and Pat in the soft musical tones she learned from her mother.

"We will go to the park to-day, Jane," she announced imperiously, and, accordingly to the park they went, where the child, having insisted on purchasing some biscuits, amused herself by feeding the ducks in the lake.

An old gentleman, resting on a seat near by, watched with an all-absorbing interest. Every gesture, every turn of the little figure seemed strangely familiar to him; and, as he watched, Pat suddenly darted across the grass to him, and, springing up, began to lick his hands and to evince every sign of glad recognition.

"Pat!" he exclaimed, involuntarily, and the dog responded with boisterous delight. "There could not be another dog in the world so like Pat!" looking into the familiar, intelligent face.

"Don't go near the water, Miss Terry," said the nurse.

The old man started and trembled. "Terry!" Who was this child with the voice, manners and name of the little girl whom his young wife had loved to clothe in just such a dainty colleen bawn cloak and hood twenty-two years ago, and who was in charge of his old friend, Pat? She turned suddenly with a biscuit in her hand to look for the dog, and revealed the little mobile, lovely face of his Terry of long ago. With an uncontrollable impulse he rose and crossed the grass to her. She saw him coming, Pat bounding forward to introduce his two friends, and looked up at him, first with a child's innocent, curious gaze, then with a great wonder and slowly dawning certainty and delight, every motion reflected on her changeful face.

"Grandfader!" she cried, and ran a few eager steps to meet him. "You are my grandfader!"

"Little maid," he answered brokenly, putting out a shaking hand to her, "what is your name?"

"Miss Terry! Miss Terry!" gasped the scandalized Jane, coming forward aghast at her charge's breach of etiquette in thus entering into conversation with a stranger.

"Be quiet at once, Jane," she said, with an imperious gesture. "My name is Tewentia Delaney Stanley," she answered him, pronouncing the long name with gravity and importance.

"Terentia Dalaney!" he repeated, a great radiance on his face, and in his sad eyes. "That is your mother's name, is it not, little one?"

The child looked puzzled. "It was once — mammie told me so. But mammie's real name is Tewentia Stanley," with conviction, "and you are her daddy. I know you are, because you're like the big picture, and Pat knows you, too." Pat, who was sitting down watching the scene, with a quiet satisfaction, as being (in his opinion) the result of his own cleverness, thumped his tail vigorously on the grass. "Mammie was crying for you this morning," reproachfully, "and she wants to see Killeary again, and so do I. You will ask us, Daddy and Mammie, and me, to spend Kismas there, won't you, grandfader?" She finished her long speech breathlessly.

The sadness was fading out of Sir Maurice's eyes, washed away by happy tears, the lines of pain out of his face; the weary world was a changed place—transfigured by the sound of that baby voice lisping "Grandfader," the sight of that little eager face lifted to his.

"Take me to your Mammie, darling," he said, lifting her in his arms, the soft red bundle seeming to warm his heart and drive the last shadow of loneliness out of it, "and we will all go to Killeary at once, if your Daddy," with a sudden misgiving, "will consent."

"He will do anything that is good for Mammie," announced the child, confidently.

And thus they started for the luxurious flat, which was Terry's home, the bewildered and somewhat horrified Jane following meekly, and half afraid, in spite of the confidence inspired by Sir Maurice's air of breeding, and by Pat's evident recognition of him, to meet her mistress.

Jack Stanley was sitting reading his paper in the drawing-room, Terry having gone away to write her letter, when a man's step sounded on the stairs and he heard his little daughter's voice in tones of strong excitement. A moment later, the door opened and Sir Maurice entered, Terry in his arms and Pat at his side.

"Daddy! Daddy! cried Terry. "I have brought grandfader, and he wants us all to go to Killeary for Kismas!"

The old man came forward quickly, holding out his hand timidly. "You will forgive me?" he asked, with a strange humility. "Your little Terry and my old friend Pat have done so already."

