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A celestial scene

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FEB. 4

The following came to us in a private letter, and has long lain among our manuscripts. It is too precious a gem to lie thus buried:

A CELESTIAL SCENE.

In the spirit land, far, far from our sight—
Where the souls of the blest in robes of light,
Are gathered around the eternal throne,
To worship the High and Holy One;
There was kneeling one who many a year
Had wept and prayed in a lower sphere—
He had mourned to see the folly and crime,
Which marked the course of the sons of time,
And he'd wished and longed for that happy day
When he, released from his prison of clay,
Might rise to dwell in that world above,
Where all is peace and joy and love—
But when he stood on that sacred height,
And viewed with the aid of eternity's light,
That sinful world where his fellow man
Still the career of folly ran—
When he saw upraised the oppressor's arm,
And none to shield from impending harm—
When he saw the deceiver leading astray
The hapless victim who fell in his way—
When he saw the wicked in power arrayed
And his cruel mandates in haste obeyed—
When he viewed in the road to death the throng,
That trifled and laughed as they passed along,
And how few were seeking the narrow way,
Which led to the realms of endless day;
He longed again in that world to dwell,
The way to a better land to tell.
He longed to show to some wandering mind
Where perfect peace he might surely find;
He longed to wipe the falling tear,
The broken heart to soothe and cheer,
To point to the straight but upward road,
Which leads from that dark and sinful abode,
To guide some erring soul to heaven,
To dwell forevermore redeemed, forgiven.
In hope on this errand of love to be sent,
His earnest request he came to present.
The Eternal One thus answered his prayer—
"For three score years I kept you there,
In your Master's vineyard to labor and toil,
To gather the fruit of that stubborn soil.
But you wept and prayed for your release,
And longed to be forever at ease—
At length I answered your mournful cry,
And took you to dwell with me on high
Then, not till then, you seemed to know,
'Twas sweet to save a soul from woe.
That to man is given no greater joy,
Than to labor with me in this noble employ."
He ceased, and as low the suppliant knelt,
The burning words in his bosom felt,
"Righteous art thou," he cried, "and just,
I feel to lie in the lowest dust,
I now look back with regret to see,
How poor my service has been for thee.
Oh had my heart with love been fired,
In my holy work I should not have sited;
I then should have felt 'twas joy indeed,
The cause of heaven with sinners to plead.
Would that those who still are permitted to dwell
On earth, the cry of life to tell,
Might know the blessing on them conferred,
And never permit an impatient word.
But cheerfully toil while 'tis called to-day,
Lest from work unfinished they're hurried away,
For never again to us it is given,
To guide immortal souls to heaven."