

## Our Boys and Girls...

EDITED BY AUNT BUSY.

This department is conducted solely in the interests of our girl and boy readers. Aunt Busy is glad to hear any time from the boys and girls who read this paper, and to give them all the advice and help in her power. Write on one side of the paper only. Do not have letters too long. Original stories and verses will be gladly received and carefully edited. The manuscripts of contributions not accepted will be returned. Address all letters to Aunt Busy, Intermountain Catholic, Salt Lake City.

### TOP OF THE MORNING.

(Percy D. W. Lizard, in London Daily News.)

There is a beauty in the old Hibernian greeting that wishes one "the top of the morning," which few of us are able to comprehend. For we are so very tardy in daylight saving, and only by force of accident or necessity have most of us who do understand discovered the ecstasy of the dry-spring and the sunrise.

The morning's prime, with its fresh, sweet hours of tonic breezes and untainted air, the invigoration of body and spirit, the impulse to start with the birth of the day to do all things well until the sun-dawn brings it rest, and happy reverie, and "depths of incommunicable dreams"—if you go a-walking in "the top of the morning," ready to be guided by nature, all these wholesome influences will come to you, and every hundred yards of the way will find you stopping out more jauntily and with a lighter heart.

Beautiful is the hour of dawn in springtide, when all the world is young and every little plant beside your path is on tip-toe to woo the sun. Rarely beautiful are the first hours of September days also, when you may drink deeply of the wine of life in the sweet, cold rush of the most bracing breezes which the round of the year's morning's supply.

The cocks have been crowing for an hour, and the roof-top starlings clamorous for almost as long a time. They tell you your house is a prison when the night has flown. Lift the latch and come out with me while the east is effulgent, and let us greet the sun.

Stretching away everywhere from your threshold are the miles on miles of lush-leaved country, of fern lands divided by full-grown hedgerows, of woodland fringes and still sleeping hamlets, of gray church towers, where the bats and owls of night are already back at home. The wild denizens of the day are beginning to stir, and while you gaze across the silent countryside at this early hour a thousand thousand creatures of the night are creeping full to their resting places.

A few deep breaths taken for the very delight of breathing, and you step down the garden path through the white and crimson phloxes and the golden harpalliums, and dahlias brilliant in their dew-washed purity, and out into the lane. The breeze wafts you a scent of apples from the orchard. Ah! you will munch an apple till you get into your stride. The heavy-headed plum trees are full of purple bloom, and thus early there are wasps at that luscious banquet, though their flight is slow and blundering, for they are half benumbed with the chill of the night.

Along the lane geometrical spiders' webs are stretched widely across every cleft in the hedgerow vegetation, and in the center of each waits the fat, expectant maker of the snare. Well she knows where to spread her silken meshes to obtain an easy living at this season. The place where the morning sunshine will fall and draw the chilled flies to its warmth, the spot where numbed insects will tumble if they sip too long in the evening at the flowers above—these are her September hunting grounds. And by the appearance of her sleek, patterned body she does not fare badly.

But is the finest piece of jewelry in the world more beautiful than any one of these large wheel webs in this morning hour, picked out along all its slender filaments with glistening diamonds of dew? Here are gems of the first water, in very truth, and before we leave the lane for the rolling common the sun climbs clear and sets them all afire.

Now it is a fairy world indeed, for every dew-laden grass blade and fern frond, mossy tuft and dripping bramble arm, is flashing the elemental colors. There are a thousand points of light in every square yard of the hedgerow.

With the coming of the sun the breeze gains strength, and the stratus cloud hanging low over the wet level of the water meadows, a curtain of roseate and pearl but a few minutes ago, begins to move upward and fade over the slope of a golden stubble field. That bank of cloud brought the flying insects to earth overnight, and the swallows took their last meal beneath it. Now, already the birds are skimming over the same ground this morning, and close at hand a lark is carrying his song to the sky. The day is wide awake; but as yet we have not seen a human form.

We tread the springy turf of the common, and the blood courses faster, the step quickens. We are in the hazy swing of the morning walk now. Like old Hazlitt on the tramp, it is hard if we cannot start some game. And why should there be any restraint? Why should we not laugh and run and leap and sing for joy?

Ahead, where the rioting bracken has mounted high among the dark furze clumps and made the track almost a green tunnel, a rabbit is sitting alert in the midst of the way. A shout of our song sends his doubts, and he pops with a flannet of white into the dewy tangle. There are robins here, tick-tick-ticking away in song the precious morning minutes. There is a chaffinch splashing on the margin of a heather-fringed pool. The subdued autumn note of a thrush is raised in a clump of oaks and birches near at hand. Sooty-winged blackbirds glide chattering across the path, and the yellow-linings are beginning their everlasting jingle.

