

THE BETTER LAND.

There is a land far, far away,
Unseen by mortal eye;
Unstained by sin, undimmed by care,
Where pleasures never lie.

Unlike this sinful world of ours,
Its skies are ever bright;
No clouds o'erspread its sunniest hours,
Nor day gives place to night.

No tempest, with its rude alarms,
Invades those regions fair;
But soft and fragrant zephyrs fill
The pure celestial air.

No forvid ray of summer's sun
Falls on the radiant brow,
But light effulgent from the throne
Illumes their pathway now.

No blasting winds, or winter's cold,
Can chill the fadeless forms;
They're safe within the heavenly fold,
Scoure from earthly storms.

They dwell with Christ, a happy band,
Redeemed from sin and pain—
By them affliction, sorrow, death,
Is never known again.

Friends are not called to gather there
Around the dying bed
Of loving ones, and bid adieu,
Or farewell tears to shed.

No, no; their sufferings now are o'er,
Their happiness complete;
For on that bright, eternal shore,
No sorrow shall they meet.

But ever in the glorious beams
Of God's eternal love,
They'll dwell throughout unending day
In that bright world above.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MILKY WAY.

A young correspondent, in Oswego county, asks the following questions about the *Milky Way* :

1. Why does the galaxy appear in different positions, and of different brightness, in different seasons?
2. Is this change a regular revolution?
3. Why is it not visible in the evening in the month of May.

The *Milky Way* is a belt, from four to twenty degrees broad, round the heavens, and of very different brightness in its parts. When the splendid star in *Lyra* is on our meridian, just south of the zenith, about the middle of August, this belt of whiteness lies from N. E. to S. W. The *Milky Way* always passes through the constellation *Cassiopeia*, in which is the *W*, a group of five stars, about thirty degrees from the Pole star, and it can be traced through *Perseus*, *Auriga*, *Orion*, to the feet of *Gemini*, and thence onward in the same direction south of the equator. It is this peculiar trace through the constellations that makes a difficulty in apprehending the apparent motions and positions of this belt, by some minds.

From the daily revolution of the earth on its axis from west to east, the stars,

and of course, the *Milky Way*, appear to move round daily from east to west.— Follow the motion of *Cassiopeia* through several hours of a clear evening, and this motion of the *Milky Way* will be obvious. And, as *Cassiopeia* is always above our horizon, the *W* is always visible when the sky is cloudless in the evening and night, because its distance from the pole is less than our distance from the equator; or, in other words, our place is 43° from the equator, and the *W* is only about 30° from the pole, so that some portion of the *Milky Way* will be visible with *Cassiopeia*. Because *Cassiopeia* thus appears to revolve from E. to W., the position of the *Milky Way* will be different at different hours.

From the annual revolution of the earth round the sun from W. to E., the constellations appear to move annually over our heads from E. to W. Hence the *Milky Way* must have this revolution, and be on our meridian at different times in the year. But it is obvious that this motion of the *Milky Way* must be as regular as that of the sun or other stars. In three months it must complete one-fourth of this apparent annual revolution. The ancients knew this in all certainty, and its varying yet definite positions at different times. When *W* is directly west of the pole star, as seen in February, the *Milky Way* lies from N. N. W. to S. E.; and when *W* is due east of the pole star, the course of it is N. N. E. to S. S. W.

In the months of July and August, September and October, the most splendid part of the *Milky Way* is visible in our latitude. It is then truly magnificent. But in May the sun and this most splendid part of the belt rise and set together, and this part can be only partially seen for several weeks. But as the sun sets with this belt at the west, the opposite portion of it rises to the east; yet it has so much less splendor that it is little noticed, and many seem not to notice it at all. In fact, then, some portion of the *Milky Way* may be seen every clear night in the year.

The irregular outline of this belt and its obliquity to the equator, ecliptic, and meridians, probably gave rise to the ancient myth, that when Phaeton undertook to guide the chariot of the sun, and could not manage the steeds and keep them in their true course, the sun set the heavens on fire, and the mighty conflagration left the *Milky Way* to be the perpetual memento of its desolating power.

Magnificent is the discovery by astronomers, that this white and beautiful belt is the mingled light of myriads of stars and suns too remote to be seen except in a large telescope. Herschel reckoned that in one-quarter of an hour 116,000 fixed stars, in one part of the *Milky Way*, passed over the field of view. The larger telescopes, like Lord Rosse's, have shown multitudes more.

The name of this belt, among the Greeks, is in one form of it, *Galaxy*, the Milk-belt or circle; in the Latin, *Viateca*, the *Milky Way*. In ages so remote, the *milky splendor* seized upon the minds of men, as the distinguishing property by which to designate this wonder of the Universe.

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