

# RICHARD CRAIGNTON,\*

OR,

INCIDENTS AND ADVENTURES IN THE HISTORY OF THE "MARKHAM GANG."

BY HARRY BLOOMFIELD, ESQUIRE, F.R.S.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE mind of Richard Craighton was fearfully agitated. What course to pursue, he could not decide. He felt as if guilty of a crime in not disclosing the knowledge he possessed, in order to furnish a track, the pursuit of which might lead to the discovery of the perpetrators of the daring attack upon the residence of Captain Willinton—a gentleman personally although not intimately known to him, as he had only met him once at Mr. Gardner's—and the public press had filled up the picture which to him had been but sketched in outline by his mother's fears, and his father's haggard appearance, as he staggered into his own house on that terrible morning, wounded and disabled, and—unrepentant.

Days had passed since he had seen him—days which to him had seemed like years, so lazily they waned. In the meantime he had voluntarily released from her engagements his betrothed bride. He had proclaimed himself—to her at least, and to him she was the world—as a felon's son; and it seemed that she had taken him at his word, for he had neither heard of or from her. Did he feel hurt at this? In spite of his generous nature—in spite of his hopes, he did. He blushed as he confessed it to his heart. Of his own will, freely and unconstrainedly exercised, he had sought her, and renounced her; and yet he could not but confess that he had hoped to be longer remembered—more deeply regretted. True, even if she had offered to forego the shame, as indeed she had all but done—and to become his own, regardless of the world's opinion, he would not—he could not have accepted the sacrifice she made. Still there was something—he knew not what—that added gall to the bitterness of his lot. She was all to him—he had believed and hoped he might have been all to her.

"Shame on me!" he said to himself, as he paced his narrow chamber. "Should I not rather rejoice that she has suffered me to remain alone with my infamy! It is an insult to her nature,

for me to think of her! I must think of her no more."

He continued pacing the room for many minutes, when the door was opened and a newspaper handed to him. He opened it mechanically. His eye fell upon a paragraph, with the title of "Daring Attempt at Robbery," which immediately chained his attention. It ran thus:

"On the night of the 7th instant, about eleven o'clock, a daring attempt was made on the life of Captain Willinton, formerly of the 86th, now residing in this Township. There were three robbers. Fortunately the gallant Captain had been sitting up rather later than usual, all his men being absent at some country merry-making. He sat outside the door, the evening having been exceedingly mild and agreeable, and saw the approach of the robbers. Two only ventured near, and one of them, from some conversation he overheard, the Captain believed to be already alarmed,—yet on they came to the very spot where he was sitting, when Captain Willinton, who had been observing them, caught the man who came first, and threw him down the steps. The second man, being a bolder villain, he encountered, having on their first appearance entered his house and armed himself. After a short encounter, the robber was disabled, when the third man came up and attacked him. This man, after fighting for some time, drew a pistol, when the disabled robber threw himself between the combatants and intercepted the ball with his own body. To this interposition Captain Willinton attributes the preservation of his own life. After this the fight was renewed, and the issue was still doubtful, when a neighbour—Mr. Bradshaw, a worthy and brave old man, a farmer, arrived at the scene of action, accompanied by his son, having been alarmed by Mrs. Willinton. The sturdy old man terminated the contest by knocking down the robber. Captain Willinton, we are happy to say, has not been seriously hurt, although he suffers severely from the many and heavy blows he received during his double encounter."