

Miscellaneous.

POSSIBLE BASIS OF UNION IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

The basis of the Missouri Synod embraces the unqualified subscription of all the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, so interpreted as to brand as heretics all who belong to other denominations, and who do not so receive them, and from whose members, therefore, fellowship in the Lord's Supper is to be withheld, and to whose ministers an interchange of pulpits is to be denied. That this is a fair representation of the basis of Missouri, their own words, as printed in our columns, abundantly prove. And that they really aim at uniting the Lutheran Church in America on such a basis, and hope to secure it, their origin, their declarations, and their efforts attest. The means through which they have propagated their sentiments, and carried forward their work, are their religious journals, and public conferences. Thus have they made individual converts in almost all the German and Scandinavian Synods, annexed the majority of the Buffalo Synod, and established formal, friendly relations with the Ohio and Wisconsin Synods. The following extract from a letter, written by one of the Missourians to the editor of the Evangelist, expresses the feelings and wishes which they cherish:

"Recently, I have read with great gratification, that besides the Ohio, the Wisconsin Synod, also, stands united in brotherly unity with ours. I wish that our Synod might also stand in the same friendly and fraternal relations with the Pennsylvania Synod. My heart bleeds with deep sorrow when I reflect on the sad discord, and dreadful dissensions in our beloved Church. I can do nothing, but pray to God, to deliver us from this great evil. Proceed, then, dear brother, through free conferences to make progress towards the desired goal."

The basis on which the General Council proposes to unite the whole Lutheran Church is found in its "Fundamental Principles." The following is its substance: "The Symbolical Books contain the pure truth of God's word, expressed in the best possible manner, without any admixture of mistake or error, and their statements must be understood and received in one and the same sense, and that sense their only true, native, and original one. The General Council, in the preamble of its constitution, declares that the vocation of the Lutheran Church 'demands such an organization as shall enable our whole Church in this land, in its various tongues, to work together, first and supremely, for the maintenance of unity in the true faith of the Gospel; and that the delegates present were assembled for the purpose of forming a union of Lutheran Synods.' The confessional basis was so strongly worded, that the hope was cherished, that the Missouri Synod, and all others who sympathized with them, would not only approve of it, but formally unite with the Council. But this hope has not been realized, and the Missourians denounce its action on the Four Points as two-sided, unionistic, un-Lutheran and un-theological. The Council has, however, secured the union of twelve or thirteen Lutheran Synods, at least, in an outward and formal manner. The doctrinal basis of the General Synod requires the reception of the Augsburg Confession, the Symbol of the Lutheran Church in her catholicity alone, and imposes the obligation that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God are therein correctly exhibited. The General Synod was organized 'for the promotion of brotherly love, to the furtherance of Christian concord, and to the firm establishment and continuance of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' And, in accordance with this design, its constitution forbids the adoption of any such confessional test, as would be calculated to burden the consciences of the brethren by human prescriptions, and, at the same time, enjoins the duty of observing the signs of the times, and of improving them to the furtherance of Christian union. Upon this broad, catholic, Scriptural, and historically Lutheran basis, the General Synod had united about thirty Synods, and notwithstanding all the misrepresentations and opposition with which it has met, it still holds in fraternal union twenty-two Synods, and has never lost one because of dissatisfaction with the Lutheran character of its basis."

Lutheran Observer.

BRYANT POET, AND EDITOR.

A correspondent writes: "Looking in at the office of the Evening Post, the other day, I saw Mr. Bryant sitting in his sanctum writing. Going up to him in the day, I saw a gentleman pointing out a person to the lady he had on his arm, and looking, saw Mr. Bryant again—walking briskly homeward, his day's labors done. The venerable poet-editor is now in his seventy-fifth year. He was born on the 3d of November, 1791. His hair is white as snow; but his step is alert; his form is seemingly unbroken by age; his eye is still bright, though perhaps a little milder than in his more contentious younger days—for the oldsters in New York remember and sometimes speak of the days when Bryant wielded the sharpest pen on the New York press. "I am told by one of Mr. Bryant's personal friends that his health has been remarkably good during the present year. He is addicted to outdoor exercise, and is still a great walker. During the summer and fall, he lives at his country place, a charming spot at Roslyn, on Long Island; in winter he comes to town. His pen is still vigorous; and he maintains a strict general oversight over his paper, though he avoids, as is proper, the mere drudgery of the editorial life, leaving that to younger men. But he writes a good deal; and guides the course of his journal as ever. When I was in the Evening Post office the other day I noticed that

the proofs, not only of his own articles but of others, were sent in to him, and by him carefully read. You will notice from poems of his in the Atlantic, Putnam's, and other magazines, that the poetic fire still burns brightly in him; and that age has not robbed him of any of the qualities which make him the great poet.

