The Best of All. BY ROWIN L SADIN.

Had I my wish, no powerful throne,
In truth, would I occupy;
Nor wealth possess, nor title own,
Nor travel at will—not I.
A boy I'd be, whose treasures are
in the guise of ball and kite.
Whose rambles by day may take him far.
But back to his mother at night.

A boy, with a long long look ahead,
And a past so short and near,
That at night, while drowsy-eyed in bed,
All he has done is clear.
The brook he waded, the fish he caught,
The fun in the wind and cold—
With a morrow at hand which surely
ought.

ought Fresh pieasures in store to hold.

So short a past, that the rosy hours Quite blot from the sight the gray. And the future is only a mass of flowers Growing from day to day. While the world of the present has wen

ders more,
Than eyes have time to see,
With creek and meadow and wood to ex plore.

And cities beyond the lea-

Tis reserved for a lad of ten, indeed,
To encounter lion and pard,
And Indians fight, and rescues lead,
In the depths of his own back yard.
With many another source of Joy
No older head may ken—
I'm certain it's better to be a boy

Than even the greatest of mer

OUR PERIODICALS:

The best, the cheapest, the most entertaining, the cost popular. Yearly

most popular.

Christian Guardian, westly, asset to the control of the control of

WILLIAM BRIGGS,

Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto. C. W Coares, 2176 St. Catherine St., Nontreal. S. F. HUESTIS, Wesleyan Book Room, Halliar, N.S.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK. Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 8, 1900.

LITTLE NEIGHBOURS.

My observation teaches me that birds, especially, are perpetually hungering for and seeking the love and companionship of man.

Lest fall there was a sparrow that Last fall there was a sparrow that came two or three times a day and perched on the sill of the open pantry window, just to be chirped to by my wife. He was not physically hungry for he seidem touched the crumbs we threw him—it was his little heart that was hungry, I think. He would always cume at such times as my wife was acwas hungry. I think. He would always come at such times as my wife was accustomed to be in the pantry, and lighting on the still would give a little shrill, interrogatory chirp as much as to say. "Good morning. How are you to-day?" Then my wife would chirp back to him, and he would futter his little wings with delight, hopping back and forth and answering her talk with language as full of gratitude and affection as any I ever heard. It was conversation well worth listening to, and often the whole household has stood, a pleased and smilling audience, just outside the pantry door. A friend of mine, while tramping along a mountain road last summer, sat down to rest on a log by the wayside. Free-child him, and wayside. Free-child him, and wayside free whiching 'down the hard, uestionized why friend cumply sat still and wathed the little follow. Growing bolder, or, rather, as I explain it, more assured of the disposition of

the man on the log, the squirrel present the man on the log, the squirrel presently made a dash from the tree, scurried up on my friend's shoulder, bounded to the earth again, and ran of "laughing," my friend asys, "as distinctly and merily as ever I heard any human being alugh." In two or three minutes he was riend sa rily as ever laugh." ing an ever 1 neard any numan neing augh." In two or three minutes he was back again frisking about my friend's fect, and ending up by perching on the toe of his boot and chattering amiably to him—New York Observer

"WRITE TO MY MOTHER."

When we arrived at the tenement in Catherine Street that night, we found him in a miserable bed, in the fifth floor, back under the roof

floor, back under the root
the had been knocked down by a truck
on Canal Street that afternoon, and the
ambuint to had borne him to his lodg
ings—as soon as it appeared—to die.
The detective trimmed the candle, re-

and detective frimmed the candle, re-ciranged the clothes on the bed, and shook up the feeble fire in the stove. You are so kind, he whispered faintly, and I know you will grant my wish?"

Write _ a_letter_ to-

Then the strong man sat himself down beside the table, and beneath the splutter of the candle, held his sheet of paper and

of the candic, neu no south is pen.
"Say," he murmured, "say that—"
Then we waited a long time.
"Say that I never for-forgot-them."
"That you have never forgotten them,"
and the pen raced on with death.
He stared into the air and a glassy look grow in his eyes.
"And—that——am—coming—home."

"And—that—I—am—coming—home."
"And that you are coming home egala. Yes, my boy, yes."
The pen raced on, but swifter still sped

And—that — my - mother—should—

'And—that — my mount — massimot—weep, but—"
"Yes, yes."
Ah, how the pen sped on, with death so near at hand!
"And the address—where does your mother live?"
"Che lives in—" She lives in-

We heard the death-rattle in his throat we neard the death-rattle in his throat, we heard the sobbing of the wind out-side, we felt that strange glamour, the treeping lack-lustre in his vacant glance, and we knew that another soul had alipped forth in the dark unknown, unwept of men, but numbered with his God.

