

Chapter LIV

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

Madonna Pia, whose husband, feeling himself injured by her, took her to his castle amid the swampy flats of the Maremma and got rid of her there, makes a pathetic figure in Dante's Purgatory, among the sinners who repented at the last and desire to be remembered compassionately by their fellow-countrymen. We know little about the grounds of mutual discontent between the Siennese couple, but we may infer with some confidence that the husband had never been a very delightful companion, and that on the flats of the Maremma his disagreeable manners had a background which threw them out remarkably; whence in his desire to punish his wife to the utmost, the nature of things was so far against him that in relieving himself of her he could not avoid making the relief mutual. And thus, without any hardness to the poor Tuscan lady, who had her deliverance long ago, one may feel warranted in thinking of her with a less sympathetic interest than of the better known Gwendolen who, instead of being delivered from her errors or earth and cleansed from their effect in purgatory, is at the very height of her entanglement in those fatal meshes which are woven within more closely than without, and often make the inward torture disproportionate to what is discernable as outward cause.

In taking his wife with him on a yachting expedition, Grandcourt had no intention to get rid of her; on the contrary, he wanted to feel more securely that she was his to do as he liked with, and to make her feel it also. Moreover, he was himself very fond of yachting: its dreamy do-nothing absolutism, unmolested by social demands, suited his disposition, and he did not in the least regard it as an equivalent for the dreariness of the Maremma. He had his reasons for carrying Gwendolen out of reach, but they were not reasons that can seem black in the mere statement. He suspected a growing spirit of opposition in her, and his feeling about the sentimental inclination she betrayed for Deronda was what in another man he would have called jealousy. In himself it seemed merely a resolution to put an end to such foolery as must have been going on in that prearranged visit of Deronda's which he had divined and interrupted.

And Grandcourt might have pleaded that he was perfectly justified in taking care that his wife should fulfill the obligations she had accepted. Her marriage was a contract where all the ostensible advantages were on her side, and it was only of those advantages that her husband should use his power to hinder her from any injurious

self committal or unsuitable behavior. He knew quite well that she had not married him - had not overcome her repugnance to certain facts - out of love to him personally; he had won her by the rank and luxuries he had to give her, and these she had got: he had fulfilled his side of the contract.

And Gwendolen, we know, was thoroughly aware of the situation. She could not excuse herself by saying that there had been a tacit part of the contract on her side - namely, that she meant to rule and have her own way. With all her early indulgence in the disposition to dominate, she was not one of the narrow-brained women who through life regard all their own selfish demands as rights, and every claim upon themselves as an injury. She had a root of conscience in her, and the process of purgatory had begun for her on the green earth: she knew that she had been wrong.

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

What had she to complain of? The yacht was of the prettiest; the cabin fitted up to perfection, smelling of cedar, soft-cushioned, hung with silk, expanded with mirrors; the crew such as suited an elegant toy, one of them having even ringlets, as well as a bronze complexion and fine teeth; and Mr Lush was not there, for he had taken his way back to England as soon as he had seen all and everything on board. Moreover, Gwendolen herself liked the sea: it did not make her ill; and to observe the rigging of the vessel and forecast the necessary adjustments was a sort of amusement that might have gratified her activity and enjoyment of imaginary rule; the weather was fine, and they were coasting southward, where even the rain-furrowed, heat-cracked clay becomes gem-like with purple shadows, and where one may float between blue and blue in an open-eyed dream that the world has done with sorrow.

But what can still that hunger of the heart which sickens the eye for beauty, and makes sweet-scented ease an oppression? What sort of Moslem paradise would quiet the terrible fury of moral repulsion and cowed resistance which, like an eating pain intensifying into torture, concentrates the mind in that poisonous misery? While Gwendolen, throned on her cushions at evening, and beholding the glory of sea and sky softening as if with boundless love around her, was hoping

that Grandcourt in his march up and down was not going to pause near her, not going to look at her or speak to her, some woman, under a smoky sky, obliged to consider the price of eggs in arranging her dinner, was listening for the music of a footstep that would remove all risk from her foretaste of joy; some couple, bending cheek by cheek, over a bit of work done by the one and delighted in by the other, were reckoning the earnings that would make them rich enough for a holiday among the furze and heather.

