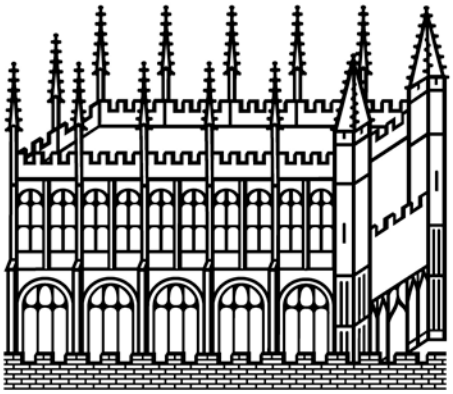

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DANIEL DERONDA

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DANIEL DERONDA

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

DANIEL DERONDA

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

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DANIEL DERONDA

BOOK V.

MORDECAI

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CHAPTER XXXV.

Were uneasiness of conscience measured by extent of crime, human history had been different, and one should look to see the contrivers of greedy wars and the mighty marauders of the money-market in one troop of self-lacerating penitents with the meaner robber and cut-purse and the murderer that doth his butchery in small with his own hand. No doubt wickedness hath its rewards to distribute; but whoso wins in this devil's game must needs be baser, more cruel, more brutal than the order of this planet will allow for the multitude born of woman, the most of these carrying a form of conscience—a fear which is the shadow of justice, a pity which is the shadow of love—that hindereth from the prize of serene wickedness, itself difficult of maintenance in our composite flesh.

ON the 29th of December Deronda knew that the Grandcourts had arrived at the Abbey, but he had had no glimpse of them before he went to dress for dinner. There had been a splendid fall of snow, allowing the party of children the rare pleasures of snow-balling and snow-building, and

in the Christmas holidays the Mallinger girls were content with no amusement unless it were joined in and managed by "cousin," as they had always called Deronda. After that outdoor exertion he had been playing billiards, and thus the hours had passed without his dwelling at all on the prospect of meeting Gwendolen at dinner. Nevertheless that prospect was interesting to him, and when, a little tired and heated with working at amusement, he went to his room before the half-hour bell had rung, he began to think of it with some speculation on the sort of influence her marriage with Grandcourt would have on her, and on the probability that there would be some discernible shades of change in her manner since he saw her at Diplow, just as there had been since his first vision of her at Leubronn.

"I fancy there are some natures one could see growing or degenerating every day, if one watched them," was his thought. "I suppose some of us go on faster than others; and I am sure she is a creature who keeps strong traces of anything that has once impressed her. That little affair of the necklace, and the idea that somebody thought her gambling wrong, had evidently bitten into her. But such impressibility tells both ways: it may drive one to desperation as soon as to anything

better. And whatever fascinations Grandcourt may have for capricious tastes—good heavens! who can believe that he would call out the tender affections in daily companionship? One might be tempted to horsewhip him for the sake of getting some show of passion into his face and speech. I'm afraid she married him out of ambition—to escape poverty. But why did she run out of his way at first? The poverty came after, though. Poor thing! she may have been urged into it. How can one feel anything else than pity for a young creature like that—full of unused life — ignorantly rash—hanging all her blind expectations on that remnant of a human being!"

Doubtless the phrases which Deronda's meditation applied to the bridegroom were the less complimentary for the excuses and pity in which it clad the bride. His notion of Grandcourt as a "remnant" was founded on no particular knowledge, but simply on the impression which ordinary polite intercourse had given him that Grandcourt had worn out all his natural healthy interest in things.

In general, one may be sure that whenever a marriage of any mark takes place, male acquaintances are likely to pity the bride, female ac-

quaintances the bridegroom: each, it is thought, might have done better; and especially where the bride is charming, young gentlemen on the scene are apt to conclude that she can have no real attachment to a fellow so uninteresting to themselves as her husband, but has married him on other grounds. Who under such circumstances pities the husband? Even his female friends are apt to think his position retributive: he should have chosen some one else. But perhaps Deronda may be excused that he did not prepare any pity for Grandcourt, who had never struck acquaintances as likely to come out of his experiences with more suffering than he inflicted; whereas for Gwendolen, young, headlong, eager for pleasure, fed with the flattery which makes a lovely girl believe in her divine right to rule — how quickly might life turn from expectancy to a bitter sense of the irremediable! After what he had seen of her he must have had rather dull feelings not to have looked forward with some interest to her entrance into the room. Still, since the honeymoon was already three weeks in the distance, and Gwendolen had been enthroned not only at Ryelands but at Diplow, she was likely to have composed her countenance with suitable manifestation or concealment, not being

one who would indulge the curious by a helpless exposure of her feelings.

A various party had been invited to meet the new couple: the old aristocracy was represented by Lord and Lady Pentreath; the old gentry by young Mr and Mrs Fitzadam of the Worcestershire branch of the Fitzadams; politics and the public good, as specialised in the cider interest, by Mr Fenn, member for West Orchards, accompanied by his two daughters; Lady Mallinger's family, by her brother, Mr Raymond, and his wife; the useful bachelor element by Mr Sinker, the eminent counsel, and by Mr Vandernoodt, whose acquaintance Sir Hugo had found pleasant enough at Leubronn to be adopted in England.

All had assembled in the drawing-room before the new couple appeared. Meanwhile the time was being passed chiefly in noticing the children —various little Raymonds, nephews and nieces of Lady Mallinger's, with her own three girls, who were always allowed to appear at this hour. The scene was really delightful — enlarged by full-length portraits with deep backgrounds, inserted in the cedar panelling—surmounted by a ceiling that glowed with the rich colours of the coats of arms ranged between the sockets—illuminated almost as much by the red fire of oak-boughs as by the

pale wax-lights—stilled by the deep-piled carpet and by the high English breeding that subdues all voices; while the mixture of ages, from the white-haired Lord and Lady Pentreath to the four-year-old Edgar Raymond, gave a varied charm to the living groups. Lady Mallinger, with fair matronly roundness and mildly prominent blue eyes, moved about in her black velvet, carrying a tiny white dog on her arm as a sort of finish to her costume; the children were scattered among the ladies, while most of the gentlemen were standing rather aloof conversing with that very moderate vivacity observable during the long minutes before dinner. Deronda was a little out of the circle in a dialogue fixed upon him by Mr Vandernoodt, a man of the best Dutch blood imported at the revolution: for the rest, one of those commodious persons in society who are nothing particular themselves, but are understood to be acquainted with the best in every department; close-clipped, pale-eyed, *nonchalant*, as good a foil as could well be found to the intense colouring and vivid gravity of Deronda.

He was talking of the bride and bridegroom, whose appearance was being waited for. Mr Vandernoodt was an industrious gleaner of personal details, and could probably tell everything about

a great philosopher or physicist except his theories or discoveries: he was now implying that he had learned many facts about Grandcourt since meeting him at Leubronn.

"Men who have seen a good deal of life don't always end by choosing their wives so well. He has had rather an anecdotic history—gone rather deep into pleasures, I fancy, lazy as he is. But, of course, you know all about him."

"No, really," said Deronda, in an indifferent tone. "I know little more of him than that he is Sir Hugo's nephew."

But now the door opened and deferred any satisfaction of Mr Vandernoodt's communicativeness.

The scene was one to set off any figure of distinction that entered on it, and certainly when Mr and Mrs Grandcourt entered, no beholder could deny that their figures had distinction. The bridegroom had neither more nor less easy perfection of costume, neither more nor less well-cut impassibility of face, than before his marriage. It was to be supposed of him that he would put up with nothing less than the best in outward equipment, wife included; and the wife on his arm was what he might have been expected to choose. "By George, I think she's handsomer if

anything!" said Mr Vandernoodt. And Deronda was of the same opinion, but he said nothing. The white silk and diamonds — it may seem strange, but she did wear the diamonds on her neck, in her ears, in her hair—might have something to do with the new imposingness of her beauty, which flashed on him as more unquestionable if not more thoroughly satisfactory than when he had first seen her at the gaming-table. Some faces which are peculiar in their beauty are like original works of art: for the first time they are almost always met with question. But in seeing Gwendolen at Diplow, Deronda had discerned in her more than he had expected of that tender appealing charm which we call womanly. Was there any new change since then? He distrusted his impressions; but as he saw her receiving greetings with what seemed a proud cold quietude and a superficial smile, there seemed to be at work within her the same demonic force that had possessed her when she took him in her resolute glance and turned away a loser from the gaming-table. There was no time for more of a conclusion—no time even for him to give his greeting before the summons to dinner.

He sat not far from opposite to her at table, and could sometimes hear what she said in

answer to Sir Hugo, who was at his liveliest in conversation with her; but though he looked towards her with the intention of bowing, she gave him no opportunity of doing so for some time. At last Sir Hugo, who might have imagined that they had already spoken to each other, said, "Deronda, you will like to hear what Mrs Grandcourt tells me about your favourite Klesmer."

Gwendolen's eyelids had been lowered, and Deronda, already looking at her, thought he discovered a quivering reluctance as she was obliged to raise them and return his unembarrassed bow and smile, her own smile being one of the lip merely. It was but an instant, and Sir Hugo continued without pause—

"The Arrowpoints have condoned the marriage, and he is spending the Christmas with his bride at Quetcham."

"I suppose he will be glad of it for the sake of his wife, else I daresay he would not have minded keeping at a distance," said Deronda.

"It's a sort of troubadour story," said Lady Pentreath, an easy, deep-voiced old lady; "I'm glad to find a little romance left among us. I think our young people now are getting too worldly wise."

"It shows the Arrowpoints' good sense, however, to have adopted the affair, after the fuss in the papers," said Sir Hugo. "And disowning your only child because of a *mésalliance* is something like disowning your one eye: everybody knows it's yours, and you have no other to make an appearance with."

"As to *mésalliance*, there's no blood on any side," said Lady Pentreath. "Old Admiral Arrowpoint was one of Nelson's men, you know—a doctor's son. And we all know how the mother's money came."

"If there were any *mésalliance* in the case, I should say it was on Klesmer's side," said Deronda.

"Ah, you think it is a case of the immortal marrying the mortal. What is your opinion?" said Sir Hugo, looking at Gwendolen.

"I have no doubt that Herr Klesmer thinks himself immortal. But I daresay his wife will burn as much incense before him as he requires," said Gwendolen. She had recovered any composure that she might have lost.

"Don't you approve of a wife burning incense before her husband?" said Sir Hugo, with an air of jocoseness.

"Oh yes," said Gwendolen, "if it were only

to make others believe in him." She paused a moment and then said with more gaiety, "When Herr Klesmer admires his own genius, it will take off some of the absurdity if his wife says Amen."

"Klesmer is no favourite of yours, I see," said Sir Hugo.

"I think very highly of him, I assure you," said Gwendolen. "His genius is quite above my judgment, and I know him to be exceedingly generous."

She spoke with the sudden seriousness which is often meant to correct an unfair or indiscreet sally, having a bitterness against Klesmer in her secret soul which she knew herself unable to justify. Deronda was wondering what he should have thought of her if he had never heard of her before: probably that she put on a little hardness and defiance by way of concealing some painful consciousness—if, indeed, he could imagine her manners otherwise than in the light of his suspicion. But why did she not recognise him with more friendliness?

Sir Hugo, by way of changing the subject, said to her, "Is not this a beautiful room? It was part of the refectory of the Abbey. There was a division made by those pillars and the three

arches, and afterwards they were built up. Else it was half as large again originally. There used to be rows of Benedictines sitting where we are sitting. Suppose we were suddenly to see the lights burning low and the ghosts of the old monks rising behind all our chairs!"

"Please don't!" said Gwendolen, with a playful shudder. "It is very nice to come after ancestors and monks, but they should know their places and keep underground. I should be rather frightened to go about this house all alone. I suppose the old generations must be angry with us because we have altered things so much."

"Oh, the ghosts must be of all political parties," said Sir Hugo. "And those fellows who wanted to change things while they lived and couldn't do it, must be on our side. But if you would not like to go over the house alone, you will like to go in company, I hope. You and Grandcourt ought to see it all. And we will ask Deronda to go round with us. He is more learned about it than I am." The baronet was in the most complaisant of humours.

Gwendolen stole a glance at Deronda, who must have heard what Sir Hugo said, for he had his face turned towards them helping himself to an *entrée;* but he looked as impassive as a picture.

At the notion of Deronda's showing her and Grandcourt the place which was to be theirs, and which she with painful emphasis remembered might have been his (perhaps, if others had acted differently), certain thoughts had rushed in —thoughts often repeated within her, but now returning on an occasion embarrassingly new; and she was conscious of something furtive and awkward in her glance, which Sir Hugo must have noticed. With her usual readiness of resource against betrayal, she said playfully, "You don't know how much I am afraid of Mr Deronda."

"How's that? Because you think him too learned?" said Sir Hugo, whom the peculiarity of her glance had not escaped.

"No. It is ever since I first saw him at Leubronn. Because when he came to look on at the roulette-table, I began to lose. He cast an evil eye on my play. He didn't approve it. He has told me so. And now whatever I do before him, I am afraid he will cast an evil eye upon it."

"Gad! I'm rather afraid of him myself when he doesn't approve," said Sir Hugo, glancing at Deronda; and then turning his face towards Gwendolen, he said less audibly, "I don't think ladies generally object to have his eyes upon them."

The baronet's small chronic complaint of facetiousness was at this moment almost as annoying to Gwendolen as it often was to Deronda.

"I object to any eyes that are critical," she said, in a cool high voice, with a turn of her neck. "Are there many of these old rooms left in the Abbey?"

"Not many. There is a fine cloistered court with a long gallery above it. But the finest bit of all is turned into stables. It is part of the old church. When I improved the place I made the most of every other bit; but it was out of my reach to change the stables, so the horses have the benefit of the fine old choir. You must go and see it."

"I shall like to see the horses as well as the building," said Gwendolen.

"Oh, I have no stud to speak of. Grandcourt will look with contempt at my horses," said Sir Hugo. "I've given up hunting, and go on in a jog-trot way, as becomes an old gentleman with daughters. The fact is, I went in for doing too much at this place. We all lived at Diplow for two years while the alterations were going on. Do you like Diplow?"

"Not particularly," said Gwendolen, with indifference. One would have thought that the

young lady had all her life had more family seats than she cared to go to.

"Ah! it will not do after Ryelands," said Sir Hugo, well pleased. "Grandcourt, I know, took it for the sake of the hunting. But he found something so much better there," added the baronet, lowering his voice, "that he might well prefer it to any other place in the world."

"It has one attraction for me," said Gwendolen, passing over this compliment with a chill smile, "that it is within reach of Offendene."

"I understand that," said Sir Hugo, and then let the subject drop.

What amiable baronet can escape the effect of a strong desire for a particular possession? Sir Hugo would have been glad that Grandcourt, with or without reason, should prefer any other place to Diplow; but inasmuch as in the pure process of wishing we can always make the conditions of our gratification benevolent, he did wish that Grandcourt's convenient disgust for Diplow should not be associated with his marriage of this very charming bride. Gwendolen was much to the baronet's taste, but, as he observed afterwards to Lady Mallinger, he should never have taken her for a young girl who had married beyond her expectations.

Deronda had not heard much of this conversation, having given his attention elsewhere, but the glimpses he had of Gwendolen's manner deepened the impression that it had something newly artificial.

Later in the drawing-room, Deronda, at somebody's request, sat down to the piano and sang. Afterwards Mrs Raymond took his place; and on rising he observed that Gwendolen had left her seat, and had come to this end of the room, as if to listen more fully, but was now standing with her back to every one, apparently contemplating a fine cowled head carved in ivory which hung over a small table. He longed to go to her and speak. Why should he not obey such an impulse, as he would have done towards any other lady in the room? Yet he hesitated some moments, observing the graceful lines of her back, but not moving.

If you have any reason for not indulging a wish to speak to a fair woman, it is a bad plan to look long at her back: the wish to see what it screens becomes the stronger. There may be a very sweet smile on the other side. Deronda ended by going to the end of the small table, at right angles to Gwendolen's position, but before he could speak she had turned on him no smile, but such an appealing look of sadness, so utterly

different from the chill effort of her recognition at table, that his speech was checked. For what was an appreciable space of time to both, though the observation of others could not have measured it, they looked at each other—she seeming to take the deep rest of confession, he with an answering depth of sympathy that neutralised other feelings.

"Will you not join in the music?" he said, by way of meeting the necessity for speech.

That her look of confession had been involuntary was shown by that just perceptible shake and change of countenance with which she roused herself to reply calmly, "I join in it by listening. I am fond of music."

"Are you not a musician?"

"I have given a great deal of time to music. But I have not talent enough to make it worth while. I shall never sing again."

"But if you are fond of music, it will always be worth while in private, for your own delight. I make it a virtue to be content with my middlingness," said Deronda, smiling; "it is always pardonable, so that one does not ask others to take it for superiority."

"I cannot imitate you," said Gwendolen, recovering her tone of artificial vivacity. "To be

middling with me is another phrase for being dull. And the worst fault I have to find with the world is, that it is dull. Do you know, I am going to justify gambling in spite of you. It is a refuge from dulness."

"I don't admit the justification," said Deronda. "I think what we call the dulness of things is a disease in ourselves. Else how could any one find an intense interest in life? And many do."

"Ah, I see! The fault I find in the world is my own fault," said Gwendolen, smiling at him. Then after a moment, looking up at the ivory again, she said, "Do *you* never find fault with the world or with others?"

"Oh yes. When I am in a grumbling mood."

"And hate people? Confess you hate them when they stand in your way—when their gain is your loss? That is your own phrase, you know."

"We are often standing in each other's way when we can't help it. I think it is stupid to hate people on that ground."

"But if they injure you and could have helped it?" said Gwendolen, with a hard intensity unaccountable in incidental talk like this.

Deronda wondered at her choice of subjects.

A painful impression arrested his answer a moment, but at last he said, with a graver, deeper intonation, "Why then, after all, I prefer my place to theirs."

"There I believe you are right," said Gwendolen, with a sudden little laugh, and turned to join the group at the piano.

Deronda looked round for Grandcourt, wondering whether he followed his bride's movements with any attention; but it was rather undiscerning in him to suppose that he could find out the fact. Grandcourt had a delusive mode of observing whatever had an interest for him, which could be surpassed by no sleepy-eyed animal on the watch for prey. At that moment he was plunged in the depth of an easy-chair, being talked to by Mr Vandernoodt, who apparently thought the acquaintance of such a bridegroom worth cultivating; and an incautious person might have supposed it safe to telegraph secrets in front of him, the common prejudice being that your quick observer is one whose eyes have quick movements. Not at all. If you want a respectable witness who will see nothing inconvenient, choose a vivacious gentleman, very much on the alert, with two eyes wide open, a glass in one of them, and an entire impartiality as to the purpose of

looking. If Grandcourt cared to keep any one under his power he saw them out of the corners of his long narrow eyes, and if they went behind him, he had a constructive process by which he knew what they were doing there. He knew perfectly well where his wife was, and how she was behaving. Was he going to be a jealous husband? Deronda imagined that to be likely; but his imagination was as much astray about Grandcourt as it would have been about an unexplored continent where all the species were peculiar. He did not conceive that he himself was a likely object of jealousy, or that he should give any pretext for it; but the suspicion that a wife is not happy naturally leads one to speculate on the husband's private deportment; and Deronda found himself after one o'clock in the morning in the rather ludicrous position of sitting up severely holding a Hebrew grammar in his hands (for somehow, in deference to Mordecai, he had begun to study Hebrew), with the consciousness that he had been in that attitude nearly an hour, and had thought of nothing but Gwendolen and her husband. To be an unusual young man means for the most part to get a difficult mastery over the usual, which is often like the sprite of ill-luck you pack up your goods to escape from, and see

grinning at you from the top of your luggage-van. The peculiarities of Deronda's nature had been acutely touched by the brief incidents and words which made the history of his intercourse with Gwendolen; and this evening's slight addition had given them an importunate recurrence. It was not vanity — it was ready sympathy that had made him alive to a certain appealingness in her behaviour towards him; and the difficulty with which she had seemed to raise her eyes to bow to him, in the first instance, was to be interpreted now by that unmistakable look of involuntary confidence which she had afterwards turned on him under the consciousness of his approach.

"What is the use of it all?" thought Deronda, as he threw down his grammar, and began to undress. "I can't do anything to help her—nobody can, if she has found out her mistake already. And it seems to me that she has a dreary lack of the ideas that might help her. Strange and piteous to think what a centre of wretchedness a delicate piece of human flesh like that might be, wrapped round with fine raiment, her ears pierced for gems, her head held loftily, her mouth all smiling pretence, the poor soul within her sitting in sick distaste of all things! But what do I know of her? There may be a demon in her to match the

worst husband, for what I can tell. She was clearly an ill-educated, worldly girl: perhaps she is a coquette."

This last reflection, not much believed in, was a self-administered dose of caution, prompted partly by Sir Hugo's much-contemned joking on the subject of flirtation. Deronda resolved not to volunteer any *tête-à-tête* with Gwendolen during the few days of her stay at the Abbey; and he was capable of keeping a resolve in spite of much inclination to the contrary.

But a man cannot resolve about a woman's actions, least of all about those of a woman like Gwendolen, in whose nature there was a combination of proud reserve with rashness, of perilously-poised terror with defiance, which might alternately flatter and disappoint control. Few words could less represent her than "coquette." She had a native love of homage, and belief in her own power; but no cold artifice for the sake of enslaving. And the poor thing's belief in her power, with her other dreams before marriage, had often to be thrust aside now like the toys of a sick child, which it looks at with dull eyes, and has no heart to play with, however it may try.

The next day at lunch Sir Hugo said to her, "The thaw has gone on like magic, and it's so

pleasant out of doors just now—shall we go and see the stables and the other old bits about the place?"

"Yes, pray," said Gwendolen. "You will like to see the stables, Henleigh?" she added, looking at her husband.

"Uncommonly," said Grandcourt, with an indifference which seemed to give irony to the word, as he returned her look. It was the first time Deronda had seen them speak to each other since their arrival, and he thought their exchange of looks as cold and official as if it had been a ceremony to keep up a charter. Still, the English fondness for reserve will account for much negation; and Grandcourt's manners with an extra veil of reserve over them might be expected to present the extreme type of the national taste.

"Who else is inclined to make the tour of the house and premises?" said Sir Hugo. "The ladies must muffle themselves: there is only just about time to do it well before sunset. You will go, Dan, won't you?"

"Oh yes," said Deronda, carelessly, knowing that Sir Hugo would think any excuse disobliging.

"All meet in the library, then, when they are ready—say in half an hour," said the baronet. Gwendolen made herself ready with wonderful

quickness, and in ten minutes came down into the library in her sables, plume, and little thick boots. As soon as she entered the room she was aware that some one else was there: it was precisely what she had hoped for. Deronda was standing with his back towards her at the far end of the room, and was looking over a newspaper. How could little thick boots make any noise on an Axminster carpet? And to cough would have seemed an intended signalling which her pride could not condescend to; also, she felt bashful about walking up to him and letting him know that she was there, though it was her hunger to speak to him which had set her imagination on constructing this chance of finding him, and had made her hurry down, as birds hover near the water which they dare not drink. Always uneasily dubious about his opinion of her, she felt a peculiar anxiety to-day, lest he might think of her with contempt, as one triumphantly conscious of being Grandcourt's wife, the future lady of this domain. It was her habitual effort now to magnify the satisfactions of her pride, on which she nourished her strength; but somehow Deronda's being there disturbed them all. There was not the faintest touch of coquetry in the attitude of her mind towards him: he was unique to her

among men, because he had impressed her as being not her admirer but her superior: in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience, as one woman whose nature is an object of reverential belief may become a new conscience to a man.

