I should find Mirah's friends to be. But I had found a brother worthy of her when I knew that her Ezra was disguised under the name of Mordecai."

"Mordecai is really my name—Ezra Mordecai Cohen."

"Is there any kinship between this family and yours?" said Deronda.

"Only the kinship of Israel. My soul clings to these people, who have sheltered me and given me succour out of the affection that abides in Jewish hearts, as a sweet odour in things long crushed and hidden from the outer air. It is

good for me to bear with their ignorance and be bound to them in gratitude, that I may keep in mind the spiritual poverty of the Jewish million, and not put impatient knowledge in the stead of loving wisdom."

"But you don't feel bound to continue with them now there is a closer tie to draw you?" said Deronda, not without fear that he might find an obstacle to overcome. "It seems to me right now—is it not?—that you should live with your sister; and I have prepared a home to take you to in the neighbourhood of her friends, that she may join you there. Pray grant me this wish. It will enable me to be with you often in the hours when Mirah is obliged to leave you. That is my selfish reason. But the chief reason is, that Mirah will desire to watch over you, and that you ought to give to her the guardianship of a brother's presence. You shall have books about you. I shall want to learn of you, and to take you out to see the river and trees. And you will have the rest and comfort that you will be more and more in need of—nay, that I need for you. This is the claim I make on you, now that we have found each other."

Deronda, grasping his own coat-collar rather nervously, spoke in a tone of earnest affectionate

pleading, such as he might have used to a venerated elder brother. Mordecai's eyes were fixed on him with a listening contemplation, and he was silent for a little while after Deronda had ceased to speak. Then he said, with an almost reproachful emphasis—

"And you would have me hold it doubtful whether you were born a Jew! Have we not from the first touched each other with invisible fibres—have we not quivered together like the leaves from a common stem with stirrings from a common root? I know what I am outwardly—I am one among the crowd of poor—I am stricken, I am dying. But our souls know each other. They gazed in silence as those who have long been parted and meet again, but when they found voice they were assured, and all their speech is understanding. The life of Israel is in your veins."

Deronda sat perfectly still, but felt his face tingling. It was impossible either to deny or assent. He waited, hoping that Mordecai would presently give him a more direct answer. And after a pause of meditation he did say firmly—

"What you wish of me I will do. And our mother—may the blessing of the Eternal be with her in our souls!—would have wished it too. I

will accept what your loving-kindness has prepared, and Mirah's home shall be mine." He paused a moment, and then added in a more melancholy tone, "But I shall grieve to part from these parents and the little ones. You must tell them, for my heart would fail me."

"I felt that you would want me to tell them. Shall we go now at once?" said Deronda, much relieved by this unwavering compliance.

"Yes; let us not defer it. It must be done," said Mordecai, rising with the air of a man who has to perform a painful duty. Then came, as an afterthought, "But do not dwell on my sister more than is needful."

When they entered the parlour he said to the alert Jacob, "Ask your father to come, and tell Sarah to mind the shop. My friend has something to say," he continued, turning to the elder Mrs Cohen. It seemed part of Mordecai's eccentricity that he should call this gentleman his friend; and the two women tried to show their better manners by warm politeness in begging Deronda to seat himself in the best place.

When Cohen entered with a pen behind his ear, he rubbed his hands and said with loud satisfaction, "Well, sir! I'm glad you're doing us the honour to join our family party again. We are pretty comfortable, I think."

He looked round with shiny gladness. And when all were seated on the hearth the scene was worth peeping in upon: on one side Baby under her scarlet quilt in the corner being rocked by the young mother, and Adelaide Rebekah seated on the grandmother's knee; on the other, Jacob between his father's legs; while the two markedly different figures of Deronda and Mordecai were in the middle—Mordecai a little backward in the shade, anxious to conceal his agitated susceptibility to what was going on around him. The chief light came from the fire, which brought out the rich colour on a depth of shadow, and seemed to turn into speech the dark gems of eyes that looked at each other kindly.

"I have just been telling Mordecai of an event that makes a great change in his life," Deronda began, "but I hope you will agree with me that it is a joyful one. Since he thinks of you as his best friends, he wishes me to tell you for him at once."

"Relations with money, sir?" burst in Cohen, feeling a power of divination which it was a pity to nullify by waiting for the fact.

"No; not exactly," said Deronda, smiling. "But a very precious relation wishes to be reunited to him—a very good and lovely young sister, who will care for his comfort in every way."

"Married, sir?"

"No, not married."

"But with a maintenance?"

"With talents which will secure her a maintenance. A home is already provided for Mordecai."

There was silence for a moment or two before the grandmother said in a wailing tone—

"Well, well! and so you're going away from us, Mordecai."

"And where there's no children as there is here," said the mother, catching the wail.

"No Jacob, and no Adelaide, and no Eugenie!" wailed the grandmother again.

"Ay, ay, Jacob's learning 'ill all wear out of him. He must go to school. It'll be hard times for Jacob," said Cohen, in a tone of decision.

In the wide-open ears of Jacob his father's words sounded like a doom, giving an awful finish to the dirge-like effect of the whole announcement. His face had been gathering a wondering incredulous sorrow at the notion of Mordecai's going away: he was unable to imagine the change as anything lasting; but at the mention of "hard times for Jacob" there was no further suspense of feeling, and he broke forth in loud lamentation. Adelaide Rebekah always cried when her brother cried, and now began to howl with astonishing sudden-

ness, whereupon baby awaking contributed angry screams, and required to be taken out of the cradle. A great deal of hushing was necessary, and Mordecai, feeling the cries pierce him, put out his arms to Jacob, who in the midst of his tears and sobs was turning his head right and left for general observation. His father, who had been saying, "Never mind, old man; you shall go to the riders," now released him, and he went to Mordecai, who clasped him, and laid his cheek on the little black head without speaking. But Cohen, sensible that the master of the family must make some apology for all this weakness, and that the occasion called for a speech, addressed Deronda with some elevation of pitch, squaring his elbows and resting a hand on each knee:—

"It's not as we're the people to grudge anybody's good luck, sir, or the portion of their cup being made fuller, as I may say. I'm not an envious man, and if anybody offered to set up Mordecai in a shop of my sort two doors lower down, *I* shouldn't make wry faces about it. I'm not one of them that had need have a poor opinion of themselves, and be frightened at anybody else getting a chance. If I'm offal, let a wise man come and tell me, for I've never heard it yet. And in point of business, I'm not a class of goods to be

in danger. If anybody takes to rolling me, I can pack myself up like a caterpillar, and find my feet when I'm let alone. And though, as I may say, you're taking some of our good works from us, which is a property bearing interest, I'm not saying but we can afford that, though my mother and my wife had the good will to wish and do for Mordecai to the last; and a Jew must not be like a servant who works for reward—though I see nothing against a reward if I can get it. And as to the extra outlay in schooling, I'm neither poor nor greedy—I wouldn't hang myself for sixpence, nor half a crown neither. But the truth of it is, the women and children are fond of Mordecai. You may partly see how it is, sir, by your own sense. A man is bound to thank God, as we do every Sabbath, that he was not made a woman; but a woman has to thank God that He has made her according to His will. And we all know what He has made her—a child-bearing, tender-hearted thing is the woman of our people. Her children are mostly stout, as I think you'll say Addy's are, and she's not mushy, but her heart is tender. So you must excuse present company, sir, for not being glad all at once. And as to this young lady —for by what you say 'young lady' is the proper term"—Cohen here threw some additional em-

phasis into his look and tone—"we shall all be glad for Mordecai's sake by-and-by, when we cast up our accounts and see where we are."

Before Deronda could summon any answer to this oddly mixed speech, Mordecai exclaimed—

"Friends, friends! For food and raiment and shelter I would not have sought better than you have given me. You have sweetened the morsel with love; and what I thought of as a joy that would be left to me even in the last months of my waning strength was to go on teaching the lad. But now I am as one who had clad himself beforehand in his shroud, and used himself to making the grave his bed, and the divine command came, 'Arise, and go forth; the night is not yet come.' For no light matter would I have turned away from your kindness to take another's. But it has been taught us, as you know, that *the reward of one duty is the power to fulfil another*—so said Ben Azai. You have made your duty to one of the poor among your brethren a joy to you and me; and your reward shall be that you will not rest without the joy of like deeds in the time to come. And may not Jacob come and visit me?"

Mordecai had turned with this question to Deronda, who said—

"Surely that can be managed. It is no further than Brompton."

Jacob, who had been gradually calmed by the need to hear what was going forward, began now to see some daylight on the future, the word "visit" having the lively charm of cakes and general relaxation at his grandfather's, the dealer in knives. He danced away from Mordecai, and took up a station of survey in the middle of the hearth with his hands in his knickerbockers.

"Well," said the grandmother, with a sigh of resignation, "I hope there'll be nothing in the way of your getting *kosher* meat, Mordecai. For you'll have to trust to those you live with."

"That's all right, that's all right, you may be sure, mother," said Cohen, as if anxious to cut off inquiry on matters in which he was uncertain of the guest's position. "So, sir," he added, turning with a look of amused enlightenment to Deronda, "it was better than learning you had to talk to Mordecai about! I wondered to myself at the time. I thought somehow there was a something."

"Mordecai will perhaps explain to you how it was that I was seeking him," said Deronda, feeling that he had better go, and rising as he spoke.

It was agreed that he should come again and the final move be made on the next day but one;

but when he was going Mordecai begged to walk with him to the end of the street, and wrapped himself in coat and comforter. It was a March evening, and Deronda did not mean to let him go far, but he understood the wish to be outside the house with him in communicative silence, after the exciting speech that had been filling the last hour. No word was spoken until Deronda had proposed parting, when he said—

"Mirah would wish to thank the Cohens for their goodness. You would wish her to do so—to come and see them, would you not?"

Mordecai did not answer immediately, but at length said—

"I cannot tell. I fear not. There is a family sorrow, and the sight of my sister might be to them as the fresh bleeding of wounds. There is a daughter and sister who will never be restored as Mirah is. But who knows the pathways? We are all of us denying or fulfilling prayers—and men in their careless deeds walk amidst invisible outstretched arms and pleadings made in vain. In my ears I have the prayers of generations past and to come. My life is as nothing to me but the beginning of fulfilment. And yet I am only another prayer—which you will fulfil."