"With all my heart!" responded Jack heartily, grasping the outstretched hand.

In her little boudoir the voices had reached Terry's quick ear, and, trembling, hardly knowing what she hoped, she flew down the passage, where she was met by Pat, who had come to fetch her, and who rushed before her into the drawing-room. For a moment she stood at the door unable to believe the evidence of her eyes: then, with a joyous cry of "Father!" she was in his arms.

* * * * * * * *

It was Christmas Eve, and Terry Stanley stood in the window looking out across Killeary estate to where the sweep of the mountains and the distant gleam of the sea shut in the horizon.

The heavy curtains behind her parted, and her husband's tall figure appeared.

"Little girl," he said wistfully, "are you regretting that you are no longer Miss Delaney of Killeary?"

"Jack," she answered reproachfully, putting one hand on each side of his coat and giving him a little shake. "Don't you know that, though every fibre of my being responds to the magic name of the home of my fathers, I would give it all up again, twenty times over for your sake? I have gained infinitely more than I have lost. Heaven itself would not be Heaven without you," her voice taking a passionate tone as she looked up into his true eyes.

He bent his fair head to hers, and his arms closed round her. "Forgive me, darling," he begged. "I am as jealous a brute as ever. What a triumphal procession you and little Miss Importance and Pat had to-day.

She laughed at the recollection, but there was a note of deep feeling in her voice as she answered. "Yes, my own dear people. I am afraid Baby Terry would soon be utterly spoilt by them if we were going to stay here altogether. Do you know, Jack, a great many admiring eyes followed you as you rode through the village this morning with Father? We Irish people do love a man who can ride, and who looks well on horseback. I had some very nice things said to me about you, too, but I'm not going to repeat them, for fear you should grow conceited. These poor people are great judges of character—there is no deceiving them."

The door opened and they pushed aside the curtains and crossed to the fireplace as Sir Maurice entered.

"This is a real Christmas Eve," he said gladly, his face full of deep content and thankfulness, as Terry slipped down into her old position on the rug at his feet and Jack came and bent over his high old chair.

"Yes," answered Terry, looking up from her lowly place and noting every detail of the heart-satisfying picture the glow from the wood fire lighting up her father's happy face, beyond that her husband's brave, boyish one, and beyond again flashing and gleaming on the oak panelling and great clusters of shining holly and scarlet berries with which little Terry had so damaged her small fingers in her determined efforts to assist in the decoration. "And I think all our hearts are echoing the angels' song, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men!'"—New Ireland.

CHRISTMAS STAR

By C. P. George

Where is Christoph? Since two o'clock mein Mann has been out of his head with the fever, and he grows worse instead of better. I must have the Herr Doctor, and there is no one to send for him but Christoph. Oh! where can the child be?"

For about the tenth time Frau Buch arose from her seat by her husband's bed, and, hurrying to the window, looked out over the wintry landscape. It was now nearly four, and the sun shone darkly red over the mountains in the west. From north to south it made a splendid flame, that lit up the snow-bound country, and tinted the tree tops in the forest, where snow and icicles clung to the branches. To morrow would be Christmas, and Frau Buch, with happy heart, had been making her preparations for a week. In the next room was the Christmas tree that her husband had brought from the forest, its branches still bare—because that morning the good man of the house had come in from his work in the woods with this mysterious illness. That was after all her five children had departed for school, and they were not home yet; she having given them permission to do some Christmas shopping after school hours, before they left the village for their home near the mountains. Suddenly she uttered an exclamation of relief, merry voices made themselves heard through the closed window, and presently the five came in sight, walking out of the path through the forest. Tall Helene came first, leading her youngest sister, Paula; behind her were the twins, Hedwig and Mathilde; and ten year old Christoph brought up the rear.