And now he would not look round and find out that she was there! The paper crackled in his hand, his head rose and sank, exploring those stupid columns, and he was evidently stroking his beard, as if this world were a very easy affair to her. Of course all the rest of the company would soon be down, and the opportunity of her saying something to efface her flippancy of the evening before, would be quite gone. She felt sick with irritation—so fast do young creatures like her absorb misery through invisible suckers of their own fancies—and her face had gathered that peculiar expression which comes with a mortification to which tears are forbidden.

At last he threw down the paper and turned round.

"Oh, you are there already," he said, coming forward a step or two; "I must go and put on my coat."

He turned aside and walked out of the room. This was behaving quite badly. Mere politeness

would have made him stay to exchange some words before leaving her alone. It was true that Grandcourt came in with Sir Hugo immediately after, so that the words must have been too few to be worth anything. As it was, they saw him walking from the library door.

"A—you look rather ill," said Grandcourt, going straight up to her, standing in front of her, and looking into her eyes. "Do you feel equal to the walk?"

"Yes, I shall like it," said Gwendolen, without the slightest movement except this of the lips.

"We could put off going over the house, you know, and only go out of doors," said Sir Hugo, kindly, while Grandcourt turned aside.

"Oh dear no!" said Gwendolen, speaking with determination; "let us put off nothing. I want a long walk."

The rest of the walking party—two ladies and two gentlemen besides Deronda—had now assembled; and Gwendolen, rallying, went with due cheerfulness by the side of Sir Hugo, paying apparently an equal attention to the commentaries Deronda was called upon to give on the various architectural fragments, and to Sir Hugo's reasons for not attempting to remedy the mixture of the undisguised modern with the antique—which in

his opinion only made the place the more truly historical. On their way to the buttery and kitchen, they took the outside of the house and paused before a beautiful pointed doorway, which was the only old remnant in the east front.

"Well, now, to my mind," said Sir Hugo, "that is more interesting standing as it is in the middle of what is frankly four centuries later, than if the whole front had been dressed up in a pretence of the thirteenth century. Additions ought to smack of the time when they are made and carry the stamp of their period. I wouldn't destroy any old bits, but that notion of reproducing the old is a mistake, I think. At least, if a man likes to do it he must pay for his whistle. Besides, where are you to stop along that road—making loopholes where you don't want to peep, and so on? You may as well ask me to wear out the stones with kneeling; eh, Grandcourt?"

"A confounded nuisance," drawled Grandcourt. "I hate fellows wanting to howl litanies—acting the greatest bores that have ever existed."

"Well, yes, that's what their romanticism must come to," said Sir Hugo, in a tone of confidential assent—"that is, if they carry it out logically."

"I think that way of arguing against a course because it may be ridden down to an absurdity

would soon bring life to a standstill," said Deronda. "It is not the logic of human action, but of a roasting-jack, that must go on to the last turn when it has been once wound up. We can do nothing safely without some judgment as to where we are to stop."

"I find the rule of the pocket the best guide," said Sir Hugo, laughingly. "And as for most of your new-old building, you had need hire men to scratch and chip it all over artistically to give it an elderly-looking surface; which at the present rate of labour would not answer."

"Do you want to keep up the old fashions, then, Mr Deronda?" said Gwendolen, taking advantage of the freedom of grouping to fall back a little, while Sir Hugo and Grandcourt went on.

"Some of them. I don't see why we should not use our choice there as we do elsewhere—or why either age or novelty by itself is an argument for or against. To delight in doing things because our fathers did them is good if it shuts out nothing better; it enlarges the range of affection—and affection is the broadest basis of good in life."

"Do you think so?" said Gwendolen, with a little surprise. "I should have thought you cared most about ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and all that."

"But to care about *them* is a sort of affection," said Deronda, smiling at her sudden *naïveté*. "Call it attachment, interest, willingness to bear a great deal for the sake of being with them and saving them from injury. Of course it makes a difference if the objects of interest are human beings; but generally in all deep affections the objects are a mixture—half persons and half ideas —sentiments and affections flow in together."

"I wonder whether I understand that," said Gwendolen, putting up her chin in her old saucy manner. "I believe I am not very affectionate; perhaps you mean to tell me, that is the reason why I don't see much good in life."

"No, I did *not* mean to tell you that; but I admit that I should think it true if I believed what you say of yourself," said Deronda, gravely.

Here Sir Hugo and Grandcourt turned round and paused.

"I never can get Mr Deronda to pay me a compliment," said Gwendolen. "I have quite a curiosity to see whether a little flattery can be extracted from him."

"Ah!" said Sir Hugo, glancing at Deronda, "the fact is, it is hopeless to flatter a bride. We give it up in despair. She has been so fed on

sweet speeches that everything we say seems tasteless."

"Quite true," said Gwendolen, bending her head and smiling. "Mr Grandcourt won me by neatly-turned compliments. If there had been one word out of place it would have been fatal."

"Do you hear that?" said Sir Hugo, looking at the husband.

"Yes," said Grandcourt, without change of countenance. "It is a deucedly hard thing to keep up, though."

All this seemed to Sir Hugo a natural playfulness between such a husband and wife; but Deronda wondered at the misleading alternations in Gwendolen's manner, which at one moment seemed to invite sympathy by childlike indiscretion, at another to repel it by proud concealment. He tried to keep out of her way by devoting himself to Miss Juliet Fenn, a young lady whose profile had been so unfavourably decided by circumstances over which she had no control, that Gwendolen some months ago had felt it impossible to be jealous of her. Nevertheless when they were seeing the kitchen—a part of the original building in perfect preservation—the depth of shadow in the niches of the stone walls and groined vault, the play of light from the huge glowing fire

on polished tin, brass, and copper, the fine resonance that came with every sound of voice or metal, were all spoiled for Gwendolen, and Sir Hugo's speech about them was made rather importunate, because Deronda was discoursing to the other ladies and kept at a distance from her. It did not signify that the other gentlemen took the opportunity of being near her: of what use in the world was their admiration while she had an uneasy sense that there was some standard in Deronda's mind which measured her into littleness? Mr Vandernoodt, who had the mania of always describing one thing while you were looking at another, was quite intolerable with his insistance on Lord Blough's kitchen, which he had seen in the north.

"Pray don't ask us to see two kitchens at once. It makes the heat double. I must really go out of it," she cried at last, marching resolutely into the open air, and leaving the others in the rear. Grandcourt was already out, and as she joined him, he said—

"I wondered how long you meant to stay in that damned place"—one of the freedoms he had assumed as a husband being the use of his strongest epithets. Gwendolen, turning to see the rest of the party approach, said—

"It was certainly rather too warm in one's wraps."

They walked on the gravel across a green court, where the snow still lay in islets on the grass, and in masses on the boughs of the great cedar and the crenelated coping of the stone walls, and then into a larger court, where there was another cedar, to find the beautiful choir long ago turned into stables, in the first instance perhaps after an impromptu fashion by troopers, who had a pious satisfaction in insulting the priests of Baal and the images of Ashtaroth, the queen of heaven. The exterior—its west end, save for the stable door, walled in with brick and covered with ivy—was much defaced, maimed of finial and gurgoyle, the friable limestone broken and fretted, and lending its soft grey to a powdery dark lichen; the long windows, too, were filled in with brick as far as the springing of the arches, the broad clerestory windows with wire or ventilating blinds. With the low wintry afternoon sun upon it, sending shadows from the cedar boughs, and lighting up the touches of snow remaining on every ledge, it had still a scarcely disturbed aspect of antique solemnity, which gave the scene in the interior rather a startling effect; though, ecclesiastical or reverential indignation apart, the

eyes could hardly help dwelling with pleasure on its piquant picturesqueness. Each finely-arched chapel was turned into a stall, where in the dusty glazing of the windows there still gleamed patches of crimson, orange, blue, and palest violet; for the rest, the choir had been gutted, the floor levelled, paved, and drained according to the most approved fashion, and a line of loose-boxes erected in the middle: a soft light fell from the upper windows on sleek brown or grey flanks and haunches; on mild equine faces looking out with active nostrils over the varnished brown boarding; on the hay hanging from racks where the saints once looked down from the altar-pieces, and on the pale-golden straw scattered or in heaps; on a little white-and-liver-coloured spaniel making his bed on the back of an elderly hackney, and on four ancient angels, still showing signs of devotion like mutilated martyrs—while over all, the grand pointed roof, untouched by reforming wash, showed its lines and colours mysteriously through veiling shadow and cobweb, and a hoof now and then striking against the boards seemed to fill the vault with thunder, while outside there was the answering bay of the blood-hounds.

"Oh, this is glorious!" Gwendolen burst forth,

in forgetfulness of everything but the immediate impression: there had been a little intoxication for her in the grand spaces of courts and building, and the fact of her being an important person among them. "This *is* glorious! Only I wish there were a horse in every one of the boxes. I would ten times rather have these stables than those at Ryelands."

But she had no sooner said this than some consciousness arrested her, and involuntarily she turned her eyes towards Deronda, who oddly enough had taken off his felt hat and stood holding it before him as if they had entered a room or an actual church. He, like others, happened to be looking at her, and their eyes met—to her intense vexation, for it seemed to her that by looking at him she had betrayed the reference of her thoughts, and she felt herself blushing: she exaggerated the impression that even Sir Hugo as well as Deronda would have of her bad taste in referring to the possession of anything at the Abbey: as for Deronda, she had probably made him despise her. Her annoyance at what she imagined to be the obviousness of her confusion robbed her of her usual facility in carrying it off by playful speech, and turning up her face to look at the roof, she wheeled away in that

attitude. If any had noticed her blush as significant, they had certainly not interpreted it by the secret windings and recesses of her feeling. A blush is no language: only a dubious flag-signal which may mean either of two contradictories. Deronda alone had a faint guess at some part of her feeling; but while he was observing her he was himself under observation.

"Do you take off your hat to the horses?" said Grandcourt, with a slight sneer.

"Why not?" said Deronda, covering himself. He had really taken off the hat automatically, and if he had been an ugly man might doubtless have done so with impunity: ugliness having naturally the air of involuntary exposure, and beauty, of display.

Gwendolen's confusion was soon merged in the survey of the horses, which Grandcourt politely abstained from appraising, languidly assenting to Sir Hugo's alternate depreciation and eulogy of the same animal, as one that he should not have bought when he was younger, and piqued himself on his horses, but yet one that had better qualities than many more expensive brutes.

"The fact is, stables dive deeper and deeper into the pocket nowadays, and I am very glad to

have got rid of that *démangeaison*," said Sir Hugo, as they were coming out.

"What is a man to do, though?" said Grandcourt. "He must ride. I don't see what else there is to do. And I don't call it riding to sit astride a set of brutes with every deformity under the sun."

This delicate diplomatic way of characterising Sir Hugo's stud did not require direct notice; and the baronet feeling that the conversation had worn rather thin, said to the party generally, "Now we are going to see the cloister—the finest bit of all—in perfect preservation: the monks might have been walking there yesterday."

But Gwendolen had lingered behind to look at the kennelled blood-hounds, perhaps because she felt a little dispirited; and Grandcourt waited for her.

"You had better take my arm," he said, in his low tone of command; and she took it.

"It's a great bore being dragged about in this way, and no cigar," said Grandcourt.

"I thought you would like it."

"Like it?—one eternal chatter. And encouraging those ugly girls—inviting one to meet such monsters. How that *fat* Deronda can bear looking at her——"

"Why do you call him a *fat?* Do you object to him so much?"

"Object? no. What do I care about his being a *fat?* It's of no consequence to me. I'll invite him to Diplow again if you like."

"I don't think he would come. He is too clever and learned to care about *us*," said Gwendolen, thinking it useful for her husband to be told (privately) that it was possible for him to be looked down upon.

"I never saw that make much difference in a man. Either he is a gentleman, or he is not," said Grandcourt.

That a new husband and wife should snatch a moment's *tête-à-tête* was what could be understood and indulged; and the rest of the party left them in the rear till, re-entering the garden, they all paused in that cloistered court where, among the falling rose-petals thirteen years before, we saw a boy becoming acquainted with his first sorrow. This cloister was built of harder stone than the church, and had been in greater safety from the wearing weather. It was a rare example of a northern cloister with arched and pillared openings not intended for glazing, and the delicately-wrought foliage of the capitals seemed still to carry the very touches of the

chisel. Gwendolen had dropped her husband's arm and joined the other ladies, to whom Deronda was noticing the delicate sense which had combined freedom with accuracy in the imitation of natural forms.

"I wonder whether one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations, or the representations through the real objects," he said, after pointing out a lovely capital made by the curled leaves of greens, showing their reticulated under-side with the firm gradual swell of its central rib. "When I was a little fellow these capitals taught me to observe, and delight in, the structure of leaves."

"I suppose you can see every line of them with your eyes shut," said Juliet Fenn.

"Yes. I was always repeating them, because for a good many years this court stood for me as my only image of a convent, and whenever I read of monks and monasteries, this was my scenery for them."

"You must love this place very much," said Miss Fenn, innocently, not thinking of inheritance. "So many homes are like twenty others. But this is unique, and you seem to know every cranny of it. I daresay you could never love another home so well."

"Oh, I carry it with me," said Deronda, quietly, being used to all possible thoughts of this kind. "To most men their early home is no more than a memory of their early years, and I'm not sure but they have the best of it. The image is never marred. There's no disappointment in memory, and one's exaggerations are always on the good side."

Gwendolen felt sure that he spoke in that way out of delicacy to her and Grandcourt—because he knew they must hear him; and that he probably thought of her as a selfish creature who only cared about possessing things in her own person. But whatever he might say, it must have been a secret hardship to him that any circumstances of his birth had shut him out from the inheritance of his father's position; and if he supposed that she exulted in her husband's taking it, what could he feel for her but scornful pity? Indeed it seemed clear to her that he was avoiding her, and preferred talking to others—which nevertheless was not kind in him.

With these thoughts in her mind she was prevented by a mixture of pride and timidity from addressing him again, and when they were looking at the rows of quaint portraits in the gallery above the cloisters, she kept up her air of interest

and made her vivacious remarks without any direct appeal to Deronda. But at the end she was very weary of her assumed spirits, and as Grandcourt turned into the billiard-room, she went to the pretty boudoir which had been assigned to her, and shut herself up to look melancholy at her ease. No chemical process shows a more wonderful activity than the transforming influence of the thoughts we imagine to be going on in another. Changes in theory, religion, admirations, may begin with a suspicion of dissent or disapproval, even when the grounds of disapproval are but matter of searching conjecture.

Poor Gwendolen was conscious of an uneasy, transforming process—all the old nature shaken to its depths, its hopes spoiled, its pleasures perturbed, but still showing wholeness and strength in the will to reassert itself. After every new shock of humiliation she tried to adjust herself and seize her old supports—proud concealment, trust in new excitements that would make life go by without much thinking; trust in some deed of reparation to nullify her self-blame and shield her from a vague, ever-visiting dread of some horrible calamity; trust in the hardening effect of use and wont that would make her indifferent to her miseries.

Yes—miseries. This beautiful, healthy young creature, with her two-and-twenty years and her gratified ambition, no longer felt inclined to kiss her fortunate image in the glass; she looked at it with wonder that she could be so miserable. One belief which had accompanied her through her unmarried life as a self-cajoling superstition, encouraged by the subordination of every one about her —the belief in her own power of dominating—was utterly gone. Already, in seven short weeks, which seemed half her life, her husband had gained a mastery which she could no more resist than she could have resisted the benumbing effect from the touch of a torpedo. Gwendolen's will had seemed imperious in its small girlish sway; but it was the will of a creature with a large discourse of imaginative fears: a shadow would have been enough to relax its hold. And she had found a will like that of a crab or a boa-constrictor which goes on pinching or crushing without alarm at thunder. Not that Grandcourt was without calculation of the intangible effects which were the chief means of mastery; indeed he had a surprising acuteness in detecting that situation of feeling in Gwendolen which made her proud and rebellious spirit dumb and helpless before him.

She had burnt Lydia Glasher's letter with an

instantaneous terror lest other eyes should see it, and had tenaciously concealed from Grandcourt that there was any other cause of her violent hysterics than the excitement and fatigue of the day: she had been urged into an implied falsehood. "Don't ask me—it was my feeling about everything — it was the sudden change from home." The words of that letter kept repeating themselves, and hung on her consciousness with the weight of a prophetic doom. "I am the grave in which your chance of happiness is buried as well as mine. You had your warning. You have chosen to injure me and my children. He had meant to marry me. He would have married me at last, if you had not broken your word. You will have your punishment. I desire it with all my soul. Will you give him this letter to set him against me and ruin us more—me and my children? Shall you like to stand before your husband with these diamonds on you, and these words of mine in his thoughts and yours? Will he think you have any right to complain when he has made you miserable? You took him with your eyes open. The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse."

The words had nestled their venomous life within her, and stirred continually the vision of

the scene at the Whispering Stones. That scene was now like an accusing apparition: she dreaded that Grandcourt should know of it—so far out of her sight now was that possibility she had once satisfied herself with, of speaking to him about Mrs Glasher and her children, and making them rich amends. Any endurance seemed easier than the mortal humiliation of confessing that she knew all before she married him, and in marrying him had broken her word. For the reasons by which she had justified herself when the marriage tempted her, and all her easy arrangement of her future power over her husband to make him do better than he might be inclined to do, were now as futile as the burnt-out lights which set off a child's pageant. Her sense of being blameworthy was exaggerated by a dread both definite and vague. The definite dread was lest the veil of secrecy should fall between her and Grandcourt, and give him the right to taunt her. With the reading of that letter had begun her husband's empire of fear.

And her husband all the while knew it. He had not, indeed, any distinct knowledge of her broken promise, and would not have rated highly the effect of that breach on her conscience; but he was aware not only of what Lush had told him

about the meeting at the Whispering Stones, but also of Gwendolen's concealment as to the cause of her sudden illness. He felt sure that Lydia had enclosed something with the diamonds, and that this something, whatever it was, had at once created in Gwendolen a new repulsion for him and a reason for not daring to manifest it. He did not greatly mind, or feel as many men might have felt, that his hopes in marriage were blighted: he had wanted to marry Gwendolen, and he was not a man to repent. Why should a gentleman whose other relations in life are carried on without the luxury of sympathetic feeling, be supposed to require that kind of condiment in domestic life? What he chiefly felt was that a change had come over the conditions of his mastery, which, far from shaking it, might establish it the more thoroughly. And it was established. He judged that he had not married a simpleton unable to perceive the impossibility of escape, or to see alternative evils: he had married a girl who had spirit and pride enough not to make a fool of herself by forfeiting all the advantages of a position which had attracted her; and if she wanted pregnant hints to help her in making up her mind properly, he would take care not to withhold them.

Gwendolen, indeed, with all that gnawing trouble in her consciousness, had hardly for a moment dropped the sense that it was her part to bear herself with dignity, and appear what is called happy. In disclosure of disappointment or sorrow she saw nothing but a humiliation which would have been vinegar to her wounds. Whatever her husband might come at last to be to her, she meant to wear the yoke so as not to be pitied. For she did think of the coming years with presentiment: she was frightened at Grandcourt. The poor thing had passed from her girlish sauciness of superiority over this inert specimen of personal distinction into an amazed perception of her former ignorance about the possible mental attitude of a man towards the woman he sought in marriage—of her present ignorance as to what their life with each other might turn into. For novelty gives immeasurableness to fear, and fills the early time of all sad changes with phantoms of the future. Her little coquetries, voluntary or involuntary, had told on Grandcourt during courtship, and formed a medium of communication between them, showing him in the light of a creature such as she could understand and manage: but marriage had nullified all such interchange, and Grandcourt had become a blank

uncertainty to her in everything but this, that he would do just what he willed, and that she had neither devices at her command to determine his will, nor any rational means of escaping it.

What had occurred between them about her wearing the diamonds was typical. One evening, shortly before they came to the Abbey, they were going to dine at Brackenshaw Castle. Gwendolen had said to herself that she would never wear those diamonds: they had horrible words clinging and crawling about them, as from some bad dream, whose images lingered on the perturbed sense. She came down dressed in her white, with only a streak of gold and a pendant of emeralds, which Grandcourt had given her, round her neck, and little emerald stars in her ears.

Grandcourt stood with his back to the fire and looked at her as she entered.

"Am I altogether as you like?" she said, speaking rather gaily. She was not without enjoyment in this occasion of going to Brackenshaw Castle with her new dignities upon her, as men whose affairs are sadly involved will enjoy dining out among persons likely to be under a pleasant mistake about them.

"No," said Grandcourt.

Gwendolen felt suddenly uncomfortable, won-

dering what was to come. She was not unprepared for some struggle about the diamonds; but suppose he were going to say, in low contemptuous tones, "You are not in any way what I like." It was very bad for her to be secretly hating him; but it would be much worse when he gave the first sign of hating her.

"Oh, mercy!" she exclaimed, the pause lasting till she could bear it no longer. "How am I to alter myself?"

"Put on the diamonds," said Grandcourt, looking straight at her with his narrow glance.

Gwendolen paused in her turn, afraid of showing any emotion, and feeling that nevertheless there was some change in her eyes as they met his. But she was obliged to answer, and said as indifferently as she could, "Oh, please not. I don't think diamonds suit me."

"What you think has nothing to do with it," said Grandcourt, his *sotto voce* imperiousness seeming to have an evening quietude and finish, like his toilet. "I wish you to wear the diamonds."

"Pray excuse me; I like these emeralds," said Gwendolen, frightened in spite of her preparation. That white hand of his which was touching his whisker was capable, she fancied, of clinging round her neck and threatening to throttle her; for her

fear of him, mingling with the vague foreboding of some retributive calamity which hung about her life, had reached a superstitious point.

"Oblige me by telling me your reason for not wearing the diamonds when I desire it," said Grandcourt. His eyes were still fixed upon her, and she felt her own eyes narrowing under them as if to shut out an entering pain.

Of what use was the rebellion within her? She could say nothing that would not hurt her worse than submission. Turning slowly and covering herself again, she went to her dressing-room. As she reached out the diamonds it occurred to her that her unwillingness to wear them might have already raised a suspicion in Grandcourt that she had some knowledge about them which he had not given her. She fancied that his eyes showed a delight in torturing her. How could she be defiant? She had nothing to say that would touch him—nothing but what would give him a more painful grasp on her consciousness.

"He delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his," she said to herself, as she opened the jewel-case with a shivering sensation. "It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail. What else

is there for me? I will not say to the world, 'Pity me.'"

She was about to ring for her maid when she heard the door open behind her. It was Grandcourt who came in.

"You want some one to fasten them," he said, coming towards her.

She did not answer, but simply stood still, leaving him to take out the ornaments and fasten them as he would. Doubtless he had been used to fasten them on some one else. With a bitter sort of sarcasm against herself, Gwendolen thought, "What a privilege this is, to have robbed another woman of!"

"What makes you so cold?" said Grandcourt, when he had fastened the last ear-ring. "Pray put plenty of furs on. I hate to see a woman come into a room looking frozen. If you are to appear as a bride at all, appear decently."

This marital speech was not exactly persuasive, but it touched the quick of Gwendolen's pride and forced her to rally. The words of the bad dream crawled about the diamonds still, but only for her: to others they were brilliants that suited her perfectly, and Grandcourt inwardly observed that she answered to the rein.