Deronda pressed his hand, and they parted.

CHAPTER XLVII.

"And you must love him ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love."
—WORDSWORTH.

ONE might be tempted to envy Deronda providing new clothes for Mordecai, and pleasing himself as if he were sketching a picture in imagining the effect of the fine grey flannel shirts and a dressing-gown very much like a Franciscan's brown frock, with Mordecai's head and neck above them. Half his pleasure was the sense of seeing Mirah's brother through her eyes, and securing her fervid joy from any perturbing impression. And yet, after he had made all things ready, he was visited with a doubt whether he were not mistaking her, and putting the lower effect for the higher: was she not just as capable as he himself had been of feeling the impressive distinction in her brother all the more for that aspect of poverty which was among the memorials of his past? But there

were the Meyricks to be propitiated towards this too Judaic brother; and Deronda detected himself piqued into getting out of sight everything that might feed the ready repugnance in minds unblessed with that "precious seeing," that bathing of all objects in a solemnity as of sunset-glow, which is begotten of a loving reverential emotion.

And his inclination would have been the more confirmed if he had heard the dialogue round Mrs Meyrick's fire late in the evening, after Mirah had gone to her room. Hans, settled now in his Chelsea rooms, had stayed late, and Mrs Meyrick, poking the fire into a blaze, said—

"Now, Kate, put out your candle, and all come round the fire cosily. Hans, dear, do leave off laughing at those poems for the ninety-ninth time, and come too. I have something wonderful to tell you."

"As if I didn't know that, ma. I have seen it in the corner of your eye ever so long, and in your pretences of errands," said Kate, while the girls came to put their feet on the fender, and Hans, pushing his chair near them, sat astride it, resting his fists and chin on the back.

"Well, then, if you are so wise, perhaps you know that Mirah's brother is found!" said Mrs Meyrick, in her clearest accents.

"Oh, confound it!" said Hans, in the same moment.

"Hans, that is wicked," said Mab. "Suppose we had lost you."

"I *can not* help being rather sorry," said Kate. "And her mother?—where is she?"

"Her mother is dead."

"I hope the brother is not a bad man," said Amy.

"Nor a fellow all smiles and jewellery—a Crystal Palace Assyrian with a hat on," said Hans, in the worst humour.

"Were there ever such unfeeling children?" said Mrs Meyrick, a little strengthened by the need for opposition. "You don't think the least bit of Mirah's joy in the matter."

"You know, ma, Mirah hardly remembers her brother," said Kate.

"People who are lost for twelve years should never come back again," said Hans. "They are always in the way."

"Hans!" said Mrs Meyrick, reproachfully. "If you had lost me for *twenty* years, I should have thought——"

"I said twelve years," Hans broke in. "Anywhere about twelve years is the time at which lost relations should keep out of the way."

"Well, but it's nice finding people—there is something to tell," said Mab, clasping her knees. "Did Prince Camaralzaman find him?"

Then Mrs Meyrick, in her neat narrative way, told all she knew without interruption. "Mr Deronda has the highest admiration for him," she ended—"seems quite to look up to him. And he says Mirah is just the sister to understand this brother."

"Deronda is getting perfectly preposterous about those Jews," said Hans with disgust, rising and setting his chair away with a bang. "He wants to do everything he can to encourage Mirah in her prejudices."

"Oh, for shame, Hans!—to speak in that way of Mr Deronda," said Mab. And Mrs Meyrick's face showed something like an undercurrent of expression, not allowed to get to the surface.

"And now we shall never be all together," Hans went on, walking about with his hands thrust into the pockets of his brown velveteen coat, "but we must have this prophet Elijah to tea with us, and Mirah will think of nothing but sitting on the ruins of Jerusalem. She will be spoiled as an artist—mind that—she will get as narrow as a nun. Everything will be spoiled—our home and everything. I shall take to drinking."

"Oh, really, Hans," said Kate, impatiently, "I do think men are the most contemptible animals in all creation. Every one of them must have everything to his mind, else he is unbearable."

"Oh, oh, oh, it's very dreadful!" cried Mab. "I feel as if ancient Nineveh were come again."

"I should like to know what is the good of having gone to the university and knowing everything, if you are so childish, Hans," said Amy. "You ought to put up with a man that Providence sends you to be kind to. *We* shall have to put up with him."

"I hope you will all of you like the new Lamentations of Jeremiah—'to be continued in our next'—that's all," said Hans, seizing his wide-awake. "It's no use being one thing more than another if one has to endure the company of those men with a fixed idea—staring blankly at you, and requiring all your remarks to be small footnotes to their text. If you're to be under a petrifying well, you'd better be an old boot. I don't feel myself an old boot." Then abruptly, "Good-night, little mother," bending to kiss her brow in a hasty, desperate manner, and condescendingly, on his way to the door, "Good-night, girls."

"Suppose Mirah knew how you are behaving," said Kate. But her answer was a slam of the

door. "I *should* like to see Mirah when Mr Deronda tells her," she went on, to her mother. "I know she will look so beautiful."

But Deronda on second thoughts had written a letter which Mrs Meyrick received the next morning, begging her to make the revelation instead of waiting for him, not giving the real reason—that he shrank from going again through a narrative in which he seemed to be making himself important, and giving himself a character of general beneficence—but saying that he wished to remain with Mordecai while Mrs Meyrick would bring Mirah on what was to be understood as a visit, so that there might be a little interval before that change of abode which he expected that Mirah herself would propose.

Deronda secretly felt some wondering anxiety how far Mordecai, after years of solitary preoccupation with ideas likely to have become the more exclusive from continual diminution of bodily strength, would allow him to feel a tender interest in his sister over and above the rendering of pious duties. His feeling for the Cohens, and especially for little Jacob, showed a persistent activity of affection; but those objects had entered into his daily life for years; and Deronda felt it noticeable that Mordecai asked no new questions about

Mirah, maintaining, indeed, an unusual silence on all subjects, and appearing simply to submit to the changes that were coming over his personal life. He donned his new clothes obediently, but said afterwards to Deronda, with a faint smile, "I must keep my old garments by me for a remembrance." And when they were seated awaiting Mirah, he uttered no word, keeping his eyelids closed, but yet showing restless feeling in his face and hands. In fact, Mordecai was undergoing that peculiar nervous perturbation only known to those whose minds, long and habitually moving with strong impetus in one current, are suddenly compelled into a new or reopened channel. Susceptible people whose strength has been long absorbed by a dominant bias dread an interview that imperiously revives the past, as they would dread a threatening illness. Joy may be there, but joy, too, is terrible.

Deronda felt the infection of excitement, and when he heard the ring at the door, he went out not knowing exactly why, that he might see and greet Mirah beforehand. He was startled to find that she had on the hat and cloak in which he had first seen her—the memorable cloak that had once been wetted for a winding-sheet. She had come down-stairs equipped in this way, and when Mrs

Meyrick said, in a tone of question, "You like to go in that dress, dear?" she answered, "My brother is poor, and I want to look as much like him as I can, else he may feel distant from me"—imagining that she should meet him in the workman's dress. Deronda could not make any remark, but felt secretly rather ashamed of his own fastidious arrangements. They shook hands silently, for Mirah looked pale and awed.

When Deronda opened the door for her, Mordecai had risen, and had his eyes turned towards it with an eager gaze. Mirah took only two or three steps, and then stood still. They looked at each other, motionless. It was less their own presence that they felt than another's; they were meeting first in memories, compared with which touch was no union. Mirah was the first to break the silence, standing where she was.

"Ezra," she said, in exactly the same tone as when she was telling of her mother's call to him.

Mordecai with a sudden movement advanced and laid his hands on her shoulders. He was the head taller, and looked down at her tenderly while he said, "That was our mother's voice. You remember her calling me?"

"Yes, and how you answered her—'Mother!'—and I knew you loved her." Mirah threw her

arms round her brother's neck, clasped her little hands behind it, and drew down his face, kissing it with childlike lavishness. Her hat fell backward on the ground and disclosed all her curls.

"Ah, the dear head, the dear head!" said Mordecai, in a low loving tone, laying his thin hand gently on the curls.

"You are very ill, Ezra," said Mirah, sadly looking at him with more observation.

"Yes, dear child, I shall not be long with you in the body," was the quiet answer.

"Oh, I will love you and we will talk to each other," said Mirah, with a sweet outpouring of her words, as spontaneous as bird-notes. "I will tell you everything, and you will teach me:—you will teach me to be a good Jewess—what she would have liked me to be. I shall always be with you when I am not working. For I work now. I shall get money to keep us. Oh, I have had such good friends."

Mirah until now had quite forgotten that any one was by, but here she turned with the prettiest attitude, keeping one hand on her brother's arm while she looked at Mrs Meyrick and Deronda. The little mother's happy emotion in witnessing this meeting of brother and sister had already won her to Mordecai, who seemed to her really to have

more dignity and refinement than she had felt obliged to believe in from Deronda's account.

"See this dear lady!" said Mirah. "I was a stranger, a poor wanderer, and she believed in me, and has treated me as a daughter. Please give my brother your hand," she added, beseechingly, taking Mrs Meyrick's hand and putting it in Mordecai's, then pressing them both with her own and lifting them to her lips

"The Eternal Goodness has been with you," said Mordecai. "You have helped to fulfil our mother's prayer."

"I think we will go now, shall we?—and return later," said Deronda, laying a gentle pressure on Mrs Meyrick's arm, and she immediately complied. He was afraid of any reference to the facts about himself which he had kept back from Mordecai, and he felt no uneasiness now in the thought of the brother and sister being alone together.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

'Tis a hard and ill-paid task to order all things beforehand by the rule of our own security, as is well hinted by Machiavelli concerning Cæsar Borgia, who, saith he, had thought of all that might occur on his father's death, and had provided against every evil chance save only one: it had never come into his mind that when his father died, his own death would quickly follow.

