

**TWINS.**

POOR POLLY wouldn't have a thing,  
How terrible that would be!  
For every single boy he'd bring  
He'd a'guess would b'long to me.

Polly! let's take our picture books  
Before we go to bed,  
Marked "Polly Brooks" and "Dolly Brooks,"  
And hang them overhead.

Then, when old Santa comes our way,  
He'll smile the biggest smile,  
And those "round the neck" and say:  
"What have we here?" Ah, twins!

—Outlook.

**CHIPS CHRISTMAS CHEER**

TACKS of money all around  
Stout little canvas sacks bulging full of gold  
and tied together at the neck with strong cord; neat little paper rolls of silver dollars piled up in pyramid form, and heaps and heaps of packages of bills counted and done up in little paper bands! Some of these packages were of one-dollar bills and some of fives and some of tens; others of twenties and fifties and one-hundreds. They were stacked up at the back of the desk where Tommy was at work in the bank, for he was a teller of some sort, or under-teller, or something which entailed a great deal of work and very little pay, as positions of responsibility often do.

As Tommy looked through the little brass-barred window at "Tommy," as everybody in the bank called him, he appeared to be a veritable money king. Wealth was all around. Besides being all over the two standing desks between which he worked, it was stowed away in drawers, I have no doubt, and piled up on the floor.

Tommy was hard at work. It was the day before Christmas, and people had been making deposits, and drawing money, and getting drafts, and doing all sorts of things which they will insist on putting off till the last minute. He was writing in an effort to close up affairs for the day, and his arm rested as he wrote on a package of one-hundred-dollar bills when he glanced up and saw at the little grating through which he had to look at the public a pair of big, greedy eyes, set in a very small and very wan face. The face itself barely reached above the window-ledge, and Tommy couldn't tell whether it belonged to a boy or a girl, it was so pinched, and hungry, and dirty. The eyes of the face were devouring the money, as the eyes of the poor are prone to do, and the owner of the face seemed lost in contemplation of the gorgeous sight.

Then the eyes saw that Tommy was looking at them and shifted to meet his own. Tommy noted that they were singularly beautiful eyes of brown, with long, curling lashes. He must have been looking into them with a very kindly gaze, for they seemed to read in his look a friendliness that made their owner bold.

"Please, mister," said a small voice, which evidently came from the owner of the eyes, "can't I go on an errand, or something, so's to earn a little Christmas stake?"

The owner of the eyes evidently took Tommy for the owner of all the wealth around him, and of the whole institution as well, and had a notion that if he chose he could hand out a bag of gold coin or two or three of the thick slabs

"BEEN A-WAITIN' FER YE."

of greenbacks which were scattered around so promiscuously. This abiding confidence in his greatness on the part of the owner of the small, wan face so

gusted Tommy that he could do nothing for a moment but stare at the big brown eyes and grow red in the face. Finally he said:

"Why, you see—ahem—it's—it's—"

And here the watchman came along and, seeing the ragged little owner of the face, hustled him out with some scornful remarks about beggars. As the little fellow disappeared through the door and down the outside steps Tommy saw a slight figure tattered and shivering. And then the doors swung shut and Tommy turned to his work, with all of his own troubles crowded out of mind and only sympathy for the poor little wail occupying his thoughts.

He forgot all about the load of obligation that was on him and his hopeless struggles to extricate himself from the quicksand of debt into which he had foundered in his efforts to care for his

own, he took down his shabby overcoat from its peg, shook himself into it, put on his hat, and went out of the bank. He noticed that the streets were full of happy, hurrying throngs of people, most of whom had some package or bundle, but he wasn't envious, though he wished for a moment that he might have been able to send to his mother and sister some of the many pretty things he had seen through the shop windows as he walked homeward each evening.

He started west at a brisk walk for he couldn't afford to ride, and it was chilly cold. He hadn't gone far when he noticed a small figure trotting along by his side. He looked at it and caught two big brown eyes glancing up into his own.

It was the boy who had wanted to earn the "Christmas stake."

way, and they both felt first-rate. Then Tommy said:

"Well, I don't exactly own the bank. I've only got an interest in it. Say! To-morrow's Christmas! Know that?"

"Bet I do!" said Chip. "That's why I'm a hustlin'. I want to be in with the other good people. I want to eat turkey."

