

## CHAPTER XXXVII

OF THE DOCTOR'S CAUTIOUS RESERVE, AND MRS. FENWICK'S STRONG COMMON-SENSE. AND OF A LADY AT BUDA-PESTH. HOW HARRISON WAS ONLY PAST FORGOTTEN NEWSPAPERS TO DR. VEREKER. OF THE OCTOPUS'S PULSE. HOW THE HABERDASHER'S BRIDE WOULD TRY ON AT TWO GUAS. A WEEK, AND OF A PLEASANT WALK BACK FROM THE RAILWAY STATION

"You never mean to say you've been in the water?"

It was quite clear, from the bluish finger-tips of the gloveless merpussy—for at St. Sennans sixes are not *de rigueur* in the morning—that she *has* been in, and has only just come out. But Fenwick, who asked the question, grasped a handful of loose black hair for confirmation, and found it wet.

"Haven't I?" says the incorrigible one. "And you should have heard the rumpus over getting a machine down."

"She's a selfish little monkey," her mother says, but forgivingly, too. "She'll drown herself, and not care a penny about all the trouble she gives." You see, Rosalind wouldn't throw her words into this callous form if she was really thinking about the merpussy. But just now she is too anxious about Gerry to be very particular.

What has passed between him and Dr. Conrad? What does the latter know now more than she does herself? She falls back with him, and allows the other two to go on in front. Obviously the most natural arrangement.

"What has he told you, Dr. Conrad?" This is not unexpected, and the answer is a prepared one, preconcerted under pressure between the doctor and his conscience.

"I am going to ask you, Mrs. Fenwick, to do me a very great kindness—don't say yes without hearing what it is—to ask you to allow me to keep back all your husband says to me, and to take for granted that he repeats to you all he feels certain of himself in his own recollections."

"He *has* told you more?"

"Yes, he has. But I am far from certain that anything he has said can be relied upon—in his present state. Anyway, I should be very sorry to take upon myself the responsibility of repeating it."

"He wishes you not to do so?"

"I think so. I should say so. Do you mind?"

"I won't press you to repeat anything you wish to keep back. But is his mind easier? After all, that's the main point."

"That is my impression—much easier." He felt he was quite warranted in saying this. "And I should say that if he does not himself tell you again whatever he has been saying to me, it will only show how uncertain and untrustworthy all his present recollections are. I cannot tell you how strongly I feel that the best course is to leave his mind to its own natural development. It may even be that the partial and distorted images of events such as he has been speaking of to me . . ."

"I mustn't ask you what they were? . . . Yes, go on."

"May again become dim and disappear altogether. If they are to do so, nothing can be gained by dwelling on them now—still less by trying to verify them—and least of all by using them as a stimulus to further recollection."

"You think I had better not ask him questions?"

"Exactly. Leave him to himself. Keep his mind on other matters—healthy occupations, surrounding life. I am certain of one thing—that the effort to disinter the past is painful to him in itself, quite independent of any painful associations in what he is endeavouring to recall."

"I have seen that, too, in the slight recurrences he has had when I was there. I quite agree with you about the best course to pursue. Let us have patience and wait."

Of course, Vereker had not the remotest conception that the less Fenwick remembered, the better his wife would be pleased. So the principal idea in his mind at that moment was, what a very sensible as well as handsome woman he was talking to! It was the way in which most people catalogued Rosalind Fenwick. But her ready assent to his wishes had intensified the doctor's first item of description. A subordinate wave of his thought



created an image of the girl Fenwick must have pictured to himself coming out of the railway carriage. He only repeated: "Let us have patience, and wait," with a feeling of relief from possible further catechism.

