

to the family had before been seen." Should the student wish to investigate still further, he will find in de Candolle's treatise the names of several Spanish and other authorities.

NOPAL.

New York, March 29.

Schwatka's Along Alaska's great river.

The author of the review of Schwatka's work on the Yukon (p. 294) is evidently ill-informed as to the history and present state of the mapping of that river, when he states that Raymond 'surveyed' it from Fort Yukon to its mouth, and supposes that the map of Raymond is the 'best in existence' of the lower Yukon. It is probable that he derives his impression from Schwatka's work; that gentleman, like many military men, preferring to ignore or affect contempt of any work done outside of military circles. The fact is, that Raymond's map has at present merely an historical value, and was originally merely one step in the many by which an approximate sketch of the course of that great stream has been arrived at. The first explorations were by the Russians, and are summarized in the map of Zogoskin, which, for the part included in it (except at the mouth of the river), has not been materially changed by any one, though positions have been better determined, and details added or subtracted. The river between the end of the Zogoskin map and Fort Yukon, and the delta, were mapped by the Western union telegraph expedition, whose work as to detail is fuller than any thing subsequent. They also sketched the upper river, but it was reserved for Raymond to correct the astronomical positions of important points, and thus modify the general course; to Schwatka and Krause, to furnish better details of the Lewis branch and head waters; to Nelson, to do the same for the delta, and Lieutenant Allen for the Tananah watershed. The credit due to each cannot be monopolized by any man or set of men, and it does not impair any man's reputation to do justly by his forerunners.

WM. H. DALL.

Smithsonian institution,
March 27.

A swindler abroad again.

Please give place to an advertisement of a fraud who has just left Oskaloosa. He came on the 6th, remained six days, and left without having caused sufficient suspicion for any one to say any thing. He professes to be Prof. Henry S. Williams of Cornell university, N. Y., a captain on the retired list of the U. S. army, — retired for disabilities resulting from wounds received from the Indians three days after General Custer fell. He is now representing the Smithsonian institution as a sort of an examiner, looking after books and specimens deposited at different places. He also represents that Cornell has a fund which makes it possible for them to sell for fifty dollars a set of fossils equal to sets sold by Ward for eight hundred and fifty dollars, and that they only want five dollars cash to pay for boxing and labelling, the remainder to be paid from time to time in local fossils, for which reasonable prices will be allowed. He contracted two sets here, but received the five dollars on but one of them.

He is about five feet eight inches high, weighs about one hundred and forty pounds, carries his right arm as though stiff, wears a glove on that hand, has light-brown straight hair, mustache, blue eyes, a

large head with prominent forehead, so that his eyes seem a little sunken, and uses tobacco and whiskey tolerably freely for a professional man. We *know* he has a whole right arm and hand, and it is quite possible nothing is the matter with it. He talks very freely and accurately of fossils, books, and men, can give minute details of events in Indian warfare of ten and more years ago, which some of our citizens know to be literally true. He spends his money very freely, and seems to have plenty of it.

There is a general feeling that he worked some one for one hundred and eighty dollars, but, if so, whoever it was will not tell it. The amount is indicated, because it is rumored he draws one hundred and eighty dollars per month from the army. I cannot find who started it. If he has not done so, he certainly missed a good chance. A despatch from Humboldt to the Des Moines *Register* says he has been there and got about one hundred dollars.

ERASMUS HAWORTH.

Penn college, Oskaloosa, Io.,
March 24.

Bancroft's History of Alaska.

In your review of Bancroft's 'Alaska,' published yesterday, you speak of the transfer of that region, and the surrender of the despotic sway of the Russian American company, only to be renewed by one of our own, or, to use your words, "while the monopoly which succeeded, though more confined in scope than that of the Russian company, does not differ in its essential details, and is still in operation."

The entire area of Alaska is to-day, and has been since the purchase, open and free to all comers, in so far as the fur-trade is concerned, with the single exception of that reservation of the government for the protection of the seal-life on the Pribylov Islands, in Bering Sea: these small islets are completely isolated, and far removed from contact with the trade of that region, and are practically unknown to everybody outside of their narrow limits, except the officers of the government and the employees of the A. C. Co.

Competing traders are found at every little post in Alaska to-day where the fur-trade will warrant the establishment of the smallest trader and his outfit. There never has been the slightest interference with the prosecution of the fur-trade in Alaska since 1867 by any monopoly whatsoever.

HENRY W. ELLIOTT.

Smithsonian institution, March 27.

[The statements of the above letter, in so far as they are accurate, are theoretically true: the statement of the reviewer, in his judgment, better represents the social and commercial facts, as regards the whole territory, except the small area about Sitka.—REV.]

Names of the Canadian Rocky Mountain peaks.

An error in my article, printed in *Science*, vii, No. 162, is kindly pointed out by Dr. George M. Dawson of the Canadian geological survey, which I am glad to correct for your readers. Dr. Dawson tells me that the peaks of the Rocky Mountains, Hooker, Bal-four, Brown, etc., were not named by the botanist Douglas, as I stated, but by Dr. Hector, now in charge of the geological survey of New Zealand, who in 1857-59 was attached to Captain Palliser's expedition into the north-west.

ERNEST INGERSOLL.

New Haven, March 25.