Next day) he was buried in Potter's Field

The unfinished letter to his mother was placed upon his breast.

BREAKING HOME TIES.

BY ALICE S. PREEMAN.

"The train leaves at 9.02 Better hurry breakfast, Meg."
"Somehow I can't do a thing this morning, I go to the pantry, and when I get there forget what it is I want. Where is prother?" Where is mother

Where is mother?"
"Upstairs, packing the satchel."
"Poke the fire a little, will you, father? I want to mix up some johnny-cake for Dick. It is the last he'll have for goodness knows how long." And Meg brushed away a tear with the corner of her apron.
"Where is he father?"
Out in the barn.
"So Dick was out in the barn, with his armoround the neck of a little gray coll Nam.

Yes, Dick was out in the barn, with is arm around the neck of a little gray colt, Nan.

"I wish I wasn't going," he muttered, tooking through the barn window at his dovecot. "I didn't think it would be so hard. But I can't stay out here, for my time is almost gone. Good-bye, Nnn," and for a moment his head rested against the silky mane. "Good-bye, Nan. I'll come back some day," and with a last look around the old familiar barn he went out. Just outside, in spite of the protests of the bristling mother hen, he stopped and looked at the brood of downy chicks. Then the pretty Jersey calf, Dick's favourite, dialmed his attention. The big eyes also attored the solution of the protest of the brood of downy chicks. Then the pretty Jersey calf, Dick's favourite, dialmed his attention. The big eyes also attored the solution must hurry on, for Dick loved every living thing on the farm, and his time was short in which to say good-bye. Nothing seemed forgotten, and he had just completed the rounds when Meg called him to breakfast.

"How much time have I, father "asked Dick as he entered.
"An hour and a helf. Sit down. Call mother, Meg."

Just then Mrs. Warren entered with

"An hour and a half. Sit down. Call mother, Meg."
Just then Mrs. Warren entered with the satchel. There was a look of suffering on her face as she crossed the room and stood behind Dick's chair. She did not cry, but only leaned her head down against his, and her arms went around his neck.
"Mother" whitepered Dick in a

choked voice, while Meg gently pushed a chair close beside Dick's. For a moment no one spoke. But these last moments were too dear to the mother's beart for her to two two with the second of the control of the contro

At last they were all gone, and nothing was left but to say good-bye. The trunk had already been carried to the trunk had already been carried to the wagson. Meg sits by the window with her hand on Guess's head. Poor Guess, what will he do without his master? All the morning he had been Dicks shadow, and his eyes fastened on Dick's face with a look which plainly said: Take me with you."

"Well, time to go, Dick," said Mr. Warren, as he picked up the satchel. Mrs. Warren looked quickly at the clock. "Why, no, father; not for the lailautes yet."

"I leave at 8.02, you know, mother," At last they were all gone, and noth-

"I leave at 9.02, you know, mother,"
Dick explained.

"And you must go now?" She was at his side in an instant, and, putting her hands on his shoulders, gazed up her hands on his shoulders, gazed up into his face as though she would never look away. Just so she looked when she bent over Jamie's little coffin and kissed him for the last time. A look which sought to fix his face in her mind for ever, and at the same time plerce the future, and see what it held for her boy. Dick longed to comfort her. His heart was almost breaking, yet he could only stand there awkwardly holding his hat. He was not looking at his mother, but off into the distance, and was struggling hard to keep back the tears. In his boysh heart he believed that to show any emotion was unumanly, yet how he longed to tell that dear, hard-working little mother how much he loved her, and how hard it was to leave her! hard it was to leave her!

But Mr. Warren was calling from the
waggon, and after one last good-bye Dick

waggon, and after one last good-bye Dick was gone.

In the farmhouse that night a silent figure stole into the south room under the caves and knelt by the bed. The moonlight, streaming in through the open window, lighted up the disordered room and the tumbled bed. Evidently nothing had been touched there that day,

Far away the same moon was looking down upon a young boy standing on the forward pintform of the train speeding astward. The world was before him, and he was looking manfully through his

and he was looking manfully through his tears into the future.

Breaking home ties? No, thank God; they are not broken. It may be some chance word or look which will bring back to the poor wanderer the dear old farm, that father leaning over his Bible, or the mother's loving face, and with the rush of memory will come, too, the old-time thoughts and desires.

"No! the tie is never broken, the chain is only lengthened; 'For death alone can break the tie That binds the heart to home."

A GOOD INVESTMENT. BY MES. A. E. C. MASSELL.

John and James Roding were twins, fourtcen years of age. Their father was very wealthy On overy birthday they expected a rich present from him. A week before they were fourteen they were talking over what they most wanted "I want a pony," said James.