Throwing a shawl around her head, Frau Buch hurried out. She hated to cloud the bright faces with bad news, but anxiety about her sick husband made it imperative that she tell them at once. Another moment and the children had crowded around her, and listened while she related what had happened. "I shall have to send you for the doctor, Christoph," she said. "It is a long walk, but you can reach the village before dark and come back with the doctor. Come into the kitchen first, child, and have something to eat, and put on your worsted jacket under your coat; it will be cold coming home."

The boy threw his arms lovingly around her. "I'll get the doctor, Mutterchen, and I'll run most of the way; it will keep me warm."

Blue-eyed Helene handed her young sister to Hedwig. "Take her in, Liebling, and give her her supper, her hands are stiff with cold; and I will sit with the Vater while Mutterlein gives you your supper and sees Christoph on his way."

Softly they reentered the house. The sick man was muttering in his fever, and now and then his voice rose, making itself heard in every corner of the small cottage that stood in a clearing of the Tyrolean forest.

"Will mein Vater die?" asked little Paula.

"Heaven forbid, Liebling. I know not how serious the sickness is. Only once before, since we were married fifteen years ago, has he been ill; and then my own doctoring made him well; but now it is different."

The boy arose from the table where he had been taking his evening meal. "I'm ready now, Mutterlein," and glancing at the tall kitchen clock, "it is 4:30. At 5:30 I will be at the Herr Doctor's, and if he is home we will reach here before 7 o'clock. Is it not so liebe Mutter?"

She bent down and kissed the boy's bright, eager face, then buttoned up his coat and pulled his cap well down over his ears with loving hands; with a few more words he departed. She stood and watched the child, as with light springing step he ran in the direction of the forest.

Small Paula slipped down from her chair, and crept close to her mother as a wild laugh, succeeded by incoherent jabbering, was heard from the direction of the sick room.

The mother glanced down at the timid child, and mother love made her remember all the beautiful Christmas Eve customs, now so sadly interrupted. "Hedwig and Mathilde," she said, "suppose you take Paula and go in the next room, and dress the Christmas tree. By midnight the Vater may be better, so let us be ready for our Christmas. Helene can now have her supper, and then she will join you."

Relieved by this ray of brightness in the midst of gloom, the children eagerly assented. Fair-haired Helene came in and had her bread, cheese and porridge; then, quickly clearing up the kitchen, joined her sisters, while their mother resumed her vigil by her husband's bed, in her hands her well worn knitting needles. In and out of the grey wool they flew, nor did the mother pause, except occasionally to give her husband a drink of water. Half-past five came, 6 o'clock, and then she heard Helene take Paula to their room to put her to bed. At 6:30 the twins also retired, and presently Helene glided into the room.

"They will be here soon, Mutterchen. The children have all three hung their stockings and have gone to sleep, all ready for St. Nicholas. Now I will run out to the barn and feed the goat and hens, and shut them up for the night."

She was gone, singing a carol softly under her breath as she went. For half an hour the sick man had been perfectly still. The eight-day clock ticked in the kitchen, and a log of wood broke on the hearth and fell apart; but still the sufferer lay motionless; the clock struck 7, and suddenly Frau Buch arose and looked intently at the sick man. Yes, there was no doubt of it, drops of moisture were on his forehead and around his mouth, and the flush on his face was decreasing. Lightly she slipped her hand under the coverlid and felt both his hands; they were dripping wet, and with a deep murmur of thankfulness, she watched him, knowing well that the fever was broken, and the worst probably over.

Helene came in just as the sick man opened his eyes, and in a perfectly rational voice asked for water.

"But how is this, meine Frau? I am dripping wet." He tried to raise himself on his elbows as he spoke, then sank back on his pillow and closed his eyes.

"I feel very weak," he said, "but my pain is all gone. What time is it, Liebling?"

"Ach Je! mein Heinrich, it is now the quarter past seven and Christoph has gone for the doctor. But now lie still and I will change your clothes and put warm blankets around you. You have sweated enough, and, as soon as I get you into dry clothes, you must have some nourishment."

