

**DANIEL DERONDA,
VOL. IV, BOOK VII: THE
MOTHER AND THE SON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649559329

Daniel Deronda, Vol. IV, Book VII: The Mother and the Son by George Eliot

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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GEORGE ELIOT

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

DANIEL DERONDA

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

VOL. IV.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCLXXVI

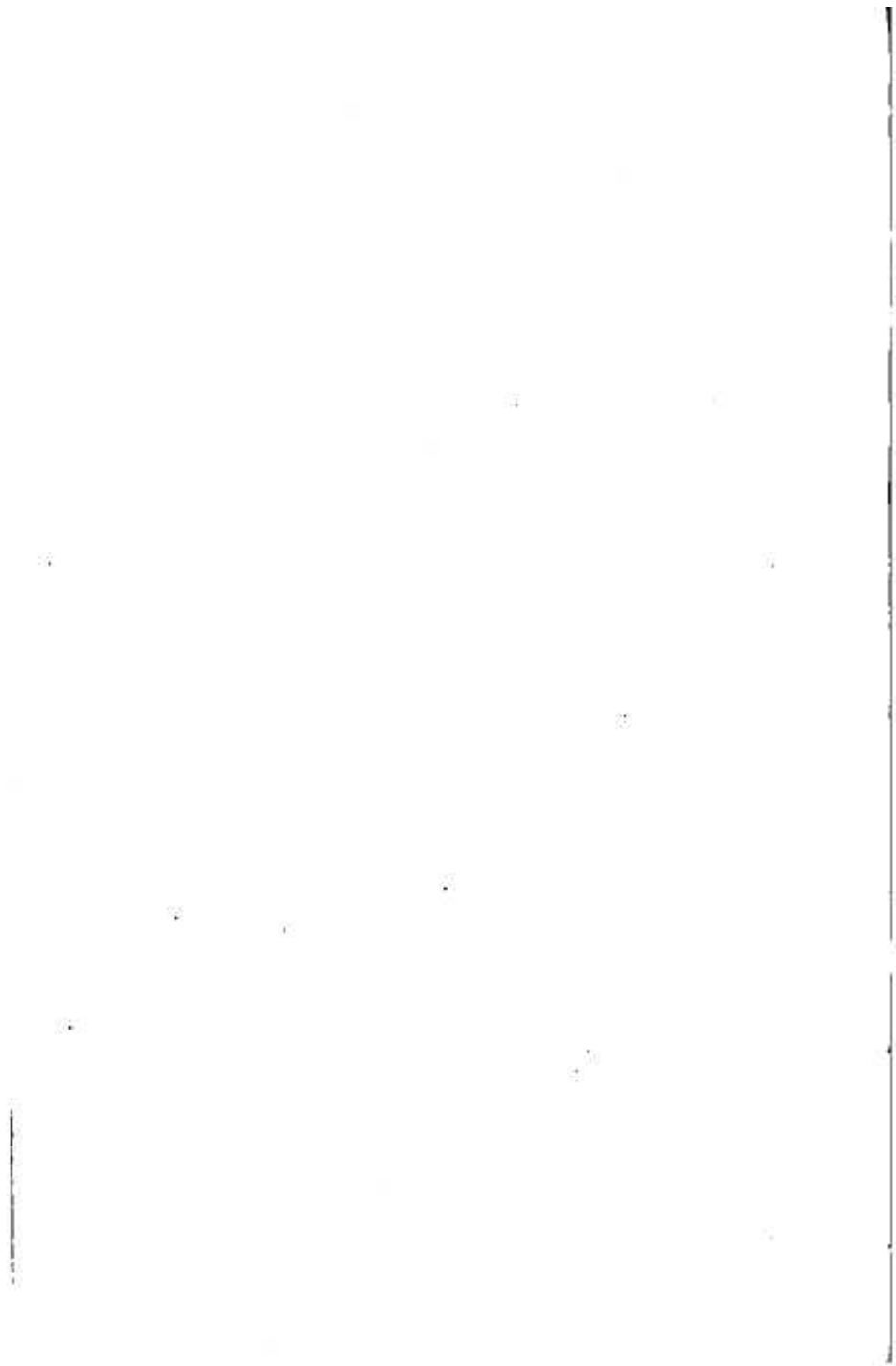


Hanson

DANIEL DERONDA

BOOK VII.

THE MOTHER AND THE SON



BOOK VII.
THE MOTHER AND THE SON.

CHAPTER I.

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

—BROWNING : *Paracelsus*.

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

TO MY SON, DANIEL DERONDA.

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

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

LEONORA HALM-EBERSTEIN.

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