

"There are a great many things in this world which are like fire-flies. They are most beautiful and glowing when just beyond the reach. One of the most brightest of these is fame; and there is many a poor soul with eyes blinded by its glitter, who considers no labour too arduous and no path too rugged which will lead him to it. And should he gain it at last, possession

would take away the brightness, and with the disappointment he would have left, like poor little Freddy, only the scars made by thorns and brambles which he had encountered in the chase. My boy, believe me, there is nothing bright and enduring but heaven, the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Sabbath Readings.

For the Presbyterian.

SOWING IN HOPE.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Working and waiting still,
Scattering the seed from morn till eventide,
No harvest blessing comes with joy to fill
Our bosom's yearning void.

We watch with weary eyes,
For early shower and later rain; alas!
The barren earth as iron seems; the skies,
A firmament of brass.

Yet must we not give way
To weakening doubts, but trusting in the Lord,
That we shall reap in due time, if we stay
Our hopes upon His word.

In the approaching years,
Some seedling struggling through the clods of earth,
Watered with sighs and prayers in dimming tears,
May spring to glorious birth,

And in our presence grow,
To cheer us with the master's favoring smile;
Reaping, with thankful hearts, while still below,
The first fruits of our toil.

Or if our work should end,
The busy feet be still, the lips be mute,
Ere we have reaped, some others God will send,
To gather in the fruit.

Then let us faithful prove,
Sowing with lavish hand the precious grain,
Assured that if we sow in faith and love,
Our work shall not be vain.

C. S. C.

THE ROOT OUT OF DRY GROUND.

"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness: and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."—*Isaiah liii. 2.*

You have seen in waste places roots protruding out of dry ground, the roots almost as dry as the ground itself, serving no purpose apparently but to make the careless passer-by to stumble. Such roots, and the

sprouts which sometimes spring from them, are the most unattractive of all growths, and for practical purposes the most useless. Strange emblem this, given us by prophecy, of the Son of God! Strange emblem of him who was the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. But we may be sure that it is significant and true.

There is a somewhat similar prophecy in the 11th chapter of *Isaiah*:—"There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."

The royal house of Jesse and David had fallen into decay long before the Christ was born. But the stem of Jesse was still in the ground, not uprooted nor destroyed, and out of the roots thus preserved by Divine providence, that branch sprang forth in the person of Jesus, by which the royal house was raised to more than royal honour. In this respect the Christ was a root or sprout growing out of a dry ground.

But the manner in which the words of the 53rd chapter are used, seems to point rather to what was consequent on Christ's lowly, though royal birth, than to that lowly and royal birth itself—namely, the estimate which the Jewish people formed of him in consequence of his lowly appearance. "He shall grow up as a root out of a dry ground." The idea suggested is twofold. He shall grow up *without any present attractiveness or beauty*, and he shall grow up *without any apparent likelihood of ever becoming great or fruitful*.

I. The Christ was to grow up without any present beauty or attractiveness to the eyes of the people. "As a root out of a dry ground." Could anything be less attractive, less beautiful than such a root? How different from the tree that is planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf never withereth! From the shrivelled, withered sprout that meets us in the desert path the eye turns away distressed and unsatisfied. On the rich foliage and fruit of the shrub