GRANDCOURT'S importance as a subject of this realm was of the grandly passive kind which consists in the inheritance of land. Political and social movements touched him only through the wire of his rental, and his most careful biographer need not have read up on Schleswig-Holstein, the policy of Bismarck, trade-unions, household suffrage, or even the last commercial panic. He glanced over the best newspaper columns on these topics, and his views on them can hardly be said to have wanted breadth, since he embraced all Germans, all commercial men, and all voters liable to use the wrong kind of soap, under the general epithet of "brutes;" but he took no

action on these much agitated questions beyond looking from under his eyelids at any man who mentioned them, and retaining a silence which served to shake the opinions of timid thinkers.

But Grandcourt within his own sphere of interest showed some of the qualities which have entered into triumphal diplomacy of the widest continental sort.

No movement of Gwendolen in relation to Deronda escaped him. He would have denied that he was jealous; because jealousy would have implied some doubt of his own power to hinder what he had determined against. That his wife should have more inclination to another man's society than to his own would not pain him: what he required was that she should be as fully aware as she would have been of a locked hand-cuff, that her inclination was helpless to decide anything in contradiction with his resolve. However much of vacillating whim there might have been in his entrance on matrimony, there was no vacillating in his interpretation of the bond. He had not repented of his marriage; it had really brought more of aim into his life, new objects to exert his will upon; and he had not repented of his choice. His taste was fastidious, and Gwendolen satisfied it: he would not have liked a wife who had not

received some elevation of rank from him; nor one who did not command admiration by her mien and beauty; nor one whose nails were not of the right shape; nor one the lobe of whose ear was at all too large and red; nor one who, even if her nails and ears were right, was at the same time a ninny, unable to make spirited answers. These requirements may not seem too exacting to refined contemporaries whose own ability to fall in love has been held in suspense for lack of indispensable details; but fewer perhaps may follow him in his contentment that his wife should be in a temper which would dispose her to fly out if she dared, and that she should have been urged into marrying him by other feelings than passionate attachment. Still, for those who prefer command to love, one does not see why the habit of mind should change precisely at the point of matrimony.

Grandcourt did not feel that he had chosen the wrong wife; and having taken on himself the part of husband, he was not going in any way to be fooled, or allow himself to be seen in a light that could be regarded as pitiable. This was his state of mind—not jealousy; still, his behaviour in some respects was as like jealousy as yellow is to yellow, which colour we know may be the effect of very different causes.

He had come up to town earlier than usual because he wished to be on the spot for legal consultation as to the arrangements of his will, the transference of mortgages, and that transaction with his uncle about the succession to Diplow, which the bait of ready money, adroitly dangled without importunity, had finally won him to agree upon. But another acceptable accompaniment of his being in town was the presentation of himself with the beautiful bride whom he had chosen to marry in spite of what other people might have expected of him. It is true that Grandcourt went about with the sense that he did not care a languid curse for any one's admiration; but this state of not-caring, just as much as desire, required its related object—namely, a world of admiring or envying spectators: for if you are fond of looking stonily at smiling persons, the persons must be there and they must smile—a rudimentary truth which is surely forgotten by those who complain of mankind as generally contemptible, since any other aspect of the race must disappoint the voracity of their contempt. Grandcourt, in town for the first time with his wife, had his non-caring abstinence from curses enlarged and diversified by splendid receptions, by conspicuous rides and drives, by presentations

of himself with her on all distinguished occasions. He wished her to be sought after; he liked that "fellows" should be eager to talk with her and escort her within his observation; there was even a kind of lofty coquetry on her part that he would not have objected to. But what he did not like were her ways in relation to Deronda.

After the musical party at Lady Mallinger's, when Grandcourt had observed the dialogue on the settee as keenly as Hans had done, it was characteristic of him that he named Deronda for invitation along with the Mallingers, tenaciously avoiding the possible suggestion to anybody concerned that Deronda's presence or absence could be of the least importance to him; and he made no direct observation to Gwendolen on her behaviour that evening, lest the expression of his disgust should be a little too strong to satisfy his own pride. But a few days afterwards he remarked, without being careful of the *à propos*—

"Nothing makes a woman more of a gawky than looking out after people and showing tempers in public. A woman ought to have fine manners. Else it's intolerable to appear with her."

Gwendolen made the expected application, and was not without alarm at the notion of being a

gawky. For she, too, with her melancholy distaste for things, preferred that her distaste should include admirers. But the sense of overhanging rebuke only intensified the strain of expectation towards any meeting with Deronda. The novelty and excitement of her town life was like the hurry and constant change of foreign travel: whatever might be the inward despondency, there was a programme to be fulfilled, not without gratification to many-sided self. But, as always happens with a deep interest, the comparatively rare occasions on which she could exchange any words with Deronda had a diffusive effect in her consciousness, magnifying their communication with each other, and therefore enlarging the place she imagined it to have in his mind. How could Deronda help this? He certainly did not avoid her; rather he wished to convince her by every delicate indirect means that her confidence in him had not been indiscreet, since it had not lowered his respect. Moreover, he liked being near her—how could it be otherwise? She was something more than a problem: she was a lovely woman, for the turn of whose mind and fate he had a care which, however futile it might be, kept soliciting him as a responsibility, perhaps all the more that, when he dared to think of his own

future, he saw it lying far away from this splendid sad-hearted creature, who, because he had once been impelled to arrest her attention momentarily, as he might have seized her arm with warning to hinder her from stepping where there was danger, had turned to him with a beseeching persistent need.

One instance in which Grandcourt stimulated a feeling in Gwendolen that he would have liked to suppress without seeming to care about it, had relation to Mirah. Gwendolen's inclination lingered over the project of the singing lessons as a sort of obedience to Deronda's advice, but day followed day with that want of perceived leisure which belongs to lives where there is no work to mark off intervals; and the continual liability to Grandcourt's presence and surveillance seemed to flatten every effort to the level of the boredom which his manner expressed: his negative mind was as diffusive as fog, clinging to all objects, and spoiling all contact.

But one morning when they were breakfasting, Gwendolen, in a recurrent fit of determination to exercise her old spirit, said, dallying prettily over her prawns without eating them—

"I think of making myself accomplished while we are in town, and having singing lessons."

"Why?" said Grandcourt, languidly.

"Why?" echoed Gwendolen, playing at sauciness; "because I can't eat *pâté de foie gras* to make me sleepy, and I can't smoke, and I can't go to the club to make me like to come away again—I want a variety of *ennui.* What would be the most convenient time, when you are busy with your lawyers and people, for me to have lessons from that little Jewess, whose singing is getting all the rage?"

"Whenever you like," said Grandcourt, pushing away his plate, and leaning back in his chair while he looked at her with his most lizard-like expression, and played with the ears of the tiny spaniel on his lap (Gwendolen had taken a dislike to the dogs because they fawned on him).

Then he said, languidly, "I don't see why a lady should sing. Amateurs make fools of themselves. A lady can't risk herself in that way in company. And one doesn't want to hear squalling in private."

"I like frankness: that seems to me a husband's great charm," said Gwendolen, with her little upward movement of her chin, as she turned her eyes away from his, and lifting a prawn before her, looked at the boiled ingenuousness of its eyes as preferable to the lizard's. "But," she added,

having devoured her mortification, "I suppose you don't object to Miss Lapidoth's singing at our party on the 4th? I thought of engaging her. Lady Brackenshaw had her, you know; and the Raymonds, who are very particular about their music. And Mr Deronda, who is a musician himself, and a first-rate judge, says that there is no singing in such good taste as hers for a drawing-room. I think his opinion is an authority."

She meant to sling a small stone at her husband in that way.

"It's very indecent of Deronda to go about praising that girl," said Grandcourt, in a tone of indifference.

"Indecent!" exclaimed Gwendolen, reddening and looking at him again, overcome by startled wonder, and unable to reflect on the probable falsity of the phrase—"to go about praising."

"Yes; and especially when she is patronised by Lady Mallinger. He ought to hold his tongue about her. Men can see what is his relation to her."

"Men who judge of others by themselves," said Gwendolen, turning white after her redness, and immediately smitten with a dread of her own words.

"Of course. And a woman should take their

judgment—else she is likely to run her head into the wrong place," said Grandcourt, conscious of using pincers on that white creature. "I suppose you take Deronda for a saint."

"Oh dear no!" said Gwendolen, summoning desperately her almost miraculous power of self-control, and speaking in a high hard tone. "Only a little less of a monster."

She rose, pushed her chair away without hurry, and walked out of the room with something like the care of a man who is afraid of showing that he has taken more wine than usual. She turned the keys inside her dressing-room doors, and sat down, for some time looking as pale and quiet as when she was leaving the breakfast-room. Even in the moments after reading the poisonous letter she had hardly had more cruel sensations than now; for emotion was at the acute point, where it is not distinguishable from sensation. Deronda unlike what she had believed him to be, was an image which affected her as a hideous apparition would have done, quite apart from the way in which it was produced. It had taken hold of her as pain before she could consider whether it were fiction or truth; and further to hinder her power of resistance came the sudden perception, how very slight were the grounds of her faith in

Deronda—how little she knew of his life—how childish she had been in her confidence. His rebukes and his severity to her began to seem odious, along with all the poetry and lofty doctrine in the world, whatever it might be; and the grave beauty of his face seemed the most unpleasant mask that the common habits of men could put on.

All this went on in her with the rapidity of a sick dream; and her start into resistance was very much like a waking. Suddenly from out the grey sombre morning there came a stream of sunshine, wrapping her in warmth and light where she sat in stony stillness. She moved gently and looked round her—there was a world outside this bad dream, and the dream proved nothing; she rose, stretching her arms upward and clasping her hands with her habitual attitude when she was seeking relief from oppressive feeling, and walked about the room in this flood of sunbeams.

"It is not true! What does it matter whether *he* believes it or not?" This was what she repeated to herself—but this was not her faith come back again; it was only the desperate cry of faith, finding suffocation intolerable. And how could she go on through the day in this state? With one of her impetuous alternations, her imagination

flew to wild actions, by which she would convince herself of what she wished: she would go to Lady Mallinger and question her about Mirah; she would write to Deronda and upbraid him with making the world all false and wicked and hopeless to her—to him she dared pour out all the bitter indignation of her heart. No; she would go to Mirah. This last form taken by her need was more definitely practicable, and quickly became imperious. No matter what came of it. She had the pretext of asking Mirah to sing at her party on the 4th. What was she going to say besides? How satisfy herself? She did not foresee—she could not wait to foresee. If that idea which was maddening her had been a living thing, she would have wanted to throttle it without waiting to foresee what would come of the act. She rang her bell and asked if Mr Grandcourt were gone out: finding that he was, she ordered the carriage, and began to dress for the drive; then she went down, and walked about the large drawing-room like an imprisoned dumb creature, not recognising herself in the glass panels, not noting any object around her in the painted gilded prison. Her husband would probably find out where she had been, and punish her in some way or other—no matter—she could neither de-

sire nor fear anything just now but the assurance that she had not been deluding herself in her trust.