But in order to avoid showing his wish to abate inquiry, he could talk about aspects of the case that would not involve it. He could tell of analogous cases well known, or in his own practice. For instance, that of a Frenchwoman who wandered away from Amiens, unconscious of her past and her identity, and somehow got to Buda-Pesth. There, having retained perfect powers of using her mother-tongue, and also speaking German fluently, she had all but got a good teachership in a school, only she had no certificate of character. With a great effort she recalled the name of a lady at Amiens she felt she could write to for one, and did so. "Fancy her husband's amazement," said Dr. Conrad, "when, on opening a letter addressed to his wife in her own handwriting, he found it was an application from Fräulein Schmidt, or some German name, asking for a testimonial!" He referred also to the many cases of the caprices of memory he had met with in his studies of the *petit-mal* of epilepsy, a subject to which he had given special attention. It may have crossed his mind that his companion had fallen very thoroughly in with his views about not dissecting her husband's case overmuch for the present. But he put it down, if it did, to her strong common-sense. It is rather a singular thing how very ready men are to ascribe this quality—whatever it is—to a beautiful woman. Especially if she agrees with them.

Nevertheless the doctor was not very sorry when he saw that Sally and Fenwick, on in front, had caught up with—or been caught up with by—a mixed party, of a sort to suspend, divert, or cancel all conversation of a continuous sort. Miss Gwendolen Arkwright and her next eldest sister had established themselves on Fenwick's shoulders, and the Julius Bradshaws had just intersected them from a side-alley. The latter were on the point of extinction; going back to London by the 3.15, and everything packed but what they had on. It was a clear reprieve, till 3.15 at any rate.

There could be no doubt, thought Rosalind to herself, that her husband's conversation with Vereker had made him easier in his

mind than when she saw him last, just after breakfast. No doubt he was all the better, too, for the merpussy's account of her exploit on the beach; of how she managed to overrule old Gabriel and get a machine put down, contrary to precedent, common caution, and public opinion—even in the face of urgent remonstrance from her Swiss acquaintance, almost as good a swimmer as herself; how she had picked out a good big selvage-wave to pop in under, and when she got beyond it enjoyed all the comfort incidental to being in bed with the door locked. Because, you see, she exaggerated. However, one thing she said was quite true. There were no breakers out beyond the said selvage-wave, because the wind had fallen a great deal, and seemed to have given up the idea of making any more white foam-crests for the present. But there would be more wind again in the night, said authority. It was only a half-holiday for Neptune.

Sally's bracing influence was all the stronger from the fact of her complete unconsciousness of anything unusual. Her mother had said nothing to her the day before of the revival of Baron Kreutzkammer, nor had Dr. Conrad, acting under cautions given. And all Sally knew of the wakeful night was that her mother had found Fenwick walking about, unable to sleep, and had said at breakfast he might just as well have his sleep out now. To which she had agreed, and had then gone away to see if "the Tishies," as she called them, were blown away, and had met the doctor coming to see if *she* was. So she was in the best of moods as an antidote to mind-cloudage. And Fenwick, under the remedy, seemed to her no more unlike himself than was to be expected after not a wink till near daylight. The object of this prolixity is that it may be borne in mind that Sally never shared her mother's or her undeclared lover's knowledge of the strange mental revival caused—as seemed most probable—by the action of the galvanic battery on the previous day.

Vereker walked back to his Octopus, whom he had forsaken for an unusually long time, with his brain in a whirl at the strange revelation he had just heard. His medical experience had put him well on his guard anent one possibility—that the whole thing might be delusion on Fenwick's part. How could



such an imperfect memory-record be said to prove anything without confirmation from without?

His habits of thought had qualified him to keep this possibility provisionally in the background without forgetting it. There was nothing in the mere knowledge of its existence to prevent his trying to recall all he could of the story of the disappearance of Harrison, as he read it in the newspapers a year and a half ago. There had been a deal of talk about it at the time, and great efforts had been made to trace Harrison, but without success. The doctor lingered a little on his way, conscious that he could recall very little of the Harrison case, but too interested to be able to leave his recollections dormant until he should get substantial information. The Octopus could recollect all about it no doubt, but how venture to apply to her? Or how to Sally? Though, truly, had he done so, it would have been with much less hope of a result. Neither Sally nor her mother were treasure-houses of the day's gossip, as *his* mother was. "We must have taken mighty little notice of what was going on in the world at the time," so thought the doctor to himself.

