

TENDER WORDS FOR WEARY MOTHERS.

BY MRS. ALBERT SMITH.

A LITTLE elbow leans upon your knee—
 Your tired knee that has so much to bear,
 A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly
 From underneath a thatch of tangled hair :
 Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch
 Of warm moist fingers holding you so tight ;
 You do not prize this blessing over much ;
 You are almost *too tired* to pray to-night !

But it *is* blessedness ! A year ago
 I did not see it as I do to-day—
 We are so dull and thankless, and too slow
 To catch the sunshine till it slips away !
 And *now* it seems surpassing strange to me
 That, while I wore the badge of motherhood,
 I did not kiss more oft and tenderly
 The little child that brought me only good.

And if, some night when you sit down to rest,
 You missed the elbow from the tired knee—
 This restless curling head from off your breast—
 This lisping tongue that chatters constantly ;—
 If from your own the dimpled hands had slipped,
 And ne'er would nestle in your palm again—
 If the white feet into the grave had tripped ;—
 I could not blame you for your heartache then !

I wonder so that mothers ever fret
 At little children clinging to their gown,
 Or that the foot-prints, when the days are wet,
 Are ever black enough to make them frown !
 If I could find a little muddy boot,
 Or cap, or jacket on my chamber floor—
 If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,
 And hear it patter in my home once more—

If I could mend a broken cart to-day—
 To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky—
 There is no woman in God's world could say
 She was more blissfully content than I.
 But ah ! the dainty pillow next my own
 Is never rumpled by a shining head—
 My singing birdling from its nest is flown,
 The little boy I used to kiss is dead !

[To those dear mothers and fathers who do miss the "little elbow," and cannot help weeping over these lines, familiar to some but not to all our readers, we would say, If the Good Shepherd has gathered your little lamb in His arms, and is now carrying it in His bosom, for "of such is the kingdom of heaven," will you not let Him also draw you to Himself, and satisfy your empty, bleeding heart with His own inexhaustless love ?]