

## The Little White Shell.

Two summers ago a company of tourists were strolling along a part of the Irish coast on which many little shells were lying. They looked at the water and the hills and the pebbly beach, but few stopped to examine the shells. At last a little girl came down with a pretty red-and-white basket. "Oh, mamma, what a pretty white, queer little shell! it looks like a church steeple."

"So other people have thought, dear. It is called the tower shell. Take a good many of them; they will be new to our friends at home."

The child filled her basket with the beautiful shells; and on her return home some were given to one friend, some to another; and some were put in a basket lined with green to look like moss, and were sent to the children's ward in a hospital.

It was a strange place. There were lovely pictures on the walls, and bright, sweet flowers on the tables, and the sunlight came in glad and strong through the broad, high windows; but there were rows of little beds, and in each bed was a little child with a face as white as the smooth, clean pillow on which it lay; and there were thin white fingers with dark blue veins resting on the snowy coverlets. Every child was ill, most of them very ill. Every now and then a groan might be heard, or a sharp painful little voice, asking for something—perhaps a drink, perhaps to be moved in bed.

Bye-and-bye the toys were brought out, and the basket of shells were placed by the side of a little girl. When she opened her eyes she saw them, and reached out her hand for them. She was so weak that she could not grasp the basket, but taking one shell, she held it without looking at it. It was pleasant to her to touch, because it was cold and rough; and she rubbed it with her poor, thin finger, and pressed it in her hot palm until, tired out, she fell asleep.

That afternoon two young men entered the room—one was the doctor who had charge of the children, the other his friend, whom he had brought to see the hospital. As they came near the little girl who had the shells, the doctor whispered, "I must talk to her, poor little thing; I can do nothing more: she has not many days to live."

The trembling white hand was slowly raised to put itself into the doctor's strong brown one. "Why, what's this, Mary? Where have you been running to since I've been away, that you've picked up such a lovely shell?"

"Tell me all about it, doctor," she said; "I never saw any real ones."

"These are real ones, picked up on the shore of old Ireland." He then told her about the lovely hills, the dark green grass, the sky, the rainbows, the birds, the cool, salt waves, the white beach, and the fisher boats, till she said it made her feel less hot and tired just to hear such things. Some one called the doctor then, and he had to go, but left his friend "as a sure sign" that he would come back. He sat looking at the shells. He had not travelled like the doctor, so they were new to him, and he thought them very beautiful.

Mary looked up at him. "Oh, sir, is it true there will be no sea in heaven? I am sorry, for I want to

see it." Her eyes were troubled, and her forehead was drawn as with pain.

He did not know what to say at first, for he, too, loved the sea. Then the truth flashed across him. "It does not mean just that, Mary, for we are told about the sea of glass and the beautiful river. It only means there will be no great, cruel waves that dash the ships to pieces and drown so many people. It means, too, that there will be no wide stormy sea to separate us from our friends. If they cross it, we can cross it too, and, therefore, we need not be afraid either for ourselves or for them."

"But," said Mary, "do you think there will be any nice waves and shells and stones, and that Jesus will let us play on the shore? I want to so much. I think it would make me more rested than anything else, and I am so very tired."

The young man felt the tears coming in his eyes when he heard this little child talking of being so tired, and said: "I know Jesus will let you do everything that will make you happy."

He could not say more, but laid his head down on the table, and sobbed. The doctor found him like this, and touched him saying, "Come, you must go now; I can't have this with my patients."

He rose and brushed away the tears. "Mary," he said, "will you give me this little shell to remember you by?"

"Yes," answered the child faintly, and turned away. She was so tired.

"Doctor," he said, when the fresh air and sunshine helped him to control himself, "you've done me lots of good to-day—not only in that way, you know, but I have an idea I can finish my tower."

"Good! but how? What have you seen?"

"Here," said his friend, and he took out the shell. "This is a new design, and it must be good, for it was drawn by the great Architect himself."

The young man was poor, and had been tempted to give up his business for one that would pay better. He had resolved to try once more, and so drew a plan for a church in hopes that it might be chosen from among many others sent in, and he could thus get a start in life. He had it all finished but the tower, and for that he could draw nothing that would satisfy him. The doctor had found him that afternoon cross, restless, and discouraged. He had only one more day before the plan must be sent in. The doctor coaxed him to the hospital, thinking that the sight of suffering would make him more contented with his own healthy, hard-working life. He was right, and he did him more good than he could have thought, for the young man copied the shell, and his plan was the one chosen as the best.—*N. Y. Observer.*

"STICKING TO IT."—A good story is told of a young man who consulted an old gentleman who had been very successful in business, as to the best business in which to engage. In answer to the question, "What had I best do?" the old man replied, "Stick." The young fellow explained that he had wished to know what he had best do to make money. Again he was told, "Stick." "Stick at what?" was asked. "Oh, that is a matter of little consequence. Take almost any line of business you like; but stick to it."

## Mother's Turn.

"It is mother's turn to be taken care of now."

