

MISCELLANEOUS.

STATE CONFERENCES OF RELIGION.

The Churches of the State of New York have set the good example of holding state conferences of religion based upon the idea on which the Religious Parliament of Chicago was held in 1893. The signers of the call include seven heads of educational institutions of note; and leading Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Unitarian ministers. The plan has received considerable support in the religious press of almost all denominations, and only *The Christian Advocate* condemns it as unchristian. Its editor seems to misconstrue the principle of the Religious Parliament whose aim is not to set aside dogma by a surrender of doctrine, but to bring together people of different beliefs in a spirit of good will and brotherly love. If the state conferences of religion are carried out in the spirit of the Religious Parliament, there is no danger that these meetings will demoralise and disintegrate the evangelical denominations. The call expressly states that men can "reverence each other's reverence, without closely sharing each other's doctrinal beliefs, and without disloyalty to the truth as they individually see it; and that, while differences in belief are to be frankly declared, there is truth to be learned from, as well as truth to be offered to, neighbors, and that a great deal of good, now undone in the world, waits for the hour when the churches shall join hands in a new brotherhood."

A BOON FOR STUDENTS OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

There is scarcely ground for complaint that classic German texts have not been accessible in cheap and handy editions. The handsome volumes of the *Cotta Bibliothek der Weltliteratur* at one mark (25 cents) are marvels. But the *Sammlung Göschen*,¹ some volumes of which lie before us, has certain advantages which especially commend it to those interested in the subjects included. The volumes are very tastily bound in flexible covers, and are of a size convenient for an overcoat, or even a sack coat, pocket. The publisher's price of 80 pfennigs makes it possible to deliver them in America at 25 cents, or even less in quantities.

Moreover, the *Sammlung Göschen* includes many subjects not represented in other collections. Reference was made in the March *Open Court* to the handbooks of various physical and mathematical sciences. Within the field of philology the publishers have not limited their collection to reprints of literary masterpieces but have wisely included the necessary apparatus for introduction to these works. So we have a volume of selections from Old High German literature, accompanied

¹ Address G. J. Göschen'sche Verlag, Leipsic, Germany.

by a grammar and a translation into modern German, by Professor Schaufler of the Gymnasium in Ulm. The edition of the *Nibelungenlied* gives nearly the entire epic, and contains within the same covers a brief Middle High German grammar and a vocabulary, the editorial work by Prof. Wolfgang Golther. Another volume contains, along with the bulk of Walther von der Vogelweide's lyrics, selections from other Minnesingers, and a vocabulary; this volume is edited by Prof. Otto Guntter. The volume on the *Hofepos* contains Hartmann's *Der arme Heinrich*, Wolfram's *Parzival*, and Gottfried's *Tristan*, all three condensed of course, the latter very greatly; here too a vocabulary is supplied, the work by Professor Marold, of Königsberg. Dr. Georg Ellinger edits a very desirable selection of lyrics from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by named authors as well as those anonymous poems called *Volkslieder*, in which the German is so rich. The text has brief explanatory notes. Dr. O. Lyon undertakes to give a grammar of the German language in the space of 139 small pages, a condensation which inevitably necessitates the omission of much that the student would most desire. Yet the little volume may serve a useful purpose as a handbook for review. The *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, by Dr. Dettler of Vienna, might prove a disappointment to those who bought it not knowing that it is merely an etymological dictionary. As such it seems to have been prepared with much care, and may serve a good turn when the "Kluge" is not handy.

It should be mentioned that the *Götschen Sammlung* includes also editions of standard eighteenth century writers. The print and paper are very good.

W. H. CARRUTH.

A HISTORY OF FRANCE.

Mr. Thomas E. Watson has certainly written an interesting work in his *Story of France*. The book begins with the earliest times and will continue the history to the Consulate of Napoleon Bonaparte. It will be published in two volumes, of which the first, which goes to the end of the reign of Louis XV, has just appeared (New York and London: The Macmillan Company. Pages, 712.) The title aptly characterises the work. It is in every sense of the word a "story," if any distinction can be made between that term and history. The narrative is extremely simple and familiar, at times intensely dramatic, and invariably tinged with a strain of irony. The author seems pre-eminently desirous of securing his effect, and to do so he appeals to sentiment as well as to reason. The characterisations of the early periods have been largely taken from the conversations of the old chronicles, and the personal element has throughout been emphasised in a much higher degree even than in Green's *History of the English People*. The characterisations of the chief personages and the surroundings are real pieces of *genre*-painting, and render many portions of the book as interesting as a novel. It is not a history of detail, but one of large outlines. It is the work of a man who has conceived his enmities and made his friends among the great characters of history, and is bent on pillorying the one and apotheosising the other. We have the author's assurance that every statement is supported by authority, and that he has consulted all the standard histories and also "those numerous memoirs and autobiographies in which the literature of France is so peculiarly rich." But of a study of the actual sources there is less intimation in the author's judgments upon events than in his narrative. It has been written not only "to note the varying forms of government, to trace the ancient origins of modern laws and customs, to mark the en-