"Oh yes, mamma, quite happy," Gwendolen had

said on her return to Diplow. "Not at all disappointed in Ryelands. It is a much finer place than this—larger in every way. But don't you want some more money?"

"Did you not know that Mr Grandcourt left me a letter on your wedding-day? I am to have eight hundred a-year. He wishes me to keep Offendene for the present, while you are at Diplow. But if there were some pretty cottage near the park at Ryelands we might live there without much expense, and I should have you most of the year, perhaps."

"We must leave that to Mr Grandcourt, mamma."

"Oh, certainly. It is exceedingly handsome of him to say that he will pay the rent for Offendene till June. And we can go on very well—without any man-servant except Crane, just for out of doors. Our good Merry will stay with us and help me to manage everything. It is natural that Mr Grandcourt should wish me to live in a good style of house in your neighbourhood, and I cannot decline. So he said nothing about it to you?"

"No; he wished me to hear it from you, I suppose."

Gwendolen in fact had been very anxious to

have some definite knowledge of what would be done for her mother, but at no moment since her marriage had she been able to overcome the difficulty of mentioning the subject to Grandcourt. Now, however, she had a sense of obligation which would not let her rest without saying to him, "It is very good of you to provide for mamma. You took a great deal on yourself in marrying a girl who had nothing but relations belonging to her."

Grandcourt was smoking, and only said carelessly, "Of course I was not going to let her live like a gamekeeper's mother."

"At least he is not mean about money," thought Gwendolen, "and mamma is the better off for my marriage."

She often pursued the comparison between what might have been, if she had not married Grandcourt, and what actually was, trying to persuade herself that life generally was barren of satisfaction, and that if she had chosen differently she might now have been looking back with a regret as bitter as the feeling she was trying to argue away. Her mother's dulness, which used to irritate her, she was at present inclined to explain as the ordinary result of women's experience. True, she still saw that she would "manage differ-

ently from mamma;" but her management now only meant that she would carry her troubles with spirit, and let none suspect them. By-and-by she promised herself that she should get used to her heart-sores, and find excitements that would carry her through life, as a hard gallop carried her through some of the morning hours. There was gambling: she had heard stories at Leubronn of fashionable women who gambled in all sorts of ways. It seemed very flat to her at this distance, but perhaps if she began to gamble again, the passion might awake. Then there was the pleasure of producing an effect by her appearance in society: what did celebrated beauties do in town when their husbands could afford display? All men were fascinated by them: they had a perfect equipage and toilet, walked into public places, and bowed, and made the usual answers, and walked out again: perhaps they bought china, and practised accomplishments. If she could only feel a keen appetite for those pleasures—could only believe in pleasure as she used to do! Accomplishments had ceased to have the exciting quality of promising any pre-eminence to her; and as for fascinated gentlemen—adorers who might hover round her with languishment, and diversify married life with the romantic stir of mystery, passion,

and danger which her French reading had given her some girlish notion of—they presented themselves to her imagination with the fatal circumstance that, instead of fascinating her in return, they were clad in her own weariness and disgust. The admiring male, rashly adjusting the expression of his features and the turn of his conversation to her supposed tastes, had always been an absurd object to her, and at present seemed rather detestable. Many courses are actually pursued—follies and sins both convenient and inconvenient—without pleasure or hope of pleasure; but to solace ourselves with imagining any course beforehand, there must be some foretaste of pleasure in the shape of appetite; and Gwendolen's appetite had sickened. Let her wander over the possibilities of her life as she would, an uncertain shadow dogged her. Her confidence in herself and her destiny had turned into remorse and dread; she trusted neither herself nor her future.

This hidden helplessness gave fresh force to the hold Deronda had from the first taken on her mind, as one who had an unknown standard by which he judged her. Had he some way of looking at things which might be a new footing for her—an inward safeguard against possible events which she dreaded as stored-up retribution? It is

one of the secrets in that change of mental poise which has been fitly named conversion, that to many among us neither heaven nor earth has any revelation till some personality touches theirs with a peculiar influence, subduing them into receptiveness. It had been Gwendolen's habit to think of the persons around her as stale books, too familiar to be interesting. Deronda had lit up her attention with a sense of novelty: not by words only, but by imagined facts, his influence had entered into the current of that self-suspicion and self-blame which awakens a new consciousness.

"I wish he could know everything about me without my telling him," was one of her thoughts, as she sat leaning over the end of a couch, supporting her head with her hand, and looking at herself in a mirror—not in admiration, but in a sad kind of companionship. "I wish he knew that I am not so contemptible as he thinks me—that I am in deep trouble, and want to be something better if I could." Without the aid of sacred ceremony or costume, her feelings had turned this man, only a few years older than herself, into a priest; a sort of trust less rare than the fidelity that guards it. Young reverence for one who is also young is the most coercive of all: there is the same level of temptation, and the higher

motive is believed in as a fuller force—not suspected to be a mere residue from weary experience.

But the coercion is often stronger on the one who takes the reverence. Those who trust us educate us. And perhaps in that ideal consecration of Gwendolen's, some education was being prepared for Deronda.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Rien ne pèse tant qu'un secret,
Le porter loin est difficile aux dames :
Et je sçais mesme sur ce fait
Bon nombre d'hommes qui sont femmes."

—La Fontaine.

Meanwhile Deronda had been fastened and led off by Mr Vandernoodt, who wished for a brisker walk, a cigar, and a little gossip. Since we cannot tell a man his own secrets, the restraint of being in his company often breeds a desire to pair off in conversation with some more ignorant person, and Mr Vandernoodt presently said—

"What a washed-out piece of cambric Grandcourt is! But if he is a favourite of yours, I withdraw the remark."

"Not the least in the world," said Deronda.

"I thought not. One wonders how he came to have a great passion again; and he must have had—to marry in this way. Though Lush, his old chum, hints that he married this girl out of

obstinacy. By George! it was a very accountable obstinacy. A man might make up his mind to marry her without the stimulus of contradiction. But he must have made himself a pretty large drain of money, eh?"

"I know nothing of his affairs."

"What! not of the other establishment he keeps up?"

"Diplow? Of course. He took that of Sir Hugo. But merely for the year."

"No, no: not Diplow: Gadsmere. Sir Hugo knows, I'll answer for it."

Deronda said nothing. He really began to feel some curiosity, but he foresaw that he should hear what Mr Vandernoodt had to tell, without the condescension of asking.

"Lush would not altogether own to it, of course. He's a confidant and go-between of Grandcourt's. But I have it on the best authority. The fact is, there's another lady with four children at Gadsmere. She has had the upper hand of him these ten years and more, and by what I can understand has it still—left her husband for him, and used to travel with him everywhere. Her husband's dead now: I found a fellow who was in the same regiment with him, and knew this Mrs Glasher before she took wing. A fiery dark-eyed

woman—a noted beauty at that time—he thought she was dead. They say she has Grandcourt under her thumb still, and it's a wonder he didn't marry her, for there's a very fine boy, and I understand Grandcourt can do absolutely as he pleases with the estates. Lush told me as much as that."

"What right had he to marry this girl?" said Deronda, with disgust.

Mr Vandernoodt, adjusting the end of his cigar, shrugged his shoulders and put out his lips.

"*She* can know nothing of it," said Deronda, emphatically. But that positive statement was immediately followed by an inward query—"Could she have known anything of it?"

"It's rather a piquant picture," said Mr Vandernoodt—"Grandcourt between two fiery women. For depend upon it this light-haired one has plenty of devil in her. I formed that opinion of her at Leubronn. It's a sort of Medea and Creüsa business. Fancy the two meeting! Grandcourt is a new kind of Jason: I wonder what sort of a part he'll make of it. It's a dog's part at best. I think I hear Ristori now, saying, 'Jasone! Jasone!' These fine women generally get hold of a stick."

"Grandcourt can bite, I fancy," said Deronda. "He is no stick."

"No, no; I meant Jason. I can't quite make out Grandcourt. But he's a keen fellow enough —uncommonly well built too. And if he comes into all this property, the estates will bear dividing. This girl, whose friends had come to beggary, I understand, may think herself lucky to get him. I don't want to be hard on a man because he gets involved in an affair of that sort. But he might make himself more agreeable. I was telling him a capital story last night, and he got up and walked away in the middle. I felt inclined to kick him. Do you suppose that is inattention or insolence, now?"

"Oh, a mixture. He generally observes the forms; but he doesn't listen much," said Deronda. Then, after a moment's pause, he went on, "I should think there must be some exaggeration or inaccuracy in what you have heard about this lady at Gadsmere."

"Not a bit, depend upon it; it has all lain snug of late years. People have forgotten all about it. But there the nest is, and the birds are in it. And I know Grandcourt goes there. I have good evidence that he goes there. However,

that's nobody's business but his own. The affair has sunk below the surface."

"I wonder you could have learned so much about it," said Deronda, rather drily.

"Oh, there are plenty of people who knew all about it; but such stories get packed away like old letters. They interest me. I like to know the manners of my time — contemporary gossip, not antediluvian. These Dryasdust fellows get a reputation by raking up some small scandal about Semiramis or Nitocris, and then we have a thousand and one poems written upon it by all the warblers big and little. But I don't care a straw about the *faux pas* of the mummies. You do, though. You are one of the historical men— more interested in a lady when she's got a rag face and skeleton toes peeping out. Does that flatter your imagination?"

"Well, if she had any woes in her love, one has the satisfaction of knowing that she's well out of them."

"Ah, you are thinking of the Medea, I see."

Deronda then chose to point to some giant oaks worth looking at in their bareness. He also felt an interest in this piece of contemporary gossip, but he was satisfied that Mr Vandernoodt had no more to tell about it.

Since the early days when he tried to construct the hidden story of his own birth, his mind had perhaps never been so active in weaving probabilities about any private affair as it had now begun to be about Gwendolen's marriage. This unavowed relation of Grandcourt's,—could she have gained some knowledge of it, which caused her to shrink from the match—a shrinking finally overcome by the urgence of poverty? He could recall almost every word she had said to him, and in certain of these words he seemed to discern that she was conscious of having done some wrong—inflicted some injury. His own acute experience made him alive to the form of injury which might affect the unavowed children and their mother. Was Mrs Grandcourt, under all her determined show of satisfaction, gnawed by a double, a treble-headed grief—self-reproach, disappointment, jealousy? He dwelt especially on all the slight signs of self-reproach: he was inclined to judge her tenderly, to excuse, to pity. He thought he had found a key now by which to interpret her more clearly: what magnifying of her misery might not a young creature get into who had wedded her fresh hopes to old secrets! He thought he saw clearly enough now why Sir Hugo had never dropped any hint of this affair

to him; and immediately the image of this Mrs Glasher became painfully associated with his own hidden birth. Gwendolen knowing of that woman and her children, marrying Grandcourt, and showing herself contented, would have been among the most repulsive of beings to him; but Gwendolen tasting the bitterness of remorse for having contributed to their injury was brought very near to his fellow-feeling. If it were so, she had got to a common plane of understanding with him on some difficulties of life which a woman is rarely able to judge of with any justice or generosity; for, according to precedent, Gwendolen's view of her position might easily have been no other than that her husband's marriage with her was his entrance on the path of virtue, while Mrs Glasher represented his forsaken sin. And Deronda had naturally some resentment on behalf of the Hagars and Ishmaels.

Undeniably Deronda's growing solicitude about Gwendolen depended chiefly on her peculiar manner towards him; and I suppose neither man nor woman would be the better for an utter insensibility to such appeals. One sign that his interest in her had changed its footing was that he dismissed any caution against her being a coquette setting snares to involve him in a vulgar flirtation,

and determined that he would not again evade any opportunity of talking with her. He had shaken off Mr Vandernoodt, and got into a solitary corner in the twilight; but half an hour was long enough to think of those possibilities in Gwendolen's position and state of mind; and on forming the determination not to avoid her, he remembered that she was likely to be at tea with the other ladies in the drawing-room. The conjecture was true; for Gwendolen, after resolving not to go down again for the next four hours, began to feel, at the end of one, that in shutting herself up she missed all chances of seeing and hearing, and that her visit would only last two days more. She adjusted herself, put on her little air of self-possession, and going down, made herself resolutely agreeable. Only ladies were assembled, and Lady Pentreath was amusing them with a description of a drawing-room under the Regency, and the figure that was cut by ladies and gentlemen in 1819, the year she was presented—when Deronda entered.

"Shall I be acceptable?" he said. "Perhaps I had better go back and look for the others. I suppose they are in the billiard-room."

"No, no; stay where you are," said Lady Pent-

reath. "They were all getting tired of me; let us hear what *you* have to say."

"That is rather an embarrassing appeal," said Deronda, drawing up a chair near Lady Mallinger's elbow at the tea-table. "I think I had better take the opportunity of mentioning our songstress," he added, looking at Lady Mallinger,—"unless you have done so."

"Oh, the little Jewess!" said Lady Mallinger. "No, I have not mentioned her. It never entered my head that any one here wanted singing lessons."

"All ladies know some one else who wants singing lessons," said Deronda. "I have happened to find an exquisite singer;"—here he turned to Lady Pentreath. "She is living with some ladies who are friends of mine—the mother and sisters of a man who was my chum at Cambridge. She was on the stage at Vienna; but she wants to leave that life, and maintain herself by teaching."

"There are swarms of those people, aren't there?" said the old lady. "Are her lessons to be very cheap or very expensive? Those are the two baits I know of."

"There is another bait for those who hear her," said Deronda. "Her singing is something quite

exceptional, I think. She has had such first-rate teaching—or rather first-rate instinct with her teaching—that you might imagine her singing all came by nature."

"Why did she leave the stage, then?" said Lady Pentreath. "I'm too old to believe in first-rate people giving up first-rate chances."

"Her voice was too weak. It is a delicious voice for a room. You who put up with my singing of Schubert would be enchanted with hers," said Deronda, looking at Mrs Raymond. "And I imagine she would not object to sing at private parties or concerts. Her voice is quite equal to that."

"I am to have her in my drawing-room when we go up to town," said Lady Mallinger. "You shall hear her then. I have not heard her myself yet; but I trust Daniel's recommendation. I mean my girls to have lessons of her."

"Is it a charitable affair?" said Lady Pentreath. "I can't bear charitable music."

Lady Mallinger, who was rather helpless in conversation, and felt herself under an engagement not to tell anything of Mirah's story, had an embarrassed smile on her face, and glanced at Deronda.

"It is a charity to those who want to have a

good model of feminine singing," said Deronda. "I think everybody who has ears would benefit by a little improvement on the ordinary style. If you heard Miss Lapidoth"—here he looked at Gwendolen—"perhaps you would revoke your resolution to give up singing."

"I should rather think my resolution would be confirmed," said Gwendolen. "I don't feel able to follow your advice of enjoying my own middlingness."

"For my part," said Deronda, "people who do anything finely always inspirit me to try. I don't mean that they make me believe I can do it as well. But they make the thing, whatever it may be, seem worthy to be done. I can bear to think my own music not good for much, but the world would be more dismal if I thought music itself not good for much. Excellence encourages one about life generally; it shows the spiritual wealth of the world."

"But then if we can't imitate it?—it only makes our own life seem the tamer," said Gwendolen, in a mood to resent encouragement founded on her own insignificance.

"That depends on the point of view, I think," said Deronda. "We should have a poor life of it if we were reduced for all our pleasure to our own

performances. A little private imitation of what is good is a sort of private devotion to it, and most of us ought to practise art only in the light of private study—preparation to understand and enjoy what the few can do for us. I think Miss Lapidoth is one of the few."

"She must be a very happy person, don't you think?" said Gwendolen, with a touch of sarcasm, and a turn of her neck towards Mrs Raymond.

"I don't know," answered the independent lady; "I must hear more of her before I said that."

"It may have been a bitter disappointment to her that her voice failed her for the stage," said Juliet Fenn, sympathetically.

"I suppose she's past her best, though," said the deep voice of Lady Pentreath.

"On the contrary, she has not reached it," said Deronda. "She is barely twenty."

"And very pretty," interposed Lady Mallinger, with an amiable wish to help Deronda. "And she has very good manners. I'm sorry she is a bigoted Jewess; I should not like it for anything else, but it doesn't matter in singing."

"Well, since her voice is too weak for her to scream much, I'll tell Lady Clementina to set her on my nine granddaughters," said Lady Pentreath;

"and I hope she'll convince eight of them that they have not voice enough to sing anywhere but at church. My notion is, that many of our girls nowadays want lessons not to sing."

"I have had my lessons in that," said Gwendolen, looking at Deronda. "You see Lady Pentreath is on my side."

While she was speaking, Sir Hugo entered with some of the other gentlemen, including Grandcourt, and standing against the group at the low tea-table said—

"What imposition is Deronda putting on you ladies—slipping in among you by himself?"

"Wanting to pass off an obscurity on us as better than any celebrity," said Lady Pentreath"—"a pretty singing Jewess who is to astonish these young people. You and I, who heard Catalani in her prime, are not so easily astonished."

Sir Hugo listened with his good-humoured smile as he took a cup of tea from his wife, and then said, "Well, you know, a Liberal is bound to think that there have been singers since Catalani's time."

"Ah, you are younger than I am. I daresay you are one of the men who ran after Alcharisi. But she married off and left you all in the lurch."

"Yes, yes; it's rather too bad when these great

singers marry themselves into silence before they have a crack in their voices. And the husband is a public robber. I remember Leroux saying, 'A man might as well take down a fine peal of church bells and carry them off to the steppes,'" said Sir Hugo, setting down his cup and turning away, while Deronda, who had moved from his place to make room for others, and felt that he was not in request, sat down a little apart. Presently he became aware that, in the general dispersion of the group, Gwendolen had extricated herself from the attentions of Mr Vandernoodt and had walked to the piano, where she stood apparently examining the music which lay on the desk. Will any one be surprised at Deronda's concluding that she wished him to join her? Perhaps she wanted to make amends for the unpleasant tone of resistance with which she had met his recommendation of Mirah, for he had noticed that her first impulse often was to say what she afterwards wished to retract. He went to her side and said—

"Are you relenting about the music and looking for something to play or sing?"

"I am not looking for anything, but I *am* relenting," said Gwendolen, speaking in a submissive tone.

"May I know the reason?"

"I should like to hear Miss Lapidoth and have lessons from her, since you admire her so much—that is, of course, when we go to town. I mean lessons in rejoicing at her excellence and my own deficiency," said Gwendolen, turning on him a sweet open smile.

"I shall be really glad for you to see and hear her," said Deronda, returning the smile in kind.

"Is she as perfect in everything else as in her music?"

"I can't vouch for that exactly. I have not seen enough of her. But I have seen nothing in her that I could wish to be different. She has had an unhappy life. Her troubles began in early childhood, and she has grown up among very painful surroundings. But I think you will say that no advantages could have given her more grace and truer refinement."

"I wonder what sort of troubles hers were?"

"I have not any very precise knowledge. But I know that she was on the brink of drowning herself in despair."

"And what hindered her?" said Gwendolen, quickly, looking at Deronda.

"Some ray or other came—which made her feel that she ought to live—that it was good to live," he answered, quietly. "She is full of piety

and seems capable of submitting to anything when it takes the form of duty."

"Those people are not to be pitied," said Gwendolen, impatiently. "I have no sympathy with women who are always doing right. I don't believe in their great sufferings." Her fingers moved quickly among the edges of the music.

"It is true," said Deronda, "that the consciousness of having done wrong is something deeper, more bitter. I suppose we faulty creatures can never feel so much for the irreproachable as for those who are bruised in the struggle with their own faults. It is a very ancient story, that of the lost sheep—but it comes up afresh every day."

"That is a way of speaking—it is not acted on, it is not real," said Gwendolen, bitterly. "You admire Miss Lapidoth because you think her blameless, perfect. And you know you would despise a woman who had done something you thought very wrong."

"That would depend entirely on her own view of what she had done," said Deronda.

"You would be satisfied if she were very wretched, I suppose?" said Gwendolen, impetuously.

"No, not satisfied—full of sorrow for her. It was not a mere way of speaking. I did not mean

to say that the finer nature is not more adorable; I meant that those who would be comparatively uninteresting beforehand may become worthier of sympathy when they do something that awakens in them a keen remorse. Lives are enlarged in different ways. I daresay some would never get their eyes opened if it were not for a violent shock from the consequences of their own actions. And when they are suffering in that way one must care for them more than for the comfortably self-satisfied." Deronda forgot everything but his vision of what Gwendolen's experience had probably been, and urged by compassion let his eyes and voice express as much interest as they would.

Gwendolen had slipped on to the music-stool, and looked up at him with pain in her long eyes, like a wounded animal asking help.

"Are you persuading Mrs Grandcourt to play to us, Dan?" said Sir Hugo, coming up and putting his hand on Deronda's shoulder with a gentle admonitory pinch.

"I cannot persuade myself," said Gwendolen, rising.

Others had followed Sir Hugo's lead, and there was an end of any liability to confidences for that day. But the next was New Year's Eve; and a

grand dance, to which the chief tenants were invited, was to be held in the picture-gallery above the cloister—the sort of entertainment in which numbers and general movement may create privacy. When Gwendolen was dressing, she longed, in remembrance of Leubronn, to put on the old turquoise necklace for her sole ornament; but she dared not offend her husband by appearing in that shabby way on an occasion when he would demand her utmost splendour. Determined to wear the memorial necklace somehow, she wound it thrice round her wrist and made a bracelet of it—having gone to her room to put it on just before the time of entering the ball-room.

It was always a beautiful scene, this dance on New Year's Eve, which had been kept up by family tradition as nearly in the old fashion as inexorable change would allow. Red carpet was laid down for the occasion; hothouse plants and evergreens were arranged in bowers at the extremities and in every recess of the gallery; and the old portraits stretching back through generations even to the pre-portraying period, made a piquant line of spectators. Some neighbouring gentry, major and minor, were invited; and it was certainly an occasion when a prospective master and mistress of Abbot's and King's Top-

ping might see their future glory in an agreeable light, as a picturesque provincial supremacy with a rent-roll personified by the most prosperous-looking tenants. Sir Hugo expected Grandcourt to feel flattered by being asked to the Abbey at a time which included this festival in honour of the family estate; but he also hoped that his own hale appearance might impress his successor with the probable length of time that would elapse before the succession came, and with the wisdom of preferring a good actual sum to a minor property that must be waited for. All present, down to the least important farmer's daughter, knew that they were to see "young Grandcourt," Sir Hugo's nephew, the presumptive heir and future baronet, now visiting the Abbey with his bride after an absence of many years; any coolness between uncle and nephew having, it was understood, given way to a friendly warmth. The bride opening the ball with Sir Hugo was necessarily the cynosure of all eyes; and less than a year before, if some magic mirror could have shown Gwendolen her actual position, she would have imagined herself moving in it with a glow of triumphant pleasure, conscious that she held in her hands a life full of favourable chances which her cleverness and spirit would enable her

to make the best of. And now she was wondering that she could get so little joy out of the exaltation to which she had been suddenly lifted, away from the distasteful petty empire of her girlhood with its irksome lack of distinction and superfluity of sisters. She would have been glad to be even unreasonably elated, and to forget everything but the flattery of the moment; but she was like one courting sleep, in whom thoughts insist like wilful tormentors.

Wondering in this way at her own dulness, and all the while longing for an excitement that would deaden importunate aches, she was passing through files of admiring beholders in the country-dance with which it was traditional to open the ball, and was being generally regarded by her own sex as an enviable woman. It was remarked that she carried herself with a wonderful air, considering that she had been nobody in particular, and without a farthing to her fortune: if she had been a duke's daughter, or one of the royal princesses, she could not have taken the honours of the evening more as a matter of course. Poor Gwendolen! It would by-and-by become a sort of skill in which she was automatically practised, to bear this last great gambling loss with an air of perfect self-possession.