Had Grandcourt the least conception of what was going on in the breast of his wife? He conceived that she did not love him; but was that necessary? She was under his power, and he was not accustomed to soothe himself, as some cheerfully-disposed persons are, with the conviction that he was very generally and justly beloved. But what lay quite away from his conception was, that she could have any special repulsion for him personally. How could she? He himself knew what personal repulsion was - nobody better; his mind was much furnished with a sense of what brutes his fellow-creatures were, both masculine and feminine; what odious familiarities they had, what smirks, what modes of flourishing their handkerchiefs, what costume, what lavender water, what bulging eyes, and what foolish notions of making themselves agreeable by remarks which were not wanted. In this critical view of mankind there was an affinity between him and Gwendolen before their marriage, and we know that she had been attractingly wrought upon by the refined negations he presented to her. Hence he understood her repulsion for Lush. But how was he to understand or conceive her present repulsion for Henleigh Grandcourt? Some men bring themselves to believe, and not merely maintain, the non-existence of an external world; a few others believe themselves objects of repulsion to a woman without being told so in plain language. But Grandcourt did not belong to this eccentric body of thinkers. He had all his life had reason to take a flattering view of his own attractiveness, and to place himself in fine antithesis to the men who, he saw at once, must be revolting to a woman of taste. He had no idea of moral repulsion, and could not have believed, if he had been told it, that there may be a resentment and disgust which will gradually make beauty more detestable than ugliness, through exasperation at that outward virtue in which hateful things can flaunt themselves or find a supercilious advantage.

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

For their behavior to each other scandalized no observer - not even the foreign maid, warranted against sea-sickness; nor Grandcourt's own experienced valet: still less the picturesque crew, who regarded them as a model couple in high life. Their companionship consisted chiefly in a well-bred silence. Grandcourt had no humorous observations at

which Gwendolen could refuse to smile, no chit-chat to make small occasions of dispute. He was perfectly polite in arranging an additional garment over her when needful, and in handing her any object that he perceived her to need, and she could not fall into the vulgarity of accepting or rejecting such politeness rudely.

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

Gwendolen said, 'Yes, please,' remembering that she must try and interest herself in sugar-canes as something outside her personal affairs. Then Grandcourt would walk up and down and smoke for a long while, pausing occasionally to point out a sail on the horizon, and at last would seat himself and look at Gwendolen with his narrow immovable gaze, as if she were part of the complete yacht; while she, conscious of being looked at was exerting her ingenuity not to meet his eyes. At dinner he would remark that the fruit was getting stale, and they must put in somewhere for more; or, observing that she did not drink the wine, he asked her if she would like any other kind better. A lady was obliged to respond to these things suitably; and even if she had not shrunk from quarrelling on other grounds, quarreling with Grandcourt was impossible; she might as well have made angry remarks to a dangerous serpent ornamentally coiled in her cabin without invitation. And what sort of dispute could a woman of any pride and dignity begin on a yacht?

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

To Gwendolen, who even in the freedom of her maiden time, had had very faint glimpses of any heroism or sublimity, the medium that now thrust itself everywhere before her view was this husband and her relation to him. The beings closest to us, whether in love or hate, are often virtually our interpreters of the world, and some feather-headed gentleman or lady whom in passing we regret to take as legal tender for a human being, may be acting as a melancholy theory of life in the minds of those who live with them - like a piece of yellow and wavy glass that distorts form and makes color an affliction. Their trivial sentences, their petty standards, their low suspicions, their loveless *ennui*, may be making somebody else's life no better than a promenade through a pantheon of ugly idols. Gwendolen had that kind of window before her, affecting the distant equally with the near. Some unhappy wives are soothed by the possibility that they may become mothers; but Gwendolen felt that to desire a child for herself

would have been a consenting to the completion of the injury she had been guilty of. She was reduced to dread lest she should become a mother. It was not the image of a new sweetly-budding life that came as a vision of deliverance from the monotony of distaste: it was an image of another sort. In the irritable, fluctuating stages of despair, gleams of hope came in the form of some possible accident. To dwell on the benignity of accident was a refuge from worse temptation.

