

was a terrible night, and to the murderer it seemed as if it would never end. But when the light came, and it came at last, it brought no hope to him. He knew that he must be condemned. He knew the crime had been committed, and to him it appeared so vivid that he almost fancied those who looked upon him must see it marked upon his brow.

With the earliest dawn, old Anthony sent his man to call assistance. He himself remained to watch. But the prisoner, knowing every attempt to be hopeless, made no effort. He sat sullenly and despairingly in a corner of his cell, waiting the hour when he would be consigned to another prison. But he felt as if the change must bring relief. His hand and arm were so dreadfully painful that his punishment already seemed as much as he could bear. He felt as if he could give himself to the hangman's hands, if by so doing he could gain for himself a moment's cessation from his pain.

Half the country was gathered round ere old Anthony's fastenings could be undone. When at last they were, the man, who was utterly incapable of resistance, was seized upon and led forth. A countryman who had been to see the body of old Gregory, looking keenly at him, remarked:

"His coat is the same as the cloth found in dead Gregory's hand. See, here is the place it was torn from. I'll bet my life that we have caught the murderer."

Nathan heard and comprehended him. He remembered that old Gregory when begging for his life, had seized his coat. He looked down, and saw that the piece was gone.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

It has been already stated that the ramifications of the band were most extensive. Among almost all ranks of society its members were to be found. It has been seen that one of the servants of Captain Willinton was an associate of the gang. This man, who, it has been already noticed, was of a cunning and inquisitive nature, at once suspected the motive of Whitley's visit to his master, and although he knew that he had been prevented from consummating his treachery, he had little doubt that he would betray the whole if brought into the presence of those skilled in eliciting information, and who would not scruple to work upon his fears. He determined therefore to take immediate steps to prevent his falling into the hands of the law, even if to accomplish his purpose it should be necessary to resort to the utmost extreme. By the code of the band, he

had already become amenable to the punishment of death.

Greene—the man we speak of—followed his master to Farmer Bradshaw's house, and obtained leave of absence for the day. His master had especial confidence in him,—for he was an arrant hypocrite,—and did not enquire the purpose for which he wished to absent himself.

As soon as he was at liberty, Greene proceeded to the inn, some six miles distant, where Gray and Craighton had left their waggon on the night of the meeting. The host knew and welcomed him, and he met with two or three others of the gang, who were lounging lazily about the bar. Joining them at once, they retired to a private room, to hear what had brought Greene thither at such an unaccustomed hour.

"By G—, lads!" said he, "we are likely to be blown."

The men started, and enquired his meaning.

"I mean," he replied, "that some of us will soon be caged, if we are not lucky enough to catch that drivelling wretch—that Whitley, who went with Craighton and I, to do the job at Willinton's."

"Whitley!" said the host. "He was here at day-break this morning. I wish I had known it then."

"He came from here, then!" said Greene. "He was at the Captain's about nine o'clock. He came to blab the whole affair, but got too frightened to do it. He got away without my knowing it, or I would have given him a lesson he would have remembered. The Captain has got, I am sure he has, some knowledge of him; and will take care to find him again—if he can. If he's caught he'll blow the whole concern. Something must soon be done to shut his throat. He must be caught by us, and settled!"

"A cursed business!" said the host. "I've always thought he was a coward, but I thought he would be as much afraid of us as of the lawyers. But if he's turned informer, he must be caught. I'll have no mercy on informers."

The other three were farmers in middling circumstances, who could not well have fled without being losers, and they therefore agreed with the host. He did a fair business, independently of his connexion with the thieves, and had no mind to leave it, particularly as it might so happen, that, should he retire to the United States, somebody would remember him. It was all-important that Whitley should be muzzled.

Consternation reigned among the group. On either hand it was a dangerous game. Few of the band had dreamed of murder when they associated themselves with it. But now they