Quickly and skilfully the devoted wife fulfilled her task, and at eight o'clock the invalid turned over on his side and presently was in a sound, refreshing sleep. Then Susanna Buch sought her eldest daughter, and together they strained their faces against the window panes, watching for the absent child. Not yet would they confess to any feeling of alarm. By eleven o'clock however, their fears were thoroughly aroused, and throwing a cloak around her and lighting a lantern, the mother ran to the edge of the forest and listened intently; but no sound broke the absolute stillness, save the wind rustling among the branches of the trees. Even as she stood there a few flakes of snow began to fall and in five minutes they were coming down thick and fast. Hanging her lantern to a tree at the entrance to the forest-path, the mother went back to the house, and for another hour she and Helene watched and prayed. Surely if all had been well, Christoph would have been home ere now.

II

For half an hour after leaving home, Christoph ran through the forest as fast as he could; used to an active outdoor life and with the path clear before him, he had no difficulty in making his way, until suddenly, at a turn in the narrow path, his course was arrested by the sound of some one running toward him, and at the same time a man dashed past, hatless, and panting for breath.

The boy paused, more in surprise than alarm, and then through the arching forest path, which was already beginning to get dim from the waning daylight, he beheld the tall figure, and shaggy beard and hair, of a man he had never seen before; clearly a stranger to that region. The boy remained motionless until the oncoming figure crossed a part of the forest path where there was daylight; then, and then only, did Christoph see that the wild creature had a knife in one hand, which he was brandishing at every step. The long shining steel blade looked more like a butcher's carving knife than anything else. For a second longer the boy stood his ground, then necessity and the instinct of self preservation, made him spring aside into the thickly wooded forest at his right. On he went, forcing his way though brambles and bare branches, knowing by the sound that the man had given up his first pursuit and was now intent on catching him, Christoph.

The boy was fleet of foot, but, turned aside from the main path, his course lay through a trackless forest, heavily timbered. If only he could get out of sight before darkness descended, all would be well. Suddenly he came out again in a clearing, and now he could run at his utmost speed. Of a sudden there was a crash in the distance; plainly his pursuer had fallen down, and, pausing a second to look over his shoulder, and seeing that the man was not in sight, Christoph's resolution was taken; another moment and he had climbed a tall tree; light of build, he climbed almost to the topmost branch. Breathless and panting the boy waited. "He can't get me here," he thought: "he was large and heavy, and even if he pursues me and tries to climb up here, the branches will break under his weight and he will fall to the ground." Presently the boy heard the sound of running steps again, and a second later the man dashed past. Christoph saw the gleam of his knife, then heard his steps grow fainter and fainter in the distance till he could hear them no more. Then, and then only, did he descend, and, pausing a moment, the brave boy decided to follow right after the apparently insane man. He knew that in that direction lay the village, through probably much further away now than if he had kept on his original course; but reach the doctor he must.

It had now become almost dark, and rapidly, yet lightly, making hardly any sound, the boy began running once more. He had run for about twenty minutes when suddenly he paused; his quick ear detected the sound of returning footsteps. Once again he sprang aside into the shelter of the friendly woods and waited, scarcely daring to breathe. Black darkness had now enveloped the forest, and it was impossible to see a dozen feet ahead. Nearer and nearer came the steps, until the man was on a line with where Christoph was standing. Afterward he wondered that the violent beating of his heart did not make itself heard; but no—the man kept on, muttering to himself as he hurried along. It was not until the last sound of his footsteps died out that the boy came out of his hiding place. The darkness and cold now were intense, but he was warmly wrapped up, and, intent only on his errand of love, Christoph ran, his hands stretched out in front of him, to ward off any obstruction from trunk or branch of tree, in the darkness. Ten minutes more and the saw light ahead; in five minutes he was out of the forest on a vast snow-covered plain. Even as the child uttered a sigh of relief, and turned to gaze heavenward to try and locate his whereabouts, he was arrested by a magnificent sight, a star so large and brilliant that all the other stars in the sky became mere points of light in comparison.