How lovely are the flowers just after the sun has dried the dew from their faces. The golden hawthorns, the little blue scabious, the field scabious swinging its big discs of mauve in the breeze, the new poppy that has just shaken out the crumpled petals of its scarlet dress, the delicate pink of the hawthorn blossom, the veined azure of the harebell waving on its wiry stem, the cream and pink goblets of the honeysuckle, the radiant ragwort, the mauve mint beside the marsh that tells its fragrant presence in every puff of wind, the tordax guarding the nectar in its sulphur spur with close-shut door of orange—all are fairest to see in the pure air and clear shine of "the top of the morning."

Now we enter the wood and crackle over the leaf-litter through its shadowy silence, and are happy, thinking. Later, out into the deep lanes again, to find the butterflies astray. There are white wings flickering through the sunbeams, and here a peacock butterfly has spread his rich damask while he probes with prodigious tongue deep among the purple florets of a knapweed. Meadow browns and coppers are flying, too; and so are the humble bees, for there is much for these buzzing bohemians to do to keep their life story running in the shortening days. They must be up betimes, and the flame-hued ragwort, the flowery platforms of the yarrow, the big scabious heads, and the bramble blossom are yielding them their sweets.

Presently we pass a whitewashed cottage with

starling-riddled thatch. There is a column of smoke rising blue from its chimney against the trees. Man is rising to the day; the sun has long been peeping through his windows.

A little farther we meet the first human being, a keeper, with gun over his shoulder and two rabbits dangling from his hand. Surely there is something more than rabbits there! The man has seen and completed an early morning tragedy. There is a stoat with its teeth fastened in the neck of one of the rabbits, and stoat and rabbit are both mutilated with shot. The keeper nods you a "Good morning" as he passes; perhaps your morning has been finer than he thinks.

And now to home and breakfast by the fields, climbing one by one the rudely fashioned stiles of old ship's oak—rough, battered, worm-eaten timbers, riddled with holes where once the bolts were that fixed them in the framework of the vessel, cast up years ago in storms on the adjacent shore, and now overgrown by the fruiting brambles between the peaceful fields. These remind you that the gales of autumn are coming, for all the serenity of the September morn.

Nearing the haunts of men, there is a hum of life at least. The plowman is already guiding his team over the stubble where you saw the mists melt to nothingness. The drowsy voice of a threshing machine sounds from the farm. The navy is plunging his pick in the sandpit. The smith is plying his clangorous trade before his furnace. Man has gone forth to his labor, and we must follow.

"The top of the morning to you"—tomorrow.

### BILL AND JOE

Come, dear old comrade, you and I  
Will steal an hour from days gone by—  
The shining days when life was new,  
And all was bright as morning dew,  
The lusty days of long ago,  
When you were Bill and I was Joe.

You name may flaunt a titled trail,  
Proud as a cockerel's rainbow tail;  
And mine as brief appendix wear  
As Tam o' Shanter's luckless mare;  
Today, old friend, remember still  
That I am Joe and you are Bill.

You've won the great world's envied prize,  
And grand you look in people's eyes,  
With HON. and LL. D.,  
In big brave letters, fair to see—  
Your fist, old fellow! off they go!  
How are you, Bill? How are you, Joe?

You've won the judge's ermine robe;  
You've taught your name to half the globe;  
You've sung mankind a deathless strain;  
You've made the dead past live again;  
The world may call you what it will,  
But you and I are Joe and Bill.

The chaffing young folks stare and say,  
"See those old buffers, beat and gray;  
They talk like fellows in their teens!  
Mad, poor old boys! That's what it means—  
And shake their heads; they little know  
The throbbing hearts of Bill and Joe.

How Bill forgets his hour of pride,  
While Joe sits smiling at his side;  
How Joe, in spite of time's disguise,  
Finds the old schoolmate in his eyes—  
Those calm, stern eyes that melt and fill  
As Joe looks fondly up at Bill.

Ah, pensive scholar! what is fame?  
A fitful tongue of leaping flame;  
A giddy whirlwind's fickle gust,  
That lifts a pinch of mortal dust;  
A few swift years, and who can show  
Which dust was Bill, and which was Joe?

The deary idol takes his stand,  
Holds out his bruised and aching hand,  
While gaping thousands come and go—  
How vain it seems, this empty show!  
Till all at once his pulses thrill:  
"Tis poor old Joe's "God bless you, Bill!"

