

**THE VICAR'S PEOPLE: A  
STORY OF STAIN. IN  
THREE VOLUMES. VOL. III**

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The Vicar's People: A Story of Stain. In Three Volumes. Vol. III by Geo. Manville Fenn

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**GEO. MANVILLE FENN**

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THREE VOLUMES. VOL. III**



# THE VICAR'S PEOPLE:

A Story of a Stain.

BY

GEO. MANVILLE FENN,

AUTHOR OF "THE PARSON O' DUMFORD."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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## THE VICAR'S PEOPLE.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### AWAKENING TO THE WORST.

GEOFFREY TRETHICK, as the servants had said, rose from the place where he was lying, and stood trying to think; but his brain seemed out of gear, and all he could master was the idea that he was not in a fit state to be at An Morlock. Consequently he groped his way out, staggered along the drive, and began to make for the hotel in a vague, erratic fashion, greatly to the amusement of such people as he met.

Fortunately for him about the sixth person



he encountered was Amos Pengelly, who limped up, looking at him with a curious expression of disgust upon his countenance.

“‘Wine is a mocker,’” he muttered; “‘strong drink is raging.’ He’s been trying to forget it all.”

The stout miner hesitated for a moment, and then took and drew Geoffrey’s arm through his own, supporting his uncertain steps, and leading him straight to the hotel, where they were refused entrance.

“No,” said Mrs. Polwinno, the landlady; “Mr. Trethick had better take his favours somewhere else;” and Mr. Polwinno, her little plump, mild husband, nodded his head, and said, “Exactly so, my dear.”

Amos Pengelly frowned, and the disgust he felt grew so strong that he was ready to loosen his hold upon Geoffrey, and leave him to his fate.

“He is false,” he said to himself, “and

bad, and now he has taken to the gashly drink, and I've done with him."

But as he spoke he looked in Geoffrey's flushed face and wild, staring eyes, and something of his old feeling of respect and veneration for his leader came back, and with it a disposition to find some scriptural quotation to suit his case.

" 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves,' " he muttered. "Yes, he's fell among thieves, who've robbed him of his reason, and I can't leave him now."

Taking hold of the helpless man a little more tightly, and knitting his brows, Amos Pengelly, in complete forgetfulness now of his scriptural quotation, proceeded unconsciously to act the part of the Good Samaritan, but under far more trying circumstances.

He had not gone far before he met Tom Jennen, slouching along with his hands deep down in the pockets of a pair of coarse,

flannel trousers, which came well under the arm-pits, and covered his chest, and the sight of those he met made Tom Jennen grin most portentously.

"Why, Amos," he said, "they told me the gashly old mine was drowned, when it was engineer and head miner. Why, Amos, I thought you'd took the pledge."

Pengelly tightened his lips and went on without answering, finding no little difficulty in keeping his companion upright.

"Ah," said old Mrs. Trevoil, standing knitting a Jersey at her door, and smiling maliciously, "some folk gets up and preaches o' Sundays among the Methodies, and teaches what other folk should do, and can't keep theirselves straight."

"Yes," said a sister gossip, in a loud voice, "that's a nice companion for a preacher. Shame on you, Amos Pengelly! You ought to be took off the plan."

Pengelly's face grew tighter, and he strode