"The Star of Bethlehem!" said Christoph aloud. "How beautiful!"

Involuntarily the child crossed himself, and bent his knee, then his keen blue eyes scanned the rest of the heavens. "Where was he, and which way ought he to go in order to reach the village?" The last half of his journey the forest path had taken so many turnings that he was completely at fault as to which way to turn. Then a strange thing happened. He had turned his back on the star; now, he was facing it again, and, oh! wonder of wonders, it was moving. There could be no doubt of it. Spell-bound with amazement and awe the child stood still, and slowly and majestically the magnificent star moved across the heavens, every moment growing brighter and brighter.

Down on his knees in the snow went the little boy, the intense faith of the Austrian Tyrolese dominating him.

"Oh, beautiful star," he said, "guide me as you did the Wise Men. I will follow you, and I believe you will bring me to the village, so I can get the Herr Doctor for mein Vater."

Like Christopher of old, the boy set out on his journey. Straight across the frozen plains, with the star ever in sight, and, now that he was safe from all fear, of the wild man of the woods, the child lifted up his voice and sang; the "Adeste Fideles" was succeeded by "Heilige Nacht, Stille Nacht," and still the boy sang on, his clear soprano echoing across the frosty fields and re-echoing upward toward that magnificent star which now seemed so near that its light was dazzling. For an hour or more the boy walked on, and then suddenly a strange thing happened; the brilliant star grew larger and nearer and there was the sound of a whirring noise. Could it be angels' wings on that Holy Night?

Christoph stood still a moment, gazing upward, and now the star was surely rushing earthward, and its light dazzled him so he could not see. Then something struck him a glancing blow on the shoulder, and with a sudden cry of pain, he sank face downward in the snow.

* * * *

"Quick, mein Herr, we have hit a child in our descent: it must have been the very boy whose voice has been enchanting our ears for the past twenty minutes."

Christoph opened his eyes on a brilliant light from several lanterns, to find he was lying on a warm blanket, with three or four men standing near, while a fifth was on his knees by him, holding something powerful and fragrant to his nose.

"So you are all right now, my little man? That was a bad blow, but fortunately your shoulder is not broken. You might have had a fractured collar bone, which would have been bad on Christmas. Eh?"

"The star," gasped Christoph, "where is it? I was following the star like the Wise Men, knowing it would lead me the right way, and now it is gone, and I must get the doctor for mein Vater who is very ill."

"So the child took our light for the Star of Bethelehem?" said another voice. "Well, he shall not be disappointed. Find out where he lives, Franz, and we will take him home."

Christoph struggled to his feet. "I'm all right now he said, "and I must stop. If you will tell me, Herr, which way to go to reach the village of F— I will go at once."

"And with daylight not here? No, my boy. My uncle wants to know where you live, and we will take you home in our balloon that you took for a star, and, seeing that you pinned your faith on us, you shall not be disappointed; that gentleman talking to my uncle is a doctor. He will see your father and find out what is the matter. Now come with me; the Christmas dawn will be here before we get you home."

In delighted bewilderment the child followed his good-natured guide until they reached a gigantic balloon that stood some distance away in the field. Afterward they told him that just as they were descending, their dog, usually the best behaved of animals, had pushed an empty lunch box, in which he had been foraging for a bone, out of the balloon, and it was this box which had hit Christoph on the shoulder.

"Aerial navigation is going to be a big thing," said a tall man with a deep voice, the same whom Christoph's friend had said was the doctor; "for ultimate safety, I think, every one will have to abandon terra firma and live in the upper air, if those who try to walk about on Shank's mare are to be hit by any or everything that flies aloft."

