

## FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

## SOWING THE SEED.

BY THE LATE BISHOP J. R. WOODFORD.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which has sowed good seed in his field."—Matt. xiii. 24.

Not by Thy mighty Hand,  
Thy wondrous works alone,  
But by the marvels of Thy Word  
Thy glory, Christ, is known.

Forth from the eternal gates,  
Thine everlasting home,  
To sow the seed of truth below,  
Thou didst vouchsafe to come.

And still from age to age  
Thou, Gracious Lord, hast been  
The bearer forth of goodly seed,  
The Sower still unseen.

And Thou wilt come again  
To reap what Thou hast sown,  
The Sower and the Reaper Thou,  
The Gatherer of Thine own.

Watch, Lord, Thy harvest-field  
With Thine unsleeping Eye;  
The children of the Kingdom keep  
To Thy Epiphany;—

So when in Thy great day  
The tares shall severed be,  
May we be gathered in Thy barn  
With all Thy saints to Thee.

## JACK-STRAWS.

(From the Young Churchman.)

(Continued.)

The next time they played jack-straws, Walter didn't win one game.

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed, as he threw down the bow, "at last I know why I couldn't get a game. I kept trying to get the bow and arrow all the time. I like them best of anything. But all the shovels, and rakes, and guns and things, were on top of them, and of course I couldn't help jiggling."

"I won two games," said grandma, "which I think is very good for me. I took the things which came in my way, if they were only plain sticks. But they all count, and I had a right good time."

"Mamma! mam-ma!" called Walter, next morning, dashing in and out of every room in the house, "where are you? Oh! here you are! Mamma, the boys from up the road are all going down into the mine, and they want me to go with them. May I go?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh! no, Walter, boy, I couldn't let you go into such a place, and papa not here. No, dear, you must not ask me."

"It's all safe, mamma—really! The boys—" "Walter!" mamma said, sternly.

Walter knew "begging" was never allowed, so he went slowly out, stuffing his handkerchief into his mouth, and standing on the piazza, shook his head at the boys without speaking.

"Can't you go?" they asked. "Pshaw! that's too bad. Good-bye." And they were off.

It may have been choking himself with his handkerchief that brought the tears into Walter's eyes. He didn't want any one to see them there, so he walked off down the garden. Out darted Jessie from the lawn, where she had been having a lonely game of tennis, while Trudy was at her half hour's practising.

"Good!" she exclaimed; "let's have a game. Why, what's the matter, Walter?"

"Nothing," answered Walter, gruffly.

Jessie was a wise little sister, as well as a loving one, so she did not get angry, but said gently:

"I'll be here if you want me, Walter," and let him wander off alone.

"Hah! Master Walter," said Jake, one of the farm hands, coming out of the barn, "don't you want to try your new rake in the hay, this fine morning?"

"No, I don't," said Walter, turning away.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Jake, not being wise and loving, like a good sister, but only a little vexed, because his kindness was rudely received;

"all right, youngster, have your own way, and carry a long face all the day."

Since it seemed as if he must meet some one, he thought he would go back to the house and get a book and read. Walter had not read a book through this summer; but he thought it might make his mother feel sorry if she saw him sitting all day reading, and he wanted her to feel sorry.

Meantime, Jessie had been in the house, and found out the cause of Walter's distress. She talked to grandma about it, for grandma had so many bright ideas, and she thought perhaps she could send some sunshine into this cloud. Grandma looked grave—she did not like sulks.

"When we don't want to be happy," she said, "it's very hard for any one to make us so. Didn't you say John was going to drive into the town this morning, Jessie?"

"Yes, in the buggy."

Grandma went out on the piazza.

"Walter, I wonder if I could trust you to buy me some spools of cotton in town this morning. If I told you I wanted 'Clarks' white, seventy and eighty,' you wouldn't bring 'Brooks' black, fifty and sixty,' would you?"

"I'm not going."

"No?"

"John didn't ask me," said Walter, feeling that he was very disobliging, and wanting very much to go, but unwilling to be happy in any way to-day, since he couldn't have his own way.

"Very well," said grandma; "perhaps John will get them; or I can wait till next time. Will you play a game of jack-straws with me, Walter?"

Walter couldn't refuse this; in fact, it was not natural for him to be disobliging. He felt inclined to tell grandma that he would ask John to take him into town, but he didn't.

He won two games, and began to feel a little brighter, though he tried not to.