The speaker was a winsome young girl, whose bright eyes, fresh colour, and eager looks told of light-hearted happiness. Just out of school, she had the air of culture, which is an added attraction to a blithe young face. It was mother's turn now. Did she know how my heart went out to her for her unselfish words?

Too many mothers in their love of their daughters, entirely overlook the idea that they themselves need recreation. They do without all the easy, pretty, and charming things, and say nothing about it; and the daughters do not think there is any self-denial involved. Jenny gets the new dress, and mother wears the old one, turned upside down and wrong side out. Lucy goes on the mountain trip, and mother stays at home and keeps house. Emily is tired of study and must lie down in the afternoon; but mother, though her back aches, has no time for such an indulgence.

Dear girls, take good care of your mothers. Coax them to let you relieve them of some of the harder duties, which for years they have patiently borne.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

## Keep Nothing From Mother.

They sat at the spinning together,  
And they spun the fine white thread,  
One face was old and the other was young—  
A golden and silver head.

At times the young voice broke in song  
That was wonderfully sweet,  
And the mother's heart beat deep and calm,  
For her joy was most complete.

There was many a holy lesson,  
Interwoven with allent prayer,  
Taught to her gentle, listening child,  
As they two sat spinning there.

"And of all that I speak, my darling,  
From my older head and heart,  
God giveth me one last thing to say,  
And with it thou shalt not part.

"Thou wilt listen to many voices,  
And ah! woe that this must be!  
The voice of praise, and the voice of love,  
And the voice of flattery.

"But listen to me, my little one,  
There's one thing that thou shalt fear,  
Let never a word to my love be said,  
Which her mother may not hear.

"No matter how true, my darling one,  
The words may seem to thee,  
They are not fit for my child to hear  
If they cannot be told to me.

"If thou'lt ever keep thy young heart pure,  
And thy mother's heart from fear,  
Bring all that is said to thee by day  
At night to thy mother's ear."

## A Prison Picture.

"Dood-bye, papa," laughed a little child, as her mother held her up that she might kiss her father through the grated door of the prison recently. "Good-bye, and hurry and tum back. Is all oo men doin' with my papa?" she continued, gazing in on the rough-looking prisoners, who were crowding near the door; "if oo is, dood-bye everybody; and tum right back and see your little girl, too."

Then she clambered down, and ran away, while the big iron door closed after her, as a sullen cloud darkens the sunlight.

This little child, with her innocent prattle, looking in upon and talking to a group of hardened men, was a pretty scene. As she put her little face against the bars and kissed her papa,

the wretches within that prison could not restrain their tears. Men were there whose lives had been on the darkest side of existence, who would hesitate at scarcely any crime, whose characters were hardened and corrupted by sin and debauchery; yet a simple little scene like the above, a few prattling words of a child, reached down through every covering and touched their better emotions. It kindled within them lingering memories of other and better days, and stirred up the little remaining sentiment of manhood, husbandhood, fatherhood. The visit of the child left an impression on those men and opened their hearts to better resolves. However, it was only one of the many occurrences that take place in that little world of itself—a city court and prison.—*Cleveland Voice.*

## Youthful Smokers and Chewers.

BY REV. C. I. E. BRANE.

THE habit of smoking and chewing tobacco is so general among boys, and so hurtful too, that I venture to call attention to the possibility of preventing many of the young of our Church from falling into this unclean and injurious practice, through the instrumentality of an organized effort in the Sabbath-school.

Two things relative to this pernicious habit are perfectly clear: First, that it is certainly injurious in its moral, intellectual, and physical results; and, secondly, that the young are in special danger of contracting it. I am inclined to think that in every Sunday-school there should be a special effort made to save the boys from a habit so hurtful and debasing. It is a very rare case for an elderly person to contract the habit of using tobacco, simply because the temptation to do so is not so great in siper years, and because the judgment is more intelligent and efficient in the control it exercises over the individual deportment. It is an alarming statement to make, but I believe it is strictly true, that the nearer you approach the confines of babyhood the more smokers and chewers you will find. Not ten days ago a little boy, of very diminutive stature, stopped me on the street and said, "Mister, give me a chew of terbacker, will yer?" I know of several boys under five years of age who actually cry for "tobacker" when they are "out." One of them has been chewing for two years. The fact is the streets are lined with youthful smokers and chewers, from five to twenty years of age. The impression prevails among little boys generally, that smoking and chewing are the most manly things they could possibly do; so, as it is the height of every boy's ambition to become a man, and that as soon as possible, they make it their earliest and chief concern to get a cheroot, cigar, or cigarette for their mouths. The latter are more generally used, because they are less expensive. It would be lucky for many boys, and men too, for that matter, if the expensiveness were the greatest objection that could be urged against it. But, alas, that is the least objectionable feature of the habit. Dr. Richardson, whose disposition seem to be to say all in favour of the use of tobacco that he possibly can, says it is "most deleterious to the young, causing in them impairment in growth and physical degradation."