What *did* he actually recollect? A paragraph headed "Disappearance of a Millionaire" in a hurried perusal of an evening paper as he rode to an urgent case; a repetition—several repetitions—on the newspaper posters of the name Harrison during the fortnight following, chiefly disclosing supposed discoveries of the missing man, sandwiched with other discoveries of their falsehood—clue and disappointment by turns. He could remember his own perfectly spurious interest in the case, produced by such announcements staring at him from all points of the compass, and his own preposterous contributions to talk-making about them, such as "Have they found that man Harrison yet?" knowing himself the merest impostor all the while, but feeling it dutiful to be up-to-date. How came no one of them all to put two and two together?

A gleam of a solution was supplied to the doctor's mind when he set himself to answer the question, "How should I have gone about suspecting it?" How, indeed? Ordinary every-day people—*you's* and *me's*—can't lightly admit to our minds the idea that we have actually got mixed up with the regular public people in the newspapers. Have not even our innocent little announce-

ments that we have been born, or died, or got married, always had a look of having got in by accident, or under some false pretence? Have we not felt inflated when a relation of ours has had a letter to a newspaper inserted, in real print, with his own name as bold as brass? Vereker was not surprised, on thinking it over, that he personally had missed the clue. And if he, why not others? Besides, all the Harrison talk had been superseded by some more exciting matter before it had been recognised as possible that Fenwick's memory might never come back.

Just as he arrived at Mrs. Iggulden's a thought struck him—not heavily; only a light, reminding flick—and he stopped a minute to see what it had to say. It referred to his interview with Scotland Yard, some six weeks after Fenwick's first appearance.

He could recall that in the course of his interview one of the younger officials spoke in an undertone to his chief; who thereon, after consideration, turned to the doctor and said, "Had not your man a panama hat? I understood you to say so;" and on receiving an affirmative reply, spoke again in an undertone to his subordinate to the effect, half-caught by Vereker, that "Alison's hat was black felt." Did he say by any chance Harrison, not Alison? If so, might not that account for a rather forbidding or opposite attitude on the Yard's part? He remembered something of fictitious claimants coming forward, representing themselves as Harrison—desperate bidders for a chance of the Klondyke gold. They might easily have supposed this man and his quenched memory another of the same sort. Evidently if investigation was not to suffer from overgrown suspicion, only young and guileless official instinct could be trusted—plain-clothes *ingénus*. Dr. Conrad laughed to himself over a particularly outrageous escapade of Sally's, who, when her mother said they always sent such very young chicks of constables to Glenmoira Road in the morning, impudently ascribed them to inspector's eggs, laid overnight.

"My pulse—feel it!" His Goody mother greeted the doctor with a feeble voice from inarticulate lips, and a wrist outstretched. She was being moribund; to pay him out for being behindhand.



He skipped all interims, and said, with negligible inaccuracy, "It's only a quarter past."

"Don't talk, but feel!" Her failing senses could indulge a little impatience; but it was like throwing ballast out of a balloon. She meant to be all the worse directly.

Her son felt the outstretched wrist, and was relieved to find it normal—almost abnormally normal, just before lunch! But he had to pretend. A teaspoonful of brandy in half a glass of water, clearly! He knew she hated it, but she had better swallow it down. *That* was right! And he would hurry Mrs. Iggulden with lunch. However, Mrs. Iggulden had been beforehand, having seen her good gentleman coming and the table all laid ready, so she got the steak on, only she knew there would something happen if too much hurry and sure enough she broke a decanter. We do not like the responsibility of punctuation in this sentence.

"I thought you had forgotten me," quoth the revived Goody to her son, assisting her to lunch. But the excellent woman said *me* (as if it was the name of somebody else, and spelt *M* double *E*) with a compassionate moan.

Rosalind was glad to see her husband in good spirits again. He was quite like himself before that unfortunate little galvanic battery upset everything. Perhaps its effect would go off, and all he had remembered of the past grow dim again. It was a puzzle, even to Rosalind herself, that her natural curiosity about all Gerry's unknown history should become as nothing in view of the unwelcome contingencies that history might disclose. It spoke well for the happiness of the *status quo* that she was ready to forego the satisfaction of this curiosity altogether rather than confront its possible disturbing influences. "If we can only know nothing about it, and be as we are!" was the thought uppermost in her mind.

