

"Who are you down there, or what are you, anyhow?"

"Heinrich Dorsch," answered he, joyfully.

"Oh! the Dutchman's boy," said the hearty voice above, addressing his companions this time. "He's from down to the Thompson mine camp. We must get a rope and get him up."

In less than half an hour, poor Heinrich was on top, pale, weak and trembling, but alive and very happy, indeed. Indians had been disturbing the neighborhood, and these were a band of sturdy miners, who were after them, and hearing the wolves, had feared something was wrong. Heinrich related to them his experience, and the men expressed sorrow for him.

"Tomorrow is Christmas," said one of them, "and let us spend it in hunting for the Indians."

The men were of one mind. "But first," said one, "let us help the kid home. Here he has worked all day to get a Christmas tree, and old Gotlieb Dorsch is no doubt now up on the mountains looking for him."

"And must I lose my tree?" said poor Heinrich, aloud, for the first time realizing his loss. But he was only too glad to see a chance now to reach home.

"Just so, just so," said the good-natured miner, winking at his comrades, a brilliant idea striking him. "Jack Rabbitt, suppose you put the youngster on your horse and ride him 'long o' you. The rest of us have something else to do."

Jack Rabbitt did as he was bid, and, helping Heinrich on his horse, they rode home under the chill moonlight, for it was midnight, and the moon was rising. They arrived just in time to cut off a party who were starting on a search for him. There were a dozen or more, but they were glad enough to disband and yield the honor of finding him to their neighbors of the upper camp.

The pillow of Heinrich's bed never felt more downy than that night, and happy tears fell from the mother's face on that of her son.

"T'ank Got! T'ank Got!" she kept repeating o'er and o'er.

Heinrich was thankful to the Great Father who had so kindly watched over his life, and had snatched him, as it were, from the jaws of death; and, also, for teaching him a lesson, which he never forgot—a lesson of caution and prudence, which all must learn, soon or late; but not all, thank heaven, in so hard a way as poor Heinrich Dorsch.

"I'm sorry I lost the tree though, mother, after all," he said, just as she bade him a last long good-night. "The children will be disappointed when they awake."

"Better it is not tink about dot," said his mother. "It vas enough mine Heinrich vas safe und not eat up mit de volfes."

But such a clatter and stamping and grating as there was in the gray of the early Christmas morning, outside the cabin door of old Gotlieb Dorsch! What a noise it was! And who could sleep under it? Old Gotlieb sprang out of bed in dismay, and pulled his night-cap closer on than he had ever done before. All the little Dorsches lay shivering in fright, thinking Santa Claus was crazy, and intended carrying them off. Then there was a silence, and a chorus of miners sang these words, to the tune of "John Brown:"

Christmas joys return again,
Christmas pies are baked again,
Happy hearts will burst again,
In chorus Christmas morning.

"Three cheers and a tiger" were then given, and the sound of retreating footsteps reached the ears of those inside the cabin doors. Then Gotlieb Dorsch drew back the bolt from his cabin door, and peered into the morning twilight,