

THE MOTHER IN PARADISE.

THE mother came to the gateway of Heaven. She was aged and weary. Her body was bowed and her face was wrinkled and withered, for her burden had been the burden of care and trouble and sorrow. So she was glad to be done with life, and to seek at the gateway of Heaven the fulfilment of the promise that had been her solace through all the hard, bitter years.

An angel met the mother at the gateway, and put her arms about the drooping figure and spoke gracious, tender words.

"Whom seekest thou?" asked the angel.

"I seek my dear ones who came hither before me," answered the mother. "They are very many—my father, my mother, my husband, my children—they are all here together, and, for many and weary years, I have lived in my loneliness with no other thing to cheer me but the thought that I should follow them in good time."

"Yes, they are here, and they await thee," said the angel. "Lean upon me, dear mother, and I will lead you to them."

Then the angel led the way through the garden of Paradise, and the angel and the mother talked as they walked together.

As they journeyed on their way a company came to meet them. Then the mother saw and knew her dear ones—even though the Heavenly life had glorified their countenances, the mother knew them, and she ran to greet them, and there was great joy to her and to them. Meanwhile, the angel kept steadfastly at her side.

Now the mother, when she had embraced her dear ones, looked at each of them separately once more, and then she said :

"Ye are indeed my beloved—my mother, my father, my husband, and my children ! But there is one who should be of your company whom I do not see—my babe, my little helpless babe that came hither so many, many years ago. My heart fainteth, my breast yearneth for that dear little lamb of mine ! Come, let us go together and search for her, or await me here under these pleasant