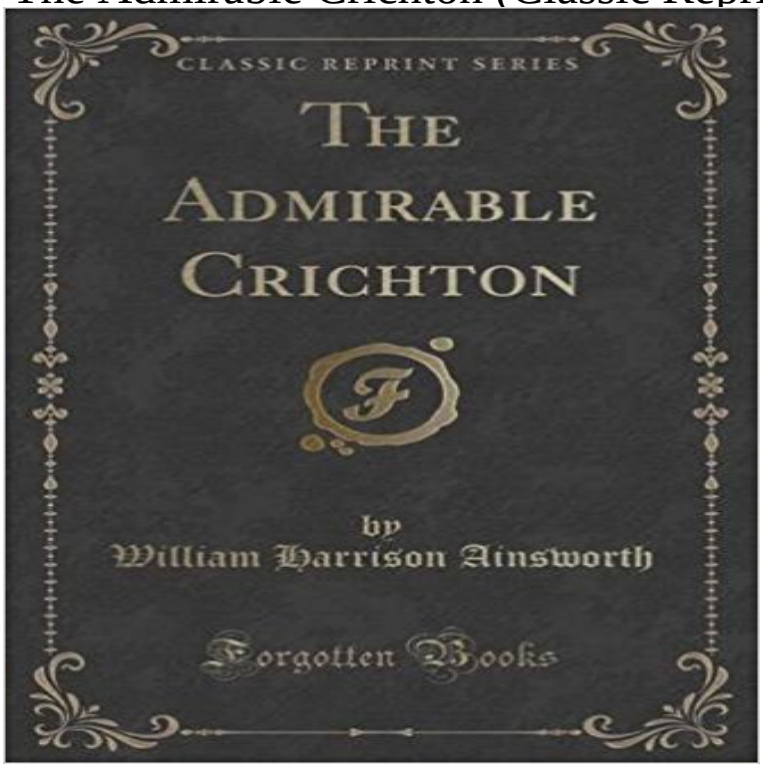
The Admirable Crichton (Classic Reprint)



Excerpt from The Admirable CrichtonIn an early volume of Frasers Magazine there is a portrait of Harrison Ainsworth at the time when he was writing his romance - The Admirable Crichton. It sketches him in outline after the piquant manner of that monthly - a handsome young buck seated very much at his ease on the end of a table. The accompanying squib or article is written by Oliver Yorke. You see, says he, what a pretty fellow the young novelist of the season is... We may without swagger apply to Ainsworth what Theodore Hook has sung of DOrsay:... gallant and gay,With the chest of Apollo, the waist of a gnat,The delight of the ball, the assembly, the play.It was the success of Rookwood which had brought the young romancer into the London limelight. Dick Turpins Ride to York, with Cruikshanks drawing of Black Bess in the act of leaping donkey and donkey-cart at Edmonton, was the choice morsel in the story, which won the readers of that day.In the succeeding saga of the invincible Scot, who was descended from the Crichtons of Sanquhar, and the Royal Stewarts, Ainsworth has to add learned disputations to physical combats in realising his hero. The scene is shifted from Dick Turpins England to the France of Henri de Valois and the lengthening sixteenth-century stage. He draws freely on the extravagant life of Crichton which is found in the history entitled a Jewel ... serving to frontal a Vindication of the Honour of Scotland, by Sir Thomas Urquhart, translator of Rabelais. Ainsworth takes his own high-falutin note from its magnification of James Crichtoun ... who for his learning, judgement, valour, eloquence, beauty and good fellowship was the perfectest result of the joynt labour of the perfect number of those six deities, Pallas, Apollo, Mars, Mercury, Venus and Bacchus.Urquhart outdoes himself in describing the tragic close at Mantua of Crichtons amazing career.About the

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