It certainly was a rare piece of good luck that, owing to Sally's leaving the house before Fenwick appeared, and running away to her madcap swim before he could join her and the doctor, she had just avoided seeing him during the worst of his depression. Indeed, his remark that he had not slept well seemed to account for all she had seen in the morning. And in the afternoon, when the whole party, minus the doctor, walked over

to St. Egbert's Station for the honeymoon portion of it to take its departure for town, and the other three to say farewells, Fenwick was quite in his usual form. Only his wife watched for any differences, and unless it was that he gave way rather more freely than usual to the practice of walking with his arm round herself or Sally, or both, she could detect nothing. As the road they took was a quiet one, and they met scarcely a soul, no exception on the score of dignity was taken to this by Rosalind; and as for Sally, her general attitude was "Leave Jeremiah alone—he shall do as he likes." Lætitia's mental comment was that it wasn't Oxford Street this time, and so it didn't matter.

"I shall walk straight into papa's library," said that young married lady in answer to an inquiry from Sally, as they fell back a little to chat. "I shall just walk straight in and say we've come back."

"What do you suppose the Professor will say?"

"My dear!—it's the merest toss up. If he's got some very interesting Greek or Phœnician nonsense on hand, he'll let me kiss him over his shoulder and say, 'All right—I'm busy.' If it's only the Cosmocylopædia work—which he doesn't care about, only it pays—he may look up and kiss me, or even go so far as to say: 'Well!—and where's master Julius?' But I don't expect he'll give any active help in the collision with mamma, which is sure to come. I rather hope she won't be at home the first time."

"Why? Wouldn't it be better to have it over and done with?" Sally always wants to clinch everything.

"Yes, of course; only the second time mamma's edge will be all taken off, and she'll die down. Besides, the crucial point is Paggy kissing her. It's got to be done, and it will be such a deal easier if I can get Theeny and Classy kissed first." Classy was the married sister, Clarissa. "After all, mamma must have got a shred of common-sense somewhere, and she must know that when things can neither be cured nor endured you have to pretend, sooner or later."

"You bottle up when it comes to that," said Sally philosophically. "But I shouldn't wonder, Tishy, if you found your Goody aggravating, too. She'll talk about haberdashers."



"Oh, my dear, haberdashers are a trifle! If that was all she might talk herself hoarse. Besides, I can stop that by the mantle department."

"What about it? Oh, I know, though!—about your being worth two guineas a week to try on. She would know you were not serious, though."

"Would she? I'm not so sure about it myself—not sure I'm not serious, I mean."

"Oh, Tishy! You don't mean you would go and try on at two guineas a week?"

"I really don't know, Sally dear. If I'm to have my husband's profession flung in my face at every turn, I may just as well have the advantage of it by a side-wind. Think what two guineas a week means! A hundred and four guineas a year—remember! guineas, not pounds. And Paggy thinks he could get it arranged for us to go out and dine together in the middle of the day at an Italian restaurant. . . ."

"I say, what a lark!" Sally immediately warms up to the scheme. "I could come, too. Do you know, Tishy dear, I was just going to twit you with the negro and his spots. But now I won't."

The Julius Bradshaws must have reached home early, as our story will show later that the anticipated collision with the Dragon took place the same evening. No great matter for surprise, this, to any one who has noticed the energetic impatience for immediate town-event in folk just off a holiday. These two were too keen to grapple with their domestic problem to allow of delays. So, after getting some dinner in a hurry at Georgiana Terrace, Bayswater, they must needs cab straight away to Ladbroke Grove Road. As for what happened when they got there, we shall know as much as we want of it later. For the present our business lies with Fenwick and his wife; to watch, in sympathy with the latter, for the next development in the strange mental state of the former, and to hope with her, as it must be confessed, for continued quiescence; or, better still, for a complete return of oblivion.

