

in the moonlight at an open door, a boy about seven years old.

The King saw him first, and, pressing my arm, stood still. On the instant the child, who had probably seen us before we saw him, advanced into the road to us. "Messieurs," he said, standing up boldly before us and looking at us without fear, "my father is ill, and I cannot close the shutter."

The boy's manner, full of self-possession, and his tone, remarkable at his age, took us so completely by surprise to say nothing of the late hour and the deserted street, which gave these things their full effect—that for a moment neither of us answered. Then the King spoke. "Indeed, M. l'Empereur," he said gravely; "and where is the shutter?"

The boy pointed to an open shutter at the top of the house behind him.

"Ah?" Henry said. "And you wish us to close it?"

"If your please, meisseurs."

"We do please," Henry replied, saluting him with mock reverence. "You may consider the shutter closed. Lead on, Monsieur; we follow."

For the first time the boy looked doubtful; but he turned without saying anything, and passing through the doorway, was in an instant lost in the pitchy darkness of the entry. I laid my hand on the King's arm, and tried to induce him not to follow; fearing much that this might be some new thieves' trap, leading nowhither save to the poire d'angoisse and the poniard. But the attempt was hopeless from the first; he broke from me and entered, and I followed him.

We groped for the balustrade and found it, and began to ascend, guided by the boy's voice; who