The next couple that passed were also worth looking at. Lady Pentreath had said, "I shall stand up for one dance, but I shall choose my partner. Mr Deronda, you are the youngest man; I mean to dance with you. Nobody is old enough to make a good pair with me. I must have a contrast." And the contrast certainly set off the old lady to the utmost. She was one of those women who are never handsome till they are old, and she had had the wisdom to embrace the beauty of age as early as possible. What might have seemed harshness in her features when she was young, had turned now into a satisfactory strength of form and expression which defied wrinkles, and was set off by a crown of white hair; her well-built figure was well covered with black drapery, her ears and neck comfortably caressed with lace, showing none of those withered spaces which one would think it a pitiable condition of poverty to expose. She glided along gracefully enough, her dark eyes still with a mischievous smile in them as she observed the company. Her partner's young richness of tint against the flattened hues and rougher forms of her aged head had an effect something like that of a fine flower against a lichenous branch. Perhaps the tenants hardly appreciated this pair. Lady Pentreath was

nothing more than a straight, active old lady: Mr Deronda was a familiar figure regarded with friendliness; but if he had been the heir, it would have been regretted that his face was not as unmistakably English as Sir Hugo's.

Grandcourt's appearance when he came up with Lady Mallinger was not impeached with foreignness: still the satisfaction in it was not complete. It would have been matter of congratulation if one who had the luck to inherit two old family estates had had more hair, a fresher colour, and a look of greater animation; but that fine families dwindled off into females, and estates ran together into the single heirship of a mealy-complexioned male, was a tendency in things which seemed to be accounted for by a citation of other instances. It was agreed that Mr Grandcourt could never be taken for anything but what he was—a born gentleman; and that, in fact, he looked like an heir. Perhaps the person least complacently disposed towards him at that moment was Lady Mallinger, to whom going in procession up this country-dance with Grandcourt was a blazonment of herself as the infelicitous wife who had produced nothing but daughters, little better than no children, poor dear things, except for her own fondness and for Sir Hugo's wonderful goodness to them. But such

inward discomfort could not prevent the gentle lady from looking fair and stout to admiration, or her full blue eyes from glancing mildly at her neighbours. All the mothers and fathers held it a thousand pities that she had not had a fine boy, or even several—which might have been expected, to look at her when she was first married.

The gallery included only three sides of the quadrangle, the fourth being shut off as a lobby or corrridor: one side was used for dancing, and the opposite side for the supper-table, while the intermediate part was less brilliantly lit, and fitted with comfortable seats. Later in the evening Gwendolen was in one of these seats, and Grandcourt was standing near her. They were not talking to each other: she was leaning backward in her chair, and he against the wall; and Deronda, happening to observe this, went up to ask her if she had resolved not to dance any more. Having himself been doing hard duty in this way among the guests, he thought he had earned the right to sink for a little while into the background, and he had spoken little to Gwendolen since their conversation at the piano the day before. Grandcourt's presence would only make it the easier to show that pleasure in talking to her even about trivialities which would be a sign of friendliness; and

he fancied that her face looked blank. A smile beamed over it as she saw him coming, and she raised herself from her leaning posture. Grandcourt had been grumbling at the *ennui* of staying so long in this stupid dance, and proposing that they should vanish: she had resisted on the ground of politeness—not without being a little frightened at the probability that he was silently angry with her. She had her reason for staying, though she had begun to despair of the opportunity for the sake of which she had put the old necklace on her wrist. But now at last Deronda had come.

"Yes; I shall not dance any more. Are you not glad?" she said, with some gaiety. "You might have felt obliged humbly to offer yourself as a partner, and I feel sure you have danced more than you like already."

"I will not deny that," said Deronda, "since you have danced as much as you like."

"But will you take trouble for me in another way, and fetch me a glass of that fresh water?"

It was but a few steps that Deronda had to go for the water. Gwendolen was wrapped in the lightest, softest of white woollen burnouses, under which her hands were hidden. While he was gone she had drawn off her glove, which was fin-

ished with a lace ruffle, and when she put up her hand to take the glass and lifted it to her mouth, the necklace-bracelet, which in its triple winding adapted itself clumsily to her wrist, was necessarily conspicuous. Grandcourt saw it, and saw that it was attracting Deronda's notice.

"What is that hideous thing you have got on your wrist?" said the husband.

"That?" said Gwendolen, composedly, pointing to the turquoises, while she still held the glass; "it is an old necklace that I like to wear. I lost it once, and some one found it for me."

With that she gave the glass again to Deronda, who immediately carried it away, and on returning said, in order to banish any consciousness about the necklace—

"It is worth while for you to go and look out at one of the windows on that side. You can see the finest possible moonlight on the stone pillars and carving, and shadows waving across it in the wind."

"I should like to see it. Will you go?" said Gwendolen, looking up at her husband.

He cast his eyes down at her, and saying, "No, Deronda will take you," slowly moved from his leaning attitude, and slowly walked away.

Gwendolen's face for a moment showed a fleeting

vexation: she resented this show of indifference towards her. Deronda felt annoyed, chiefly for her sake; and with a quick sense that it would relieve her most to behave as if nothing peculiar had occurred, he said, "Will you take my arm and go, while only servants are there?" He thought that he understood well her action in drawing his attention to the necklace: she wished him to infer that she had submitted her mind to rebuke—her speech and manner had from the first fluctuated towards that submission—and that she felt no lingering resentment. Her evident confidence in his interpretation of her appealed to him as a peculiar claim.

When they were walking together, Gwendolen felt as if the annoyance which had just happened had removed another film of reserve from between them, and she had more right than before to be as open as she wished. She did not speak, being filled with the sense of silent confidence, until they were in front of the window looking out on the moonlit court. A sort of bower had been made round the window, turning it into a recess. Quitting his arm, she folded her hands in her burnous, and pressed her brow against the glass. He moved slightly away, and held the lapels of his coat with his thumbs under the

collar as his manner was: he had a wonderful power of standing perfectly still, and in that position reminded one sometimes of Dante's *spiriti magni con occhi tardi e gravi.* (Doubtless some of these danced in their youth, doubted of their own vocation, and found their own times too modern.) He abstained from remarking on the scene before them, fearing that any indifferent words might jar on her: already the calm light and shadow, the ancient steadfast forms, had aloofness enough from those inward troubles which he felt sure were agitating her. And he judged aright: she would have been impatient of polite conversation. The incidents of the last minute or two had receded behind former thoughts which she had imagined herself uttering to Deronda, and which now urged themselves to her lips. In a subdued voice, she said—

"Suppose I had gambled again, and lost the necklace again, what should you have thought of me?"

"Worse than I do now."

"Then you are mistaken about me. You wanted me not to do that—not to make my gain out of another's loss in that way — and I have done a great deal worse."

"I can imagine temptations," said Deronda.

"Perhaps I am able to understand what you mean. At least I understand self-reproach." In spite of preparation he was almost alarmed at Gwendolen's precipitancy of confidence towards him, in contrast with her habitual resolute concealment.

"What should you do if you were like me—feeling that you were wrong and miserable, and dreading everything to come?" It seemed that she was hurrying to make the utmost use of this opportunity to speak as she would.

"That is not to be amended by doing one thing only—but many," said Deronda, decisively.

"What?" said Gwendolen, hastily, moving her brow from the glass and looking at him.

He looked full at her in return, with what she thought was severity. He felt that it was not a moment in which he must let himself be tender, and flinch from implying a hard opinion.

"I mean there are many thoughts and habits that may help us to bear inevitable sorrow. Multitudes have to bear it."

She turned her brow to the window again, and said impatiently, "You must tell me then what to think and what to do; else why did you not let me go on doing as I liked, and not minding? If I had gone on gambling I might have won again, and I might have got not to care for any-

thing else. You would not let me do that. Why shouldn't I do as I like, and not mind? Other people do." Poor Gwendolen's speech expressed nothing very clearly except her irritation.

"I don't believe you would ever get not to mind," said Deronda, with deep-toned decision. "If it were true that baseness and cruelty made an escape from pain, what difference would that make to people who can't be quite base or cruel? Idiots escape some pain; but you can't be an idiot. Some may do wrong to another without remorse; but suppose one does feel remorse? I believe you could never lead an injurious life—all reckless lives are injurious, pestilential—without feeling remorse." Deronda's unconscious fervour had gathered as he went on: he was uttering thoughts which he had used for himself in moments of painful meditation.

"Then tell me what better I can do," said Gwendolen, insistently.

"Many things. Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are, and how they are borne. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires. Try to care for what is best in thought and action—something that is good apart from the accidents of your own lot."

For an instant or two Gwendolen was mute. Then, again moving her brow from the glass, she said—

"You mean that I am selfish and ignorant."

He met her fixed look in silence before he answered firmly—

"You will not go on being selfish and ignorant."

She did not turn away her glance or let her eyelids fall, but a change came over her face—that subtle change in nerve and muscle which will sometimes give a childlike expression even to the elderly: it is the subsidence of self-assertion.

"Shall I lead you back?" said Deronda, gently, turning and offering her his arm again. She took it silently, and in that way they came in sight of Grandcourt, who was walking slowly near their former place. Gwendolen went up to him and said, "I am ready to go now. Mr Deronda will excuse us to Lady Mallinger."

"Certainly," said Deronda. "Lord and Lady Pentreath disappeared some time ago."

Grandcourt gave his arm in silent compliance, nodding over his shoulder to Deronda, and Gwendolen too only half turned to bow and say, "Thanks." The husband and wife left the gallery and paced the corridors in silence. When the door had closed on them in the boudoir, Grand-

court threw himself into a chair and said, with undertoned peremptoriness, "Sit down." She, already in the expectation of something unpleasant, had thrown off her burnous with nervous unconsciousness, and immediately obeyed. Turning his eyes towards her, he began:

"Oblige me in future by not showing whims like a mad woman in a play."

"What do you mean?" said Gwendolen.

"I suppose there is some understanding between you and Deronda about that thing you have on your wrist. If you have anything to say to him, say it. But don't carry on a telegraphing which other people are supposed not to see. It's damnably vulgar."

"You can know all about the necklace," said Gwendolen, her angry pride resisting the nightmare of fear.

"I don't want to know. Keep to yourself whatever you like." Grandcourt paused between each sentence, and in each his speech seemed to become more preternaturally distinct in its inward tones. "What I care to know, I shall know without your telling me. Only you will please to behave as becomes my wife. And not make a spectacle of yourself."

"Do you object to my talking to Mr Deronda?"

"I don't care two straws about Deronda, or any other conceited hanger-on. You may talk to him as much as you like. He is not going to take my place. You are my wife. And you will either fill your place properly—to the world and to me—or you will go to the devil."

"I never intended anything but to fill my place properly," said Gwendolen, with bitterest mortification in her soul.

"You put that thing on your wrist, and hid it from me till you wanted him to see it. Only fools go into that deaf and dumb talk, and think they're secret. You will understand that you are not to compromise yourself. Behave with dignity. That's all I have to say."

With that last word Grandcourt rose, turned his back to the fire and looked down on her. She was mute. There was no reproach that she dared to fling at him in return for these insulting admonitions, and the very reason she felt them to be insulting was that their purport went with the most absolute dictate of her pride. What she would least like to incur was the making a fool of herself and being compromised. It was futile and irrelevant to try and explain that Deronda too had only been a monitor—the strongest of all monitors. Grandcourt was contemptuous, not jealous; con-

temptuously certain of all the subjection he cared for. Why could she not rebel, and defy him? She longed to do it. But she might as well have tried to defy the texture of her nerves and the palpitation of her heart. Her husband had a ghostly army at his back, that could close round her wherever she might turn. She sat in her splendid attire, like a white image of helplessness, and he seemed to gratify himself with looking at her. She could not even make a passionate exclamation, or throw up her arms, as she would have done in her maiden days. The sense of his scorn kept her still.

"Shall I ring?" he said, after what seemed to her a long while. She moved her head in assent, and after ringing he went to his dressing-room.

Certain words were gnawing within her. "The wrong you have done me will be your own curse." As he closed the door, the bitter tears rose, and the gnawing words provoked an answer: "Why did you put your fangs into me and not into him?" It was uttered in a whisper, as the tears came up silently. But immediately she pressed her handkerchief against her eyes, and checked her tendency to sob.

The next day, recovered from the shuddering fit of this evening scene, she determined to use the

charter which Grandcourt had scornfully given her, and to talk as much as she liked with Deronda; but no opportunities occurred, and any little devices she could imagine for creating them were rejected by her pride, which was now doubly active. Not towards Deronda himself—she was curiously free from alarm lest he should think her openness wanting in dignity: it was part of his power over her that she believed him free from all misunderstanding as to the way in which she appealed to him: or rather, that he should misunderstand her had never entered into her mind. But the last morning came, and still she had never been able to take up the dropped thread of their talk, and she was without devices. She and Grandcourt were to leave at three o'clock. It was too irritating that after a walk in the grounds had been planned in Deronda's hearing, he did not present himself to join in it. Grandcourt was gone with Sir Hugo to King's Topping, to see the old manor-house; others of the gentlemen were shooting; she was condemned to go and see the decoy and the water-fowl, and everything else that she least wanted to see, with the ladies, with old Lord Pentreath and his anecdotes, with Mr Vandernoodt and his admiring manners. The irritation became too strong for her: without premedi-

tation, she took advantage of the winding road to linger a little out of sight, and then set off back to the house, almost running when she was safe from observation. She entered by a side door, and the library was on her left hand; Deronda, she knew, was often there; why might she not turn in there as well as into any other room in the house? She had been taken there expressly to see the illuminated family tree, and other remarkable things—what more natural than that she should like to look in again? The thing most to be feared was that the room would be empty of Deronda, for the door was ajar. She pushed it gently, and looked round it. He was there, writing busily at a distant table, with his back towards the door (in fact, Sir Hugo had asked him to answer some constituents' letters which had become pressing). An enormous log-fire, with the scent of russia from the books, made the great room as warmly odorous as a private chapel in which the censers have been swinging. It seemed too daring to go in—too rude to speak and interrupt him; yet she went in on the noiseless carpet, and stood still for two or three minutes, till Deronda, having finished a letter, pushed it aside for signature, and threw himself back to consider whether there were anything else for him to do, or whether he could

walk out for the chance of meeting the party which included Gwendolen, when he heard her voice saying, "Mr Deronda."

It was certainly startling. He rose hastily, turned round, and pushed away his chair with a strong expression of surprise.

"Am I wrong to come in?" said Gwendolen.

"I thought you were far on your walk," said Deronda.

"I turned back," said Gwendolen.

"Do you not intend to go out again? I could join you now, if you would allow me."

"No; I want to say something, and I can't stay long," said Gwendolen, speaking quickly in a subdued tone, while she walked forward and rested her arms and muff on the back of the chair he had pushed away from him. "I want to tell you that it is really so—I can't help feeling remorse for having injured others. That was what I meant when I said that I had done worse than gamble again and pawn the necklace again—something more injurious, as you called it. And I can't alter it. I am punished, but I can't alter it. You said I could do many things. Tell me again. What should you do—what should you feel, if you were in my place?"

The hurried directness with which she spoke—

the absence of all her little airs, as if she were only concerned to use the time in getting an answer that would guide her, made her appeal unspeakably touching.

Deronda said,—"I should feel something of what you feel—deep sorrow."

"But what would you try to do?" said Gwendolen, with urgent quickness.

"Order my life so as to make any possible amends, and keep away from doing any sort of injury again," said Deronda, catching her sense that the time for speech was brief.

"But I can't—I can't; I must go on," said Gwendolen, in a passionate loud whisper. "I have thrust out others—I have made my gain out of their loss—tried to make it—tried. And I must go on. I can't alter it."

It was impossible to answer this instantaneously. Her words had confirmed his conjecture, and the situation of all concerned rose in swift images before him. His feeling for those who had been "thrust out" sanctioned her remorse; he could not try to nullify it, yet his heart was full of pity for her. But as soon as he could he answered—taking up her last words—

"That is the bitterest of all—to wear the yoke of our own wrong-doing. But if you submitted

to that, as men submit to maiming or a lifelong incurable disease?—and made the unalterable wrong a reason for more effort towards a good that may do something to counterbalance the evil? One who has committed irremediable errors may be scourged by that consciousness into a higher course than is common. There are many examples. Feeling what it is to have spoiled one life may well make us long to save other lives from being spoiled."

"But you have not wronged any one, or spoiled their lives," said Gwendolen, hastily. "It is only others who have wronged *you*."

Deronda coloured slightly, but said immediately —"I suppose our keen feeling for ourselves might end in giving us a keen feeling for others, if, when we are suffering acutely, we were to consider that others go through the same sharp experience. That is a sort of remorse before commission. Can't you understand that?"

"I think I do—now," said Gwendolen. "But you were right—I *am* selfish. I have never thought much of any one's feelings, except my mother's. I have not been fond of people.—But what can I do?" she went on, more quickly. "I must get up in the morning and do what every one else does. It is all like a dance set beforehand.

I seem to see all that can be—and I am tired and sick of it. And the world is all confusion to me" —she made a gesture of disgust. "You say I am ignorant. But what is the good of trying to know more, unless life were worth more?"

"This good," said Deronda promptly, with a touch of indignant severity, which he was inclined to encourage as his own safeguard; "life *would* be worth more to you: some real knowledge would give you an interest in the world beyond the small drama of personal desires. It is the curse of your life—forgive me—of so many lives, that all passion is spent in that narrow round, for want of ideas and sympathies to make a larger home for it. Is there any single occupation of mind that you care about with passionate delight or even independent interest?"

Deronda paused, but Gwendolen, looking startled and thrilled as by an electric shock, said nothing, and he went on more insistently—

"I take what you said of music for a small example—it answers for all larger things—you will not cultivate it for the sake of a private joy in it. What sort of earth or heaven would hold any spiritual wealth in it for souls pauperised by inaction? If one firmament has no stimulus for our attention and awe, I don't see how four would

have it. We should stamp every possible world with the flatness of our own inanity—which is necessarily impious, without faith or fellowship. The refuge you are needing from personal trouble is the higher, the religious life, which holds an enthusiasm for something more than our own appetites and vanities. The few may find themselves in it simply by an elevation of feeling; but for us who have to struggle for our wisdom, the higher life must be a region in which the affections are clad with knowledge."

The half-indignant remonstrance that vibrated in Deronda's voice came, as often happens, from the habit of inward argument with himself rather than from severity towards Gwendolen; but it had a more beneficent effect on her than any soothings. Nothing is feebler than the indolent rebellion of complaint; and to be roused into self-judgment is comparative activity. For the moment she felt like a shaken child—shaken out of its wailings into awe, and she said humbly—

"I will try. I will think."

They both stood silent for a minute, as if some third presence had arrested them,—for Deronda, too, was under that sense of pressure which is apt to come when our own winged words seem to

be hovering around us,—till Gwendolen began again—

"You said affection was the best thing, and I have hardly any—none about me. If I could, I would have mamma; but that is impossible. Things have changed to me so—in such a short time. What I used not to like, I long for now. I think I am almost getting fond of the old things now they are gone." Her lip trembled.

"Take the present suffering as a painful letting in of light," said Deronda, more gently. "You are conscious of more beyond the round of your own inclinations—you know more of the way in which your life presses on others, and their life on yours. I don't think you could have escaped the painful process in some form or other."

"But it is a very cruel form," said Gwendolen, beating her foot on the ground with returning agitation. "I am frightened at everything. I am frightened at myself. When my blood is fired I can do daring things—take any leap; but that makes me frightened at myself." She was looking at nothing outside her; but her eyes were directed toward the window, away from Deronda, who, with quick comprehension, said—

"Turn your fear into a safeguard. Keep your dread fixed on the idea of increasing that remorse

which is so bitter to you. Fixed meditation may do a great deal towards defining our longing or dread. We are not always in a state of strong emotion, and when we are calm we can use our memories and gradually change the bias of our fear, as we do our tastes. Take your fear as a safeguard. It is like quickness of hearing. It may make consequences passionately present to you. Try to take hold of your sensibility, and use it as if it were a faculty, like vision." Deronda uttered each sentence more urgently; he felt as if he were seizing a faint chance of rescuing her from some indefinite danger.

"Yes, I know; I understand what you mean," said Gwendolen, in her loud whisper, not turning her eyes, but lifting up her small gloved hand and waving it in deprecation of the notion that it was easy to obey that advice. "But if feelings rose —there are some feelings—hatred and anger—how can I be good when they keep rising? And if there came a moment when I felt stifled and could bear it no longer——" She broke off, and with agitated lips looked at Deronda, but the expression on his face pierced her with an entirely new feeling. He was under the baffling difficulty of discerning, that what he had been urging on her was thrown into the pallid distance of mere

thought before the outburst of her habitual emotion. It was as if he saw her drowning while his limbs were bound. The pained compassion which was spread over his features as he watched her, affected her with a compunction unlike any she had felt before, and in a changed imploring tone she said—

"I am grieving you. I am ungrateful. You *can* help me. I will think of everything. I will try. Tell me—it will not be a pain to you that I have dared to speak of my trouble to you? You began it, you know, when you rebuked me." There was a melancholy smile on her lips as she said that, but she added more entreatingly, "It will not be a pain to you?"

"Not if it does anything to save you from an evil to come," said Deronda, with strong emphasis; "otherwise, it will be a lasting pain."

"No—no—it shall not be. It may be—it shall be better with me because I have known you." She turned immediately, and quitted the room.

When she was on the first landing of the staircase, Sir Hugo passed across the hall on his way to the library, and saw her. Grandcourt was not with him.

Deronda, when the baronet entered, was standing in his ordinary attitude, grasping his coat

collar, with his back to the table, and with that indefinable expression by which we judge that a man is still in the shadow of a scene which he has just gone through. He moved, however, and began to arrange the letters.

"Has Mrs Grandcourt been in here?" said Sir Hugo.

"Yes, she has."

"Where are the others?"

"I believe she left them somewhere in the grounds."

After a moment's silence, in which Sir Hugo looked at a letter without reading it, he said, "I hope you are not playing with fire, Dan—you understand me."

"I believe I do, sir," said Deronda, after a slight hesitation, which had some repressed anger in it. "But there is nothing answering to your metaphor—no fire, and therefore no chance of scorching."

Sir Hugo looked searchingly at him, and then said, "So much the better. For between ourselves, I fancy there may be some hidden gunpowder in that establishment."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Aspern. Pardon, my lord—I speak for Sigismund.
Fronsberg. For him? Oh, ay—for him I always hold
A pardon safe in bank, sure he will draw
Sooner or later on me. What his need?
Mad project broken? fine mechanic wings
That would not fly? durance, assault on watch,
Bill for Epernay, not a crust to eat?
Aspern. Oh, none of these, my lord; he has escaped
From Circe's herd, and seeks to win the love
Of your fair ward Cecilia; but would win
First your consent. You frown.
Fronsberg. Distinguish words.
I said I held a pardon, not consent.

In spite of Deronda's reasons for wishing to be in town again—reasons in which his anxiety for Mirah was blent with curiosity to know more of the enigmatic Mordecai—he did not manage to go up before Sir Hugo, who preceded his family that he might be ready for the opening of Parliament on the 6th of February. Deronda took up his quarters in Park Lane, aware that his chambers were sufficiently tenanted by Hans Meyrick. This was what he expected; but he found other things not altogether according to his expectations.