It seemed so cruelly hard to Rosalind that it might not be. What had she to gain by the revival of a forgotten past—a past

her own share of which she had for twenty years striven to forget? Utterly guiltless as, conceivably, she may have known herself to be, she had striven against that past as the guilty strive with the memory of a concealed crime. And here was she, at the end of this twenty years, with all she most longed for at the beginning in her possession, mysteriously attained with a thoroughness no combination of circumstances, no patience or forbearance of her own, no self-restraint or generosity of her young husband's could possibly have brought about. Think only of what we do know of this imperfect story! Conceive that it should have been possible for the Algernon Palliser of those days to know and understand it to the full; indulge the supposition, however strained it may be, that his so knowing it would not have placed him in a felon's dock for the prompt and righteous murder of the betrayer—we take the first convenient name—of the woman he loved. Convince yourself this could have been; figure to yourself a happy wedded life for the couple after Miss Sally had made her unconscious *début* with the supremest indifference to her antecedents; construct a hypothetical bliss for them at all costs, and then say if you can fill out the picture with a relation between Sally and her putative father to be compared for a moment to the one chance has favoured now for the stepfather and stepdaughter of our story.

Our own imagination is at fault about the would-have-beens and might-have-beens in this case. The only picture our mind can form of what would have followed a full grasp of all the facts by Algernon Palliser may be dictated or suggested by a memory of what sent Mr. Salter, of Livermore's Rents, 1808, to the hospital. Rosalind knew nothing of Mr. Salter, but she could remember well all Gerry's feats of strength in his youth—all the cracking of walnuts in his arm-joints and bending of kitchen-pokers across his neck—and also, too well, an impotence against his own anger when provoked; it had died down now to a trifle, but she could detect the trifle still. Was such an executive to be trusted not to take the law into its own hands, to fall into the grasp of an offended legislative function later—one too dull to be able to define offence so as to avoid the condemnation, now and again, of a culprit whose technical crime has the applause of the whole human race? Had the author of all her wrongs



met his death at the hands of her young husband, might not this husband of her later life—beside her now—be still serving his time at the galleys, with every compulsory sharer in his condemnation thinking him a hero?

It was all so much better as it had turned out. Only, could it remain so?

At least, nothing was wrong now, at this moment. Whatever her husband had said to Vereker in that morning walk, the present hour was a breathing-space for Rosalind. The Kreutzkammer recurrence of the previous evening was losing its force for her, and there had been nothing since that she knew of. "Chaotic ideas"—the phrase he had used in the night—might mean anything or nothing.

They came back from the railway-station by what was known to them as the long short cut in contradistinction to the short short cut. The latter, Sally said, had the courage of its opinions, while the former was a time-serving cut. Could she have influenced it at the first go-off—when it originally started from the V-shaped stile your skirts stuck in, behind the Wheatsheaf—it might have mustered the resolution to go straight on, instead of going off at a tangent to Gattrell's Farm, half a mile out of the way. Was it intimidated by a statement that trespassers would be prosecuted, nailed to an oak-tree, legible a hundred years ago, perhaps, when its nails were not rust, and really held it tight—instead of, as now, merely countenancing its wish to remain from old habit? It may have been so frightened in its timid youth; but if so, surely the robust self-assertion of its straight start for Gattrell's had in it something of contempt for the poor old board, coupled with its well-known intention of turning to the left and going slap through the wood the minute you (or it) got there. It may even have twitted that board with its apathy in respect of trespassers. Had the threat *ever* been carried out?

The long short cut was, according to the aborigines, a goodish step longer than the road, geometrically. But there was some inner sense—moral, ethical, spiritual—somehow metaphysical or supraphysical—in which it was a short cut, for all that. The road was a dale farther, some did say, along of the dust. But, then, there was no dust now, because it was all laid. So the

reason why was allowed to lapse, and the fact to take care of itself for once. Helped by an illusion that a path through an undergrowth of nut-trees and an overgrowth of oak on such a lovely afternoon as this wasn't distance at all—even when you got hooked in the brambles—and by other palliative incidents, it was voted a very short cut indeed. Certainly not too long for Rosalind's breathing-space, and had it been even a longer short cut she would have been well contented.