Some good-natured raillery followed, to which Christoph listened, the while he gazed in wonder at the balloon, at its ropes, cords, engine, and in fact every part, which he examined with all a boy's interest and curiosity. In five minutes all was ready for start—the rest of the party entered the balloon, and in a second's time they shot upward. Everyone seemed to have something to do except the kindly looking old gentleman who, sitting down by the child, asked him all about his home and his father. In a few moments Christoph was talking to his new friend as if he had known him all his life, the while he held the dog on his lap, and pulled its silky ears.

And now the red dawn has broken in the east, and the child looked out on a wonderful world; far below stretched frozen plains and dark forests touched with snow and frost, with here and there a cluster of cottages; truly it was a marvelous world seen from such a height.

"We must be right above the boy's home now," said the old gentleman called Franz; "I will descend, and then back to the castle for breakfast."

Leaning over the side of the balloon, Christoph eagerly scanned the world below. Yes, surely, there was the little cottage on the border of the forest, and in another moment he made out his mother and sisters standing outside the door, gazing upward at the fast descending balloon.

In his excitement, he shouted, the dog barked, and the old gentleman laughed; and now they had landed in a field back of the cottage, and Frau Buch and her daughters were running to meet them. There were exclamations and laughter and tears. Again and again the mother alternately strained the boy she had believed lost and frozen in the snow to her heart, and courtesied to the gentlemen who had so wonderfully found him and brought him home.

After sorrow comes joy; after the dark night comes day; after the Advent season the Christmas morn, with happy hearts and family reunion. Frau Buch took the doctor in to see her husband, and then hurried back to hear the story of Christoph's night experience and the wonderful light which he thought was the Star of Bethlehem and which had truly proved his salvation.

"I was just getting sleepy," he said, "when I saw that light. I wanted to lie down in the snow and go to sleep; but when I saw the star I forgot I was sleepy and followed it."

"A good thing, my boy," said the old gentleman. "If you had lain down to sleep you would never have awakened again in this world. Ah, here is the doctor. What about your patient, Herman?"

"A regular case of chills and fever, and therefore nothing at all serious. I have left medicine for him, and he will be all right in a few days." Then, answering the unspoken question in the mother's eyes, the big man smiled.

"You all want to go to Mass," he said, "Yes, you can go with an easy mind. Your husband can stay alone for an hour or two. He has no fever and only needs rest, and his medicine, which he can take himself."

"We have all been to midnight Mass," said the old gentleman, "and our way to the castle lies beyond your village. Jump in the balloon, Frau, and I will have you and your children at the church in 10 minutes, then you will only have to walk home."

Could anything have been more delightful! There was a hurried putting on of wraps, a scampering for rosaries and prayer books. A good-bye to the father for a little while, and they were off!

"Are we going to Christmas Mass in heaven?" asked little Paula.

"Not quite, mein Liebling," said the old gentleman, as a merry laugh ran around the circle of bright faces; "but I fancy it will be a heaven-sent Mass for your mother to-day."

Now they were descending near the village church; and what was this? for the pastor who was outside the church, giving Christmas greeting to his flock, cast one glance at the old gentleman and had then fallen on one knee before him. Wonderingly the Frau stepped out of the balloon with her children, uttering her grateful thanks for all they had done for her and hers.

The old gentleman took some shining coins out of his pocket and slipped them in Christoph's hand.

"Good-bye, my boy; divide this Christmas present with your sisters; and perhaps you will like to know it is a Christmas gift from your Emperor."

The Emperor! Down on her knees in the frozen snow went the good Frau, and in speechless awe the children followed her example, to think they had been sailing in a balloon with the Emperor.

Another moment and the balloon was floating away; and then, and then only, did the mother and her children arise from their knees, and enter the little village church for the second Mass at break of day. Before the Christmas crib, and in the presence of the King of Kings, before Whom Emperor and peasant alike kneel in lowly adoration, Christoph gave fervent thanks for his safety from peril in the forest, and for the light that, shining in a dark place, had led him to safety and home, as the star led the Wise Men of old.

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