The embitterment of hatred is often as unaccountable to onlookers as the growth of devoted love, and it not only seems but is really out of direct relation with any outward causes to be alleged. Passion is of the nature of seed, and finds nourishment within, tending to a predominance which determines all currents toward itself, and makes the whole life its tributary. And the intensest form of hatred is that rooted in fear, which compels to silence and drives vehemence into a constructive vindictiveness, an imaginary annihilation of the detested object, something like the hidden rites of vengeance with which the persecuted have made a dark vent for their rage, and soothed their suffering into dumbness. Such hidden rites went on in the secrecy of Gwendolen's mind, but not with soothing effect - rather with the effect of a struggling terror. Side by side with the dread of her husband had grown the self-dread, which urged her to flee from the pursuing images wrought by her pent-up impulse. The vision of her past wrongdoing, and what it had brought on her, came with a pale ghastly illumination over every imagined deed that was a rash effort at freedom, such as she had made in her marriage. Moreover, she had learned to see all her acts through the impression they would make on Deronda: whatever relief might come to her, she could not sever it from the judgment of her that would be created in his mind. Not one word of flattery, of indulgence, of dependence on her favor, could be fastened on by her in all their intercourse, to weaken his restraining power over her (in this way Deronda's effort over himself was repaid); and amid the dreary uncertainties of her spoiled life the possible remedies that lay in his mind, nay, the remedy that lay in her feeling for him, made her only hope. He seemed to her a terrible-browed angel, from whom she could not think of concealing any deed so as to win an ignorant regard from him: it belonged to the nature of their relation that she should be truthful, for his power over her had begun in the raising of a self-discontent which could be satisfied only by genuine change. But in no concealment had she now any confidence: her vision of what she had to dread took more decidedly than ever the form of some fiercely impulsive deed, committed as in a dream that she would instantaneously wake from to find the effects real though the images had been false: to find death under her hands, but instead of darkness, daylight; instead of satisfied hatred, the dismay of guilt; instead of freedom, the palsy of a new terror - a white dead face from which she was forever trying to flee and forever held back. She

remembered Deronda's words: they were continually recurring in her thought -

'Turn your fear into a safeguard. Keep your dread fixed on the idea of increasing your remorse. * * * Take your fear as a safeguard. It is like quickness of hearing. It may make consequences passionately present to you.'

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

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

So the days passed, taking with them light breezes beyond and about the Balearic Isles, and then to Sardinia, and then with gentle change persuading them northward again toward Corsica. But this floating, gentle-wafted existence, with its apparently peaceful influences, was becoming as bad as a nightmare to Gwendolen.

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

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

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

'I like yachting longer than anything else,' said Grandcourt; 'and I had none last year. I suppose you are beginning to tire of it. Women are so confoundedly whimsical. They expect everything to give way to them.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

been on her side. This possibility of hoping, after her long fluctuation amid fears, was like a first return of hunger to the long-languishing patient.