"And what do you want, John?" asked

his father

his father
"A boy."
"A boy!" gasped his father.
"Yes, sir. It don't cost much more
to keep a boy than it does a horse, does
the ""

to keep a boy than it does a horse, does it?"
"Why, no," replied his father, still very much surprised.
"And I can get boy for nothing, to bogin with."
"Yes," replied his father, hesitatingly,
"I suppose so."
"Why, papa, I know so. There are lots of 'em running around without any home."
Oh that's what you are up to 18 to 2. Oh, that's what you are up to, is it?

Ob, that's want you are up to, 100 to 11 Want to take a boy to bring up, do you ?"
"Yes, sir, it would be a great deal better than the St. Bernard dog you were going to buy me, wouldn't if ? You see, my boy could go about with me, play with me, and do all

kinds of nice things for me—and I could do nice things for him, too, couldn't 1? He could go to school and I could help him with his examples and Latin. "Examples and Latin 7 God bless the boy, what is he alming at?" and Judge Roding wiped the sweat from his bald

Roding wiped the sweat from his bald head.

"I know," laughed James. "Ho's al-ways up to something like that. 'I'll bet a dollar he wants to adopt old drunken Pete's son."

"Is that so, John?"

"Yes, pany: 'cause he is running about the atrects as dirry and ragged as he can be, and old Pete don't care a cent about him, and he's a splendid boy, father. He's just as smart as can be, only he can't go to school half the time, 'cause he hasn't anything decent to wear."

"How long do you want to keep him?"

"Until he gets to be a man, father."

"And turns out such a man as old Peter?"

Year or "No danger of that, father. He has signed the pledge not to drink intoxicants, nor swear, nor smoke, and he has helped me, father, for when I have want ed to do such things he has told me that his father w. once a rich man's an and sixt as republica as James and hat his father wa once a rich man's on and just as promising as James and

"Do you mean to tell me that you ever feel like doing such things as drink-ing, swearing, smoking and loafing?" asked his father, sternly.

asken ans lather, sternly.
"Why, papa, you don't know half the temptations boys have nowadays. Why boys of our set swear and smoke and drink right along when nobody sees them."

drink right along when nobody sees them."
"Don't let me ever catch you doing such things."
"Not now, father, I think, for I am trying to surrender all—every vice, every bad habit, unnecessary pleasures. I don't see how I could eajoy a dog or a pony when I knew a nice boy suffering for some of the good things I enjoy."
"You may have the boy, John, and may God bless the gift."
And God did bless the gift. And God did bless the gift. And God ready the gift of the good the good they are the god panionship of drunken Pete's son, and as for the drunkard's boy, overything he touched seemed to prosper. John and James' mother said it was because God had said, "When your father and mother forsalte you, then will the Lord take you the prospering.

Ercel Roding not only lifted up his.

Fred Roding not only lifted up his.

ing.

Fred Roding not only lifted up his own fallen family, but became as much of a prop for Judge Roding's family.

"His delight was in the law of the Lorc He was like a tree planted by the rivers of water, and whatsoever he did pros-pored."

THE LITTLE WORD "NOW."

THE LITTLE WORD "NOW."

Canon Wilberforce tells a pathetic story illustrating the force of the little word "now." It was of a miner who, hearing the Gospel preached, determined that if the promised blessing of immediate salvation were indeed true, be would not leave the presence of the minister who was declaring it until assured of its possession by himself. He walled, consequently, after the meeting to speak with the minister, and in his untutored way said?

"Didn't ye say I could have the blessin now ""

"Didn't ye say I could have the blestin' now ?"
"Yes, my friend."
"Then yary with me, for I'm not going awa without it."
They did pray, these two men, until the wrestling miner heard silent words of comfort and cheer.
"I've got it now!" cried the miner, bis face reflecting the joy within; "I've got it now!"
The next day a frishtful accident oc-

The next day a frightful accident occurred at the mines. The same minister was called to the scene, and among the men, dead and dying, was the quivering, aimost breathless, body of the man who only the night before, big and brawny, came to him to know if salvation could really be had now for the asking. There was but a fleetling moment of recognition between the two ere the minister's sout look flight; but in that-moment he had time to say, in response to the minister's sympathy, "Oh, I don't mind, for I've got it!—I've got it!—I've got it!—I've mine!" Then the name of this poor man went into the sad ilst of the "killed." The next day a frightful accident oc

In a Glasgow Sunday-school one Sun-In a Glasgow Sundsy-school one Sun-day the lesson bore on the land of Canaan, where it is spoken of as a land flowing with milk and honey. "What do you think a land flowing with milk and honey would be like?" asked the lady teacher. "It would be awfu' zicky," responded a wee chap at the foot of the class."