"It is cheering to see this hale old age, vigorous, erect, alive to the events and impressions of the hour, and in full accord with the times. May he be long spared to the world; may he long retain his strength, and remain to guide the journal over which he has so long and so ably presided; where he has fought with such sound judgment, for so much good and against so much evil." Transcript.

THE HON. JOSIAH QUINCY, addressing the Boston Social Science Association on the price of cereals, claimed that it is affected more directly by the means of transportation than by any other cause except size of crops. The railroad freight charges in the country are extortionate; this is due to the bad management of our roads and especially to the constant "watering" of stock. The Erie received its share of indignation of course. He deplored that it was possible for Western speculating combinations to influence the prices materially. "The grain crop is from its immensity beyond the reach of mercantile monopolies. Fisk, Vanderbilt and Drew, with a few others, hold the keys to the granaries of the West. They have created a formidable transportation monopoly."

Scientific.

GREAT STAR SHOWER IN GEORGIA.

From the following articles, both of which we cut from the Mason (Ga.) Telegraph, it will be seen that the meteoric shower of Nov. 14, brilliant as it was at the north and west, was far more grand and startling at the south. We have collected nearly three hundred different accounts of this last star shower, as it appeared in different parts of the United States, some of which are very interesting.

Those of our citizens who were fortunate enough to be up between 12 and 5 o'clock on the morning of November 14, witnessed one of the grandest sights ever seen by man. It was a fall of millions of meteors. At first they appeared singly with momentary intervals, and would suddenly dart forth from the darkened horizon or from the zenith, and, traversing several degrees, explode like rockets. Then they came two at a time; then three, four, five, ten, twenty, one hundred, until the whole heavens began to be lighted and illuminated, as if a city was being bombarded by ten thousand batteries.

"Springing into existence" as "quick" as thought, and travelling with electric velocity, exhibiting a dazzling brilliancy almost equal to the sun at noon, they would leave a luminous train behind them, which would sometimes last for a minute. There was one which surpassed in magnitude all the rest. It rose to the north, passed the zenith over the city, and disappeared in the southwest. It was like an immense ball of fire, and had a train more brilliant than a rocket, and as long as a rainbow. The scene culminated about 3 o'clock, when it was grandly and awfully sublime. The night was clear. There was not a cloud to be seen anywhere. Stars and planets were eclipsed by the rising of the sun. It looked as if the heavens were holding high carnival over the earth; or that the angels were celebrating some glorious event. The "superstitious" who saw it "no doubt thought the final day of the world had surely come, and listened every moment for the trumpet of the Archangel.

The people of this earth seldom have the opportunity of witnessing anything so sublime; or so grandly beautiful. No language can describe, no pencil can paint the scene. To say that it was like a million bombshells simultaneously flying through the air would be but a faint description. The finest print could easily be read by the light. It lasted until daylight, and the rising sun put an end to it. We can but regret how poorly the eloquence of words describes a scene like this. The contrast between it and those pyrotechnic displays sometimes seen in cities, illustrated the grandeur, the power and glory of the Supreme Ruler of the universe.

We happened to see the grand meteoric shower of Nov. 13, 1833, and from all accounts, have no doubt that the shower of Nov. 14, 1869, was fully as remarkable.

JAPANESE PAPER.

The Japanese are emphatically a race of paper makers and paper users. It enters into all their trade calculations, and is exhaustive of more of their ingenious art than any other article. When a collection of the different kinds of paper was made to be sent to the London Exhibition of 1862, no less than sixty-seven kinds were forwarded. It is made to subserv the purpose of the useful as well as the ornamental. Everywhere may be seen paper fans, paper umbrellas, paper yatches, paper lanterns, paper pocket handkerchiefs, cloaks, and windows. The paper strings used by store-keepers, so lately introduced here, have been used by the Chinese for centuries. A short time ago an inventor applied for a patent on a paper hat, and a revolution in titles was promised. But the invention was little more than a theft from our antipodes, for the Japanese wore paper hats before Columbus saw the West Indies. We now hear every day of paper lath or ceiling; but in Japan they have used paper walls from time immemorial. Paper among the Japanese is not only an article of

trade, but a medium of exchange. Among the wealthy a certain quantity of paper is required to constitute a marriage portion. They manufacture paper from the bark of a certain tree, but not like us from rags. The preparation of it is a curious process, and requires a much longer time than we employ in its manufacture.

