



THE WHITE ROSEBUD.

IT was the first Thursday, and a busy morning it had been for Father Ryan, for even in the remote South African village of Wyndall the devotion of the Nine Fridays was practised.

Not till the midday Angelus struck did the priest leave the confessional, and as he knelt at the end of the church for a few moments, footsteps on the gravel outside told him that possibly another penitent would detain him still longer. On the footsteps came, till they stopped in the porch. The priest turned his head and his gaze met a pair of dark eyes belonging to a little girl of about four or five. The child was a stranger to him, but he remembered to have seen her in the grounds adjoining the presbytery garden. Father Ryan beckoned to her, and she obeyed his sign.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Rosebud," was the reply, and then she added: "Nurse fell asleep, so I got through the hedge in your garden and comed here."

"Will mother not be anxious about you?"

The pretty face clouded, as with a dreary sigh she answered:

"Mother died when we lived in the other house, and I is so lonely."