Most of us remember Retzsch's drawing of destiny in the shape of Mephistopheles playing at chess with man for his soul, a game in which we may imagine the clever adversary making a feint of unintended moves so as to set the beguiled mortal on carrying his defensive pieces away from the true point of attack. The fiend makes preparation his favourite object of mockery, that he may fatally persuade us against our best safeguard: he even meddles so far as to suggest our taking out waterproofs when he is well aware the sky is going to clear, foreseeing that the imbecile will turn this delusion into a prejudice against waterproofs instead of giving a closer study to the weather-signs. It is a peculiar test of a man's metal when, after he has painfully adjusted himself to what seems a wise provision, he finds all his mental precaution a little beside the mark, and his excellent intentions no better than miscalculated dovetails, accurately cut from a wrong starting-point. His magnanimity has got itself ready to meet misbehaviour, and finds quite a different call upon it. Something of this kind happened to Deronda.

His first impression was one of pure pleasure and amusement at finding his sitting-room transformed into an *atelier* strewed with miscellaneous

drawings and with the contents of two chests from Rome, the lower half of the windows darkened with baize, and the blond Hans in his weird youth as the presiding genius of the littered place—his hair longer than of old, his face more whimsically creased, and his high voice as usual getting higher under the excitement of rapid talk. The friendship of the two had been kept up warmly since the memorable Cambridge time, not only by correspondence but by little episodes of companionship abroad and in England, and the original relation of confidence on one side and indulgence on the other had been developed in practice, as is wont to be the case where such spiritual borrowing and lending has been well begun.

"I knew you would like to see my casts and antiquities," said Hans, after the first hearty greetings and inquiries, "so I didn't scruple to unlade my chests here. But I've found two rooms at Chelsea not many hundred yards from my mother and sisters, and I shall soon be ready to hang out there—when they've scraped the walls and put in some new lights. That's all I'm waiting for. But you see I don't wait to begin work: you can't conceive what a great fellow I'm going to be. The seed of immortality has sprouted within me."

"Only a fungoid growth, I daresay—a crowing disease in the lungs," said Deronda, accustomed to treat Hans in brotherly fashion. He was walking towards some drawings propped on the ledge of his bookcases; five rapidly-sketched heads—different aspects of the same face. He stood at a convenient distance from them, without making any remark. Hans, too, was silent for a minute, took up his palette and began touching the picture on his easel.

"What do you think of them?" he said at last.

"The full face looks too massive; otherwise the likenesses are good," said Deronda, more coldly than was usual with him.

"No, it is not too massive," said Hans, decisively. "I have noted that. There is always a little surprise when one passes from the profile to the full face. But I shall enlarge her scale for Berenice. I am making a Berenice series—look at the sketches along there—and now I think of it, you are just the model I want for the Agrippa." Hans, still with pencil and palette in hand, had moved to Deronda's side while he said this, but he added hastily, as if conscious of a mistake, "No, no, I forgot; you don't like sitting for your portrait, confound you! However, I've picked up a capital Titus. There are to be five

in the series. The first is Berenice clasping the knees of Gessius Florus and beseeching him to spare her people; I've got that on the easel. Then this, where she is standing on the Xystus with Agrippa, entreating the people not to injure themselves by resistance."

"Agrippa's legs will never do," said Deronda.

"The legs are good realistically," said Hans, his face creasing drolly; "public men are often shaky about the legs—'Their legs, the emblem of their various thought,' as somebody says in the *Rehearsal*."

"But these are as impossible as the legs of Raphael's Alcibiades," said Deronda.

"Then they are good ideally," said Hans. "Agrippa's legs were possibly bad; I idealise that and make them impossibly bad. Art, my Eugenius, must intensify. But never mind the legs now: the third sketch in the series is Berenice exulting in the prospect of being Empress of Rome, when the news has come that Vespasian is declared Emperor and her lover Titus his successor."

"You must put a scroll in her mouth, else people will not understand that. You can't tell that in a picture."

"It will make them feel their ignorance then—an excellent æsthetic effect. The fourth

is, Titus sending Berenice away from Rome after she has shared his palace for ten years —both reluctant, both sad—*invitus invitam*, as Suetonius hath it. I've found a model for the Roman brute."

"Shall you make Berenice look fifty? She must have been that."

"No, no; a few mature touches to show the lapse of time. Dark-eyed beauty wears well, hers particularly. But now, here is the fifth: Berenice seated lonely on the ruins of Jerusalem. That is pure imagination. That is what ought to have been — perhaps was. Now, see how I tell a pathetic negative. Nobody knows what became of her: — that is finely indicated by the series coming to a close. There is no sixth picture." Here Hans pretended to speak with a gasping sense of sublimity, and drew back his head with a frown, as if looking for a like impression on Deronda. "I break off in the Homeric style. The story is chipped off, so to speak, and passes with a ragged edge into nothing—*le néant;* can anything be more sublime, especially in French? The vulgar would desire to see her corpse and burial—perhaps her will read and her linen distributed. But now come and look at this on the easel. I have made some way there."

"That beseeching attitude is really good," said Deronda, after a moment's contemplation. "You have been very industrious in the Christmas holidays; for I suppose you have taken up the subject since you came to London." Neither of them had yet mentioned Mirah.

"No," said Hans, putting touches to his picture, "I made up my mind to the subject before. I take that lucky chance for an augury that I am going to burst on the world as a great painter. I saw a splendid woman in the Trastevere—the grandest women there are half Jewesses—and she set me hunting for a fine situation of a Jewess at Rome. Like other men of vast learning, I ended by taking what lay on the surface. I'll show you a sketch of the Trasteverina's head when I can lay my hands on it."

"I should think she would be a more suitable model for Berenice," said Deronda, not knowing exactly how to express his discontent.

"Not a bit of it. The model ought to be the most beautiful Jewess in the world, and I have found her."

"Have you made yourself sure that she would like to figure in that character? I should think no woman would be more abhorrent to her. Does she quite know what you are doing?"

"Certainly. I got her to throw herself precisely into this attitude. Little mother sat for Gessius Florus, and Mirah clasped her knees."—Here Hans went a little way off and looked at the effect of his touches.

"I daresay she knows nothing about Berenice's history," said Deronda, feeling more indignation than he would have been able to justify.

"Oh yes, she does—ladies' edition. Berenice was a fervid patriot, but was beguiled by love and ambition into attaching herself to the arch enemy of her people. Whence the Nemesis. Mirah takes it as a tragic parable, and cries to think what the penitent Berenice suffered as she wandered back to Jerusalem and sat desolate amidst desolation. That was her own phrase. I couldn't find in my heart to tell her I invented that part of the story."

"Show me your Trasteverina," said Deronda, chiefly in order to hinder himself from saying something else.

"Shall you mind turning over that folio?" said Hans. "My studies of heads are all there. But they are in confusion. You will perhaps find her next to a crop-eared undergraduate."

After Deronda had been turning over the drawings a minute or two, he said—

"These seem to be all Cambridge heads and bits of country. Perhaps I had better begin at the other end."

"No; you'll find her about the middle. I emptied one folio into another."

"Is this one of your undergraduates?" said Deronda, holding up a drawing. "It's an unusually agreeable face."

"That? Oh, that's a man named Gascoigne—Rex Gascoigne. An uncommonly good fellow; his upper lip, too, is good. I coached him before he got his scholarship. He ought to have taken honours last Easter. But he was ill, and has had to stay up another year. I must look him up. I want to know how he's going on."

"Here she is, I suppose," said Deronda, holding up the sketch of the Trasteverina.

"Ah," said Hans, looking at it rather contemptuously, "too coarse. I was unregenerate then."

Deronda was silent while he closed the folio, leaving the Trasteverina outside. Then grasping his coat collar, and turning towards Hans, he said, "I daresay my scruples are excessive, Meyrick, but I must ask you to oblige me by giving up this notion."

Hans threw himself into a tragic attitude, and screamed, "What! my series—my immortal Bere-

nice series? Think of what you are saying, man —destroying, as Milton says, not a life but an immortality. Wait before you answer, that I may deposit the implements of my art and be ready to uproot my hair."

Here Hans laid down his pencil and palette, threw himself backward into a great chair, and hanging limply over the side, shook his long hair half over his face, lifted his hooked fingers on each side his head, and looked up with comic terror at Deronda, who was obliged to smile as he said—

"Paint as many Berenices as you like, but I wish you could feel with me—perhaps you will, on reflection—that you should choose another model."

"Why?" said Hans, standing up, and looking serious again.

"Because she may get into such a position that her face is likely to be recognised. Mrs Meyrick and I are anxious for her that she should be known as an admirable singer. It is right, and she wishes it, that she should make herself independent. And she has excellent chances. One good introduction is secured already. And I am going to speak to Klesmer. Her face may come to be very well known, and

—well, it is useless to attempt to explain, unless you feel as I do. I believe that if Mirah saw the circumstances clearly, she would strongly object to being exhibited in this way—to allowing herself to be used as a model for a heroine of this sort."

As Hans stood with his thumbs in the belt of his blouse listening to this speech, his face showed a growing surprise melting into amusement, that at last would have its way in an explosive laugh; but seeing that Deronda looked gravely offended, he checked himself to say, "Excuse my laughing, Deronda. You never gave me an advantage over you before. If it had been about anything but my own pictures, I should have swallowed every word, because you said it. And so you actually believe that I should get my five pictures hung on the line in a conspicuous position, and carefully studied by the public? Zounds, man! cider-cup and conceit never gave me half such a beautiful dream. My pictures are likely to remain as private as the utmost hypersensitiveness could desire."

Hans turned to paint again as a way of filling up awkward pauses. Deronda stood perfectly still, recognising his mistake as to publicity, but also conscious that his repugnance was not much

diminished. He was the reverse of satisfied either with himself or with Hans; but the power of being quiet carries a man well through moments of embarrassment. Hans had a reverence for his friend which made him feel a sort of shyness at Deronda's being in the wrong; but it was not in his nature to give up anything readily, though it were only a whim—or rather, especially if it were a whim, and he presently went on, painting the while—

"But even supposing I had a public rushing after my pictures as if they were a railway series including nurses, babies, and bonnet-boxes, I can't see any justice in your objection. Every painter worth remembering has painted the face he admired most, as often as he could. It is a part of his soul that goes out into his pictures. He diffuses its influence in that way. He puts what he hates into a caricature. He puts what he adores into some sacred, heroic form. If a man could paint the woman he loves a thousand times as the *Stella Maris* to put courage into the sailors on board a thousand ships, so much the more honour to her. Isn't that better than painting a piece of staring immodesty and calling it by a worshipful name?"

"Every objection can be answered if you take

broad ground enough, Hans: no special question of conduct can be properly settled in that way," said Deronda, with a touch of peremptoriness. "I might admit all your generalities, and yet be right in saying you ought not to publish Mirah's face as a model for Berenice. But I give up the question of publicity. I was unreasonable there." Deronda hesitated a moment. "Still, even as a private affair, there might be good reasons for your not indulging yourself too much in painting her from the point of view you mention. You must feel that her situation at present is a very delicate one; and until she is in more independence, she should be kept as carefully as a bit of Venetian glass, for fear of shaking her out of the safe place she is lodged in. Are you quite sure of your own discretion? Excuse me, Hans. My having found her binds me to watch over her. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly," said Hans, turning his face into a good-humoured smile. "You have the very justifiable opinion of me that I am likely to shatter all the glass in my way, and break my own skull into the bargain. Quite fair. Since I got into the scrape of being born, everything I have liked best has been a scrape either for myself or somebody else. Everything I have taken to heartily has somehow

turned into a scrape. My painting is the last scrape; and I shall be all my life getting out of it. You think now I shall get into a scrape at home. No; I am regenerate. You think I must be over head and ears in love with Mirah. Quite right; so I am. But you think I shall scream and plunge and spoil everything. There you are mistaken — excusably, but transcendently mistaken. I have undergone baptism by immersion. Awe takes care of me. Ask the little mother."

"You don't reckon a hopeless love among your scrapes, then?" said Deronda, whose voice seemed to get deeper as Hans's went higher.

"I don't mean to call mine hopeless," said Hans, with provoking coolness, laying down his tools, thrusting his thumbs into his belt, and moving away a little, as if to contemplate his picture more deliberately.

"My dear fellow, you are only preparing misery for yourself," said Deronda, decisively. "She would not marry a Christian, even if she loved him. Have you heard her—of course you have—heard her speak of her people and her religion?"

"That can't last," said Hans. "She will see no Jew who is tolerable. Every male of that race is insupportable,—'insupportably advancing'—his nose."

"She may rejoin her family. That is what she longs for. Her mother and brother are probably strict Jews."

"I'll turn proselyte if she wishes it," said Hans, with a shrug and a laugh.

"Don't talk nonsense, Hans. I thought you professed a serious love for her," said Deronda, getting heated.

"So I do. You think it desperate, but I don't."

"I know nothing; I can't tell what has happened. We must be prepared for surprises. But I can hardly imagine a greater surprise to me than that there should have seemed to be anything in Mirah's sentiments for you to found a romantic hope on." Deronda felt that he was too contemptuous.

"I don't found my romantic hopes on a woman's sentiments," said Hans, perversely inclined to be the merrier when he was addressed with gravity. "I go to science and philosophy for my romance. Nature designed Mirah to fall in love with me. The amalgamation of races demands it —the mitigation of human ugliness demands it —the affinity of contrasts assures it. I am the utmost contrast to Mirah—a bleached Christian, who can't sing two notes in tune. Who has a chance against me?"

"I see now; it was all *persiflage*. You don't mean a word of what you say, Meyrick," said Deronda, laying his hand on Meyrick's shoulder, and speaking in a tone of cordial relief. "I was a wiseacre to answer you seriously."

"Upon my honour I do mean it, though," said Hans, facing round and laying his left hand on Deronda's shoulder, so that their eyes fronted each other closely. "I am at the confessional. I meant to tell you as soon as you came. My mother says you are Mirah's guardian, and she thinks herself responsible to you for every breath that falls on Mirah in her house. Well, I love her—I worship her—I won't despair—I mean to deserve her."

"My dear fellow, you can't do it," said Deronda, quickly.

"I should have said, I mean to try."

"You can't keep your resolve, Hans. You used to resolve what you would do for your mother and sisters."

"You have a right to reproach me, old fellow," said Hans, gently.

"Perhaps I am ungenerous," said Deronda, not apologetically, however. "Yet it can't be ungenerous to warn you that you are indulging mad, Quixotic expectations."

"Who will be hurt but myself, then?" said Hans, putting out his lip. "I am not going to say anything to her, unless I felt sure of the answer. I dare not ask the oracles: I prefer a cheerful caliginosity, as Sir Thomas Browne might say. I would rather run my chance there and lose, than be sure of winning anywhere else. And I don't mean to swallow the poison of despair, though you are disposed to thrust it on me. I am giving up wine, so let me get a little drunk on hope and vanity."

"With all my heart, if it will do you any good," said Deronda, loosing Hans's shoulder, with a little push. He made his tone kindly, but his words were from the lip only. As to his real feeling he was silenced.

He was conscious of that peculiar irritation which will sometimes befall the man whom others are inclined to trust as a mentor—the irritation of perceiving that he is supposed to be entirely off the same plane of desire and temptation as those who confess to him. Our guides, we pretend, must be sinless: as if those were not often the best teachers who only yesterday got corrected for their mistakes. Throughout their friendship Deronda had been used to Hans's egotism, but he had never before felt intolerant of it: when Hans,

habitually pouring out his own feelings and affairs, had never cared for any detail in return, and, if he chanced to know any, had soon forgotten it, Deronda had been inwardly as well as outwardly indulgent—nay, satisfied. But now he noted with some indignation, all the stronger because it must not be betrayed, Hans's evident assumption that for any danger of rivalry or jealousy in relation to Mirah, Deronda was as much out of the question as the angel Gabriel. It is one thing to be resolute in placing one's self out of the question, and another to endure that others should perform that exclusion for us. He had expected that Hans would give him trouble: what he had not expected was that the trouble would have a strong element of personal feeling. And he was rather ashamed that Hans's hopes caused him uneasiness in spite of his well-warranted conviction that they would never be fulfilled. They had raised an image of Mirah changing; and however he might protest that the change would not happen, the protest kept up the unpleasant image. Altogether, poor Hans seemed to be entering into Deronda's experience in a disproportionate manner—going beyond his part of rescued prodigal, and rousing a feeling quite distinct from compassionate affection.

When Deronda went to Chelsea he was not made as comfortable as he ought to have been by Mrs Meyrick's evident release from anxiety about the beloved but incalculable son. Mirah seemed livelier than before, and for the first time he saw her laugh. It was when they were talking of Hans, he being naturally the mother's first topic. Mirah wished to know if Deronda had seen Mr Hans going through a sort of character piece without changing his dress.

"He passes from one figure to another as if he were a bit of flame, where you fancied the figures without seeing them," said Mirah, full of her subject; "he is so wonderfully quick. I used never to like comic things on the stage—they were dwelt on too long; but all in one minute Mr Hans makes himself a blind bard, and then Rienzi addressing the Romans, and then an opera-dancer, and then a desponding young gentleman—I am sorry for them all, and yet I laugh, all in one"—here Mirah gave a little laugh that might have entered into a song.

"We hardly thought that Mirah could laugh till Hans came," said Mrs Meyrick, seeing that Deronda, like herself, was observing the pretty picture.

"Hans seems in great force just now," said

Deronda, in a tone of congratulation. "I don't wonder at his enlivening you."

"He's been just perfect ever since he came back," said Mrs Meyrick, keeping to herself the next clause—"if it will but last."

"It is a great happiness," said Mirah, "to see the son and brother come into this dear home. And I hear them all talk about what they did together when they were little. That seems like heaven, to have a mother and brother who talk in that way. I have never had it."

"Nor I," said Deronda, involuntarily.

"No?" said Mirah, regretfully. "I wish you had. I wish you had had every good." The last words were uttered with a serious ardour as if they had been part of a litany, while her eyes were fixed on Deronda, who with his elbow on the back of his chair was contemplating her by the new light of the impression she had made on Hans, and the possibility of her being attracted by that extraordinary contrast. It was no more than what had happened on each former visit of his, that Mirah appeared to enjoy speaking of what she felt very much as a little girl fresh from school pours forth spontaneously all the long-repressed chat for which she has found willing ears. For the first time in her life Mirah was

among those whom she entirely trusted, and her original visionary impression that Deronda was a divinely-sent messenger hung about his image still, stirring always anew the disposition to reliance and openness. It was in this way she took what might have been the injurious flattery of admiring attention into which her helpless dependence had been suddenly transformed: every one around her watched for her looks and words, and the effect on her was simply that of having passed from a stifling imprisonment into an exhilarating air which made speech and action a delight. To her mind it was all a gift from others' goodness. But that word of Deronda's implying that there had been some lack in his life which might be compared with anything she had known in hers, was an entirely new inlet of thought about him. After her first expression of sorrowful surprise she went on—

"But Mr Hans said yesterday that you thought so much of others you hardly wanted anything for yourself. He told us a wonderful story of Bouddha giving himself to the famished tigress to save her and her little ones from starving. And he said you were like Bouddha. That is what we all imagine of you."

"Pray don't imagine that," said Deronda, who

had lately been finding such suppositions rather exasperating. "Even if it were true that I thought so much of others, it would not follow that I had no wants for myself. When Bouddha let the tigress eat him he might have been very hungry himself."

"Perhaps if he was starved he would not mind so much about being eaten," said Mab, shyly.

"Please don't think that, Mab; it takes away the beauty of the action," said Mirah.

"But if it were true, Mirah?" said the rational Amy, having a half-holiday from her teaching; "you always take what is beautiful as if it were true."

"So it is," said Mirah, gently. "If people have thought what is the most beautiful and the best thing, it must be true. It is always there."

"Now, Mirah, what *do* you mean?" said Amy.

"I understand her," said Deronda, coming to the rescue. "It is a truth in thought though it may never have been carried out in action. It lives as an idea. Is that it?" He turned to Mirah, who was listening with a blind look in her lovely eyes.

"It must be that, because you understand me, but I cannot quite explain," said Mirah, rather abstractedly—still searching for some expression.

"But *was* it beautiful for Bouddha to let the tiger eat him?" said Amy, changing her ground. "It would be a bad pattern."

"The world would get full of fat tigers," said Mab.

Deronda laughed, but defended the myth. "It is like a passionate word," he said; "the exaggeration is a flash of fervour. It is an extreme image of what is happening every day—the transmutation of self."

"I think I can say what I mean, now," said Mirah, who had not heard the intermediate talk. "When the best thing comes into our thoughts, it is like what my mother has been to me. She has been just as really with me as all the other people about me—often more really with me."

Deronda, inwardly wincing under this illustration, which brought other possible realities about that mother vividly before him, presently turned the conversation by saying, "But we must not get too far away from practical matters. I came, for one thing, to tell of an interview I had yesterday, which I hope Mirah will find to have been useful to her. It was with Klesmer, the great pianist."

"Ah?" said Mrs Meyrick, with satisfaction. "You think he will help her?"

"I hope so. He is very much occupied, but has promised to fix a time for receiving and hearing Miss Lapidoth, as we must learn to call her"——here Deronda smiled at Mirah——"if she consents to go to him."

"I shall be very grateful," said Mirah, calmly. "He wants to hear me sing, before he can judge whether I ought to be helped."

Deronda was struck with her plain sense about these matters of practical concern.

"It will not be at all trying to you, I hope, if Mrs Meyrick will kindly go with you to Klesmer's house."

"Oh no, not at all trying. I have been doing that all my life—I mean, told to do things that others may judge of me. And I have gone through a bad trial of that sort. I am prepared to bear it, and do some very small thing. Is Klesmer a severe man?"

"He is peculiar, but I have not had experience enough of him to know whether he would be what you would call severe. I know he is kind-hearted—kind in action, if not in speech."

"I have been used to be frowned at and not praised," said Mirah.

"By the by, Klesmer frowns a good deal," said Deronda, "but there is often a sort of smile in

his eyes all the while. Unhappily he wears spectacles, so you must catch him in the right light to see the smile."

"I shall not be frightened," said Mirah. "If he were like a roaring lion, he only wants me to sing. I shall do what I can."

"Then I feel sure you will not mind being invited to sing in Lady Mallinger's drawing-room," said Deronda. "She intends to ask you next month, and will invite many ladies to hear you, who are likely to want lessons from you for their daughters."

"How fast we are mounting!" said Mrs Meyrick, with delight. "You never thought of getting grand so quickly, Mirah."

"I am a little frightened at being called Miss Lapidoth," said Mirah, colouring with a new uneasiness. "Might I be called Cohen?"

"I understand you," said Deronda, promptly. 'But, I assure you, you must not be called Cohen. The name is inadmissible for a singer. This is one of the trifles in which we must conform to vulgar prejudice. We could choose some other name, however—such as singers ordinarily choose—an Italian or Spanish name, which would suit your *physique*." To Deronda just now the name

Cohen was equivalent to the ugliest of yellow badges.

Mirah reflected a little, anxiously, then said, "No. If Cohen will not do, I will keep the name I have been called by. I will not hide myself. I have friends to protect me. And now —if my father were very miserable and wanted help—no," she said, looking at Mrs Meyrick, "I should think then, that he was perhaps crying as I used to see him, and had nobody to pity him, and I had hidden myself from him. He had none belonging to him but me. Others that made friends with him always left him."

"Keep to what you feel right, my dear child," said Mrs Meyrick. "*I* would not persuade you to the contrary." For her own part she had no patience or pity for that father, and would have left him to his crying.