SCIENTIFIC ITEMS.

FROM THE EUROPEAN STUDY OF ALCHEMY, now developed into the science of Chemistry, had its origin, like nearly everything else in China, is proven by many facts adduced by the Rev. William A. P. Martin, before the Oriental Society at its last meeting. Mr. Martin is a resident of Peking, and has given the subject much thought. The study of Alchemy had, in full vigor, in China for at least six centuries before it made its appearance in Europe. It first appeared in Europe during the fourth century, when intercourse with the far East had become somewhat frequent. It appeared first at Byzantium and Alexandria, where the commerce of the East chiefly entered, and was subsequently revived in Europe by the Saracens, whose most famous school of Alchemy was at Baghdad, where there was a constant intercourse with Eastern Asia. The objects of pursuit in both the European and Asiatic schools of Alchemy were identical, and two fold—immortality and gold. In Europe the former was the most prominent, because the people being in possession of Christianity, had a vivid faith in a future life, to satisfy their longings on that head. In each school there were two slixes, the greater and the less, and the properties ascribed to them closely correspond. The principles underlying both systems are identical—the composite nature of the metals and their vegetation from a seminal germ. The means by which the Eastern and Western alchemists pursued their objects were nearly identical—mercury and lead being as conspicuous in the laboratories of the East as mercury and sulphur were in those of the West. Individuals in both schools held this doctrine of a cyclic change, in the course of which the precious metals revert to their base elements. Both are closely interwoven with astrology. Both led to the practice of magical rites and charlatanisms. Both schools deal in extravagant and florid language.

There is a very valuable mine of silica in North Stonington, Conn. A joint stock company has been organized and commenced operations in the spring. The company own 600 acres more, and have a long lease of 200 acres more, with mining privileges. The silica is mostly cut at the depth of three feet, but occasionally crops out on the surface. The first met with, after digging a few feet, resembles a ledge of decomposed marble, and is broken out in lumps of from several hundred pounds weight to fractions of pounds. Further down, the silica becomes finer and finer, until it has the appearance of wheat flour. It has been tested at several of the largest glass and crockery manufactories of the country, and pronounced equal to the best. It makes very handsome crockery. Six crushing machines will be used by the company in reducing the silica to the proper condition for use. An excavation to the depth of about 200 feet has been made on the land, and standing on the surface and looking down, the cavity has the appearance of an immense basin of milk.

A telegraphic review of the past year by The Telegrapher is very satisfactory. The Atlantic Cable has worked regularly, and with constantly increasing patronage. The charges have been largely reduced, and it is daily coming into more general use. The cable of 1866 parted, but no special difficulty except that arising from violent storms was found in recovering and repairing it. It has been fully demonstrated that ocean telegraph cables can be repaired with as much certainty as land lines. The Franco-American Cable Company has made a successful beginning. Its capital is secured, and the cable is being manufactured in London. The Great Eastern is now being fitted up for laying it. The coming summer, in all probability, will see this new line in successful operation. The cable of the International Ocean Telegraph Company, from Punta Rosa to Cuba, has worked well throughout the year, and has proved remunerative. A conference of telegraph managers held at Vienna, made very important arrangements for facilitating and cheapening telegraphic communication. Telegraph lines have been steadily extended and more generally used in Europe. The English Parliament, after long discussion, has determined that the Government shall assume control of the national telegraph lines. In this country the progress of the telegraph during the past year has been very great, and the patronage bestowed upon it by the public has been largely augmented. The annual financial statement of the Western Union Telegraph Company shows the year to have been a very prosperous one. Notwithstanding large reduction of tolls on several of the most important routes, its receipts and profits have largely increased, and its stockholders have received a generous dividend. Its facilities have been greatly increased, and the condition of its wires much improved. The lines which compete with the Western Union Company have been rapidly extended during the year, and now reach many important points which a year ago they did not. In the Dominion of Canada a new company has been organized, called the Dominion Telegraph Company. This company is intended to compete with the old-established Montreal Telegraph Company, and the result has already been a very material reduction of tariff by the latter, in advance of competition.

The cypress of Soimna, in Lombardy, Italy, is the oldest tree on record. It was known to be in existence at the time of Julius Caesar, forty-two years before Christ, and is therefore 1907 years old. It is 106 feet in height and 20 feet in circumference at one foot from the ground. Napoleon, when laying down his plan for the great road over the Simplon, diverged from a straight line to avoid injuring this tree. Superior antiquity is claimed for the immense tree in Calaveras County, California. This is supposed, from the number of concentric circles in the trunk, to be 2,565 years old.

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