

had got the pistols, to do for myself, if necessary, what the authorities at the time could not do for me. But I had fortunately found no use for them, though I had visited many a lonely hollow and little-frequented water-course, — exactly the sort of places in which, a century ago, one would have been apt to raise footpads as one now starts hares; and in crossing the borders, I had half resolved to leave them behind me. They gave confidence, however, in unknown neighborhoods, or when travelling alone in the night-time; and so I had brought them with me into England, to support, if necessary, the majesty of the law and the rights of the liege subject; and certainly did not regret this evening that I had.

I entered Newport Pagnell a little after ten o'clock, and found all its inns exactly such scenes of riot and uproar as the inn at Wolverton. There was the same display of glancing lights in the windows, and the same wild hubbub of sound. On I went. A decent mechanic, with a white apron before him, whom I found in the street, assured me there was no chance of getting a bed in Newport Pagnell, but that I might possibly get one at Skirvington, a village on the Olney road, about three miles further on. And so, leaving Newport Pagnell behind me, I set out for Skirvington. It was now wearing late, and I met no more travellers: the little bit of a moon had been down the hill for more than an hour, the fog rime had thickened, and the trees by the wayside loomed through the clouds like giants in dominos. In passing through Skirvington, I had to stoop down and look between me and the sky for signposts. There were no lights in the houses, save here and there in an upper casement; and all was quiet as in a churchyard. By dint of sky-gazing, I discovered an inn, and rapped hard at the door. It was opened by the landlord, *sans* coat and waistcoat. There was no bed to be had there, he said; the beds