USES FOR SHELLS AND SEA-WEEDS.

There seems to be an instinctive in every man which prompts one to pick up shells when staying at the seashore. While taking a walk upon the sands, we see a pretty shell, an impulse bids us procure it, though we have to jump over or wade through a pool for it, and we know it will be of no use whatever when we have it.

Usually we are tired of carrying our treasures, throw all wet and sandy as they are, before the strong sun, and we throw them back on the sands again with nothing of relief to be rid of them. Should we manage to convey them in safety to our lodgings, they are laid aside and forgotten till an unpleasant, fishy odour remind us of their existence, and they are cast away with disgust.

Now, this is a great pity, as even supposing one is not ambitious enough to attempt a collection properly arranged and named, still the most unlearned can make very pretty objects with shells and seaweed. Collecting shells is a delightful occupation when there is some definite end in view, and the hope of securing fresh varieties adds a new zest to otherwise interminable walks.

A sufficient variety for our purpose can usually be found along the edge of the tide with no other equipment than a basket or one of the little wooden pans without which no child is content. The advantage of a basket is that it saves the trouble of washing the shells separately, a tedious operation in a large collection. By occasionally dipping the basket in the water, the mud and sand will wash through and leave the shells clean. If this be done, however, a small box should be carried, in which to store the shells, use small specimens that might slip through the basket during the washing process.

One needs to be a little more adventurous in collecting seaweeds. The delicate kinds can only be found in perfection by following the retreating tide step by step. When it is at its lowest ebb, particularly after a storm, you will find a rich harvest of seaweeds and corallines, chief among the former on our English coasts being the beautiful red rhodophyta.

Most of the red and some of the green seaweeds lose their bright colour very soon if exposed to the sun and air, changing to a dirty-white tinge. It is necessary, therefore, to collect them as soon as possible after they are deposited by the tide. The bright-coloured lichen-like sponges, so tempting to the inexperienced, which are to be found in the pools at low water, are quite useless for ornamental purposes, as they lose their colour directly.

The different sorts of coralline, common on all our coasts, are very suitable for decoration; one of the most abundantly met with is the sea-hair coralline, so called from its form of growth, in tufts like bunches of hair. Another common one is the sedge coralline: both of these, with any other variety, and all the stiff, bushy sea-weeds that can be found, will be very useful.

It may be interesting to mention here that these corallines, popularly called, and formerly supposed to be sea-weeds, are in reality not so. Each delicate hair-like branch is composed of a series of cells, and each of these is occupied by a tiny living creature, which may be easily seen under a microscope of moderate power. The little inhabitants are generally already dead when the coralline is found on the shore; and, from its structure it soon dries and is more lasting in colour and form than most of the sea-weeds.

On some parts of our coasts nothing but the commonest and plainest kinds of seaweeds are to be found. These should not be neglected, however, as they may be made into beautiful sprays by being washed with fresh water. After several applications of this they are finished off with rotten-stone and oil, applied with camomile's feather. The presence of the oil makes the natural state of the shell, if the pretty ones can be found, is decidedly preferable to any effect obtained by artificial means. Another way of beautifying shells, such as mussels, some sorts of top-shells and others, is to put them into a cup of vinegar and water, which in the course of a few days will eat off the rough, dingy exterior, and disclose a surface of mother-of-pearl. They must not be left too long, nor should the solution of vinegar be very strong, as in either case the shell will dissolve and crumble away altogether.

I have made several exceedingly pretty bunches in this manner, and I am sure that any who follow the directions will be pleased with the result.

Procure some strong mill or cardboard—an old dress box will do admirably; cut out a piece in the shape of a half-moon, the size being regulated by the position to be occupied by the bracket. This is for the top; then cut out another piece for the front, which must be the same length as the rounded part of the top. The lower edge should be skilfully in some way, such as is shown in the picture.
before the ornamentation is begun, as if anything be left till afterwards the shells are likely to be knocked off.

Liquid glue is best to use, and a rather small brush will be necessary.

