

THE SPIRIT BRIDAL.

COULD mortals but know and feel the bliss of ethereal existence; could they but experience foretaste of the raptures known only to those who, having performed a pilgrimage through the vicissitudes of a sublunary world; borne never-ending griefs with patience; enjoyed with moderation its short and unsatisfactory pleasures while they had power to please—and, when their charms faded, beheld them vanish without regret; who, having loved with constancy the companions with whom were shared the pains and pleasures of the world, and at last seen the universal mower, death, with relentless hand sweep those companions from mortal sight, yet still lived on, waiting with patience the moment, when through the valley of death and our shining portals, themselves should pass to a re-union with the objects of their affection, never more to part, but dwell with them in everlasting peace and happiness;—could, I say, mortals but foretaste such an existence, how insupportable would be the remainder of the term they are destined to inhabit the world below us; with what restless anxiety would they look forward to that hour, in which their souls shall leave their earthly abodes. How gladly would they welcome him who is called the “King of Terrors,” and did they not fear, that by summoning him prematurely to their aid, they might be forever shut out from our communion, few, few indeed, would wait his pleasure, but, by their own act, force him to their presence and, under his influence, “sleep the sleep that knows no dreaming.”

To dwell with us, none but the lovely and virtuous can be admitted; our constant employment, the interchange of kindness, the contemplation of the beauties of our abode, the praising of that power which placed us in and gave us to enjoy the pleasures of such a state of being; and if sometimes one, who has rushed from earth uncalled, seeks and gains admittance to our company, the knowledge by us, that earth's troubles, weighing too heavily on the throne of reason had forced her from her seat, and deprived of her support, caused her forsaken object, whose sensitive nature and hitherto unblemished soul, crushed by her desertion to deeper despair, to violate, in an ungarded moment the law of nature, and seek by its own act in death, a refuge from the woes of life—we draw a veil over and obliterate by our sympathy all remembrance of the fault, and to palliate, remember only the train

of ills which instigated to its committal. That we may, by contrast, more fully appreciate our happy condition; the griefs we ourselves experienced while on earth and those of such as come among us, are the themes of our converse; and though tears of sorrow are among us unknown, tears are shed. But the tears of sympathy for the woes of others are not of sorrow; for as they comfort and console the afflicted, sorrow can have no share in their nature. Therefore it is, that at this moment, smiles, tears and offices of kindness are now in their fullest plenitude, that the greetings and welcomings of our band may fully accomplish their design at the induction of two newly arrived spirits into, that they may form part of our community, enjoy our privileges, pleasures and abode; forgetting in eternal happiness the pains and sorrows they have left on earth, contemplate only the bliss prepared for them in their present state and be no longer strangers. Think not however, mortal, thou canst, even in imagination, give us a local habitation, think not our region is circumscribed by limits, however remote in space thou canst imagine them; no, that would destroy one of our greatest privileges, for privileged we are. Our region is boundless, earth, air, sea, fire, all are ours: even thy race, mortal, is under our controul. What is sleep but temporary death? what the visions and fantasies of sleep, but our powerful agency working within the inanimate though breathing clay?

When mortals wearied with toil stretch themselves on their beds, 'tis then we take their spirits into our keeping, they are among us and enjoy, for a short season, our pleasures; but we deprive them of the power to convey on their return to earth, any information of our state or condition. What conveys sweet fancies through the brain of virtuous sleepers? While their spirits are absent some of our band hover about or lie beside them, breathing into their ears, recounting their virtuous deeds, of which we have been witnesses, sweetening their sleep by visions of happiness they shall at some future time enjoy, and picturing to them the place to which we have momentarily conveyed their own spirit, its future destiny and eternal abode. Why is the sleep of the vicious troubled? It is that we in like manner convey their spirits from them, but they enter not our home; afar off they behold our happiness and conscious such can never be theirs, feel the despair to which they are at a future time destined. So also do we recount in the ears of the sleepers their misdeeds, tell