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

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

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

The doubt might certainly have been changed into a disagreeable certainty, for Grandcourt on this unaccountable appearance of Deronda at Genoa of all places, immediately tried to conceive how there could have been an arrangement between him and Gwendolen. It is true that before they were well in their rooms, he had seen how difficult it was to shape such an arrangement with any probability, being too cool-headed to find it at once easily credible that Gwendolen had not only while in London hastened to inform Deronda of the yachting project, but had posted a letter to him from Marseilles or Barcelona, advising him to travel to Genoa in time for the chance of meeting her there, or of receiving a letter from her telling of some other destination - all which must have implied a miraculous foreknowledge in her, and in Deronda a bird-like facility in flying about and perching idly. Still he was there, and though Grandcourt would not make a fool of himself by fabrications that others might call preposterous, he was not, for all that, disposed to admit fully that Deronda's presence was, so far as Gwendolen was concerned, a mere accident. It was a disgusting fact; that was enough; and no doubt she was well pleased. A man out of temper does not wait for proofs before feeling toward all things animate and inanimate as if they were in a conspiracy against him, but at once threshes his horse or kicks his dog in consequence. Grandcourt felt toward Gwendolen and Deronda as if he knew them to be in a conspiracy against him, and here was an event in league with them. What he took for clearly certain - and so far he divined the truth - was that Gwendolen was now counting on an interview with Deronda whenever her husband's back was turned.

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

This morning the benefits of the voyage seemed to be suddenly revealing themselves in a new elasticity of mien. As she rose from the table and put her two heavily-jewelled hands on each side of her neck, according to her wont, she had no art to conceal that sort of joyous expectation which makes the present more bearable than usual, just as when a man means to go out he finds it easier to be amiable to the family for a quarter of an hour beforehand. It is not impossible that a terrier whose pleasure was concerned would perceive those amiable signs and know their meaning - know why his master stood in a peculiar way, talked with alacrity, and even had a peculiar gleam in his eye, so that on the least movement toward the door, the terrier would scuttle to be in time. And, in dog fashion, Grandcourt discerned the signs of Gwendolen's expectation, interpreting them with the narrow correctness which leaves a world of unknown feeling behind.

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

Gwendolen turned cold. There was not only the cruel disappointment; there was the immediate conviction that her husband had determined to take her because he would not leave her out of his sight; and probably this dual solitude in a boat was the more attractive to him because it would be wearisome to her. They were not on the plank-island; she felt it the more possible to begin a contest. But the gleaming content had died out of her. There was a change in her like that of a glacier after sunset.

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

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

'I can't bear to go in a boat,' said Gwendolen, angrily.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'I hope this is useful,' said Grandcourt, after a moment or two. 'All I can say is, it's most confoundedly unpleasant. What the devil women can see in this kind of thing, I don't know. *You* see something to be got by it, of course. All I can see is, that we shall be shut up here when we might have been having a pleasant sail.'

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

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

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

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

'It's all false!' said Gwendolen, bitterly. 'You don't in the least imagine what is in my mind. I have seen enough of the disgrace that comes in that way. And you had better leave me at liberty to speak with any one I like. It will be better for you.'

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

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

'What decision have you come to?' he said, presently looking at her. 'What orders shall I give?'

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

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

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

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

Gwendolen, keeping her impassable air, as they moved away from the strand, felt her imagination obstinately at work. She was not afraid of any outward dangers - she was afraid of her own wishes which were taking shapes possible and impossible, like a cloud of demon-faces. She was afraid of her own hatred, which under the cold iron touch that had compelled her to-day had gathered a fierce intensity. As she sat guiding the tiller under her husband's eyes, doing just what he told her, the strife within her seemed like her own effort to escape from herself. She clung to the thought of Deronda: she persuaded herself that he would not go away while she was there - he knew that she needed help. The sense that he was there would save her from acting out the evil within. And yet quick, quick, came images, plans of evil that would come again and seize her in the night, like furies preparing the deed that they would straightway avenge.

They were taken out of the port and carried eastward by a gentle breeze. Some clouds tempered the sunlight, and the hour was always deepening toward the supreme beauty of evening. Sails larger and

smaller changed their aspect like sensitive things, and made a cheerful companionship, alternately near and far. The grand city shone more vaguely, the mountains looked out above it, and there was stillness as in an island sanctuary. Yet suddenly Gwendolen let her hands fall, and said in a scarcely audible tone, 'God help me!'

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

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

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

'Very.'

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

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

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

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

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