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Dark as it was, I fancied that I discerned something strange in her appearance, and I would have investigated it; but she whispered that we were late, and evading as well my questions as the caress I offered, she bade me help her as quickly as I could over the fence. I did so; we crossed a neighbouring garden, and in a twinkling and with the least possible difficulty stood in the road. Here the strains of music came more plainly to the ear, and the glare of light hung lower and shone more brightly. This seemed enough for my mistress; she turned that way without hesitation, and set forward, the outskirts of the town being quickly passed. Between the late hour and the flux of people towards the centre of interest, the streets were vacant; and we met no one until we reached the main thoroughfare, and came upon the edge of the great crowd that moved to and fro before the Rose Inn. Here all the windows, in one of which a band of music was playing some new air, were brilliantly lighted; while below and round the door was such a throng of hurrying waiters and drawers, and such a carrying of meals and drinks, and a shouting of orders as almost turned the brain. A carriage and six that had just set down a grandee, come to pay his devoirs to the Prince, was moving off as we came up, the horses smoking, the footmen panting, and the postilions stooping in their saddles. A little to one side a cask was being staved for the troopers who had come with the Duke; and on all the noisy, moving scene and the flags that streamed from the roofs and windows, and the shifting crowd, poured the ruddy light of a great *bon-feu* that burned on the farther side of the way.

Nor, rare as were these things, were they the most pertinent or the strangest that the fire revealed to me. I had come for nothing else but to see, *clam et furtim*, as the classics say, what was to be seen; with no thought of passing beyond the uttermost ring of spectators. But as