

Christmas in French Canada

"What's the matter?" cried out Joachim Crête.

"Some impudent jokers, no doubt," said the hired man.

"Let us go and see, quick!"

A lantern was lit, and our two checker players started with uncertain step in the direction of the undershot-wheel. But vainly did they search and poke everywhere; all was in good order, nothing seemed to have been interfered with.

"This is most extraordinary," they said, quite nonplussed.

At all events, they oiled the machine, started her again, and returned to their checker-board — not without making their first call at the table, though.

"Your health, Hubert."

"This is to yours, monsieur Joachim."

But hardly were the glasses emptied, when the two men started staring at each other with a bewildered expression: they were beastly drunk first of all, and then the mill had become silent once more.

"Some confounded rascals have thrown