She was provided with Mirah's address. Soon she was on the way with all the fine equipage necessary to carry about her poor uneasy heart, depending in its palpitations on some answer or other to questioning which she did not know how she should put. She was as heedless of what happened before she found that Miss Lapidoth was at home, as one is of lobbies and passages on the way to a court of justice—heedless of everything till she was in a room where there were folding-doors, and she heard Deronda's voice behind it. Doubtless the identification was helped by forecast, but she was as certain of it as if she had seen him. She was frightened at her own agitation, and began to unbutton her gloves that she might button them again, and bite her lips over the pretended difficulty, while the door opened, and Mirah presented herself with perfect quietude and a sweet smile of recognition. There was relief in the sight of her face, and Gwendolen was able to smile in return, while she put out her hand in silence; and as she seated herself, all the while hearing the voice, she felt some reflux of energy in the confused sense that the truth could not be anything that she dreaded. Mirah drew

her chair very near, as if she felt that the sound of the conversation should be subdued, and looked at her visitor with placid expectation, while Gwendolen began in a low tone, with something that seemed like bashfulness—

"Perhaps you wonder to see me—perhaps I ought to have written—but I wished to make a particular request."

"I am glad to see you instead of having a letter," said Mirah, wondering at the changed expression and manner of the "Vandyke duchess," as Hans had taught her to call Gwendolen. The rich colour and the calmness of her own face were in strong contrast with the pale agitated beauty under the plumed hat.

"I thought," Gwendolen went on—"at least, I hoped you would not object to sing at our house on the 4th—in the evening—at a party like Lady Brackenshaw's. I should be so much obliged."

"I shall be very happy to sing for you. At half-past nine or ten?" said Mirah, while Gwendolen seemed to get more instead of less embarrassed.

"At half-past nine, please," she answered; then paused, and felt that she had nothing more to say. She could not go. It was impossible to rise and say good-bye. Deronda's voice was in her ears.

She must say it—she could contrive no other sentence—

"Mr Deronda is in the next room."

"Yes," said Mirah, in her former tone. "He is reading Hebrew with my brother."

"You have a brother?" said Gwendolen, who had heard this from Lady Mallinger, but had not minded it then.

"Yes, a dear brother who is ill—consumptive, and Mr Deronda is the best of friends to him, as he has been to me," said Mirah, with the impulse that will not let us pass the mention of a precious person indifferently.

"Tell me," said Gwendolen, putting her hand on Mirah's, and speaking hardly above a whisper —"tell me—tell me the truth. You are sure he is quite good. You know no evil of him. Any evil that people say of him is false."

Could the proud-spirited woman have behaved more like a child? But the strange words penetrated Mirah with nothing but a sense of solemnity and indignation. With a sudden light in her eyes and a tremor in her voice, she said—

"Who are the people that say evil of him? I would not believe any evil of him, if an angel came to tell it me. He found me when I was so miserable—I was going to drown myself—I looked

so poor and forsaken—you would have thought I was a beggar by the wayside. And he treated me as if I had been a king's daughter. He took me to the best of women. He found my brother for me. And he honours my brother—though he too was poor—oh, almost as poor as he could be. And my brother honours him. That is no light thing to say"—here Mirah's tone changed to one of proud emphasis, and she shook her head backward—"for my brother is very learned and great-minded. And Mr Deronda says there are few men equal to him." Some Jewish defiance had flamed into her indignant gratitude, and her anger could not help including Gwendolen, since she seemed to have doubted Deronda's goodness.

But Gwendolen was like one parched with thirst, drinking the fresh water that spreads through the frame as a sufficient bliss. She did not notice that Mirah was angry with her; she was not distinctly conscious of anything but of the penetrating sense that Deronda and his life were no more like her husband's conception than the morning in the horizon was like the morning mixed with street gas: even Mirah's words seemed to melt into the indefiniteness of her relief. She could hardly have repeated them, or said how her whole state of feeling was changed. She

pressed Mirah's hand, and said, "Thank you, thank you," in a hurried whisper—then rose, and added, with only a hazy consciousness, "I must go, I shall see you—on the 4th—I am so much obliged"—bowing herself out automatically; while Mirah, opening the door for her, wondered at what seemed a sudden retreat into chill loftiness.

Gwendolen, indeed, had no feeling to spare in any effusiveness towards the creature who had brought her relief. The passionate need of contradiction to Grandcourt's estimate of Deronda, a need which had blunted her sensibility to everything else, was no sooner satisfied than she wanted to be gone: she began to be aware that she was out of place, and to dread Deronda's seeing her. And once in the carriage again, she had the vision of what awaited her at home. When she drew up before the door in Grosvenor Square, her husband was arriving with a cigar between his fingers. He threw it away and handed her out, accompanying her up-stairs. She turned into the drawing-room, lest he should follow her farther and give her no place to retreat to; then sat down with a weary air, taking off her gloves, rubbing her hand over her forehead, and making his presence as much of a cipher as possible. But he sat too, and not far from her

—just in front, where to avoid looking at him must have the emphasis of effort.

"May I ask where you have been at this extraordinary hour?" said Grandcourt.

"Oh yes; I have been to Miss Lapidoth's to ask her to come and sing for us," said Gwendolen, laying her gloves on the little table beside her, and looking down at them.

"And to ask her about her relations with Deronda?" said Grandcourt, with the coldest possible sneer in his low voice, which in poor Gwendolen's ear was diabolical.

For the first time since their marriage she flashed out upon him without inward check. Turning her eyes full on his she said, in a biting tone—

"Yes; and what you said is false—a low, wicked falsehood."

"She told you so—did she?" returned Grandcourt, with a more thoroughly distilled sneer.

Gwendolen was mute. The daring anger within her was turned into the rage of dumbness. What reasons for her belief could she give? All the reasons that seemed so strong and living within her—she saw them suffocated and shrivelled up under her husband's breath. There was no proof to give, but her own impression, which

would seem to him her own folly. She turned her head quickly away from him and looked angrily towards the end of the room: she would have risen, but he was in her way.

Grandcourt saw his advantage. "It's of no consequence so far as her singing goes," he said, in his superficial drawl. "You can have her to sing, if you like." Then, after a pause, he added in his lowest imperious tone, "But you will please to observe that you are not to go near that house again. As my wife, you must take my word about what is proper for you. When you undertook to be Mrs Grandcourt, you undertook not to make a fool of yourself. You have been making a fool of yourself this morning; and if you were to go on as you have begun, you might soon get yourself talked of at the clubs in a way you would not like. What do *you* know about the world? You have married *me*, and must be guided by my opinion."

Every slow sentence of that speech had a terrific mastery in it for Gwendolen's nature. If the low tones had come from a physician telling her that her symptoms were those of a fatal disease, and prognosticating its course, she could not have been more helpless against the argument that lay in it. But she was permitted to move

now, and her husband never again made any reference to what had occurred this morning. He knew the force of his own words. If this white-handed man with the perpendicular profile had been sent to govern a difficult colony, he might have won reputation among his contemporaries. He had certainly ability, would have understood that it was safer to exterminate than to cajole superseded proprietors, and would not have flinched from making things safe in that way.

Gwendolen did not, for all this, part with her recovered faith;—rather, she kept it with a more anxious tenacity, as a Protestant of old kept his Bible hidden or a Catholic his crucifix, according to the side favoured by the civil arm; and it was characteristic of her that apart from the impression gained concerning Deronda in that visit, her imagination was little occupied with Mirah or the eulogised brother. The one result established for her was, that Deronda had acted simply as a generous benefactor, and the phrase "reading Hebrew" had fleeted unimpressively across her sense of hearing, as a stray stork might have made its peculiar flight across her landscape without rousing any surprised reflection on its natural history.

But the issue of that visit, as it regarded her husband, took a strongly active part in the process

which made an habitual conflict within her, and was the cause of some external change perhaps not observed by any one except Deronda. As the weeks went on bringing occasional transient interviews with her, he thought that he perceived in her an intensifying of her superficial hardness and resolute display, which made her abrupt betrayals of agitation the more marked and disturbing to him.

In fact, she was undergoing a sort of discipline for the refractory which, as little as possible like conversion, bends half the self with a terrible strain, and exasperates the unwillingness of the other half. Grandcourt had an active divination rather than discernment of refractoriness in her, and what had happened about Mirah quickened his suspicion that there was an increase of it dependent on the occasions when she happened to see Deronda: there was some "confounded nonsense" between them: he did not imagine it exactly as flirtation, and his imagination in other branches was rather restricted; but it was nonsense that evidently kept up a kind of simmering in her mind — an inward action which might become disagreeably outward. Husbands in the old time are known to have suffered from a threatening devoutness in their wives, presenting

itself first indistinctly as oddity, and ending in that mild form of lunatic asylum, a nunnery: Grandcourt had a vague perception of threatening moods in Gwendolen which the unity between them in his views of marriage required him peremptorily to check. Among the means he chose, one was peculiar, and was less ably calculated than the speeches we have just heard.

