

to assure us that he is one of those who are intelligently interested in such events, and that at least the loyalty of one patient watcher of the skies has met his reward.

Some few of these interesting visitants which have reached this planet are large, and most national museums contain one or more. England, America, Paris, Vienna possess specimens weighing from 8,000 to 2,000 pounds each. What are they? whence come they? are questions which naturally suggest themselves. The first enquiry is not a difficult one to answer. They are samples of the physical universe simply, and contain no element that does not exist in the whole planetary system from the sun to Neptune.

It is only rational to suppose that at the earlier period of planetary life our earth must have experienced a tremendous bombardment of such missiles, and that meteoric showers as they are called were continuous for ages. The awful whirl of nebulous matter when our solar system was in process of formation, sent these particles gyrating on their own account, until the greater bulk of the earth induced the wanderers to return, which they did under the irresistible persuasion of superior attraction—and which they have been doing since, getting fewer as the ages lapse, and the time may arrive when an aerolite will become as rare as a live volcano.

K. P. C.

STEPHEN GIRARD.

STEPHEN GIRARD, the founder of Girard University, was a lover of children and gave his wealth to his country. Very few men in history have united so many apparently contradictory qualities. He loved children passionately, and the sight of a crippled or miserable-looking urchin would bring tears to his eyes. His devotion to the United States never once faltered, and at every reverse during the war of 1812-15 he ground his teeth and, it is said, swore in his native French. At length he offered to dedicate his entire fortune to the war, lent the Government \$5,000,000, and asked no interest till the war closed. A rich man who loves children and is willing to give all his wealth to his country must have a great deal of good in him.

His bravery was of the morally sublime order. When the yellow fever scourged Philadelphia, and had driven away most of the nurses, he and Peter Helm worked two months in the hospital at the most menial offices and shamed the faint-hearted into bravery. An affliction in early childhood destroyed his right eye and distorted that side of his face, so the boys nicknamed him by a French word that might be translated "wall eye." He lost his mother when he was quite young and his father was harsh. In short, he was a miserable, lonely child, and fled from home to be a cabin boy at the age of ten.

The romance of his life came to him in Philadelphia, where he opened his first store. He loved and was beloved again. She was singularly beautiful and vivacious; he taciturn, disfigured and eleven years her senior. For a few years they were happy; then she suddenly lost her health, soon became violently insane, and lived in that condition thirty years in the state asylum. Their only child died in infancy, and the sad old man finished his journey alone. His magnificent charities have preserved his name for all time. He was a deist in religion and named his ships after infidel authors.