"Well, I tell you," said Tommy, "I don't want any errands done, and I don't know of anythin'. I can give you to do, Chip—"

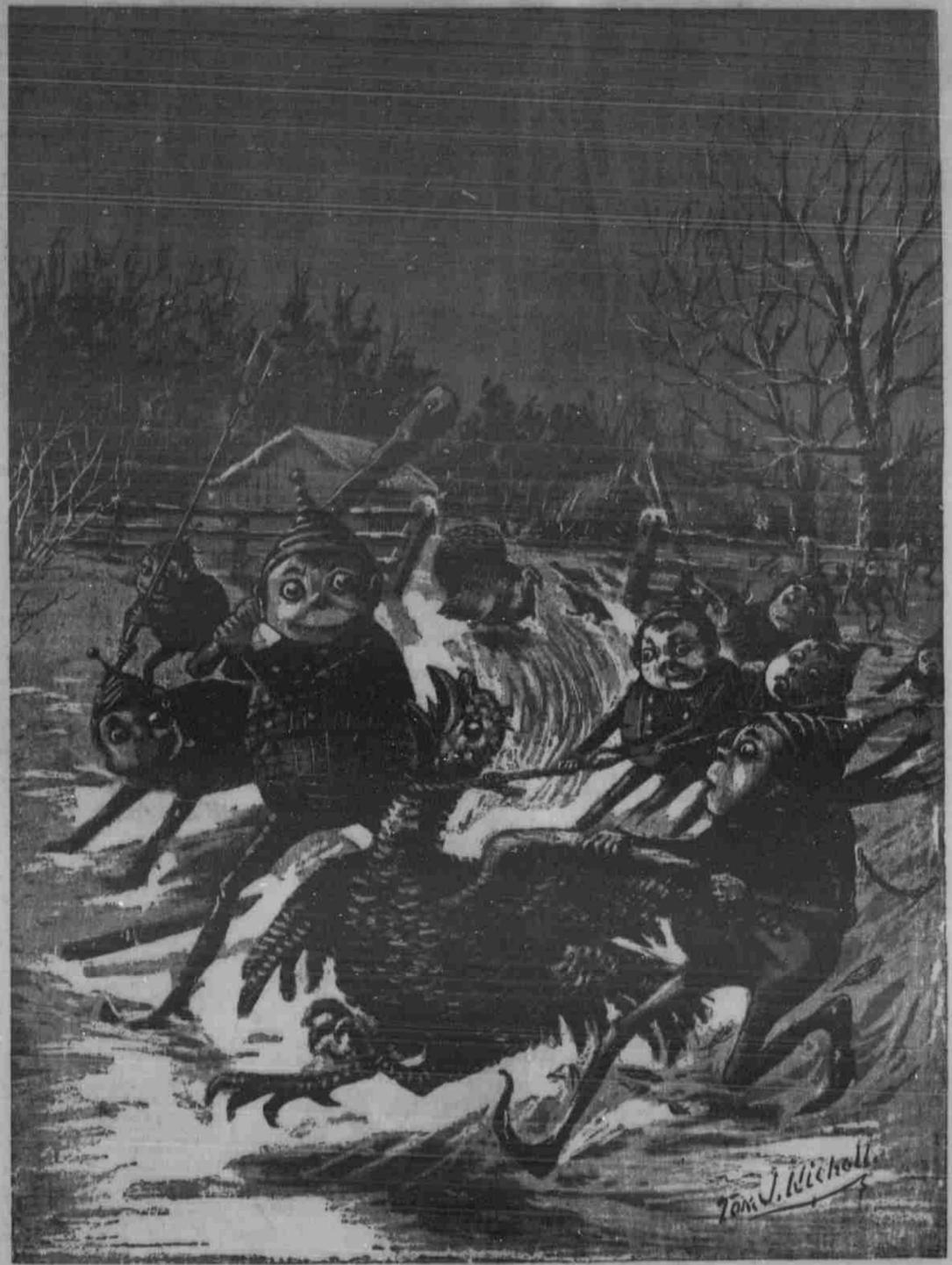
Here the wan little face looked up bravely and the big brown eyes stared themselves a bit till Tommy had finished.

"But I'll take you home with me, if you like, and you can share my Christmas dinner with me, whatever it may be. Now's that; eh, old man?"

The big brown eyes in the little pale

scrubbed him up and fitted him into a back-number jacket and trousers which her own boy had worn years and years ago, before he ran off on a lake schooner and got drowned—then it came dinner time, and oh, dear! what a feast that dinner was to Chip. There wasn't any turkey, but there was the tenderest and best stewed chicken that ever Mrs. Bloomer had cooked, and the gravy was simply delicious. Then there were nice, warm biscuits to split in half and smother with this gravy; and mashed potatoes and homemade bread and butter; and to top off with there was the thickest, and juiciest, and sweetest apple pie that ever was baked. And Chip had two glasses of real milk.

And how his big brown eyes sparkled and his pale cheeks brightened! What a merry little fellow he proved to be, with his quaint sayings and his extrar-



A RACE FOR A HOLIDAY DINNER.

poor old mother and a helpless invalid sister in a little Wisconsin town. The load had been made infinitely heavier by a sad accident to his mother, which had resulted in a broken limb and which had necessitated nurses and increased doctors' bills and no end of expense during the fall, and Tommy had been obliged to borrow money from a private shylock in the bank and pay a ruinously onerous interest per month for the same. He had had to send home the big end of his small salary, too, each month, and what between this and the borrowed money he had run behind in his board, and was in about as desperate a financial fix as a hard-working, honest and faithful ex-plays ever was. Only the extreme kindness of the little old lady with whom Tommy boarded in a little old cottage on a little by-street on the West side enabled him to keep his head above water at all. But he was one of those stout-hearted fellows of whom the great world rarely hears, and wouldn't let himself get sour or cross.