He determined that she should know the main purport of the will he was making, but he could not communicate this himself, because it involved the fact of his relation to Mrs Glasher and her children; and that there should be any overt recognition of this between Gwendolen and himself was supremely repugnant to him. Like all proud, closely-wrapped natures, he shrank from explicitness and detail, even on trivialities, if they were personal: a valet must maintain a strict reserve with him on the subject of shoes and stockings. And clashing was intolerable to him: his habitual want was to put collision out of the question by the quiet massive pressure of his rule. But he wished Gwendolen to know that before he made her an offer it was no secret to him that she was aware of his relations with Lydia, her previous knowledge being the apology for bringing the subject before her now. Some men in his

place might have thought of writing what he wanted her to know, in the form of a letter. But Grandcourt hated writing: even writing a note was a bore to him, and he had long been accustomed to have all his writing done by Lush. We know that there are persons who will forego their own obvious interest rather than do anything so disagreeable as to write letters; and it is not probable that these imperfect utilitarians would rush into manuscript and syntax on a difficult subject in order to save another's feelings. To Grandcourt it did not even occur that he should, would, or could write to Gwendolen the information in question; and the only medium of communication he could use was Lush, who, to his mind, was as much of an implement as pen and paper. But here too Grandcourt had his reserves, and would not have uttered a word likely to encourage Lush in an impudent sympathy with any supposed grievance in a marriage which had been discommended by him. Who that has a confidant escapes believing too little in his penetration, and too much in his discretion? Grandcourt had always allowed Lush to know his external affairs indiscriminately, irregularities, debts, want of ready money; he had only used discrimination about what he would allow his confidant to say to

him; and he had been so accustomed to this human tool, that the having him at call in London was a recovery of lost ease. It followed that Lush knew all the provisions of the will more exactly than they were known to the testator himself.

Grandcourt did not doubt that Gwendolen, since she was a woman who could put two and two together, knew or suspected Lush to be the contriver of her interview with Lydia, and that this was the reason why her first request was for his banishment. But the bent of a woman's inferences on mixed subjects which excite mixed passions is not determined by her capacity for simple addition; and here Grandcourt lacked the only organ of thinking that could have saved him from mistake—namely, some experience of the mixed passions concerned. He had correctly divined one half of Gwendolen's dread—all that related to her personal pride, and her perception that his will must conquer hers; but the remorseful half, even if he had known of her broken promise, was as much out of his imagination as the other side of the moon. What he believed her to feel about Lydia was solely a tongue-tied jealousy, and what he believed Lydia to have written with the jewels was the fact that she had once been used to wearing them, with other ameni-

ties such as he imputed to the intercourse of jealous women. He had the triumphant certainty that he could aggravate the jealousy and yet smite it with a more absolute dumbness. His object was to engage all his wife's egoism on the same side as his own, and in his employment of Lush he did not intend an insult to her: she ought to understand that he was the only possible envoy. Grandcourt's view of things was considerably fenced in by his general sense, that what suited him, others must put up with. There is no escaping the fact that want of sympathy condemns us to a corresponding stupidity. Mephistopheles thrown upon real life, and obliged to manage his own plots, would inevitably make blunders.

One morning he went to Gwendolen in the boudoir beyond the back drawing-room, hat and gloves in hand, and said with his best-tempered, most persuasive drawl, standing before her and looking down on her as she sat with a book on her lap—

"A—Gwendolen, there's some business about property to be explained. I have told Lush to come and explain it to you. He knows all about these things. I am going out. He can come up now. He's the only person who can explain. I suppose you'll not mind."

"You know that I do mind," said Gwendolen,

angrily, starting up. "I shall not see him." She showed the intention to dart away to the door. Grandcourt was before her, with his back towards it. He was prepared for her anger, and showed none in return, saying, with the same sort of remonstrant tone that he might have used about an objection to dining out—

"It's no use making a fuss. There are plenty of brutes in the world that one has to talk to. People with any *savoir vivre* don't make a fuss about such things. Some business must be done. You don't expect agreeable people to do it. If I employ Lush, the proper thing for you is to take it as a matter of course. Not to make a fuss about it. Not to toss your head and bite your lips about people of that sort."

The drawling and the pauses with which this speech was uttered gave time for crowding reflections in Gwendolen, quelling her resistance. What was there to be told her about property? This word had certain dominant associations for her, first with her mother, then with Mrs Glasher and her children. What would be the use if she refused to see Lush? Could she ask Grandcourt to tell her himself? That might be intolerable, even if he consented, which it was certain he would not, if he had made up his mind to the

contrary. The humiliation of standing an obvious prisoner, with her husband barring the door, was not to be borne any longer, and she turned away to lean against a cabinet, while Grandcourt again moved towards her.

"I have arranged with Lush to come up now, while I am out," he said, after a long organ stop, during which Gwendolen made no sign. "Shall I tell him he may come?"

Yet another pause before she could say "Yes" —her face turned obliquely and her eyes cast down.

"I shall come back in time to ride, if you like to get ready," said Grandcourt. No answer. "She is in a desperate rage," thought he. But the rage was silent, and therefore not disagreeable to him. It followed that he turned her chin and kissed her, while she still kept her eyelids down, and she did not move them until he was on the other side of the door.

What was she to do? Search where she would in her consciousness, she found no plea to justify a plaint. Any romantic illusions she had had in marrying this man had turned on her power of using him as she liked. He was using her as he liked.

She sat awaiting the announcement of Lush as

a sort of searing operation that she had to go through. The facts that galled her gathered a burning power when she thought of their lying in his mind. It was all a part of that new gambling in which the losing was not simply a *minus* but a terrible *plus* that had never entered into her reckoning.

Lush was neither quite pleased nor quite displeased with his task. Grandcourt had said to him by way of conclusion, "Don't make yourself more disagreeable than nature obliges you."

"That depends," thought Lush. But he said, "I will write a brief abstract for Mrs Grandcourt to read." He did not suggest that he should make the whole communication in writing, which was a proof that the interview did not wholly displease him.

Some provision was being made for himself in the will, and he had no reason to be in a bad humour, even if a bad humour had been common with him. He was perfectly convinced that he had penetrated all the secrets of the situation; but he had no diabolic delight in it. He had only the small movements of gratified self-loving resentment in discerning that this marriage fulfilled his own foresight in not being as satisfactory as the supercilious young lady had expected it to be, and

as Grandcourt wished to feign that it was. He had no persistent spite much stronger than what gives the seasoning of ordinary scandal to those who repeat it and exaggerate it by their conjectures. With no active compassion or goodwill, he had just as little active malevolence, being chiefly occupied in liking his particular pleasures, and not disliking anything but what hindered those pleasures—everything else ranking with the last murder and the last *opera buffa*, under the head of things to talk about. Nevertheless, he was not indifferent to the prospect of being treated uncivilly by a beautiful woman, or to the counterbalancing fact that his present commission put into his hands an official power of humiliating her. He did not mean to use it needlessly; but there are some persons so gifted in relation to us that their "How do you do?" seems charged with offence.

By the time that Mr Lush was announced, Gwendolen had braced herself to a bitter resolve that he should not witness the slightest betrayal of her feeling, whatever he might have to tell. She invited him to sit down with stately quietude. After all, what was this man to her? He was not in the least like her husband. Her power of hating a coarse, familiar-mannered man, with

clumsy hands, was now relaxed by the intensity with which she hated his contrast.

He held a small paper folded in his hand while he spoke.

"I need hardly say that I should not have presented myself if Mr Grandcourt had not expressed a strong wish to that effect—as no doubt he has mentioned to you."

From some voices that speech might have sounded entirely reverential, and even timidly apologetic. Lush had no intention to the contrary, but to Gwendolen's ear his words had as much insolence in them as his prominent eyes, and the pronoun "you" was too familiar. He ought to have addressed the folding-screen, and spoken of her as Mrs Grandcourt. She gave the smallest sign of a bow, and Lush went on, with a little awkwardness, getting entangled in what is elegantly called tautology.

"My having been in Mr Grandcourt's confidence for fifteen years or more—since he was a youth, in fact—of course gives me a peculiar position. He can speak to me of affairs that he could not mention to any one else; and, in fact, he could not have employed any one else in this affair. I have accepted the task out of friendship for him. Which is my apology for accept-

ing the task—if you would have preferred some one else."

He paused, but she made no sign, and Lush, to give himself a countenance in an apology which met no acceptance, opened the folded paper, and looked at it vaguely before he began to speak again.

"This paper contains some information about Mr Grandcourt's will, an abstract of a part he wished you to know—if you'll be good enough to cast your eyes over it. But there is something I had to say by way of introduction—which I hope you'll pardon me for, if it's not quite agreeable." Lush found that he was behaving better than he had expected, and had no idea how insulting he made himself with his "not quite agreeable."

"Say what you have to say without apologising, please," said Gwendolen, with the air she might have bestowed on a dog-stealer come to claim a reward for finding the dog he had stolen.

"I have only to remind you of something that occurred before your engagement to Mr Grandcourt," said Lush, not without the rise of some willing insolence in exchange for her scorn. "You met a lady in Cardell Chase, if you remember, who spoke to you of her position with regard to Mr Grandcourt. She had children with her—one a very fine boy."

Gwendolen's lips were almost as pale as her cheeks: her passion had no weapons — words were no better than chips. This man's speech was like a sharp knife-edge drawn across her skin; but even her indignation at the employment of Lush was getting merged in a crowd of other feelings, dim and alarming as a crowd of ghosts.

"Mr Grandcourt was aware that you were acquainted with this unfortunate affair beforehand, and he thinks it only right that his position and intentions should be made quite clear to you. It is an affair of property and prospects; and if there were any objection you had to make, if you would mention it to me—it is a subject which of course he would rather not speak about himself—if you will be good enough just to read this." With the last words Lush rose and presented the paper to her.

When Gwendolen resolved that she would betray no feeling in the presence of this man, she had not prepared herself to hear that her husband knew the silent consciousness, the silently accepted terms on which she had married him. She dared not raise her hand to take the paper, lest it should visibly tremble. For a moment Lush stood holding it towards her, and she felt his gaze

on her as ignominy, before she could say even with low-toned haughtiness—

"Lay it on the table. And go into the next room, please."

Lush obeyed, thinking as he took an easy-chair in the back drawing-room, "My lady winces considerably. She didn't know what would be the charge for that superfine article, Henleigh Grandcourt." But it seemed to him that a penniless girl had done better than she had any right to expect, and that she had been uncommonly knowing for her years and opportunities: her words to Lydia meant nothing, and her running away had probably been part of her adroitness. It had turned out a master-stroke.