And shall we breathe in happier spheres  
The names that pleased our mortal ears,  
In some sweet lull of harp and song,  
For earth-born spirits none too long,  
Just whispering of the world below,  
Where this was Bill, and that was Joe?

No matter; while our home is here  
No sounding name is half so dear;  
When fades at length our lingering day,  
Who cares what pompous tombstones say?  
Read on the hearts that love us still,  
Hic Jacet Joe. Hic Jacet Bill.

—Holmes.

### SANTA CLAUS' ASSISTANT.

It was not long after midnight. The wee small hours of Christmas day were just beginning to arrive, and down in the library, where the tree was sheltering a profuse array of toys, stood an unexpected guest. He was ill clad, unshaven, and his hair looked as though it had never known a comb. In his right hand he carried a dark-lantern, and slung over his left arm was a sack, a common jute bag, and he had entered a window that looked out upon the street. The family had all retired, and for the most part were asleep. That is why the unexpected guest chose this time to arrive.

"Hullo!" said a soft voice from the broad doorway that opened into the hall. He slid back the front of his lantern and lighted a match in the flame. He turned on the gas and lit it, so that he might better see the exact character of his surroundings.

"Humph!" he said, as he observed the tree. "Quite a fine layout. I don't know but what, after all, it's a good thing that parents give their children expensive things these days. It's a great help to our profession. You can't raise much on candy, balls and two-penny dolls, but these silver plated engines and purses with ten-dollar bills in 'em come in handy. Gold sleeve buttons, too," he added, as his eyes took in a few further details of the scene before him, "an' a gold watch as well. This is luck."

And then, as he bent over the group of toys and presents of a more expensive nature intended for Bobbie, his eyes glittering with joy at the prospective value of his haul, the heart of the unexpected guest stopped beating for an instant. There was a rustling behind him.

With a quick movement he slid the cover of the dark-lantern to by mere force of habit, and at the same moment the curtains were parted and there stood Bobbie, clad in his night gown. "Is that you, Santa Claus?" he added, peering curiously at the unexpected guest.

The man gave a short laugh. "That's the first time I've been taken for any one that's half decent," he said to himself, and then he answered in a whisper loud enough for Bobbie to hear:

"Well, not exactly, sonny. I'm only his assistant."

"Sh! Not so loud, my boy—you'll wake the family; and if you did that I'd vanish like the mist,"

said the man. "I said I was only Santa Claus' assistant. You see, my lad, there are so many more children nowadays than there used to be that the boss has to get outside help Christmas eve, or he'd never be able to finish up his work in time. So he sends for me an' a few others like me—heaven help us!—and we do his distributing for him. I'd just laid these things out here when you surprised me."

"Oh, isn't it beautiful!" he cried. "All these things for me! A watch too, just the very thing I wanted."

"Are you tired?" asked Bobbie, leaving the tree and crossing to Santa Claus' assistant.

"Yes," said the man. "Very."

"I'm sorry," said Bobbie, affectionately, as he took the other's hand in his and kissed it.

"Don't—don't do that," said the man, huskily. "It's not—not clean."

"I shouldn't think it would be," laughed Bobbie; "climbing in by sooty chimneys can't be very clean work. Do you know, I always wonder why there's never any soot left on the toys."

"Oh, we take care of that," said the assistant. "You see, this bag keeps the soot off. But I didn't come in by the chimney this time," he added hastily, observing that there was no soot on the bag either.

"I thought the window was easier," said Bobbie, looking at the bag.

"How do you know that?" asked the man.

"Your bag is empty. Isn't there any one else for you to take a toy to?"

The unexpected guest buried his face in his grimy hands, and a great lump arose in his throat.

"There was one other," said the assistant, "but there's nothing for him—and it's all my fault. I neglected to look after him."

"And won't he get anything?" asked Bobbie.

"No," said the assistant, roughly, rising, and taking a step toward the tree.

"He can have one of mine," cried Bobbie. "Here, take him this. I've got plenty, thanks to you." He handed him one of the treasures beneath the tree.

The unexpected guest looked at the boy for a minute, and then he slowly reached out his hand and took the proffered toy.

"I'll see that he gets it," he said, "and God bless you for it! Good-by, little one. I must be off or he'll wake up and be disappointed."

He moved toward the door when Bobbie ran after him, and holding up his little face said: "Won't you take a kiss for Santa Claus from me?"

"That I will," said the other, and he bent over, and, kissing the child, flew precipitately out the window and disappeared in the darkness of the street.