I put first of all a row of sprigs of coraline all round, projecting over the edge of the bracket, forming a fringe. Then a row of one variety of shells, such as small whelks or cockles, all round inside the fringe of corallines. After this border, a sort of ground-horizon of the larger shells should be made, leaving the interspaces until the last to be filled in with tiny shells and morsels of seaweed. The lovely little nearly galeana, and the bright pink trumpet-shells will be at once chosen for these purposes. Should there be a scarcity of bright-coloured specimens, and the bracket looks dull and flat, some little pieces of lichen may be introduced with great advantage; they are of all shades and hues, and can be found on the trees in most country places. They look so much like seaweed that no one will detect the difference, and they add the little touches of colour here and there which are necessary to brighten up the whole.

A favourite, though old-fashioned, way of using these "spells of the sea" is to take a very small wicker basket, cut it in halves lengthwise, and stitch or glue it on to a piece of cardboard, the hollow side of course inwards. Then fill it with dried or pressed seaweeds, arranging the colours and forms as tastefully as possible, and fastening each piece with gum, either to the basket or to the cardboard, as the position may require. I should have said, however, before the basket is attached, that some sprays of seaweed may be "floated out" on the card, round where the edge of the basket is to be. This forms a border and facilitates the arrangement of the rest of the bunch considerably.

A more useful employment of shells, and one, therefore, more to be recommended, is in the conversion of a small wooden box into a pretty work or trinket box. The inside will first require to be lined with silk or coloured material, and the lid attached more securely. Two little hinges may be bought for a trifling sum, fastened on with tiny nails, or two or three little slips of cloth will do instead of orthodox hinges. A loop of ribbon should also be fastened to the front of the lid, that it may be opened without touching the shells. If they are well glued on, however, they will stand a good deal of wear unless really roughly handled. They are fastened and arranged in the same way as on the bracket. If the box be intended for a present, a pretty idea is to cover the whole and the initials of the recipient in pink or white shells on the lid, the letters being edged with seaweed or very small shells of a different colour, to make them show up well.

The finest shells of all may be reserved for the making of birthday and other gift cards; they would be quite lost if employed on any larger work. In beautifully inlaid wreath of fine and delicate sea-weed on a card of this description, which will form a pleasing memento of a summer holiday at the seaside.

TOWERS USED AT A WEDDING.

THE BEAUTY AND CHARM OF THE WOMEN OF ANCIENT EGYPT ARE GRACED REMARKED IN HISTORY AND SUNG IN POETRY, AND MODERN TRAVELLERS HAVE BEEN AS CERAMIC AND ELEGANT IN THEIR DESCRIPTIONS. THEIR ACCOMPLISHEMENTS WERE NUTRIENT, DANCING, AND SINGING. THEY HAD THEIR PICNIC PARTIES, THEY PAID HOUSE-TO-HOUSE VISITS, THEY FESTIVAL THE FAMOUS DRIVES AND PROMENADES IN THEIR HANDSOME CHAROIS, AND THEY CARRIED THE ARTS OF THEME AND THE TOILETTE TO AN EXTREME NEVER SINCE EXCEEDED. THEY WERE PADDED OF GARDENING, PRACTISED GYMNASTICS, PLAYED GAMES WITH BALLS, EMBROIDERED, AND DID VARIOUS KINDS OF WORK WITH THEIR BRONZE NEEDLES. THERE IS NO REASON FOR BELIEVING THAT THEY DID NOT MAKE EXCELLENT WIVES AND MOTHERS.

The social and legal rights of women were

were music, dancing, and singing. They had an extravagant love of jewellery. They had their picnic parties, they paid house-to-house visits, they frequented the fashionable drives and promenades in their handsome chariots, and they carried the arts of dress and the toilette to an extreme never since exceeded. They were famed of gardening, practised gymnastics, played games with balls, embroidered, and did various kinds of work with their bronze needles. There is no reason for believing that they did not make excellent wives and mothers.

The social and legal rights of women were