Deronda was saying to himself, "I am rather base to be angry with Hans. How can he help being in love with her? But it is too absurdly presumptuous for him even to frame the idea of appropriating her, and a sort of blasphemy to suppose that she could possibly give herself to him."

What would it be for Daniel Deronda to enter-

tain such thoughts? He was not one who could quite naïvely introduce himself where he had just excluded his friend, yet it was undeniable that what had just happened made a new stage in his feeling towards Mirah. But apart from other grounds for self-repression, reasons both definite and vague made him shut away that question as he might have shut up a half-opened writing that would have carried his imagination too far and given too much shape to presentiments. Might there not come a disclosure which would hold the missing determination of his course? What did he really know about his origin? Strangely in these latter months when it seemed right that he should exert his will in the choice of a destination, the passion of his nature had got more and more locked by this uncertainty. The disclosure might bring its pain, indeed the likelihood seemed to him to be all on that side; but if it helped him to make his life a sequence which would take the form of duty—if it saved him from having to make an arbitrary selection where he felt no preponderance of desire? Still more he wanted to escape standing as a critic outside the activities of men, stiffened into the ridiculous attitude of self-assigned superiority. His chief tether was his early inwrought affection for Sir Hugo, making

him gratefully deferential to wishes with which he had little agreement; but gratitude had been sometimes disturbed by doubts which were near reducing it to a fear of being ungrateful. Many of us complain that half our birthright is sharp duty: Deronda was more inclined to complain that he was robbed of this half; yet he accused himself, as he would have accused another, of being weakly self-conscious and wanting in resolve. He was the reverse of that type painted for us in Faulconbridge and Edmund of Gloster, whose coarse ambition for personal success is inflamed by a defiance of accidental disadvantages. To Daniel the words Father and Mother had the altar-fire in them; and the thought of all closest relations of our nature held still something of the mystic power which had made his neck and ears burn in boyhood. The average man may regard this sensibility on the question of birth as preposterous and hardly credible; but with the utmost respect for his knowledge as the rock from which all other knowledge is hewn, it must be admitted that many well-proved facts are dark to the average man, even concerning the action of his own heart and the structure of his own retina. A century ago he and all his forefathers had not had the slightest notion of that electric discharge

by means of which they had all wagged their tongues mistakenly; any more than they were awake to the secluded anguish of exceptional sensitiveness into which many a carelessly-begotten child of man is born.

Perhaps the ferment was all the stronger in Deronda's mind because he had never had a confidant to whom he could open himself on these delicate subjects. He had always been leaned on instead of being invited to lean. Sometimes he had longed for the sort of friend to whom he might possibly unfold his experience: a young man like himself who sustained a private grief and was not too confident about his own career; speculative enough to understand every moral difficulty, yet socially susceptible, as he himself was, and having every outward sign of equality either in bodily or in spiritual wrestling;—for he had found it impossible to reciprocate confidences with one who looked up to him. But he had no expectation of meeting the friend he imagined. Deronda's was not one of those quiveringly-poised natures that lend themselves to second-sight.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

There be who hold that the deeper tragedy were a Prometheus Bound not *after* but *before* he had well got the celestial fire into the νάρθηξ whereby it might be conveyed to mortals: thrust by the Kratos and Bia of instituted methods into a solitude of despised ideas, fastened in throbbing helplessness by the fatal pressure of poverty and disease—a solitude where many pass by, but none regard.

"SECOND-SIGHT" is a flag over disputed ground. But it is matter of knowledge that there are persons whose yearnings, conceptions—nay, travelled conclusions—continually take the form of images which have a foreshadowing power: the deed they would do starts up before them in complete shape, making a coercive type; the event they hunger for or dread rises into vision with a seed-like growth, feeding itself fast on unnumbered impressions. They are not always the less capable of the argumentative process, nor less sane than the commonplace calculators of the market: sometimes it may be that their natures have manifold openings, like the hundred-gated Thebes,

where there may naturally be a greater and more miscellaneous inrush than through a narrow beadle-watched portal. No doubt there are abject specimens of the visionary, as there is a minim mammal which you might imprison in the finger of your glove. That small relative of the elephant has no harm in him; but what great mental or social type is free from specimens whose insignificance is both ugly and noxious? One is afraid to think of all that the genus "patriot" embraces; or of the elbowing there might be at the day of judgment for those who ranked as Authors, and brought volumes either in their hands or on trucks.

This apology for inevitable kinship is meant to usher in some facts about Mordecai, whose figure had bitten itself into Deronda's mind as a new question which he felt an interest in getting answered. But the interest was no more than a vaguely expectant suspense: the consumptive-looking Jew, apparently a fervid student of some kind, getting his crust by a quiet handicraft, like Spinoza, fitted into none of Deronda's anticipations.

It was otherwise with the effect of their meeting on Mordecai. For many winters, while he had been conscious of an ebbing physical life, and

a widening spiritual loneliness, all his passionate desire had concentred itself in the yearning for some young ear into which he could pour his mind as a testament, some soul kindred enough to accept the spiritual product of his own brief, painful life, as a mission to be executed. It was remarkable that the hopefulness which is often the beneficent illusion of consumptive patients, was in Mordecai wholly diverted from the prospect of bodily recovery and carried into the current of this yearning for transmission. The yearning, which had panted upward from out of overwhelming discouragements, had grown into a hope — the hope into a confident belief, which, instead of being checked by the clear conception he had of his hastening decline, took rather the intensity of expectant faith in a prophecy which has only brief space to get fulfilled in.

Some years had now gone since he had first begun to measure men with a keen glance, searching for a possibility which became more and more a distinct conception. Such distinctness as it had at first was reached chiefly by a method of contrast: he wanted to find a man who differed from himself. Tracing reasons in that self for the rebuffs he had met with and the hindrances

that beset him, he imagined a man who would have all the elements necessary for sympathy with him, but in an embodiment unlike his own: he must be a Jew, intellectually cultured, morally fervid—in all this a nature ready to be plenished from Mordecai's; but his face and frame must be beautiful and strong, he must have been used to all the refinements of social life, his voice must flow with a full and easy current, his circumstances be free from sordid need: he must glorify the possibilities of the Jew, not sit and wander as Mordecai did, bearing the stamp of his people amid the signs of poverty and waning breath. Sensitive to physical characteristics, he had, both abroad and in England, looked at pictures as well as men, and in a vacant hour he had sometimes lingered in the National Gallery in search of paintings which might feed his hopefulness with grave and noble types of the human form, such as might well belong to men of his own race. But he returned in disappointment. The instances are scattered but thinly over the galleries of Europe, in which the fortune or selection even of the chief masters has given to Art a face at once young, grand, and beautiful, where, if there is any melancholy, it is no feeble passivity, but enters into the foreshadowed capability of heroism.

Some observant persons may perhaps remember his emaciated figure, and dark eyes deep in their sockets, as he stood in front of a picture that had touched him either to new or habitual meditation: he commonly wore a cloth cap with black fur round it, which no painter would have asked him to take off. But spectators would be likely to think of him as an odd-looking Jew, who probably got money out of pictures; and Mordecai, when he noticed them, was perfectly aware of the impression he made. Experience had rendered him morbidly alive to the effect of a man's poverty and other physical disadvantages in cheapening his ideas, unless they are those of a Peter the Hermit who has a tocsin for the rabble. But he was too sane and generous to attribute his spiritual banishment solely to the excusable prejudices of others: certain incapacities of his own had made the sentence of exclusion; and hence it was that his imagination had constructed another man who would be something more ample than the second soul bestowed, according to the notion of the Cabbalists, to help out the insufficient first —who would be a blooming human life, ready to incorporate all that was worthiest in an existence whose visible, palpable part was burning itself fast away. His inward need for the conception

of this expanded, prolonged self was reflected as an outward necessity. The thoughts of his heart (that ancient phrase best shadows the truth) seemed to him too precious, too closely inwoven with the growth of things not to have a further destiny. And as the more beautiful, the stronger, the more executive self took shape in his mind, he loved it beforehand with an affection half identifying, half contemplative and grateful.

Mordecai's mind wrought so constantly in images, that his coherent trains of thought often resembled the significant dreams attributed to sleepers by waking persons in their most inventive moments; nay, they often resembled genuine dreams in their way of breaking off the passage from the known to the unknown. Thus, for a long while, he habitually thought of the Being answering to his need as one distantly approaching or turning his back towards him, darkly painted against a golden sky. The reason of the golden sky lay in one of Mordecai's habits. He was keenly alive to some poetic aspects of London; and a favourite resort of his, when strength and leisure allowed, was to some one of the bridges, especially about sunrise or sunset. Even when he was bending over watch-wheels and trinkets, or seated in a small upper room looking out on

dingy bricks and dingy cracked windows, his imagination spontaneously planted him on some spot where he had a far-stretching scene; his thought went on in wide spaces; and whenever he could, he tried to have in reality the influences of a large sky. Leaning on the parapet of Blackfriars Bridge, and gazing meditatively, the breadth and calm of the river, with its long vista half hazy, half luminous, the grand dim masses or tall forms of buildings which were the signs of world-commerce, the oncoming of boats and barges from the still distance into sound and colour, entered into his mood and blent themselves indistinguishably with his thinking, as a fine symphony to which we can hardly be said to listen makes a medium that bears up our spiritual wings. Thus it happened that the figure representative of Mordecai's longing was mentally seen darkened by the excess of light in the aerial background. But in the inevitable progress of his imagination towards fuller detail, he ceased to see the figure with its back towards him. It began to advance, and a face became discernible; the words youth, beauty, refinement, Jewish birth, noble gravity, turned into hardly individual but typical form and colour: gathered from his memory of faces seen among the Jews of Holland and Bohemia, and from

the paintings which revived that memory. Reverently let it be said of this mature spiritual need that it was akin to the boy's and girl's picturing of the future beloved; but the stirrings of such young desire are feeble compared with the passionate current of an ideal life straining to embody itself, made intense by resistance to imminent dissolution. The visionary form became a companion and auditor; keeping a place not only in the waking imagination, but in those dreams of lighter slumber of which it is truest to say, "I sleep, but my heart is awake" — when the disturbing trivial story of yesterday is charged with the impassioned purpose of years.

Of late the urgency of irredeemable time, measured by the gradual choking of life, had turned Mordecai's trust into an agitated watch for the fulfilment that must be at hand. Was the bell on the verge of tolling, the sentence about to be executed? The deliverer's footstep must be near— the deliverer who was to rescue Mordecai's spiritual travail from oblivion, and give it an abiding place in the best heritage of his people. An insane exaggeration of his own value, even if his ideas had been as true and precious as those of Columbus or Newton, many would have counted this

yearning, taking it as the sublimer part for a man to say, "If not I, then another," and to hold cheap the meaning of his own life. But the fuller nature desires to be an agent, to create, and not merely to look on: strong love hungers to bless, and not merely to behold blessing. And while there is warmth enough in the sun to feed an energetic life, there will still be men to feel, "I am lord of this moment's change, and will charge it with my soul."

But with that mingling of inconsequence which belongs to us all, and not unhappily, since it saves us from many effects of mistake, Mordecai's confidence in the friend to come did not suffice to make him passive, and he tried expedients, pathetically humble, such as happened to be within his reach, for communicating something of himself. It was now two years since he had taken up his abode under Ezra Cohen's roof, where he was regarded with much goodwill as a compound of workman, dominie, vessel of charity, inspired idiot, man of piety, and (if he were inquired into) dangerous heretic. During that time little Jacob had advanced into knickerbockers, and into that quickness of apprehension which has been already made manifest in relation to hardware and exchange. He had also advanced in attachment to Mordecai,

regarding him as an inferior, but liking him none the worse, and taking his helpful cleverness as he might have taken the services of an enslaved Djinn. As for Mordecai, he had given Jacob his first lessons, and his habitual tenderness easily turned into the teacher's fatherhood. Though he was fully conscious of the spiritual distance between the parents and himself, and would never have attempted any communication to them from his peculiar world, the boy moved him with that idealising affection which merges the qualities of the individual child in the glory of childhood and the possibilities of a long future. And this feeling had drawn him on, at first without premeditation, and afterwards with conscious purpose, to a sort of outpouring in the ear of the boy which might have seemed wild enough to any excellent man of business who overheard it. But none overheard when Jacob went up to Mordecai's room on a day, for example, in which there was little work to be done, or at an hour when the work was ended, and after a brief lesson in English reading or in numeration, was induced to remain standing at his teacher's knees, or chose to jump astride them, often to the patient fatigue of the wasted limbs. The inducement was perhaps the mending of a toy, or some little mechanical

device in which Mordecai's well-practised finger-tips had an exceptional skill; and with the boy thus tethered, he would begin to repeat a Hebrew poem of his own, into which years before he had poured his first youthful ardours for that conception of a blended past and future which was the mistress of his soul, telling Jacob to say the words after him.

"The boy will get them engraved within him," thought Mordecai; "it is a way of printing."

None readier than Jacob at this fascinating game of imitating unintelligible words; and if no opposing diversion occurred, he would sometimes carry on his share in it as long as the teacher's breath would last out. For Mordecai threw into each repetition the fervour befitting a sacred occasion. In such instances, Jacob would show no other distraction than reaching out and surveying the contents of his pockets; or drawing down the skin of his cheeks to make his eyes look awful, and rolling his head to complete the effect; or alternately handling his own nose and Mordecai's as if to test the relation of their masses. Under all this the fervid reciter would not pause, satisfied if the young organs of speech would submit themselves. But most commonly a sudden impulse sent Jacob leaping away into some antic

or active amusement, when, instead of following the recitation, he would return upon the foregoing words most ready to his tongue, and mouth or gabble, with a see-saw suited to the action of his limbs, a verse on which Mordecai had spent some of his too scanty heart's blood. Yet he waited with such patience as a prophet needs, and began his strange printing again undiscouraged on the morrow, saying inwardly—

"My words may rule him some day. Their meaning may flash out on him. It is so with a nation—after many days."

Meanwhile Jacob's sense of power was increased and his time enlivened by a store of magical articulation with which he made the baby crow, or drove the large cat into a dark corner, or promised himself to frighten any incidental Christian of his own years. One week he had unfortunately seen a street mountebank, and this carried off his muscular imitativeness in sad divergence from New Hebrew poetry after the model of Jehuda ha-Levi. Mordecai had arrived at a fresh passage in his poem; for as soon as Jacob had got well used to one portion, he was led on to another, and a fresh combination of sounds generally answered better in keeping him fast for a few minutes. The consumptive voice, originally a strong high baritone,

with its variously mingling hoarseness, like a haze amidst illuminations, and its occasional incipient gasp, had more than the usual excitement, while it gave forth Hebrew verses with a meaning something like this :—

> " Away from me the garment of forgetfulness,
> Withering the heart ;
> The oil and wine from presses of the Goyim,
> Poisoned with scorn.
> Solitude is on the sides of Mount Nebo,
> In its heart a tomb :
> There the buried ark and golden cherubim
> Make hidden light :
> There the solemn faces gaze unchanged,
> The wings are spread unbroken :
> Shut beneath in silent awful speech
> The Law lies graven.
> Solitude and darkness are my covering,
> And my heart a tomb ;
> Smite and shatter it, O Gabriel !
> Shatter it as the clay of the founder
> Around the golden image."

In the absorbing enthusiasm with which Mordecai had intoned rather than spoken this last invocation, he was unconscious that Jacob had ceased to follow him and had started away from his knees; but pausing he saw, as by a sudden flash, that the lad had thrown himself on his hands with his feet in the air, mountebank fashion, and was picking up with his lips a bright farthing which was a favourite among his pocket

treasures. This might have been reckoned among the tricks Mordecai was used to, but at this moment it jarred him horribly, as if it had been a Satanic grin upon his prayer.

"Child! child!" he called out with a strange cry that startled Jacob to his feet, and then he sank backward with a shudder, closing his eyes.

"What?" said Jacob, quickly. Then, not getting an immediate answer, he pressed Mordecai's knees with a shaking movement, in order to rouse him. Mordecai opened his eyes with a fierce expression in them, leaned forward, grasped the little shoulders, and said in a quick, hoarse whisper—

"A curse is on your generation, child. They will open the mountain and drag forth the golden wings and coin them into money, and the solemn faces they will break up into ear-rings for wanton women! And they shall get themselves a new name, but the angel of ignominy, with the fiery braud, shall know them, and their heart shall be the tomb of dead desires that turn their life to rottenness."

The aspect and action of Mordecai were so new and mysterious to Jacob—they carried such a burthen of obscure threat—it was as if the patient, indulgent companion had turned into

something unknown and terrific: the sunken dark eyes and hoarse accents close to him, the thin grappling fingers, shook Jacob's little frame into awe, and while Mordecai was speaking he stood trembling with a sense that the house was tumbling in and they were not going to have dinner any more. But when the terrible speech had ended and the pinch was relaxed, the shock resolved itself into tears; Jacob lifted up his small patriarchal countenance and wept aloud. This sign of childish grief at once recalled Mordecai to his usual gentle self: he was not able to speak again at present, but with a maternal action he drew the curly head towards him and pressed it tenderly against his breast. On this Jacob, feeling the danger wellnigh over, howled at ease, beginning to imitate his own performance and improve upon it—a sort of transition from impulse into art often observable. Indeed, the next day he undertook to terrify Adelaide Rebekah in like manner, and succeeded very well.

But Mordecai suffered a check which lasted long, from the consciousness of a misapplied agitation; sane as well as excitable, he judged severely his moments of aberration into futile eagerness, and felt discredited with himself. All the more his mind was strained towards the dis-

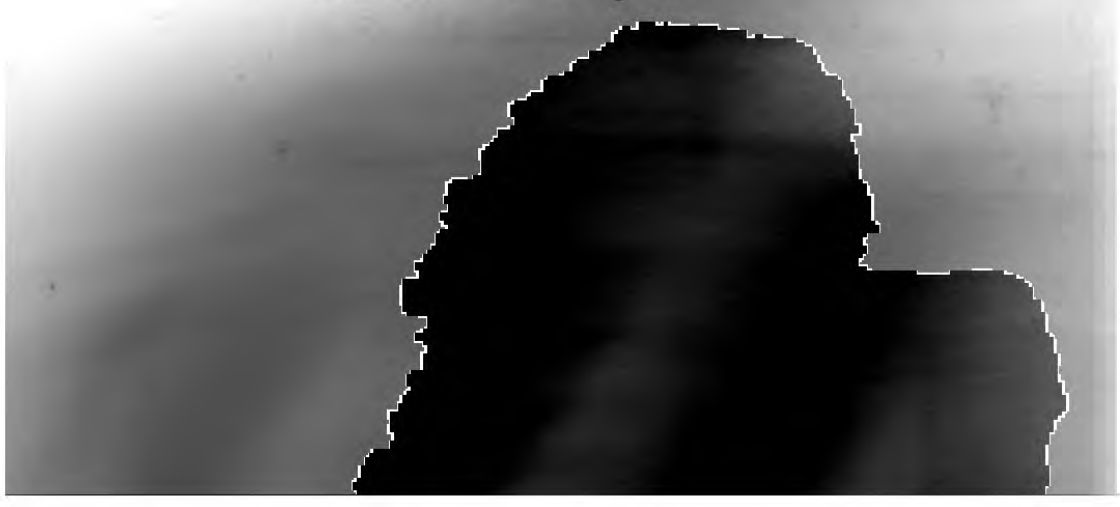
cernment of that friend to come, with whom he would have a calm certainty of fellowship and understanding.

It was just then that, in his usual mid-day guardianship of the old book-shop, he was struck by the appearance of Deronda, and it is perhaps comprehensible now why Mordecai's glance took on a sudden eager interest as he looked at the new-comer: he saw a face and frame which seemed to him to realise the long-conceived type. But the disclaimer of Jewish birth was for the moment a backward thrust of double severity, the particular disappointment tending to shake his confidence in the more indefinite expectation. Nevertheless, when he found Deronda seated at the Cohens' table, the disclaimer was for the moment nullified: the first impression returned with added force, seeming to be guaranteed by this second meeting under circumstances more peculiar than the former; and in asking Deronda if he knew Hebrew, Mordecai was so possessed by the new inrush of belief, that he had forgotten the absence of any other condition to the fulfilment of his hopes. But the answering "No" struck them all down again, and the frustration was more painful than before. After turning his back on the visitor that Sabbath evening, Mordecai went through days of

a deep discouragement, like that of men on a doomed ship who, having strained their eyes after a sail, and beheld it with rejoicing, behold it never advance, and say, "Our sick eyes make it." But the long-contemplated figure had come as an emotional sequence of Mordecai's firmest theoretic convictions; it had been wrought from the imagery of his most passionate life; and it inevitably reappeared—reappeared in a more specific self-asserting form than ever. Deronda had that sort of resemblance to the preconceived type which a finely individual bust or portrait has to the more generalised copy left in our minds after a long interval: we renew our memory with delight, but we hardly know with how much correction. And now, his face met Mordecai's inward gaze as if it had always belonged to the awaited friend, raying out, moreover, some of that influence which belongs to breathing flesh; till by-and-by it seemed that discouragement had turned into a new obstinacy of resistance, and the ever-recurrent vision had the force of an outward call to disregard counter-evidence, and keep expectation awake. It was Deronda now who was seen in the often painful night-watches, when we are all liable to be held with the clutch of a single thought—whose figure, never with its back turned, was seen in

moments of soothed reverie or soothed dozing, painted on that golden sky which was the doubly blessed symbol of advancing day and of approaching rest.

Mordecai knew that the nameless stranger was to come and redeem his ring; and, in spite of contrary chances, the wish to see him again was growing into a belief that he should see him. In the January weeks, he felt an increasing agitation of that subdued hidden quality which hinders nervous people from any steady occupation on the eve of an anticipated change. He could not go on with his printing of Hebrew on little Jacob's mind; or with his attendance at a weekly club, which was another effort of the same forlorn hope: something else was coming. The one thing he longed for was to get as far as the river, which he could do but seldom and with difficulty. He yearned with a poet's yearning for the wide sky, the far-reaching vista of bridges, the tender and fluctuating lights on the water which seems to breathe with a life that can shiver and mourn, be comforted and rejoice.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

" Vor den Wissenden sich stellen
Sicher ist's in allen Fällen!
Wenn du lange dich gequälet
Weiss er gleich wo dir es fehlet;
Auch auf Beifall darfst du hoffen,
Denn er weiss wo du's getroffen."
—GOETHE: *West-östlicher Divan.*

MOMENTOUS things happened to Deronda the very evening of that visit to the small house at Chelsea, when there was the discussion about Mirah's public name. But for the family group there, what appeared to be the chief sequence connected with it occurred two days afterwards. About four o'clock wheels paused before the door, and there came one of those knocks with an accompanying ring which serve to magnify the sense of social existence in a region where the most enlivening signals are usually those of the muffin-man. All the girls were at home, and the two rooms were thrown together to make space for Kate's drawing, as well as a great length of em-

broidery which had taken the place of the satin cushions — a sort of *pièce de résistance* in the courses of needlework, taken up by any clever fingers that happened to be at liberty. It stretched across the front room picturesquely enough, Mrs Meyrick bending over it at one corner, Mab in the middle, and Amy at the other end. Mirah, whose performances in point of sewing were on the makeshift level of the tailor-bird's, her education in that branch having been much neglected, was acting as reader to the party, seated on a camp-stool; in which position she also served Kate as model for a title-page vignette, symbolising a fair public absorbed in the successive volumes of the Family Tea-table. She was giving forth with charming distinctness the delightful Essay of Elia, *The Praise of Chimney-Sweeps*, and all were smiling over the "innocent blacknesses," when the imposing knock and ring called their thoughts to loftier spheres, and they looked up in wonderment.

