

ere?" he asked.

ever, and shook
ching silently.
men came out
had come, but
e observations
that whatever
lighter hearts
t the same.

full share of
of wondering,
and it more
he had dis-
ot surprised,
to gain my
open again,
hurried me
house.

quickly and
visitors, we
ere is the

ely daring
lf by the
suspicion
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t landing,
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There
airs and
e absur-
should
o stifled

laughter, from which he vainly strove to restrain himself by pinching me.

I was not in so gay a mood myself, however, the responsibility of the safety lying heavy upon me; while the possibility that the adventure might prove no less tragical in the sequel than it now appeared comical, did not fail to present itself to my eyes in the darkest colors. When we had watched, therefore, five minutes or more—which seemed to me an hour—I began to loose faith; and I was on the point of undertaking Henry to withdraw, when the voices of men speaking at the door below reached us, and told me that it was too late. The next moment their steps crossed the threshold, and they began to ascend, the boy saying continually, "This way, Messieurs, this way!" and preceding them as he had preceded us. We heard them approach, breathing heavily, and but for the balustrade, by which I felt sure that they would guide themselves, and which stood some feet from our corner, I should have been in a panic lest they should blunder against us. But they passed safely, and a moment later the boy opened the door of the room above. We heard them go in, and without a second's hesitation we crept up after them, following them so closely that the door was scarcely shut before we were at it. We heard, therefore, what passed from the first; the child's request that they would close the shutter, their hasty compliance, and the silence, strange and pregnant, which followed, and which was broken at least by a solemn voice. "We have closed one shutter," it said, "but the shutter of God's mercy is never closed."

"Amen," a second person answered in a tone so distant and muffled that it needed no great wit to