

him home, and that as they lived in a direction the reverse of that which would have brought him home, it was scarcely possible that he would return ere morning. With this explanation the Captain was fully satisfied, the more especially as he had much confidence in the absent man, who was a hypocrite, and had always been exceedingly deferential in his manner, besides being alert and careful in the performance of his duties.

It is scarcely necessary to tell the reader, that, although his master and his fellow-servants fully believed the tale, the man's sickness was a scheme only to give an excuse to Greene to leave them, and that he, on getting free from the house where the merry-making was, had proceeded to the place appointed for his meeting with Whitley and Craighton.

### CHAPTER III.

#### MOTHER AND SON.

WE must now return to Edward Craighton and his associates. After receiving the pistol bullet in his arm, Craighton had from excitement, and pain, and loss of blood, found himself utterly incapable of further action. He dragged himself away from the struggling combatants, towards the end of the house, with a view if possible to reach the road, but before half the distance had been accomplished he sunk down exhausted and fainting. Greene, who was the only man seen by Mr. Bradshaw and his son, was lying wounded, but not utterly prostrate where he had been struck by the sturdy farmer. Young Bradshaw was left to guard him, and to bind up his wound. The ruffian, as he recovered his presence of mind, saw that he was opposed only by a single man, and for a moment, meditated an attempt to overpower him and escape, but fearing a failure, wounded as he was, should the struggle for freedom be protracted, and call the attention of the household, he determined to use stratagem as a safer and surer course. Pretending a greater weakness than he felt, he moaned heavily, and gasped out "water!" as if from the lips of a man in the last extremities. The youth, prompted by feelings of humanity, ceased his attempt to remove the mask which yet concealed the prisoner's features, and entered the house to obtain the water for which he asked. Seizing the moment, Greene, who knew the locality perfectly, crept rapidly towards the nearest fence, favored by the darkness; and having crossed it, crouched beside it as he ran, and, before young Bradshaw's return, was out of sight.

When the young man returned, he found the spot where he had left his prisoner deserted. Not

believing it possible that he could so soon have fled far beyond his reach, he made a rapid circuit of the house, until he fell upon the body of Craighton where he lay insensible. Believing he had found his man, he applied himself to the task of mercy, and had the satisfaction of finding his exertions rewarded by the revival of the wounded man.

Whitley, although thrown down so unexpectedly, and stunned for a moment by his fall, was very slightly hurt, and rather rejoiced at the issue, as far as he himself was concerned. He crept under the shadow of the wall of an adjoining outhouse, with the way clear before him for flight towards the woods, where he might easily baffle his pursuers, should he be observed and followed when the time came for flight. He thus remained a silent but anxious spectator, as far as the darkness of a clear summer night would permit, and whatever was not discernible to the eye, his ear supplied. He knew that Craighton had been first encountered, and overcome, and that the Captain had afterwards been engaged by Greene. Of Craighton's having saved the life of Willinton he was ignorant, for no words had been spoken in his hearing which referred to it. But he saw the death struggle on the sward. When he heard other steps approaching, he had crept closer under the shadow, and when he saw the blow dealt by Mr. Bradshaw, believing all was lost, he prepared for flight, when he was arrested by a new dread—a coward fear of what might be the result, if either should fall alive into the hands of the injured man. Should they or either of them be induced to confess, and to disclose his connection with them, he felt that he was lost. The thought rooted him to the spot, determined to know all. When the Captain, his wife, and his deliverer, entered the house, he drew still nearer. He was so near that he heard the moans of Greene, and his gasping cry. He saw the youth enter the house, and was only prevented from approaching Greene, by seeing him rise and run. He immediately suspected the stratagem, and congratulated himself that one danger was escaped. But where was Craighton? Before he had time to think, young Bradshaw returned with water and a light, and when he saw his start of surprise at the disappearance of his prisoner, and the rapid movement he made in search of him, he felt that he himself was in imminent peril, and hastily but noiselessly crept farther back, keeping his eye fixed on the young farmer's movements. Simultaneously they saw the prostrate body, and the whole of his fears returned with double force upon Whitley's mind. He knew he was disliked by Craighton, and he almost hoped