Every hour passed now, without a new recurrence of some by-gone, was going to give her—she knew it well beforehand—a sense of greater security. And every little incident on the walk that made a change in the rhythm of event was welcome. When they paused for refreshments—ginger-beer in stone bottles—at Gattrell's, and old Mrs. Gattrell, while she undid the corks, outlined the troubles of her husband's family and her own, she felt grateful for both to have kept clear of India and "the colonies." No memories of California or the Arctic Circle could arise from Mrs. Gattrell's twin-sister Debory, who suffered from information—internal information, mind you; an explanation necessary to correct an impression of overstrain to the mind in pursuit of research. Nor from her elder sister Hannah, whose neuralgic sick headaches were a martyrdom to herself, but apparently a source of pride to her family. Of which the inflation, strange to say, was the greater because Dr. Knox was of opinion that they would yield to treatment and tonics; though the old lady herself was opposed to both, and said elder-flower-water. She was a pleasant old personage, Mrs. Gattrell, who always shone out as a beacon of robust health above a fever-stricken, paralysed, plague-spotted, debilitated, and disintegrating crowd of blood-relations and connexions by marriage. But not one of all these had ever left the soil they were born on, none of Mrs. Gattrell's people holding with foreign parts. And nothing whatever had ever taken place at St. Egbert's till the railway came; so it wasn't likely to arouse memories of the ice-fields of the northern cold or the tiger-hunts of the southern heat.

Rosalind found herself asking of each new thing as it arose: "Will this bring anything fresh to his mind, or will it pass?" The wood-path the nut-tree growth all but closed over on either side she decided was safe; it could taste of nothing but his



English school-boyhood, before ever she knew him. But the sudden uprush of the covey of partridges from the stubble, and their bee-line for a haven in the next field—surely danger lay that way? Think what a shot he was in the old days! However, he only said, "Poor dears, they don't know how near the thirty-first is," and seemed to be able to know that much from past experience without discomfort at not knowing more.

When Sally proposed fortune-telling in connexion with a *bona-fide* gipsy woman, who looked (she said) exactly like in "Lavengro," her mother's first impulse was to try and recall if she and the Gerry of old times had ever been in contact with gipsies, authentic or otherwise, and, after decision in the negative, to feel that this wanderer was more welcome than not, as having a tendency to conduct his mind safely into new channels. Even the conclave of cows he had to disperse that they might get through a gate—cows that didn't mind how long they waited at it, having time on their hands—suggested the same kind of query. She was rapidly getting to look at everything from the point of view of what it was going to remind her husband of. She must struggle against the habit that was forming, or it would become insupportable. But then, again, the thought would come back that every hour that passed without an alarm was another step towards a safe haven; and who could say that in a week or so things might not be, at least, no worse than they were before this pestilent little galvanic battery broke in upon her peace?

The fact that he had spoken of new memories to Vereker and had not repeated them to her was no additional source of uneasiness; rather, if anything, the contrary. For she could not entertain the idea that Gerry would keep back from her anything he could tell to Vereker. What had actually happened was necessarily inconceivable by her—that a *recollected recollection* of his own marriage with her should be interpreted by him as a memory of a marriage with some other woman unknown, who might, for anything he knew, be still living; that his inference as to the bearing of this on his own conduct was that he should refrain, at any cost to himself, from claiming, so to speak, his own identity; should accept the personality chance had forced upon him for her sake; should even forego the treasure of her

sympathy, more precious far to him than the heavy score to his credit at the banks of New York and San Francisco, rather than dig up what needs must throw doubt on the validity of their marriage, and turn her path of life, now smooth, to one of stones and thorns. For that was the course he had sketched out for himself; and had it only been possible for oblivion to draw a sharp line across the slowly reviving record, and to say to memory: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," Fenwick might have persevered in this course successfully till now. And then all our story would have been told—at least, as far as Rosalind and Fenwick go. And we might say farewell to them at this moment as the cows reluctantly surrender passage-way of the long short cut, and Gerry saunters on, seemingly at ease from his own mind's unwelcome activities, with Sally on one arm and his wife in the other, and Mrs. Grundy nowhere. But no conspiracies are possible to memory and oblivion. They are a couple that act independently and consult nobody's convenience but their own.