"I think you are not trying for the bow and arrow first thing, as you did yesterday," said grandma. "Well, you are a wise boy; the hoes and rakes are worth having, too, when you can't have the bow and arrow."

"Ha, ha, grandma," laughed Walter, at last, "I've had four games out of five, and only took the bow and arrow once!"

Grandma put her arms around the little man.

"Will you let grandma preach a very short sermon," she asked, "with jack-straws for a text?"

"Yes, grandma."

"Don't you think you would have been a wiser and happier boy, this morning, if you had taken some of the fun that came in your way, even if you could not go to the mine? The mine was the great prize jack-straw, I know; but I think a game of tennis with Jessie, or a romp in the hay-field, or a drive into town, were worth something."

"I'm sorry about your cotton, grandma."

"Never mind that, dear; next time will do as well for that. I know you are not a disobliging boy, though it really did seem so to-day. We can't very well wrap up ourselves in a cloud, and not make it cloudy for somebody else."

A few days after this, grandma came into the parlor one morning, just in time to hear a long-drawn sigh from Jessie, who was on the piano-stool working rather dismally at a troublesome scale. She started again, and made the same mistake.

"Oh! grandma, I don't believe I'll ever be able to play like mamma."

"Will you play a game of jack-straws with me, Jessie?"

"Why, I can't, grandma! I have to practice."

"I will ask mamma to let you finish practicing by-and-by."

How many steps grandma took for these

children! She was soon back with mamma's consent, and they went out to the piazza, the favorite place for jack-straws, followed by Walter, who every now and then rubbed a smile off his face.

It was Jessie's turn, and she was just beginning to angle carefully for the ladder, which lay on top, when grandma asked suddenly:

"Jessie, you were telling me, the other day, what fun you had up in the hay-loft. How could you ever reach it, child? It's three or four times as high as your head. If you were a bird, you could fly up, in no time. But you haven't a flying machine, have you?"

"Why, no, grandma," said Jessie, rather puzzled, while Walter looked highly amused; "we climb up by the ladder."

"Ladder—oh! But isn't that very slow and hard work?"

"Why, no; we don't think anything about it, we have such good times when we once get up."

"Does John go up that way, and Jake?"

"Yes, everybody has to."

"Well, surely if you saw your mother up there, Jessie, you would think that she must have flown up, wouldn't you?"

"No, grandmother," Jessie laughed.

"Well, I thought perhaps you would, because I saw you looking up at her this morning, as she stood on the top of a hill that you were just climbing, and it seems to me that you thought she must have flown up there like a bird, and never had any climbing at all. It was the hill of music, my dear. I think you must have forgotten that she spent a great many years on that ladder of scales and exercises, where you are now. Courage, my girl! Your fingers are young and strong. I think I shall never be able to visit the hay-loft, because I am too old. Ladders are for young folks—and remember it will pay you for all the work when you reach the top. It's your turn to play, my dear."

"What did you get, Jessie?" asked Walter.

"A ladder," Jessie answered, laughing, and holding it up.

"I know grandma, now," said Walter, nodding his head sagely. "I thought she was going to make it a sermon when she asked you to play jacks all of a sudden."

And it was not the last that grandma preached. None of them liked jack-straws any the less, because they didn't know when grandma might make them mean something. The "something" was never unkind and wounding, for grandma never scolded, or hurt people's feelings.

One of grandma's "bright ideas" for rainy days was this. The people of this country place were very anxious to build a little church, and every summer the people who came from the cities gave something toward the fund. Jessie, and Walter, and Trudy, were anxious to give something of their "very own," and grandma suggested how they might do it. "Little people," she said, "whose hands had been so well trained as theirs, ought to be able to do something with them that was worth doing. So they had a talk, early in the summer, with some of the boys and girls in the hotels and cottages, and made a plan which paid well in the end. Samples of the various grades of handiwork which they could best do were put in a case where all could see, and a slate for orders.

Jessie had learned from grandma to net, and her sample of the cutest little doll's hammock and lawn tennis net brought her orders thick and fast. So did Trudy's captivating doll's hats, braided by herself from straw, and trimmed with everlastings. Walter's knife did noble work, and his carpentering knowledge earned him a great reputation. Boxes of all sizes and shapes, for all sorts of purposes, were freely ordered. Taking Trudy's dairy and knitting sets for copies, he supplied in-