

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

Do they, indeed, surround our path, the high,
 The Holy ones, the Spirits whom we call
 Departed, are they often by our side,
 At golden morn, or in the still, deep night !
 They who have wash'd their robes, once all impure,
 White in atoning blood, who walk on high
 The Sapphire streets of heaven, and with sweet voices
 Join in celestial song—do they come down,
 From thrones and palaces of light, to linger
 Invisible, 'mid scenes of former love ?
 Or from celestial hills look down to view
 The homes that once were their's of this dim earth ?
 Yes, they do mark our footsteps, as we glide
 On to their happy bowers ; oh ! when we turn,
 And look with eyes of fondness on the world—
 The world of vanity—they pity us,
 And wonder how we can, how once they could,
 Bestow such love on its poor transient shades !
 Perchance into our softened hearts they whisper
 Some tale of real joy, or picture fair,
 To our mind's eye, some scene of other lands,
 To win us back to heaven ; and then their task,
 Their holy task, fulfilled, they spread their wings,
 And, swifter than a sunbeam, dart again
 Up to its blessed shores. But when they mark
 The beings whom they loved as their own souls,
 With steady foot, and heavenward gazing eye,
 Their upward course pursuing, gladness thrills
 Even through their happy bosoms.

Not alone

Do human spirits hover round this earth,—
 Angelic creatures, all unseen, are walking
 Amid our dwellings oft ; their holy footsteps
 From many a peril guard us, and their eyes
 Behold our conduct—oh ! how strange they think it
 That beings, with immortal souls like ours,
 Should idly waste their energies sublime
 On poorest trifles, and forget the prize
 Of everlasting joy, to hunt some bauble,
 Some very vanity ! How they admire
 The riches of that wisdom ; infinite,
 And boundless love, that at so high a cost
 Reclaimed such wretched creatures from their choice ;
 And freely gave them, holiness and heaven !
 But think my soul, of Him, that higher witness,
 Who ever compasseth thy path, whose eye
 Surveys thine inmost thoughts, and penetrates
 The dark recesses of thy deepest heart,
 Thy Saviour and thy Judge ! oh, let his presence
 Dwell in thy ever, ever wakeful consciousness !

We get a glimpse of true wisdom, and know how we should
 live, perhaps an hour before we die.