"Well," said the unexpected guest the following morning, as he watched his own pallid faced little youngster playing with the first Christmas present he'd ever known, "that was the rummiest thing. I went out to steal, and the only thing I bagged that wasn't really given to me was a kiss. It was a rich haul, but I think I'll get a more decent job at New Year's."—Catholic News.

### DON'T WAIT.

If you've anything good to say of a man,  
Don't wait till he's laid to rest,  
For the eulogy spoken when hearts are broken  
Is an empty thing at best.  
Ah, the blighted flower now drooping lonely  
Would perfume the mountain side,  
If the sun's glad ray had but shone today,  
And the pretty bud expired.

If you've aims to give to the poor,  
Don't wait till you hear the cry  
Of wan distress in this wilderness,  
Lest the one forsook may die.  
Oh, hearken to poverty's sad lament!  
Be swift her wants to allay;  
Don't spurn God's poor from the favored door,  
As you hope for mercy one day.

Don't wait for another to bear the burden  
Of sorrow's irksome load;  
Let your hand extend to a stricken friend  
As he totters to down life's road.  
And if you've anything good to say of a man,  
Don't wait till he's laid at rest;  
For the eulogy spoken when hearts are broken  
Is an empty thing at best.

### WHAT A BOY CAN DO.

Be frank.  
Be polite.  
Be prompt.  
Be obliging.  
Obey his parents.  
Keep himself tidy.  
Keep out of bad company.  
Never laugh at a coarse joke.  
Be kind to his brothers and sisters.  
Take the part of those who are ill used.  
Never make fun of another because he is poor.  
Never tell or listen to a story which he would not repeat to his mother.

### WONDERFUL CLOCK.

Five wheels and a small battery virtually constitute the mechanism of a wonderful clock just invented in England. It will run three years without attention, and at the end of that time all that is required is to attach a new battery.

Another new English clock enables the possessor to ascertain at a glance the mean time, the meridian and relative position of every part of the empire, besides being able to witness the actual speed and direction of the earth's rotation. The money power is a clock in the base of the stand, and the apparatus requires winding only once a week.

### LAND OF DESOLATION.

Continued from Page 1.

rapacity, dishonesty and violence there has come a pitiful and dismal failure. Of all forms of government a democracy or republic asks from the governed and governing a large measure of intelligence, unswerving honesty on the part of the executive and administrative bodies, and some approach to common sense among her people. To expect these mixed races, these human hybrids, to accomplish that which is testing the strength and intellect of France and the United States to achieve, is unfair to them and contrary to all Roman and Grecian precedent.

Diego, our captain, told us he anchored in mid-river in preference to bivouacking on the shore, where mosquitoes would make rest a mockery. It may be so, but all the same, the pests found us out, and that night I got a foretaste of purgatory. The mosquitoes of the Realio river for venomous and persistent attack, for bloodthirsty ferocity, have a bad preeminence over the worst I had ever met with elsewhere, and I say this having in mind my experience in the swamps of the Orinoco and the forests of Demerara. With the dawning of the day we were again amove.

Suddenly a sound between a shriek and a roar came to us from the river bank. "What is it, Diego?" I asked. "The lion bird," answered the captain. For miles as we advanced the cry of the bird broke the stillness of the forest. Unlike our

northern diver, it never calls on the wing, but soars to a limb of the towering mora, and as the sun rises, so, too, rises over the forest the shriek and howl of this most extraordinary of forest birds. The lion bird is no larger than a pigeon, and how it can take in enough air to give out such an ear-splitting and ear-reaching volume of sound is indeed surprising.

The Realio narrowed as we moved on, and the vegetation and very air became more tropical and oppressive. High up on the wild fig-trees were perched, chattering and grimacing, black, long-tailed monkeys, their wonderfully human faces peering down at us; the mothers holding with one arm to their breasts their hairy little babies, while the males aimlessly scratched their heads, or made faces at us as we courteously bade them "good-morning," and passed on. We rowed through a tangled mass of wild, luxuriant vegetation, through tree-ferns and giant palms, and strangely drooping parasites. In the estuaries of the river, basking on floating or stationary ceiba logs, were multitudes of iguanas or "serpentes," as old Peter Martyr, the historian, calls them, water lizards, large and of giant wrack, and caymans or Central American crocodiles, huge fellows, whose belching at night is heard afar off. Early in the morning of the third day's sailing we sighted the historic city of Leon, high up on a commanding elevation, and, from afar, beautiful and fair to look upon.

(To be continued.)

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