

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

FROM THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILHELM VON KAULBACH.



THE belief prevailed in very ancient times that mortals are accompanied through life by a special supernatural being who watches over them for guidance and protection. Socrates is thought to have shared in this belief, from the fact that he claimed to have a particular *daimon* as his spiritual counsellor. The ancient Jews laid much stress on the doctrine of guardian angels, as also did the early Christian Fathers. Children in particular were believed to be peculiarly the objects of angelic watch-care; and this phase of the doctrine was thought to be confirmed by the words of the Saviour, who said: "Take heed how ye offend one of these little ones: for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

It is this venerable and beautiful belief that has inspired Kaulbach's well-known and popular picture. Here we behold a little one clinging trustingly to the ever-watchful guardian who has snatched him from recent danger, and bears him on to a place of safety. Or, looking at it in another way, the angel may be transferring the tender charge from the perils and pains of the earthly state, to the bright celestial country. In either case, the thought is grateful to the maternal heart, that the little ones, whether wandering upon earth, or caught away from mortal sight, are not alone, but are evermore the wards of loving spirits.

W. von Kaulbach (born, 1805; died, 1874) was a great figure in German art. He was known equally for his felicitous designs illustrative of "Reynard the Fox;" for tender subjects like *Mother-Love* and the present work; and for such vast and sublime creations as *The Battle of the Huns* and *The Destruction of Jerusalem*. He received many decorations; was Member of several academies; Correspondent of the Institute, and Officer of the Legion of Honor.



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