When at last he had straightened everything up and had packed away the bundles of bills, and the bags of gold, and the paper rolls with the silver dollars inside, and had run over in his mind all the good he might do if only a small portion of all this money was his

Tommy stopped short, so did the boy. "Hello!" said Tommy, cheerily. "Where did you come from?"

"Been a-waitin' fer ye," piped the small voice, with equal cheerfulness. "Tought mebbe you might want a errand run son-ers."

"What's your name?" asked Tommy, in an admiring tone, his face beaming.

"Chip."

"Anything else?"

"No. Nothin' but Chip. Ye see, I'm a hustlin' for myself, so I hain't had no time to think up names. A little fellow like me don't ketch on very easy, you know."

Tommy had started on and this last speech had come from the small figure as it trotted along. He looked down and saw the big brown eyes looking up at him. They were beautiful to look into, and the voice was such a cheery little voice, without a trace of a whine in it, that Tommy felt immensely refreshed.

"And what made you pick me out?" asked Tommy.

"Well, I liked your looks, and—w-y, you own the bank, don't you, an' all that money, an' ever'body."

Tommy looked down again and laughed. Chip looked up and laughed. It was right jolly to chat along that

face gladdened with the tears that touches of unexpected kindness always produce in sensitive natures, but the voice made a great effort to be as brave and cheery as ever when it replied between shivers:

"I call that—'way up in G, an'—you're a pr—prince o' the blood—you are!"

"Put it there," said Tommy, as he stepped under a gas lamp and held his hand to the little grand soul by his side. The cool little hand snuggled confidently in his and the eyes looked back into his own and the bond of intimacy and warm friendship was complete.

Thereafter Tommy held Chip's hand as they tramped a zig-zag west, and when they reached the side street in which he lived, Tommy lifted the thin little figure in his arms and with Chip's hands clasped round his neck walked into the presence of kind old Mrs. Bloomer. It was messager fare they had that night, considered from the standard of high fivers, but Tommy was used to it and it was simply luxurious to Chip.

But the next day, after Tommy had chummed with Chip all forenoon and got friendly and learned all about him—which wasn't much, he hadn't a friend in the world—and after Mrs. Bloomer had taken him in hand and

ngant admiration of Tommy! And when dinner was over and Chip was happy as he could be Tommy got out his harmonica and played dead marches till Chip was "mighty nigh to bustin'," as he himself expressed it.

In the evening Tommy took Chip to the theater and sat up in the twenty-five cent gallery, and they had the best time in the world, and wouldn't have changed places with the swell people in the first-floor boxes, not on any account. And when they had gone home and to bed and Chip had snuggled down by his side, Tommy asked:

"What are you thinking about, Chip, old man?"

A small, thin arm stole up over Tommy's breast and hugged his shoulder warmly.

"I was jist a offerin' a bet to myself," said Chip, sleepily, "that you wasn't nothin' less'n my own brother to Santy Claus. Ain't ya?"

But before Tommy could answer happy little Chip was far afoot on dreamland's delightful sea and was living over again the pleasures of the day, while in Tommy's heart there crooned a soothing song more sweet and comforting than any millionaire in all the great big city could ever hope to hear.—Kirk La Shelle, in Chicago Mail.

**CHRISTMAS AT THE OLD PLACE**

THEY SAT beside the flickering fire, and in its ruddy gleams And looked in the face of him who leaned above her there, And kissed her cheek, and tenderly smoothed down her golden hair. She said: "We've been so long away from mother, that I know She's lonely in the home we left so many years ago!"

No other words she said, but he kissed back the tears that came, And whispered: "If they loved you then, they love you still the same; The old home must be lonely, though the fire is blazing bright— The little one shall plead for us—they'll kiss him Christmas night!"

And so it was that, while star o'er the remembered bells Still brightly beamed each Christmas star and pealed the Christmas bells, The wanderers went home, and in its loveliness and light They found a welcome, and a kiss for baby Christmas night! —Frank L. Stanton, in Atlantic Constitution.



**DEBATE AND SPECIFIC.**

Our resolutions for the new year should be definite and specific. Do not say simply that you will be more liberal, but say just how liberal you will be. Do not say that you will be more faithful, but say just what duties, neglected in the past, you will engage to perform in the future. Do not promise that you will give more of your time to the service of the Master, but decide upon the proportion of your time which you will give. A promise may be almost or altogether worthless because of indefiniteness. Let us deal honestly and reverently with Him whom we serve. Vow and pay.—United Presbyterian.

**SANTA CLAUS IN CHICAGO.**

Santa Claus—Take me up to the roof, boy. I tried to get there in my usual way, but it was no use—my team isn't equal to it!—Puck.