Meanwhile Gwendolen was rallying her nerves to the reading of the paper. She must read it. Her whole being—pride, longing for rebellion, dreams of freedom, remorseful conscience, dread of fresh visitation—all made one need to know what the paper contained. But at first it was not easy to take in the meaning of the words. When she had succeeded, she found that in the case of there being no son as issue of her marriage, Grandcourt had made the small Henleigh his heir;—that was all she cared to extract from the paper with any distinctness. The other state-

ments as to what provision would be made for her in the same case, she hurried over, getting only a confused perception of thousands and Gadsmere. It was enough. She could dismiss the man in the next room with the defiant energy which had revived in her at the idea that this question of property and inheritance was meant as a finish to her humiliations and her thraldom.

She thrust the paper between the leaves of her book, which she took in her hand, and walked with her stateliest air into the next room, where Lush immediately rose, awaiting her approach. When she was four yards from him, it was hardly an instant that she paused to say in a high tone, while she swept him with her eyelashes—

"Tell Mr Grandcourt that his arrangements are just what I desired" — passing on without haste, and leaving Lush time to mingle some admiration of her graceful back with that half-amused sense of her spirit and impertinence, which he expressed by raising his eyebrows and just thrusting his tongue between his teeth. He really did not want her to be worse punished, and he was glad to think that it was time to go and lunch at the club, where he meant to have a lobster salad.

What did Gwendolen look forward to? When

her husband returned he found her equipped in her riding-dress, ready to ride out with him. She was not again going to be hysterical, or take to her bed and say she was ill. That was the implicit resolve adjusting her muscles before she could have framed it in words, as she walked out of the room, leaving Lush behind her. She was going to act in the spirit of her message, and not to give herself time to reflect. She rang the bell for her maid, and went with the usual care through her change of toilet. Doubtless her husband had meant to produce a great effect on her: by-and-by perhaps she would let him see an effect the very opposite of what he intended; but at present all that she could show was a defiant satisfaction in what had been presumed to be disagreeable. It came as an instinct rather than a thought, that to show any sign which could be interpreted as jealousy, when she had just been insultingly reminded that the conditions were what she had accepted with her eyes open, would be the worst self-humiliation. She said to herself that she had not time to-day to be clear about her future actions; all she could be clear about was that she would match her husband in ignoring any ground for excitement. She not only rode, but went out with him to dine, contributing

nothing to alter their mutual manner, which was never that of rapid interchange in discourse; and curiously enough she rejected a handkerchief on which her maid had by mistake put the wrong scent—a scent that Grandcourt had once objected to. Gwendolen would not have liked to be an object of disgust to this husband whom she hated: she liked all disgust to be on her side.

But to defer thought in this way was something like trying to talk down the singing in her own ears. The thought that is bound up with our passion is as penetrative as air — everything is porous to it; bows, smiles, conversation, repartee, are mere honeycombs where such thought rushes freely, not always with a taste of honey. And without shutting herself up in any solitude, Gwendolen seemed at the end of nine or ten hours to have gone through a labyrinth of reflection, in which already the same succession of prospects had been repeated, the same fallacious outlets rejected, the same shrinking from the necessities of every course. Already she was undergoing some hardening effect from feeling that she was under eyes which saw her past actions solely in the light of her lowest motives. She lived back in the scenes of her courtship, with the new bitter consciousness of what had been in

Grandcourt's mind—certain now, with her present experience of him, that he had had a peculiar triumph in conquering her dumb repugnance, and that ever since their marriage he had had a cold exultation in knowing her fancied secret. Her imagination exaggerated every tyrannical impulse he was capable of. "I will insist on being separated from him"—was her first darting determination: then, "I will leave him, whether he consents or not. If this boy becomes his heir, I have made an atonement." But neither in darkness nor in daylight could she imagine the scenes which must carry out those determinations with the courage to feel them endurable. How could she run away to her own family—carry distress among them, and render herself an object of scandal in the society she had left behind her? What future lay before her as Mrs Grandcourt gone back to her mother, who would be made destitute again by the rupture of the marriage for which one chief excuse had been that it had brought that mother a maintenance? She had lately been seeing her uncle and Anna in London, and though she had been saved from any difficulty about inviting them to stay in Grosvenor Square by their wish to be with Rex, who would not risk a meeting with her, the transient visits she had

had from them helped now in giving stronger colour to the picture of what it would be for her to take refuge in her own family. What could she say to justify her flight? Her uncle would tell her to go back. Her mother would cry. Her aunt and Anna would look at her with wondering alarm. Her husband would have power to compel her. She had absolutely nothing that she could allege against him in judicious or judicial ears. And to "insist on separation!" That was an easy combination of words; but considered as an action to be executed against Grandcourt, it would be about as practicable as to give him a pliant disposition and a dread of other people's unwillingness. How was she to begin? What was she to say that would not be a condemnation of herself? "If I am to have misery anyhow," was the bitter refrain of her rebellious dreams, "I had better have the misery that I can keep to myself." Moreover, her capability of rectitude told her again and again that she had no right to complain of her contract, or to withdraw from it.

And always among the images that drove her back to submission was Deronda. The idea of herself separated from her husband, gave Deronda a changed, perturbing, painful place in her consciousness: instinctively she felt that the separa-

tion would be from him too, and in the prospective vision of herself as a solitary, dubiously regarded woman, she felt some tingling bashfulness at the remembrance of her behaviour towards him. The association of Deronda with a dubious position for herself was intolerable. And what would he say if he knew everything? Probably that she ought to bear what she had brought on herself, unless she were sure that she could make herself a better woman by taking any other course. And what sort of woman was she to be — solitary, sickened of life, looked at with a suspicious kind of pity?—even if she could dream of success in getting that dreary freedom. Mrs Grandcourt "run away" would be a more pitiable creature than Gwendolen Harleth condemned to teach the bishop's daughters, and to be inspected by Mrs Mompert.

One characteristic trait in her conduct is worth mentioning. She would not look a second time at the paper Lush had given her; and before ringing for her maid she locked it up in a travelling-desk which was at hand, proudly resolved against curiosity about what was allotted to herself in connection with Gadsmere—feeling herself branded in the minds of her husband and his confidant with the meanness that would accept

marriage and wealth on any conditions, however dishonourable and humiliating.

Day after day the same pattern of thinking was repeated. There came nothing to change the situation—no new elements in the sketch—only a recurrence which engraved it. The May weeks went on into June, and still Mrs Grandcourt was outwardly in the same place, presenting herself as she was expected to do in the accustomed scenes, with the accustomed grace, beauty, and costume; from church at one end of the week, through all the scale of desirable receptions, to opera at the other. Church was not markedly distinguished in her mind from the other forms of self-presentation, for marriage had included no instruction that enabled her to connect liturgy and sermon with any larger order of the world than that of unexplained and perhaps inexplicable social fashions. While a laudable zeal was labouring to carry the light of spiritual law up the alleys where law is chiefly known as the policeman, the brilliant Mrs Grandcourt, condescending a little to a fashionable Rector and conscious of a feminine advantage over a learned Dean, was, so far as pastoral care and religious fellowship were concerned, in as complete a solitude as a man in a lighthouse.

Can we wonder at the practical submission which hid her constructive rebellion? The combination is common enough, as we know from the number of persons who make us aware of it in their own case by a clamorous unwearied statement of the reasons against their submitting to a situation which, on inquiry, we discover to be the least disagreeable within their reach. Poor Gwendolen had both too much and too little mental power and dignity to make herself exceptional. No wonder that Deronda now marked some hardening in a look and manner which were schooled daily to the suppression of feeling.

For example. One morning, riding in Rotten Row with Grandcourt by her side, she saw standing against the railing at the turn, just facing them, a dark-eyed lady with a little girl and a blond boy, whom she at once recognised as the beings in all the world the most painful for her to behold. She and Grandcourt had just slackened their pace to a walk; he being on the outer side was the nearer to the unwelcome vision, and Gwendolen had not presence of mind to do anything but glance away from the dark eyes that met hers piercingly towards Grandcourt, who wheeled past the group with an unmoved face, giving no sign of recognition.

Immediately she felt a rising rage against him mingling with her shame for herself, and the words, "You might at least have raised your hat to her," flew impetuously to her lips—but did not pass them. If as her husband, in her company, he chose to ignore these creatures whom she herself had excluded from the place she was filling, how could she be the person to reproach him? She was dumb.

It was not chance, but her own design, that had brought Mrs Glasher there with her boy. She had come to town under the pretext of making purchases—really wanting educational apparatus for the children, and had had interviews with Lush in which he had not refused to soothe her uneasy mind by representing the probabilities as all on the side of her ultimate triumph. Let her keep quiet, and she might live to see the marriage dissolve itself in one way or other—Lush hinted at several ways—leaving the succession assured to her boy. She had had an interview with Grandcourt too, who had as usual told her to behave like a reasonable woman, and threatened punishment if she were troublesome; but had, also as usual, vindicated himself from any wish to be stingy, the money he was receiving from Sir Hugo on account of Diplow encouraging his dis-

position to be lavish. Lydia, feeding on the probabilities in her favour, devoured her helpless wrath along with that pleasanter nourishment; but she could not let her discretion go entirely without the reward of making a Medusa-apparition before Gwendolen, vindictiveness and jealousy finding relief in an outlet of venom, though it were as futile as that of a viper already flung to the other side of the hedge. Hence each day, after finding out from Lush the likely time for Gwendolen to be riding, she had watched at that post, daring Grandcourt so far. Why should she not take little Henleigh into the Park?

The Medusa-apparition was made effective beyond Lydia's conception by the shock it gave Gwendolen actually to see Grandcourt ignoring this woman who had once been the nearest in the world to him, along with the children she had borne him. And all the while the dark shadow thus cast on the lot of a woman destitute of acknowledged social dignity, spread itself over her visions of a future that might be her own, and made part of her dread on her own behalf. She shrank all the more from any lonely action. What possible release could there be for her from this hated vantage-ground, which yet she dared not quit, any more than if fire had been raining out-

side it? What release, but death? Not her own death. Gwendolen was not a woman who could easily think of her own death as a near reality, or front for herself the dark entrance on the untried and invisible. It seemed more possible that Grandcourt should die:—and yet not likely. The power of tyranny in him seemed a power of living in the presence of any wish that he should die. The thought that his death was the only possible deliverance for her was one with the thought that deliverance would never come—the double deliverance from the injury with which other beings might reproach her and from the yoke she had brought on her own neck. No! she foresaw him always living, and her own life dominated by him; the "always" of her young experience not stretching beyond the few immediate years that seemed immeasurably long with her passionate weariness. The thought of his dying would not subsist: it turned as with a dream-change into the terror that she should die with his throttling fingers on her neck avenging that thought. Fantasies moved within her like ghosts, making no break in her more acknowledged consciousness and finding no obstruction in it: dark rays doing their work invisibly in the broad light.