"Dear me!" said Mrs Meyrick; "can it be Lady Mallinger? Is there a grand carriage, Amy?"

"No — only a hansom cab. It must be a gentleman."

"The Prime Minister, I should think," said

Kate, drily. "Hans says the greatest man in London may get into a hansom cab."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Mab. "Suppose it should be Lord Russell!"

The five bright faces were all looking amused when the old maid-servant bringing in a card distractedly left the parlour-door open, and there was seen bowing towards Mrs Meyrick a figure quite unlike that of the respected Premier—tall and physically impressive even in his kid and kerseymere, with massive face, flamboyant hair, and gold spectacles: in fact, as Mrs Meyrick saw from the card, *Julius Klesmer*.

Even embarrassment could hardly have made the "little mother" awkward, but quick in her perceptions she was at once aware of the situation, and felt well satisfied that the great personage had come to Mirah instead of requiring her to come to him; taking it as a sign of active interest. But when he entered, the rooms shrank into closets, the cottage piano, Mab thought, seemed a ridiculous toy, and the entire family existence as petty and private as an establishment of mice in the Tuileries. Klesmer's personality, especially his way of glancing round him, immediately suggested vast areas and a multitudinous audience, and probably they made the usual scenery of his

consciousness, for we all of us carry on our thinking in some habitual *locus* where there is a presence of other souls, and those who take in a larger sweep than their neighbours are apt to seem mightily vain and affected. Klesmer was vain, but not more so than many contemporaries of heavy aspect, whose vanity leaps out and startles one like a spear out of a walking-stick; as to his carriage and gestures, these were as natural to him as the length of his fingers; and the rankest affectation he could have shown would have been to look diffident and demure. While his grandiose air was making Mab feel herself a ridiculous toy to match the cottage piano, he was taking in the details around him with a keen and thoroughly kind sensibility. He remembered a home no larger than this on the outskirts of Bohemia; and in the figurative Bohemia too he had had large acquaintance with the variety and romance which belong to small incomes. He addressed Mrs Meyrick with the utmost deference.

"I hope I have not taken too great a freedom. Being in the neighbourhood, I ventured to save time by calling. Our friend Mr Deronda mentioned to me an understanding that I was to have the honour of becoming acquainted with a young lady here—Miss Lapidoth."

Klesmer had really discerned Mirah in the first moment of entering, but with subtle politeness he looked round bowingly at the three sisters as if he were uncertain which was the young lady in question.

"Those are my daughters: this is Miss Lapidoth," said Mrs Meyrick, waving her hand towards Mirah.

"Ah," said Klesmer, in a tone of gratified expectation, turning a radiant smile and deep bow to Mirah, who, instead of being in the least taken by surprise, had a calm pleasure in her face. She liked the look of Klesmer, feeling sure that he would scold her, like a great musician and a kind man.

"You will not object to beginning our acquaintance by singing to me," he added, aware that they would all be relieved by getting rid of preliminaries.

"I shall be very glad. It is good of you to be willing to listen to me," said Mirah, moving to the piano. "Shall I accompany myself?"

"By all means," said Klesmer, seating himself, at Mrs Meyrick's invitation, where he could have a good view of the singer. The acute little mother would not have acknowledged the weakness, but she really said to herself, "He will like her singing better if he sees her."

All the feminine hearts except Mirah's were beating fast with anxiety, thinking Klesmer terrific as he sat with his listening frown on, and only daring to look at him furtively. If he did say anything severe it would be so hard for them all. They could only comfort themselves with thinking that Prince Camaralzaman, who had heard the finest things, preferred Mirah's singing to any other:—also she appeared to be doing her very best, as if she were more instead of less at ease than usual.

The song she had chosen was a fine setting of some words selected from Leopardi's grand Ode to Italy:—

"O patria mia, vedo le mura e gli archi
E le colonne e i simulacri e l'erme
Torri degli avi nostri"—

This was recitative: then followed—

"Ma la gloria non vedo"—

a mournful melody, a rhythmic plaint. After this came a climax of devout triumph—passing from the subdued adoration of a happy Andante in the words—

"Beatissimi voi,
Che offriste il petto alle nemiche lance
Per amor di costei che al sol vi diede"—

to the joyous outburst of an exultant Allegro in—

"Oh viva, oh viva:
Beatissimi voi
Mentre nel mondo si favelli o scriva."

When she had ended, Klesmer said after a moment—

"That is old Leo's music."

"Yes, he was my last master—at Vienna: so fierce and so good," said Mirah, with a melancholy smile. "He prophesied that my voice would not do for the stage. And he was right."

"*Con*tinue, if you please," said Klesmer, putting out his lips and shaking his long fingers, while he went on with a smothered articulation quite unintelligible to the audience.

The three girls detested him unanimously for not saying one word of praise. Mrs Meyrick was a little alarmed.

Mirah, simply bent on doing what Klesmer desired, and imagining that he would now like to hear her sing some German, went through Prince Radzivill's music to Gretchen's songs in the Faust, one after the other, without any interrogatory pause. When she had finished he rose and walked to the extremity of the small space at command, then walked back to the piano, where Mirah had risen from her seat and stood looking towards him

with her little hands crossed before her, meekly awaiting judgment; then with a sudden unknitting of his brow and with beaming eyes, he put out his hand and said abruptly, "Let us shake hands: you are a musician."

Mab felt herself beginning to cry, and all the three girls held Klesmer adorable. Mrs Meyrick took a long breath.

But straightway the frown came again, the long hand, back uppermost, was stretched out in quite a different sense to touch with finger-tip the back of Mirah's, and with protruded lip he said—

"Not for great tasks. No high roofs. We are no skylarks. We must be modest." Klesmer paused here. And Mab ceased to think him adorable: 'as if Mirah had shown the least sign of conceit!'

Mirah was silent, knowing that there was a specific opinion to be waited for, and Klesmer presently went on—

"I would not advise—I would not further your singing in any larger space than a private drawing-room. But you will do there. And here in London that is one of the best careers open. Lessons will follow. Will you come and sing at a private concert at my house on Wednesday?"

"Oh, I shall be grateful," said Mirah, putting

her hands together devoutly. "I would rather get my bread in that way than by anything more public. I will try to improve. What should I work at most?"

Klesmer made a preliminary answer in noises which sounded like words bitten in two and swallowed before they were half out, shaking his fingers the while, before he said, quite distinctly, "I shall introduce you to Astorga: he is the foster-father of good singing and will give you advice." Then addressing Mrs Meyrick, he added, "Mrs Klesmer will call before Wednesday, with your permission.

"We shall feel that to be a great kindness," said Mrs Meyrick.

"You will sing to her," said Klesmer, turning again to Mirah. "She is a thorough musician, and has a soul with more ears to it than you will often get in a musician. Your singing will satisfy her:—

'Vor den Wissenden sich stellen'—

You know the rest?"

"'Sicher ist's in allen Fällen,'"

said Mirah, promptly. And Klesmer saying, "Schön!" put out his hand again as a good-bye.

He had certainly chosen the most delicate way of praising Mirah, and the Meyrick girls had now

given him all their esteem. But imagine Mab's feeling when, suddenly fixing his eyes on her, he said decisively, "That young lady is musical, I see!" She was a mere blush and sense of scorching.

"Yes," said Mirah on her behalf. "And she has a touch."

"Oh please, Mirah—a scramble, not a touch," said Mab, in anguish, with a horrible fear of what the next thing might be: this dreadfully divining personage—evidently Satan in grey trousers—might order her to sit down to the piano, and her heart was like molten wax in the midst of her. But this was cheap payment for her amazed joy when Klesmer said benignantly, turning to Mrs Meyrick, "Will she like to accompany Miss Lapidoth and hear the music on Wednesday?"

"There could hardly be a greater pleasure for her," said Mrs Meyrick. "She will be most glad and grateful."

Thereupon Klesmer bowed round to the three sisters more grandly than they had ever been bowed to before. Altogether it was an amusing picture—the little room with so much of its diagonal taken up in Klesmer's magnificent bend to the small feminine figures like images a little less than life-size, the grave Holbein faces on the

walls, as many as were not otherwise occupied, looking hard at this stranger who by his face seemed a dignified contemporary of their own, but whose garments seemed a deplorable mockery of the human form.

Mrs Meyrick could not help going out of the room with Klesmer and closing the door behind her. He understood her and said with a frowning nod—

"She will do: if she doesn't attempt too much and her voice holds out, she can make an income. I know that is the great point: Deronda told me. You are taking care of her. She looks like a good girl."

"She is an angel," said the warm-hearted woman.

"No," said Klesmer, with a playful nod; "she is a pretty Jewess: the angels must not get the credit of her. But I think she has found a guardian angel," he ended, bowing himself out in this amiable way.

The four young creatures had looked at each other mutely till the door banged and Mrs Meyrick re-entered. Then there was an explosion. Mab clapped her hands and danced everywhere inconveniently; Mrs Meyrick kissed Mirah and blessed her; Amy said emphatically, "We can

never get her a new dress before Wednesday!" and Kate exclaimed, "Thank heaven my table is not knocked over!"

Mirah had reseated herself on the music-stool without speaking, and the tears were rolling down her cheeks as she looked at her friends.

"Now, now, Mab!" said Mrs Meyrick; "come and sit down reasonably and let us talk."

"Yes, let us talk," said Mab, cordially, coming back to her low seat and caressing her knees. "I am beginning to feel large again. Hans said he was coming this afternoon. I wish he had been here—only there would have been no room for him. Mirah, what are you looking sad for?"

"I am too happy," said Mirah. "I feel so full of gratitude to you all; and he was so very kind."

"Yes, at last," said Mab, sharply. "But he might have said something encouraging sooner. I thought him dreadfully ugly when he sat frowning, and only said, '*Con*tinue.' I hated him all the long way from the top of his hair to the toe of his polished boot."

"Nonsense, Mab; he has a splendid profile," said Kate.

"*Now*, but not *then*. I cannot bear people to keep their minds bottled up for the sake of letting them off with a pop. They seem to grudge

making you happy unless they can make you miserable beforehand. However, I forgive him everything," said Mab, with a magnanimous air, "because he has invited me. I wonder why he fixed on me as the musical one? Was it because I have a bulging forehead, ma, and peep from under it like a newt from under a stone?"

"It was your way of listening to the singing, child," said Mrs Meyrick. "He has magic spectacles and sees everything through them, depend upon it. But what was that German quotation you were so ready with, Mirah—you learned puss?"

"Oh, that was not learning," said Mirah, her tearful face breaking into an amused smile. "I said it so many times for a lesson. It means that it is safer to do anything—singing or anything else—before those who know and understand all about it."

"That was why you were not one bit frightened, I suppose," said Amy. "But now, what we have to talk about is a dress for you on Wednesday."

"I don't want anything better than this black merino," said Mirah, rising to show the effect. "Some white gloves and some new *bottines*." She put out her little foot, clad in the famous felt slipper.

"There comes Hans," said Mrs Meyrick. "Stand still, and let us hear what he says about the dress. Artists are the best people to consult about such things."

"You don't consult me, ma," said Kate, lifting up her eyebrow with a playful complainingness. "I notice mothers are like the people I deal with —the girls' doings are always priced low."

"My dear child, the boys are such a trouble— we could never put up with them, if we didn't make believe they were worth more," said Mrs Meyrick, just as her boy entered. "Hans, we want your opinion about Mirah's dress. A great event has happened. Klesmer has been here, and she is going to sing at his house on Wednesday among grand people. She thinks this dress will do."

"Let me see," said Hans. Mirah in her child-like way turned towards him to be looked at; and he, going to a little further distance, knelt with one knee on a hassock to survey her.

"This would be thought a very good stage-dress for me," she said, pleadingly, "in a part where I was to come on as a poor Jewess and sing to fashionable Christians."

"It would be effective," said Hans, with a con-

sidering air; "it would stand out well among the fashionable *chiffons*."

"But you ought not to claim all the poverty on your side, Mirah," said Amy. "There are plenty of poor Christians and dreadfully rich Jews and fashionable Jewesses."

"I didn't mean any harm," said Mirah. "Only I have been used to thinking about my dress for parts in plays. And I almost always had a part with a plain dress."

"That makes me think it questionable," said Hans, who had suddenly become as fastidious and conventional on this occasion as he had thought Deronda was, apropos of the Berenice-pictures. "It looks a little too theatrical. We must not make you a *rôle* of the poor Jewess—or of being a Jewess at all." Hans had a secret desire to neutralise the Jewess in private life, which he was in danger of not keeping secret.

"But it is what I am really. I am not pretending anything. I shall never be anything else," said Mirah. "I always feel myself a Jewess."

"But we can't feel that about you," said Hans, with a devout look. "What does it signify whether a perfect woman is a Jewess or not?"

"That is your kind way of praising me; I never was praised so before," said Mirah, with a smile, which was rather maddening to Hans and made him feel still more of a cosmopolitan.

"People don't think of me as a British Christian," he said, his face creasing merrily. "They think of me as an imperfectly handsome young man and an unpromising painter."

"But you are wandering from the dress," said Amy. "If that will not do, how are we to get another before Wednesday? and to-morrow Sunday?"

"Indeed this will do," said Mirah, entreatingly. "It is all real, you know," here she looked at Hans — "even if it seemed theatrical. Poor Berenice sitting on the ruins—any one might say that was theatrical, but I know that is just what she would do."

"I am a scoundrel," said Hans, overcome by this misplaced trust. "That is my invention. Nobody knows that she did that. Shall you forgive me for not saying so before?"

"Oh yes," said Mirah, after a momentary pause of surprise. "You knew it was what she would be sure to do—a Jewess who had not been faithful—who had done what she did and was penitent. She could have no joy but to afflict herself;

and where else would she go? I think it is very beautiful that you should enter so into what a Jewess would feel."

"The Jewesses of that time sat on ruins," said Hans, starting up with a sense of being checkmated. "That makes them convenient for pictures."

"But the dress—the dress," said Amy; "is it settled?"

"Yes; is it not?" said Mirah, looking doubtfully at Mrs Meyrick, who in her turn looked up at her son, and said, "What do you think, Hans?"

"That dress will not do," said Hans, decisively. "She is not going to sit on ruins. You must jump into a cab with her, little mother, and go to Regent Street. It's plenty of time to get anything you like—a black silk dress such as ladies wear. She must not be taken for an object of charity. She has talents to make people indebted to her."

"I think it is what Mr Deronda would like—for her to have a handsome dress," said Mrs Meyrick, deliberating.

"Of course it is," said Hans, with some sharpness. "You may take my word for what a gentleman would feel."

"I wish to do what Mr Deronda would like me to do," said Mirah, gravely, seeing that Mrs Meyrick looked towards her; and Hans, turning on his heel, went to Kate's table and took up one of her drawings as if his interest needed a new direction.

"Shouldn't you like to make a study of Klesmer's head, Hans?" said Kate. "I suppose you have often seen him?"

"Seen him!" exclaimed Hans, immediately throwing back his head and mane, seating himself at the piano and looking round him as if he were surveying an amphitheatre, while he held his fingers down perpendicularly towards the keys. But then in another instant he wheeled round on the stool, looked at Mirah and said, half timidly—"Perhaps you don't like this mimicry; you must always stop my nonsense when you don't like it."

Mirah had been smiling at the swiftly-made image, and she smiled still, but with a touch of something else than amusement, as she said—"Thank you. But you have never done anything I did not like. I hardly think he could, belonging to you," she added, looking at Mrs Meyrick.

In this way Hans got food for his hope. How could the rose help it when several bees in succession took its sweet odour as a sign of personal attachment?

CHAPTER XL.

"Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal, that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness, as the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even,
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene."

—WORDSWORTH: *Excursion*, B. IV.

DERONDA came out of the narrow house at Chelsea in a frame of mind that made him long for some good bodily exercise to carry off what he was himself inclined to call the fumes of his temper. He was going towards the city, and the sight of the Chelsea Stairs with the waiting boats at once determined him to avoid the irritating inaction of being driven in a cab, by calling a wherry and taking an oar.

His errand was to go to Ram's book-shop, where

he had yesterday arrived too late for Mordecai's mid-day watch, and had been told that he invariably came there again between five and six. Some further acquaintance with this remarkable inmate of the Cohens was particularly desired by Deronda as a preliminary to redeeming his ring: he wished that their conversation should not again end speedily with that drop of Mordecai's interest which was like the removal of a drawbridge, and threatened to shut out any easy communication in future. As he got warmed with the use of the oar, fixing his mind on the errand before him and the ends he wanted to achieve on Mirah's account, he experienced, as was wont with him, a quick change of mental light, shifting his point of view to that of the person whom he had been thinking of hitherto chiefly as serviceable to his own purposes, and was inclined to taunt himself with being not much better than an enlisting sergeant, who never troubles himself with the drama that brings him the needful recruits.

"I suppose if I got from this man the information I am most anxious about," thought Deronda, "I should be contented enough if he felt no disposition to tell me more of himself, or why he seemed to have some expectation from me which was disappointed. The sort of curiosity he stirs

would die out; and yet it might be that he had neared and parted as one can imagine two ships doing, each freighted with an exile who would have recognised the other if the two could have looked out face to face. Not that there is any likelihood of a peculiar tie between me and this poor fellow, whose voyage, I fancy, must soon be over. But I wonder whether there is much of that momentous mutual missing between people who interchange blank looks, or even long for one another's absence in a crowded place. However, one makes one's self chances of missing by going on the recruiting-sergeant's plan."

When the wherry was approaching Blackfriars Bridge, where Deronda meant to land, it was half-past four, and the grey day was dying gloriously, its western clouds all broken into narrowing purple strata before a wide-spreading saffron clearness, which in the sky had a monumental calm, but on the river, with its changing objects, was reflected as a luminous movement, the alternate flash of ripples or currents, the sudden glow of the brown sail, the passage of laden barges from blackness into colour, making an active response to that brooding glory.

Feeling well heated by this time, Deronda gave up the oar and drew over him again his Inverness

cape. As he lifted up his head while fastening the topmost button, his eyes caught a well-remembered face looking towards him over the parapet of the bridge—brought out by the western light into startling distinctness and brilliancy—an illuminated type of bodily emaciation and spiritual eagerness. It was the face of Mordecai, who also, in his watch towards the west, had caught sight of the advancing boat, and had kept it fast within his gaze, at first simply because it was advancing, then with a recovery of impressions that made him quiver as with a presentiment, till at last the nearing figure lifted up its face towards him—the face of his visions—and then immediately, with white uplifted hand, beckoned again and again.

For Deronda, anxious that Mordecai should recognise and await him, had lost no time before signalling, and the answer came straightway. Mordecai lifted his cap and waved it—feeling in that moment that his inward prophecy was fulfilled. Obstacles, incongruities, all melted into the sense of completion with which his soul was flooded by this outward satisfaction of his longing. His exultation was not widely different from that of the experimenter, bending over the first stirrings of change that correspond to what in the fervour of concentrated prevision his thought has

foreshadowed. The prefigured friend had come from the golden background, and had signalled to him: this actually was: the rest was to be.

In three minutes Deronda had landed, had paid his boatman, and was joining Mordecai, whose instinct it was to stand perfectly still and wait for him.

"I was very glad to see you standing here," said Deronda, "for I was intending to go on to the book-shop and look for you again. I was there yesterday—perhaps they mentioned it to you?"

"Yes," said Mordecai; "that was the reason I came to the bridge."

This answer, made with simple gravity, was startlingly mysterious to Deronda. Were the peculiarities of this man really associated with any sort of mental alienation, according to Cohen's hint?

"You knew nothing of my being at Chelsea?" he said after a moment.

"No: but I expected you to come down the river I have been waiting for you these five years." Mordecai's deep-sunk eyes were fixed on those of the friend who had at last arrived, with a look of affectionate dependence, at once pathetic and solemn. Deronda's sensitiveness was not the less responsive because he could not but believe

that this strangely-disclosed relation was founded on an illusion.

"It will be a satisfaction to me if I can be of any real use to you," he answered very earnestly. "Shall we get into a cab and drive to—wherever you wish to go? You have probably had walking enough with your short breath."

"Let us go to the book-shop. It will soon be time for me to be there. But now look up the river," said Mordecai, turning again towards it and speaking in undertones of what may be called an excited calm—so absorbed by a sense of fulfilment that he was conscious of no barrier to a complete understanding between him and Deronda. "See the sky, how it is slowly fading. I have always loved this bridge: I stood on it when I was a little boy. It is a meeting-place for the spiritual messengers. It is true—what the Masters said—that each order of things has its angel: that means the full message of each from what is afar. Here I have listened to the messages of earth and sky; when I was stronger I used to stay and watch for the stars in the deep heavens. But this time just about sunset was always what I loved best. It has sunk into me and dwelt with me—fading, slowly fading: it was my own decline: it paused—it waited, till at last it

brought me my new life—my new self—who will live when this breath is all breathed out."

Deronda did not speak. He felt himself strangely wrought upon. The first-prompted suspicion that Mordecai might be liable to hallucinations of thought—might have become a monomaniac on some subject which had given too severe a strain to his diseased organism—gave way to a more submissive expectancy. His nature was too large, too ready to conceive regions beyond his own experience, to rest at once in the easy explanation, "madness," whenever a consciousness showed some fulness and conviction where his own was blank. It accorded with his habitual disposition that he should meet rather than resist any claim on him in the shape of another's need; and this claim brought with it a sense of solemnity which seemed a radiation from Mordecai, as utterly nullifying his outward poverty and lifting him into authority as if he had been that preternatural guide seen in the universal legend, who suddenly drops his mean disguise and stands a manifest Power. That impression was the more sanctioned by a sort of resolved quietude which the persuasion of fulfilment had produced in Mordecai's manner. After they had stood a moment in silence he said, "Let us go now;" and

when they were walking he added, "We will get down at the end of the street and walk to the shop. You can look at the books, and Mr Ram will be going away directly and leave us alone."

It seemed that this enthusiast was just as cautious, just as much alive to judgments in other minds as if he had been that antipole of all enthusiasm called "a man of the world."

While they were rattling along in the cab, Mirah was still present with Deronda in the midst of this strange experience, but he foresaw that the course of conversation would be determined by Mordecai, not by himself: he was no longer confident what questions he should be able to ask; and with a reaction on his own mood, he inwardly said, "I suppose I am in a state of complete superstition, just as if I were awaiting the destiny that could interpret the oracle. But some strong relation there must be between me and this man, since he feels it strongly. Great heaven! what relation has proved itself more potent in the world than faith even when mistaken—than expectation even when perpetually disappointed? Is my side of the relation to be disappointing or fulfilling?—well, if it is ever possible for me to fulfil, I will not disappoint."

In ten minutes the two men, with as intense a consciousness as if they had been two undeclared lovers, felt themselves alone in the small gas-lit book-shop and turned face to face, each baring his head from an instinctive feeling that they wished to see each other fully. Mordecai came forward to lean his back against the little counter, while Deronda stood against the opposite wall hardly more than four feet off. I wish I could perpetuate those two faces, as Titian's "Tribute Money" has perpetuated two types presenting another sort of contrast. Imagine—we all of us can—the pathetic stamp of consumption with its brilliancy of glance to which the sharply-defined structure of features, reminding one of a forsaken temple, give already a far-off look as of one getting unwillingly out of reach; and imagine it on a Jewish face naturally accentuated for the expression of an eager mind—the face of a man little above thirty, but with that age upon it which belongs to time lengthened by suffering, the hair and beard still black throwing out the yellow pallor of the skin, the difficult breathing giving more decided marking to the mobile nostril, the wasted yellow hands conspicuous on the folded arms: then give to the yearning consumptive glance something of the slowly dying mother's

look when her one loved son visits her bedside, and the flickering power of gladness leaps out as she says, "My boy!"—for the sense of spiritual perpetuation in another resembles that maternal transference of self.

