

tired, for she had been ironing for them since early morning. Grant was the first to speak this time, too. 'I think mamma's plan is the best. The best time to begin the best plan is right now.' And he started for the wood-pile, while the girls began to clear off the table.—The 'Herald and Presbyter.'

A Morning Prayer.

(‘Our Little Dots.’)

Now, before we work to-day,
We must not forget to pray
To God, who kept us through the
night
And woke us with the morning
light.

Help us, Lord, to love Thee more
Than we ever loved before;
In our work and in our play,
Be Thou with us through the
day.

Milo's Bunnies.

(Elizabeth Price, in the 'Youth's Companion.')

Milo lived away up in Montana, on a ranch so big that it was like a great many farms put together. You could walk miles without coming to any other house than Milo's, except the ones where the men lived who helped take care of the cattle.

There were about thirty of these men—cowboys, they called themselves, although most of them had not been boys for years, and some were gray-headed. Milo thought they had a way of miscalling things, for they always spoke of their bedroom as the 'bunk-house,' their dining-room, 'the mess,' and they had more queer names for their fat cook and each other than you could remember.

Milo liked to go out among them, but mamma thought he was quite too young for such grown-up company, so he did not often get to their quarters.

You might have thought it a bit lonesome for a very small boy not to have a single playmate his own age anywhere between the edges of the blue sky that came down and rested on the ground, or scalloped itself behind the fountain-tops. But Milo did not know what lonesomeness was. All day long he played outdoors, and was so well acquainted with the birds and the prairie-dogs and other wild things that he thought he could almost understand what they meant by their chirp and chatter. When it was bright, warm weather his linen rompers and big straw hat roved about the ranch. When it was cold, all sorts of overcoats and leggings covered him; and when it rained, a suit of oil-skins and a pair of rubber boots kept him dry and cozy. Nothing short of a real blizzard could keep him indoors; and as Trip and Towser were always with their young master, mamma knew no harm could come to him.

He did not need any tonics to help him sleep when night came, either. It

was as much as ever he could do to keep awake till he was ready for bed, although it was always before the cowboys' supper-time. He stopped every night by the hall window on his way up-stairs, to see the light from the fat cook's big stove, glowing out into the dusk.

One day it rained. Milo did not know what time it began, because the pitter-patter on the windows was the first sound he heard that morning. It was still coming steadily down when he remembered, all at once, that it must be getting nearly bread-and-milk time, that his rubber boots were much heavier than they had been at noon, and that, after all, bed was not such a bad place in which to spend part of one's life.

Ten minutes later mamma was helping unbutton his rain-coat when something squirmed in his rain-coat pocket. Mamma jumped; she could not quite forget that she had emptied a damaged but still lively lizard out of Milo's handkerchief a day or two before.

'Oh, I most forgot!' Milo stopped to pull out a bunch of wet grass. 'Cowboy Jack told me you could train rabbits to do tricks, and I—Look at him, mamma! Isn't he cute?' and Milo held out a wee, shivery, brown bunny, so little it could not open its eyes, and its queer little nose was twitching in the funniest fashion. 'It looks like it's going to cry, but it isn't, mamma. They always do like that. I'm going to train him to shoot guns and dance, and—'

Milo talked very fast, and his cheeks were redder than usual. Perhaps he was not much surprised when mamma interrupted him to say, 'Milo, is it possible you took this bunny baby away from its mother?'

'No'm, the mother wasn't at home. I s'posed maybe she wouldn't care—there's plenty more.'

'You supposed quite wrong. Take it back home to its nest.'

'But, mamma, the nest's away over by the calf pasture.'

'I'm sorry, dear, but if it were twice as far you'd have to go and put it back carefully.'

Milo drew on those heavy boots. It was no use to tease. Out into the wet he trudged, Trip and Towser following unwillingly, their draggled tails hanging limply behind them. It was half a mile to the calf pasture, but it seemed a whole one to the weary boy. Mamma was waiting for him when he came back, with his warm little bed-gown and slippers.

'Mamma was sorry, dear, but you see she had to make you do right,' she said, gently. 'You knew it was wrong to do as you did, and I can't let my boy grow up to be selfish and heartless, causing pain and suffering in the world, instead of making everything happy.'

'But Cowboy Jack says rabbits don't count.'

'Cowboy Jack is sadly mistaken. Anything God has made alive counts. You could have taken away that baby bunny's life, but you could never, never give it back. A boy who begins

by being cruel to a rabbit may keep on until he is cruel to everything. We can't run that risk, Milo boy.'

'Was—was I cruel?'

'I'll let you decide that for yourself. The little rabbit would have starved to death.'

The boy sat quite still a moment, looking out into the driving rain. Then he drew a long breath, and reached for the boots again. 'There's another,' he said, slowly, 'in my other pocket. I forgot it till I was most home, and Jack said rabbits didn't count. But I couldn't ever let it starve—could I, mamma?'

It was a sorry-looking trio that came stumbling in at last from the second trip through the gathering darkness. Trip and Towser threw themselves on their mats with a look that said plainly it would take more than rabbits to rout them out again. But Milo's eyes were bright as stars, and down inside of his rain-coat and his blouse was a warm little spot that kept reminding him of a cozy, sheltered nest among the hedge-roots, where two little homesick bunnies lay close to their mother's warm breast.

Pip and His Pug.

(M. M., in 'Our Little Dots.')

Some people said that Puggy was ugly, but Pip (his proper name was Philip) firmly said he was a 'beauty,' and believed it, too. And in return Puggy loved Pip with all his heart.

Pip and Pug were walking up and down just outside the house where they lived, one fine morning, waiting for nurse. All of a sudden a huge, fierce dog came rushing up to them, with great gleaming teeth, and seized hold of Pip's white tunic. Poor Pip shrieked with terror; but before nurse could run down the steps Puggy flew at the great dog. The fierce beast was so surprised that he dropped Pip's sleeve from his mouth, and turned round to bite little Puggy, but a gentleman came to the rescue, and beat him away!

The Lost House.

(Zitella Cooke, in the 'Youth's Companion.')

I had a house—my very own—
Not made of wood or brick or stone,
But it was built of crystal bright,
With roof and towers, one frosty night,
And round it was a garden, too,
Where trees and plants and flowers
grew.

And there were birds with silver
wings,

And oh, so many pretty things,
I meant to quit my books and play,
To look at them the livelong day!
I woke and saw it all so plain,
And then I fell asleep again.

And while I slept till broad daylight
Somebody stole my house outright!
Do you know who? 'Tis my belief
The Sun was just that cruel thief,
For when I tried my house to find,
I caught him staring through the
blind.