Only an evening or two after that encounter in

the Park, there was a grand concert at Klesmer's, who was living rather magnificently now in one of the large houses in Grosvenor Place, a patron and prince among musical professors. Gwendolen had looked forward to this occasion as one on which she was sure to meet Deronda, and she had been meditating how to put a question to him which, without containing a word that she would feel a dislike to utter, would yet be explicit enough for him to understand it. The struggle of opposite feelings would not let her abide by her instinct that the very idea of Deronda's relation to her was a discouragement to any desperate step towards freedom. The next wave of emotion was a longing for some word of his to enforce a resolve. The fact that her opportunities of conversation with him had always to be snatched in the doubtful privacy of large parties, caused her to live through them many times beforehand, imagining how they would take place and what she would say. The irritation was proportionate when no opportunity came; and this evening at Klesmer's she included Deronda in her anger, because he looked as calm as possible at a distance from her, while she was in danger of betraying her impatience to every one who spoke to her. She found her only safety in a chill haughtiness which

made Mr Vandernoodt remark that Mrs Grandcourt was becoming a perfect match for her husband. When at last the chances of the evening brought Deronda near her, Sir Hugo and Mrs Raymond were close by and could hear every word she said. No matter: her husband was not near, and her irritation passed without check into a fit of daring which restored the security of her self-possession. Deronda was there at last, and she would compel him to do what she pleased. Already and without effort rather queenly in her air as she stood in her white lace and green leaves, she threw a royal permissiveness into her way of saying, "I wish you would come and see me to-morrow between five and six, Mr Deronda."

There could be but one answer at that moment: "Certainly," with a tone of obedience.

Afterwards it occurred to Deronda that he would write a note to excuse himself. He had always avoided making a call at Grandcourt's. But he could not persuade himself to any step that might hurt her, and whether his excuse were taken for indifference or for the affectation of indifference it would be equally wounding. He kept his promise. Gwendolen had declined to ride out on the plea of not feeling well enough, having left her refusal to the last moment when the horses were soon to

be at the door—not without alarm lest her husband should say that he too would stay at home. Become almost superstitious about his power of suspicious divination, she had a glancing forethought of what she would do in that case—namely, have herself denied as not well. But Grandcourt accepted her excuse without remark, and rode off.

Nevertheless when Gwendolen found herself alone, and had sent down the order that only Mr Deronda was to be admitted, she began to be alarmed at what she had done, and to feel a growing agitation in the thought that he would soon appear, and she should soon be obliged to speak: not of trivialities, as if she had had no serious motive in asking him to come; and yet what she had been for hours determining to say began to seem impossible. For the first time the impulse of appeal to him was being checked by timidity; and now that it was too late she was shaken by the possibility that he might think her invitation unbecoming. If so, she would have sunk in his esteem. But immediately she resisted this intolerable fear as an infection from her husband's way of thinking. That *he* would say she was making a fool of herself was rather a reason why such a judgment would be remote from Deronda's

mind. But that she could not rid herself from this sudden invasion of womanly reticence was manifest in a kind of action which had never occurred to her before. In her struggle between agitation and the effort to suppress it, she was walking up and down the length of two drawing-rooms, where at one end a long mirror reflected her in her black dress, chosen in the early morning with a half-admitted reference to this hour. But above this black dress her head on its white pillar of a neck showed to advantage. Some consciousness of this made her turn hastily and hurry to the boudoir, where again there was glass, but also, tossed over a chair, a large piece of black lace which she snatched and tied over her crown of hair so as completely to conceal her neck, and leave only her face looking out from the black frame. In this manifest contempt of appearance, she thought it possible to be freer from nervousness, but the black lace did not take away the uneasiness from her eyes and lips.

She was standing in the middle of the room when Deronda was announced, and as he approached her she perceived that he too for some reason was not his usual self. She could not have defined the change except by saying that he looked less happy than usual, and appeared to be under

some effort in speaking to her. And yet the speaking was the slightest possible. They both said, "How do you do?" quite curtly; and Gwendolen, instead of sitting down, moved to a little distance, resting her arms slightly on the tall back of a chair, while Deronda stood where he was, holding his hat in one hand and his coat-collar with the other—both feeling it difficult to say anything more, though the preoccupation in his mind could hardly have been more remote than it was from Gwendolen's conception. She naturally saw in his embarrassment some reflection of her own. Forced to speak, she found all her training in concealment and self-command of no use to her, and began with timid awkwardness—

"You will wonder why I begged you to come. I wanted to ask you something. You said I was ignorant. That is true. And what can I do but ask you?"

And at this moment she was feeling it utterly impossible to put the questions she had intended. Something new in her nervous manner roused Deronda's anxiety lest there might be a new crisis. He said with the sadness of affection in his voice—

"My only regret is, that I can be of so little use to you." The words and the tone touched a new

spring in her, and she went on with more sense of freedom, yet still not saying anything she had designed to say, and beginning to hurry, that she might somehow arrive at the right words.

"I wanted to tell you that I have always been thinking of your advice, but is it any use?—I can't make myself different, because things about me raise bad feelings—and I must go on—I can alter nothing—it is no use."

She paused an instant, with the consciousness that she was not finding the right words, but began again as hurriedly, "But if I go on, I shall get worse. I want not to get worse. I should like to be what you wish. There are people who are good and enjoy great things—I know there are. I am a contemptible creature. I feel as if I should get wicked with hating people. I have tried to think that I would go away from everybody. But I can't. There are so many things to hinder me. You think, perhaps, that I don't mind. But I do mind. I am afraid of everything. I am afraid of getting wicked. Tell me what I can do."

She had forgotten everything but that image of her helpless misery which she was trying to make present to Deronda in broken allusive speech—wishing to convey but not express all her need. Her eyes were tearless, and had a look of smart-

ing in their dilated brilliancy; there was a subdued sob in her voice which was more and more veiled, till it was hardly above a whisper. She was hurting herself with the jewels that glittered on her tightly-clasped fingers pressed against her heart.

The feeling Deronda endured in these moments he afterwards called horrible. Words seemed to have no more rescue in them than if he had been beholding a vessel in peril of wreck—the poor ship with its many-lived anguish beaten by the inescapable storm. How could he grasp the long-growing process of this young creature's wretchedness?—how arrest and change it with a sentence? He was afraid of his own voice. The words that rushed into his mind seemed in their feebleness nothing better than despair made audible, or than that insensibility to another's hardship which applies precept to soothe pain. He felt himself holding a crowd of words imprisoned within his lips, as if the letting them escape would be a violation of awe before the mysteries of our human lot. The thought that urged itself foremost was—"Confess everything to your husband; leave nothing concealed:"—the words carried in his mind a vision of reasons which would have needed much fuller expression for Gwendolen to apprehend

them, but before he had begun to utter those brief sentences, the door opened and the husband entered.

Grandcourt had deliberately gone out and turned back to satisfy a suspicion. What he saw was Gwendolen's face of anguish framed black like a nun's, and Deronda standing three yards from her with a look of sorrow such as he might have bent on the last struggle of life in a beloved object. Without any show of surprise, Grandcourt nodded to Deronda, gave a second look at Gwendolen, passed on, and seated himself easily at a little distance, crossing his legs, taking out his handkerchief and trifling with it elegantly.

Gwendolen had shrunk and changed her attitude on seeing him, but she did not turn or move from her place. It was not a moment in which she could feign anything, or manifest any strong revulsion of feeling: the passionate movement of her last speech was still too strong within her. What she felt besides was a dull despairing sense that her interview with Deronda was at an end: a curtain had fallen. But he, naturally, was urged into self-possession and effort by susceptibility to what might follow for her from being seen by her husband in this betrayal of agitation; and feeling that any pretence of ease in prolonging his visit

would only exaggerate Grandcourt's possible conjectures of duplicity, he merely said—

"I will not stay longer now. Good-bye."

He put out his hand, and she let him press her poor little chill fingers; but she said no good-bye.

When he had left the room, Gwendolen threw herself into a seat, with an expectation as dull as her despair—the expectation that she was going to be punished. But Grandcourt took no notice; he was satisfied to have let her know that she had not deceived him, and to keep a silence which was formidable with omniscience. He went out that evening, and her plea of feeling ill was accepted without even a sneer.

The next morning at breakfast he said, "I am going yachting to the Mediterranean."

"When?" said Gwendolen, with a leap of heart which had hope in it.

"The day after to-morrow. The yacht is at Marseilles. Lush is gone to get everything ready."

"Shall I have mamma to stay with me, then?" said Gwendolen, the new sudden possibility of peace and affection filling her mind like a burst of morning light.

"No; you will go with me."

CHAPTER XLIX.

Ever in his soul
That larger justice which makes gratitude
Triumphed above resentment. 'Tis the mark
Of regal natures, with the wider life,
And fuller capability of joy:—
Not wits exultant in the strongest lens
To show you goodness vanished into pulp
Never worth "thank you"—they're the devil's friars,
Vowed to be poor as he in love and trust,
Yet must go begging of a world that keeps
Some human property.

DERONDA, in parting from Gwendolen, had abstained from saying, "I shall not see you again for a long while: I am going away," lest Grandcourt should understand him to imply that the fact was of importance to her.

He was actually going away under circumstances so momentous to himself that when he set out to fulfil his promise of calling on her, he was already under the shadow of a solemn emotion which revived the deepest experience of his life.

Sir Hugo had sent for him to his chambers with the note—"Come immediately. Something has happened:" a preparation that caused him some relief when, on entering the baronet's study, he was received with grave affection instead of the distress which he had apprehended.

"It is nothing to grieve you, sir?" said Deronda, in a tone rather of restored confidence than question, as he took the hand held out to him. There was an unusual meaning in Sir Hugo's look, and a subdued emotion in his voice, as he said—

"No, Dan, no. Sit down. I have something to say."

