

## Fenwick's Career

A silence. Then he said, waveringly, stooping over her:

"Phœbe—I was very hard to you. But there was a black pall on me—and now it's lifting. Will you forgive me?—my dear—my dear!"

She clung to him with a great cry. And once more the torrent of love and repentance was unsealed, which had been arrested through all these weeks. In broken words—in mutual confession—each helping, each excusing the other—the blessed, healing time passed on its way; till suddenly, as her hand dropped again upon her knee, he noticed, as he had often bitterly noticed before, the sham wedding-ring on the third finger.

She saw his eyes upon it, and flushed.

"I had to, John," she pleaded. "I had to."

He said nothing, but he thrust his hand into the breast-pocket of his coat, and brought out the same large pocket-book which still held her last letter to him. He took out the letter, and offered it to her. "Don't read it," he said, peremptorily. "Tear it up."

She recognized it, with a sob, and, trembling, did as he bade her. He gathered up the small fragments of it, took them to the grate, and lit a match under them. Then he returned to her—still holding the open pocket-book.

"Give me your hand."

She held it out to him, bewildered. He slowly drew off the ring, put it aside; then from the inmost fold of the pocket-book he took another ring, slipped it on her finger, and kissed the hand. After which he knelt down again beside her, and they clung to each other—close and long.