It may easily be that Rosalind, had she been mistress of all the facts and taken in the full position, would have decided to run the risks incidental to confronting her husband with his own past—taken him into her confidence and told him. With the chance in view that his reason might become unsettled from the chronic torment of constant half-revivals of memory, would it not almost be safer to face the acute convulsion of a sudden *éclaircissement*—to put happiness to the touch, and win or lose it all? Sally could be got out of the way for long enough to allow of a resumption of equilibrium after the shock of the first disclosure and a completely established understanding that she *must not be told*, come what might. Supposing that she could tell, and he could hear, the whole story of twenty years ago better than when a terrible position warped it for teller and hearer in what had since become to her an intolerable dream—supposing this done, and each could understand the other, might not the very strangeness of the fact that the small new life that played so large a part in that dream had become Sally since, and was the only means by which Sally could have been established, might not this tell for peace? Might it not even raise the question, "What does a cloud of twenty years ago matter at all?" and sug-



gest the answer, "Nothing? For did not Sally come to us out of the cloud, and could we do without her?"

But Rosalind's half-insight into the patchwork of her husband's perceptions warranted no step so decisive. Rather, if anything, it pointed to a gradual resumption of his *status quo* of a few days ago. After all, had he not had (and completely forgotten) recurrences like that of the Baron and the fly-wheel? Well, perhaps the last was a shade more vivid than the others. But then see now, had he not forgotten it already to all outward seeming?

So that the minds of the two of them worked to a common end—silence. Hers in the hope that the effects of the galvanic current—if that did it—would die away and leave him rest for his; his in the fear that behind the unraised curtain that still hid his early life from himself was hidden what might become a baleful power to breed unrest for hers.

But it all depended on his own mastery of himself. Except he told it, who should know that he was Harrison? And *how* he felt the shelter of the gold! Who was going to suspect that a man who could command wealth in six figures by disclosing his identity, would keep it a secret? And for his wife's sake too! A pitiful four- or five-figure man might—yes. But hundreds of thousands!—think of it!

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

OF AN EXPEDITION AGAINST A GOODY, AND THE WALK BACK TO LOBJOIT'S. AND THE WALK BACK AGAIN TO IGGULDEN'S. HOW FENWICK TOOK VEREKER'S CONFIDENCE BY STORM. OF A COLLIER THAT PUT TO SEA. SUCCESSFUL AMBUSCADE OF THE OCTOPUS. PROVISIONAL EQUILIBRIUM OF FENWICK'S MIND. WHY BOTHER ABOUT HORACE? WHY NOT ABOUT PICKWICK JUST AS MUCH? THE KITTEN WASN'T THERE—CERTAINLY NOT!

So it came about that during the remainder of that day and part of the next Fenwick either made no further exploration of his past; or, if he did so, concealed his discoveries. For he not only kept silence with Rosalind, but even with Vereker was absolutely reserved, never alluding to their conversation of the morning. And the doctor accepted this reserve, and asked no questions.

As for Rosalind, she was only too glad to catch at the support of the medical authority and to abstain from question or suggestion; for the present certainly, and, unless her silence—as might be—should seem to imply a motive on her part, to maintain it until her husband revived the subject by disclosing further recollections of the bygone time. Happily Sally knew nothing about it; *that* her mother was convinced of. And Sally wasn't likely to know anything, for Vereker's professional discretion could be relied on, even if her suspicions were excited. And, really, except that Fenwick seemed a little drowsy and reflective, and that Rosalind had a semitone of consolation in her manner towards him, there was nothing to excite suspicion.

After the cows—this is an expression borrowed from Sally, later in the afternoon—conversation flagged through the rest of the walk home. Except for regrets, more than once expressed, that it would be much too late for tea when we got in, and a