Deronda obeyed, not without presentiment. It was extremely rare for Sir Hugo to show so much serious feeling.

"Not to grieve me, my boy, no. At least, if there is nothing in it that will grieve you too much. But I hardly expected that this—just this—would ever happen. There have been reasons why I have never prepared you for it. There have been reasons why I have never told you anything about your parentage. But I have striven in every way not to make that an injury to you."

Sir Hugo paused, but Deronda could not speak. He could not say, "I have never felt it an injury." Even if that had been true, he could not have

trusted his voice to say anything. Far more than any one but himself could know of was hanging on this moment when the secrecy was to be broken. Sir Hugo had never seen the grand face he delighted in so pale—the lips pressed together with such a look of pain. He went on with a more anxious tenderness, as if he had a new fear of wounding.

"I have acted in obedience to your mother's wishes. The secrecy was her wish. But now she desires to remove it. She desires to see you. I will put this letter into your hands, which you can look at by-and-by. It will merely tell you what she wishes you to do, and where you will find her."

Sir Hugo held out a letter written on foreign paper, which Deronda thrust into his breast-pocket, with a sense of relief that he was not called on to read anything immediately. The emotion in Daniel's face had gained on the baronet, and was visibly shaking his composure. Sir Hugo found it difficult to say more. And Deronda's whole soul was possessed by a question which was the hardest in the world to utter. Yet he could not bear to delay it. This was a sacramental moment. If he let it pass, he could not recover the influences under which it was possible

to utter the words and meet the answer. For some moments his eyes were cast down, and it seemed to both as if thoughts were in the air between them. But at last Deronda looked at Sir Hugo, and said, with a tremulous reverence in his voice —dreading to convey indirectly the reproach that affection had for years been stifling—

"Is my father also living?"

The answer came immediately in a low emphatic tone—

"No."

In the mingled emotions which followed that answer it was impossible to distinguish joy from pain.

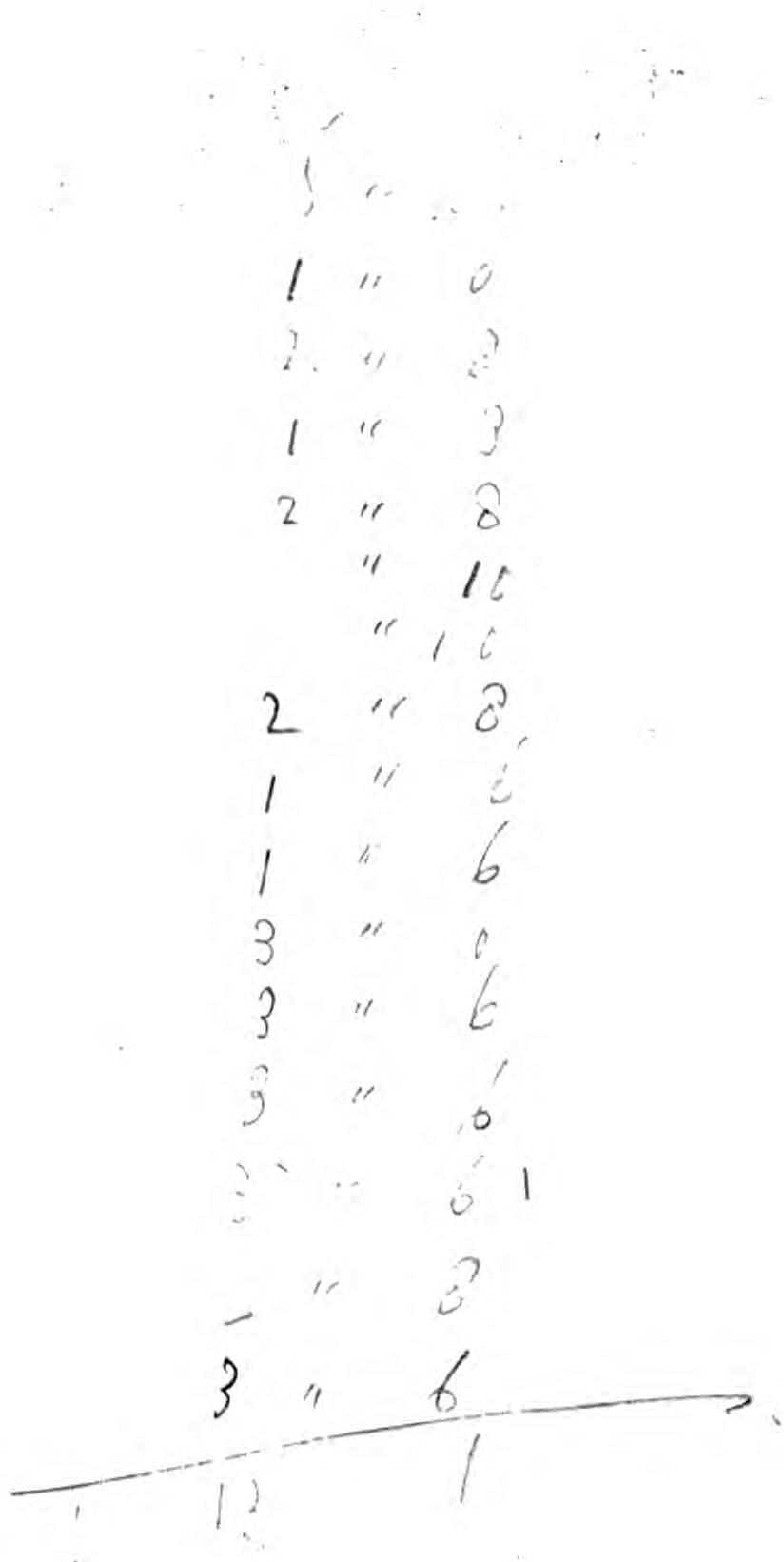
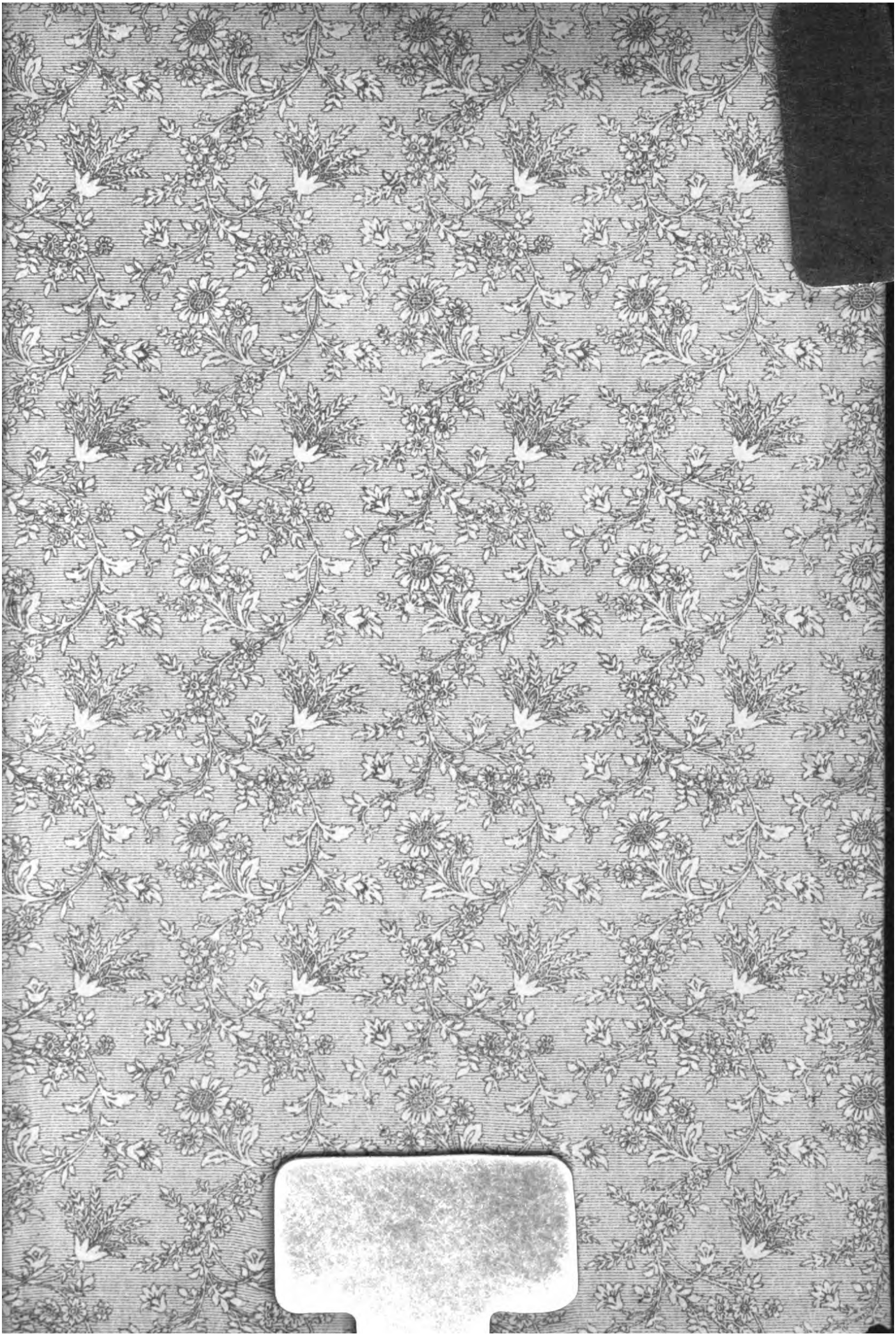
Some new light had fallen on the past for Sir Hugo too in this interview. After a silence in which Deronda felt like one whose creed is gone before he has religiously embraced another, the baronet said, in a tone of confession—

"Perhaps I was wrong, Dan, to undertake what I did. And perhaps I liked it a little too well—having you all to myself. But if you have had any pain which I might have helped, I ask you to forgive me."

"The forgiveness has long been there," said Deronda. "The chief pain has always been on account of some one else—whom I never knew—

whom I am now to know. It has not hindered me from feeling an affection for you which has made a large part of all the life I remember."

It seemed one impulse that made the two men clasp each other's hand for a moment.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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