Seeing such a portrait you would see Mordecai. And opposite to him was a face not more distinctively oriental than many a type seen among what we call the Latin races: rich in youthful health, and with a forcible masculine gravity in its repose, that gave the value of judgment to the reverence with which he met the gaze of this mysterious son of poverty who claimed him as a long-expected friend. The more exquisite quality of Deronda's nature—that keenly perceptive sympathetic emotiveness which ran along with his speculative tendency—was never more thoroughly tested. He felt nothing that could be called belief in the validity of Mordecai's impressions concerning him or in the probability of any greatly effective issue: what he felt was a profound sensibility to a cry from the depths of another soul; and accompanying that, the summons to be receptive instead of superciliously prejudging. Receptiveness is a rare and massive power, like fortitude; and this state of mind now gave Deronda's face its utmost expression of

calm benignant force—an expression which nourished Mordecai's confidence and made an open way before him. He began to speak.

"You cannot know what has guided me to you and brought us together at this moment. You are wondering."

"I am not impatient," said Deronda. "I am ready to listen to whatever you may wish to disclose."

"You see some of the reasons why I needed you," said Mordecai, speaking quietly, as if he wished to reserve his strength. "You see that I am dying. You see that I am as one shut up behind bars by the wayside, who if he spoke to any would be met only by head-shaking and pity. The day is closing—the light is fading—soon we should not have been able to discern each other. But you have come in time."

"I rejoice that I am come in time," said Deronda, feelingly. He would not say, "I hope you are not mistaken in me,"—the very word "mistaken," he thought, would be a cruelty at that moment.

"But the hidden reasons why I need you began afar off," said Mordecai; "began in my early years when I was studying in another land. Then ideas, beloved ideas, came to me,

because I was a Jew. They were a trust to fulfil, because I was a Jew. They were an inspiration, because I was a Jew, and felt the heart of my race beating within me. They were my life; I was not fully born till then. I counted this heart, and this breath, and this right hand" —Mordecai had pathetically pressed his hand against his breast, and then stretched its wasted fingers out before him—"I counted my sleep and my waking, and the work I fed my body with, and the sights that fed my eyes—I counted them but as fuel to the divine flame. But I had done as one who wanders and engraves his thought in rocky solitudes, and before I could change my course came care and labour and disease, and blocked the way before me, and bound me with the iron that eats itself into the soul. Then I said, 'How shall I save the life within me from being stifled with this stifled breath?'"

Mordecai paused to rest that poor breath which had been taxed by the rising excitement of his speech. And also he wished to check that excitement. Deronda dared not speak: the very silence in the narrow space seemed alive with mingled awe and compassion before this struggling fervour. And presently Mordecai went on—

"But you may misunderstand me. I speak

not as an ignorant dreamer—as one bred up in the inland valleys, thinking ancient thoughts anew and not knowing them ancient, never having stood by the great waters where the world's knowledge passes to and fro. English is my mother-tongue, England is the native land of this body, which is but as a breaking pot of earth around the fruit-bearing tree, whose seed might make the desert rejoice. But my true life was nourished in Holland, at the feet of my mother's brother, a Rabbi skilled in special learning; and when he died I went to Hamburg to study, and afterwards to Göttingen, that I might take a larger outlook on my people, and on the Gentile world, and drink knowledge at all sources. I was a youth; I felt free; I saw our chief seats in Germany; I was not then in utter poverty. And I had possessed myself of a handicraft. For I said, I care not if my lot be as that of Joshua ben Chananja: after the last destruction he earned his bread by making needles, but in his youth he had been a singer on the steps of the Temple, and had a memory of what was, before the glory departed. I said, let my body dwell in poverty, and my hands be as the hands of the toiler; but let my soul be as a temple of remembrance where the treasures of knowledge enter and the inner

sanctuary is hope. I knew what I chose. They said, 'He feeds himself on visions,' and I denied not; for visions are the creators and feeders of the world. I see, I measure the world as it is, which the vision will create anew. You are not listening to one who raves aloof from the lives of his fellows."

Mordecai paused, and Deronda, feeling that the pause was expectant, said, "Do me the justice to believe that I was not inclined to call your words raving. I listen that I may know, without prejudgment. I have had experience which gives me a keen interest in the story of a spiritual destiny embraced willingly, and embraced in youth."

"A spiritual destiny embraced willingly—in youth?" Mordecai repeated in a corrective tone. "It was the soul fully born within me, and it came in my boyhood. It brought its own world—a mediæval world, where there were men who made the ancient language live again in new psalms of exile. They had absorbed the philosophy of the Gentile into the faith of the Jew, and they still yearned toward a centre for our race. One of their souls was born again within me, and awaked amid the memories of their world. It travelled into Spain and Provence; it debated

with Aben-Ezra; it took ship with Jehuda ha-Levi; it heard the roar of the Crusaders and the shrieks of tortured Israel. And when its dumb tongue was loosed, it spoke the speech they had made alive with the new blood of their ardour, their sorrow, and their martyred trust: it sang with the cadence of their strain."

Mordecai paused again, and then said in a loud, hoarse whisper—

"While it is imprisoned in me, it will never learn another."

"Have you written entirely in Hebrew, then?" said Deronda, remembering with some anxiety the former question as to his own knowledge of that tongue.

"Yes—yes," said Mordecai, in a tone of deep sadness; "in my youth I wandered toward that solitude, not feeling that it was a solitude. I had the ranks of the great dead around me; the martyrs gathered and listened. But soon I found that the living were deaf to me. At first I saw my life spread as a long future: I said, part of my Jewish heritage is an unbreaking patience; part is skill to seek divers methods and find a rooting-place where the planters despair. But there came new messengers from the Eternal. I had to bow under the yoke that presses on the great multitude born

of woman: family troubles called me—I had to work, to care, not for myself alone. I was left solitary again; but already the angel of death had turned to me and beckoned, and I felt his skirts continually on my path. I loosed not my effort. I besought hearing and help. I spoke; I went to men of our people—to the rich in influence or knowledge, to the rich in other wealth. But I found none to listen with understanding. I was rebuked for error; I was offered a small sum in charity. No wonder. I looked poor; I carried a bundle of Hebrew manuscript with me; I said, our chief teachers are misleading the hope of our race. Scholar and merchant were both too busy to listen. Scorn stood as interpreter between me and them. One said, 'The Book of Mormon would never have answered in Hebrew; and if you mean to address our learned men, it is not likely you can teach them anything.' He touched a truth there."

The last words had a perceptible irony in their hoarsened tone.

"But though you had accustomed yourself to write in Hebrew, few, surely, can use English better," said Deronda, wanting to hint consolation in a new effort for which he could smooth the way.

Mordecai shook his head slowly, and answered,

"Too late—too late. I can write no more. My writing would be like this gasping breath. But the breath may wake the fount of pity — the writing not. If I could write now and used English, I should be as one who beats a board to summon those who have been used to no signal but a bell. My soul has an ear to hear the faults of its own speech. New writing of mine would be like this body"—Mordecai spread his arms—"within it there might be the Ruach-ha-kodesh—the breath of divine thought—but men would smile at it and say, 'A poor Jew!'—and the chief smilers would be of my own people."

Mordecai let his hands fall, and his head sink in melancholy: for the moment he had lost hold of his hope. Despondency, conjured up by his own words, had floated in and hovered above him with eclipsing wings. He had sunk into momentary darkness.

"I feel with you—I feel strongly with you," said Deronda, in a clear deep voice which was itself a cordial, apart from the words of sympathy. "But—forgive me if I speak hastily—for what you have actually written there need be no utter burial. The means of publication are within reach. If you will rely on me, I can assure you of all that is necessary to that end."

"That is not enough," said Mordecai, quickly, looking up again with the flash of recovered memory and confidence. "That is not all my trust in you. You must be not only a hand to me, but a soul—believing my belief—being moved by my reasons—hoping my hope—seeing the vision I point to — beholding a glory where I behold it!"—Mordecai had taken a step nearer as he spoke, and now laid his hand on Deronda's arm with a tight grasp; his face little more than a foot off had something like a pale flame in it—an intensity of reliance that acted as a peremptory claim, while he went on—"You will be my life: it will be planted afresh; it will grow. You shall take the inheritance; it has been gathering for ages. The generations are crowding on my narrow life as a bridge: what has been and what is to be are meeting there; and the bridge is breaking. But I have found you. You have come in time. You will take the inheritance which the base son refuses because of the tombs which the plough and harrow may not pass over or the gold-seeker disturb: you will take the sacred inheritance of the Jew."

Deronda had become as pallid as Mordecai. Quick as an alarm of flood or fire, there spread within him not only a compassionate dread of

discouraging this fellow-man who urged a prayer as of one in the last agony, but also the opposing dread of fatally feeding an illusion, and being hurried on to a self-committal which might turn into a falsity. The peculiar appeal to his tenderness overcame the repulsion that most of us experience under a grasp and speech which assume to dominate. The difficulty to him was to inflict the accents of hesitation and doubt on this ardent suffering creature, who was crowding too much of his brief being into a moment of perhaps extravagant trust. With exquisite instinct, Deronda, before he opened his lips, placed his palm gently on Mordecai's straining hand—an act just then equal to many speeches. And after that he said, without haste, as if conscious that he might be wrong—

"Do you forget what I told you when we first saw each other? Do you remember that I said I was not of your race?"

"It can't be true," Mordecai whispered immediately, with no sign of shock. The sympathetic hand still upon him had fortified the feeling which was stronger than those words of denial. There was a perceptible pause, Deronda feeling it impossible to answer, conscious indeed that the assertion, "It can't be true"—had the pressure of

argument for him. Mordecai, too entirely possessed by the supreme importance of the relation between himself and Deronda to have any other care in his speech, followed up that assertion by a second, which came to his lips as a mere sequence of his long-cherished conviction—

"You are not sure of your own origin."

"How do you know that?" said Daniel, with an habitual shrinking which made him remove his hand from Mordecai's, who also relaxed his hold, and fell back into his former leaning position.

"I know it—I know it; what is my life else?" said Mordecai, with a low cry of impatience. "Tell me everything: tell me why you deny."

He could have no conception what that demand was to the hearer—how probingly it touched the hidden sensibility, the vividly conscious reticence of years; how the uncertainty he was insisting on as part of his own hope had always for Daniel been a threatening possibility of painful revelation about his mother. But the moment had influences which were not only new but solemn to Deronda: any evasion here might turn out to be a hateful refusal of some task that belonged to him, some act of due fellowship; in any case it would be a cruel rebuff to a being who was ap-

pealing to him as a forlorn hope under the shadow of a coming doom. After a few moments, he said, with a great effort over himself—determined to tell all the truth briefly—

"I have never known my mother. I have no knowledge about her. I have never called any man father. But I am convinced that my father is an Englishman."

Deronda's deep tones had a tremor in them as he uttered this confession; and all the while there was an under-current of amazement in him at the strange circumstances under which he uttered it. It seemed as if Mordecai were hardly overrating his own power to determine the action of the friend whom he had mysteriously chosen.

"It will be seen—it will be declared," said Mordecai, triumphantly. "The world grows, and its frame is knit together by the growing soul; dim, dim at first, then clearer and more clear, the consciousness discerns remote stirrings. As thoughts move within us darkly, and shake us before they are fully discerned—so events—so beings: they are knit with us in the growth of the world. You have risen within me like a thought not fully spelled: my soul is shaken before the words are all there. The rest will come—it will come."

"We must not lose sight of the fact that the outward event has not always been a fulfilment of the firmest faith," said Deronda, in a tone that was made hesitating by the painfully conflicting desires, not to give any severe blow to Mordecai, and not to give his confidence a sanction which might have the severest of blows in reserve.

Mordecai's face, which had been illuminated to the utmost in that last declaration of his confidence, changed under Deronda's words, but not into any show of collapsed trust: the force did not disappear from the expression, but passed from the triumphant into the firmly resistant.

"You would remind me that I may be under an illusion—that the history of our people's trust has been full of illusion. I face it all." Here Mordecai paused a moment. Then bending his head a little forward, he said, in his hoarse whisper, "*So it might be with my trust, if you would make it an illusion. But you will not.*"

The very sharpness with which these words penetrated Deronda, made him feel the more that here was a crisis in which he must be firm.

"What my birth was does not lie in my will," he answered. "My sense of claims on me cannot be independent of my knowledge there. And I cannot promise you that I will try to hasten a disclosure.

Feelings which have struck root through half my life may still hinder me from doing what I have never yet been able to do. Everything must be waited for. I must know more of the truth about my own life, and I must know more of what it would become if it were made a part of yours."

Mordecai had folded his arms again while Deronda was speaking, and now answered with equal firmness, though with difficult breathing—

"You *shall* know. What are we met for, but that you should know? Your doubts lie as light as dust on my belief. I know the philosophies of this time and of other times: if I chose I could answer a summons before their tribunals. I could silence the beliefs which are the mother-tongue of my soul and speak with the rote-learned language of a system, that gives you the spelling of all things, sure of its alphabet covering them all. I could silence them: may not a man silence his awe or his love and take to finding reasons, which others demand? But if his love lies deeper than any reasons to be found? Man finds his pathways: at first they were foot-tracks, as those of the beast in the wilderness; now they are swift and invisible: his thought dives through the ocean, and his wishes thread the air: has he found all the pathways yet? What reaches him,

stays with him, rules him: he must accept it, not knowing its pathway. Say, my expectation of you has grown but as false hopes grow. That doubt is in your mind? Well, my expectation was there, and you are come. Men have died of thirst. But I was thirsty, and the water is on my lips. What are doubts to me? In the hour when you come to me and say, 'I reject your soul: I know that I am not a Jew: we have no lot in common'—I shall not doubt. I shall be certain —certain that I have been deluded. That hour will never come!"

Deronda felt a new chord sounding in this speech: it was rather imperious than appealing —had more of conscious power than of the yearning need which had acted as a beseeching grasp on him before. And usually, though he was the reverse of pugnacious, such a change of attitude towards him would have weakened his inclination to admit a claim. But here there was something that balanced his resistance and kept it aloof. This strong man whose gaze was sustainedly calm and his finger-nails pink with health, who was exercised in all questioning, and accused of excessive mental independence, still felt a subduing influence over him in the tenacious certitude of the fragile creature before him, whose

pallid yellow nostril was tense with effort as his breath laboured under the burthen of eager speech. The influence seemed to strengthen the bond of sympathetic obligation. In Deronda at this moment the desire to escape what might turn into a trying embarrassment was no more likely to determine action than the solicitations of indolence are likely to determine it in one with whom industry is a daily law. He answered simply—

"It is my wish to meet and satisfy your wishes wherever that is possible to me. It is certain to me at least that I desire not to undervalue your toil and your suffering. Let me know your thoughts. But where can we meet?"

"I have thought of that," said Mordecai. "It is not hard for you to come into this neighbourhood later in the evening? You did so once."

"I can manage it very well occasionally," said Deronda. "You live under the same roof with the Cohens, I think?"

Before Mordecai could answer, Mr Ram re-entered to take his place behind the counter. He was an elderly son of Abraham, whose childhood had fallen on the evil times at the beginning of this century, and who remained amid this smart and instructed generation as a preserved specimen,

soaked through and through with the effect of the poverty and contempt which were the common heritage of most English Jews seventy years ago. He had none of the oily cheerfulness observable in Mr Cohen's aspect: his very features—broad and chubby—showed that tendency to look mongrel without due cause which, in a miscellaneous London neighbourhood, may perhaps be compared with the marvels of imitation in insects, and may have been nature's imperfect effort on behalf of the purer Caucasian to shield him from the shame and spitting to which purer features would have been exposed in the times of zeal. Mr Ram dealt ably in books in the same way that he would have dealt in tins of meat and other commodities—without knowledge or responsibility as to the proportion of rottenness or nourishment they might contain. But he believed in Mordecai's learning as something marvellous, and was not sorry that his conversation should be sought by a bookish gentleman, whose visits had twice ended in a purchase. He greeted Deronda with a crabbed goodwill, and, putting on large silver spectacles, appeared at once to abstract himself in the daily accounts.

But Deronda and Mordecai were soon in the street together, and, without any explicit agree-

ment as to their direction, were walking towards Ezra Cohen's.

"We can't meet there: my room is too narrow," said Mordecai, taking up the thread of talk where they had dropped it. "But there is a tavern not far from here where I sometimes go to a club. It is the *Hand and Banner*, in the street at the next turning, five doors down. We can have the parlour there any evening."

"We can try that for once," said Deronda. "But you will perhaps let me provide you with some lodging, which would give you more freedom and comfort than where you are."

"No; I need nothing. My outer life is as nought. I will take nothing less precious from you than your soul's brotherhood. I will think of nothing else yet. But I am glad you are rich. You did not need money on that diamond ring. You had some other motive for bringing it."

Deronda was a little startled by this clear-sightedness; but before he could reply, Mordecai added —"It is all one. Had you been in need of the money, the great end would have been that we should meet again. But you are rich?" he ended, in a tone of interrogation.

"Not rich, except in the sense that every one is rich who has more than he needs for himself."

"I desired that your life should be free," said Mordecai, dreamily—"mine has been a bondage."

It was clear that he had no interest in the fact of Deronda's appearance at the Cohens' beyond its relation to his own ideal purpose. Despairing of leading easily up to the question he wished to ask, Deronda determined to put it abruptly, and said—

"Can you tell me why Mrs Cohen, the mother, must not be spoken to about her daughter?"

There was no immediate answer, and he thought that he should have to repeat the question. The fact was that Mordecai had heard the words, but had to drag his mind to a new subject away from his passionate preoccupation. After a few moments, he replied, with a careful effort such as he would have used if he had been asked the road to Holborn—

"I know the reason. But I will not speak even of trivial family affairs which I have heard in the privacy of the family. I dwell in their tent as in a sanctuary. Their history, so far as they injure none other, is their own possession."

Deronda felt the blood mounting to his cheeks at a sort of rebuke he was little used to, and he also found himself painfully baffled where he had reckoned with some confidence on getting decisive

knowledge. He became the more conscious of emotional strain from the excitements of the day; and although he had the money in his pocket to redeem his ring, he recoiled from the further task of a visit to the Cohens', which must be made not only under the former uncertainty, but under a new disappointment as to the possibility of its removal.

"I will part from you now," he said, just before they could reach Cohen's door; and Mordecai paused, looking up at him with an anxious fatigued face under the gaslight.

"When will you come back?" he said, with slow emphasis.

"May I leave that unfixed? May I ask for you at the Cohens' any evening after your hour at the book-shop? There is no objection, I suppose, to their knowing that you and I meet in private?"

"None," said Mordecai. "But the days I wait now are longer than the years of my strength. Life shrinks: what was but a tithe is now the half. My hope abides in you."

"I will be faithful," said Deronda—he could not have left those words unuttered. "I will come the first evening I can after seven: on Saturday or Monday, if possible. Trust me."

He put out his ungloved hand. Mordecai, clasping it eagerly, seemed to feel a new instreaming of confidence, and he said with some recovered energy—"This is come to pass, and the rest will come."

That was their good-bye.

DANIEL DERONDA

BOOK VI.

REVELATIONS

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.*

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.

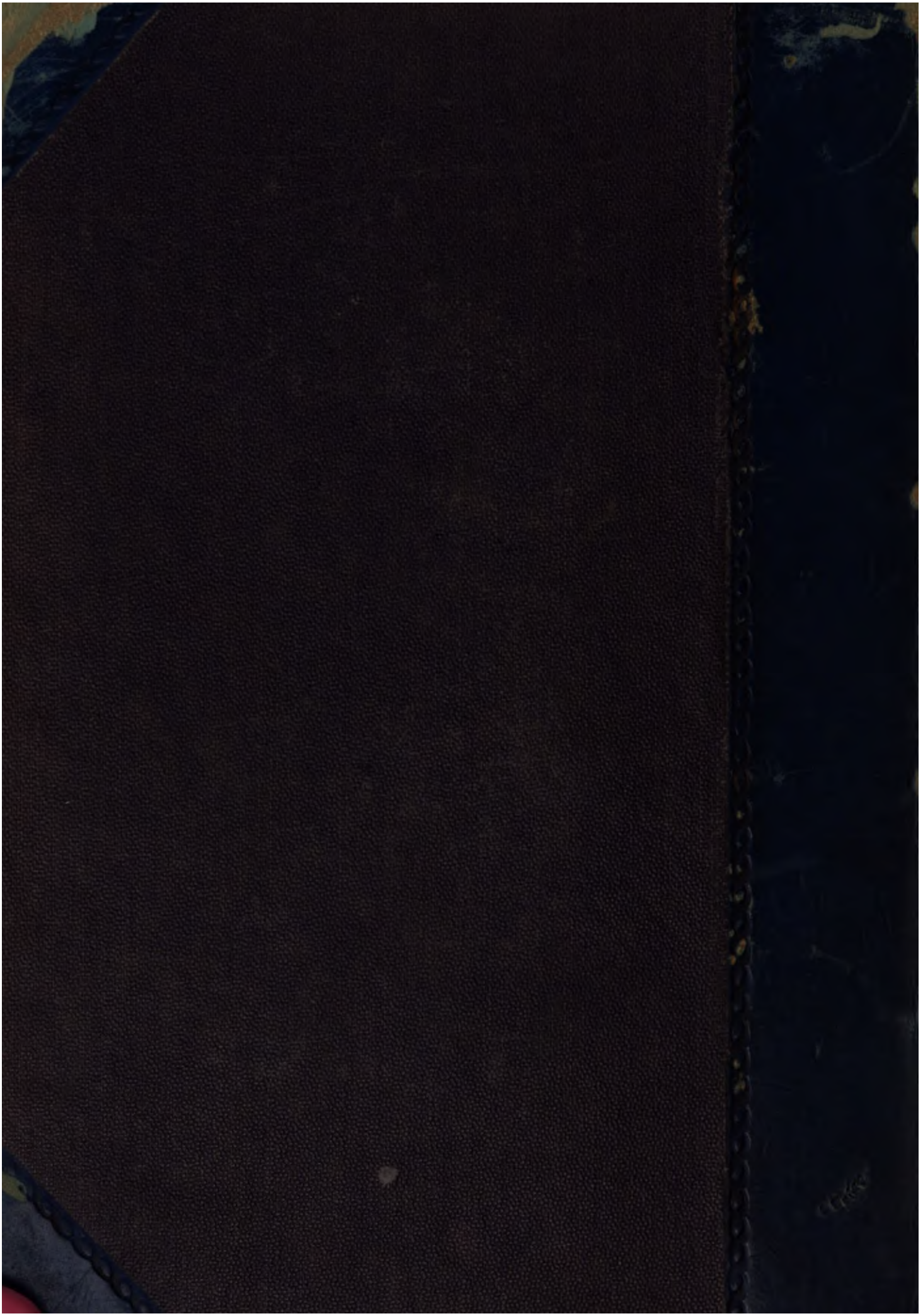
Some new light had fallen on the past for Sir Hugo too in this interview. After a silence in which Deronda felt like one whose creed is gone before he has religiously embraced another, the baronet said, in a tone of confession—

"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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