

my post; he can call out, a shout is easier to hear, and not so suspicious."

The three men went back into the tavern, and they kept up the festivity; but at eleven o'clock Vandoyer, Courteenisse, Tonsard, and Bonnébault turned out with their guns, none of the women paying any attention to this. Three-quarters of an hour later, moreover, they came in again, and sat drinking until one o'clock in the morning. Catherine and Marie, with their mother and Bonnébault, had plied the rest of the party with drink, until the miller, the laborers, and the two peasants, like Daddy Fourchon, lay snoring on the floor, when the four set out on their errand. When they came back they shook the sleepers, whom they found as they left them, each in his place.

While this orgy went on, Michand's household endured the most cruel anxiety. Olympe had been taken with false labor-pains, and her husband had started in all haste to summon the doctor. But the poor woman's pains ceased as soon as Michand was out of the house. Her mind was full of the possible risks which her husband might be running at that late hour in a hostile country full of determined scoundrels; and so strong was her anguish of soul, that for the time being it quelled physical suffering. In vain did her servant tell her again and again that her fears were imaginary; she did not seem to understand the words, and sat by the fireside in her room, listening to every sound without. In an agony of terror, which grew from second to second, she called up the man to give him an order which she did not give. The poor little woman walked to and fro in feverish agitation. She went to the windows and looked out, she threw them open in spite of the cold, then she went downstairs, opened the door into the yard, and looked out into the distance and listened.

"Nothing—," she said, "nothing yet," and she went up to her room again in despair.

About a quarter-past twelve she cried out, "Here he is; I