

world by Mr. George H. Harris, in the 'Semi-centennial history of the city of Rochester.' My own contribution to the subject was purely from the geologic side.

I may add, that the formation described by Mr. Murdoch is unquestionably littoral, and not greatly elevated above the present coast. What we know of recent oscillations of coasts in arctic regions, and of the rate of formation of littoral deposits, tends to the opinion that the Point Barrow gogges have an antiquity far less than that of the other finds.

G. K. GILBERT.

Washington, D.C., Dec. 11.

### Polarization of resistance coils.

On p. 208 of *Science* (viii. No. 187) Professor Mendenhall's observation is noted. With my rheostat I fail to obtain any 'reverse' current properly so called. The secondary current obtained by us is in the same sense, whichever sense is given to the primary, charging current; and the secondary current is not in the same sense in all the coils.

This rheostat is constructed with brass mountings and German-silver coils: hence I infer that the main cause, at least of secondary current, is unequal heating of the junctions of coils with mountings.

Since we obtained galvanometer deflections of equal amount, as well as in the same sense, for both senses of primary current through the rheostat, we failed to observe any polarization effect by difference. It may be that thermo-electric effects at junctions of copper conductors with brass terminals happened to mask the polarization in this case, though we could not believe it probable.

If my explanation of secondary current be correct as far it goes, would it not be well to make rheostat coils and mountings of the same material?

F. C. VAN DYCK.

New Brunswick, N.J., Dec. 8.

### Height of a meteor.

I have a very accurate map of the track of the large fireball which was seen near Philadelphia about 9.48 o'clock on the evening of Nov. 4. If any one can supply another, even if only approximate, so that the height may be computed, it would greatly oblige

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### Elliott's Alaska and the Seal Islands.

I beg permission to draw attention through the columns of *Science* to a glaring instance of plagiarism in Mr. Henry W. Elliott's lately published work entitled 'Our arctic province.' In this work the greater part of the third chapter (more particularly pp. 45 to 57) is quoted, or adopted with slight verbal alteration, and without the least acknowledgment, from my report on the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia, published in the 'Annual report of the geological survey of Canada for 1878-79.' This in itself is perhaps a matter of small importance, though not calculated to lead the public to place unquestioning faith in the character of other parts of Mr. Elliott's volume, to which I do not here allude. The specially reprehensible feature to which I must direct attention is that Mr. Elliott has availed himself of

the fact that a division of the Haida Indians inhabit the southern part of Prince of Wales Island (Alaska) to apply my specific observations on the Queen Charlotte Island Haidas and neighboring Ishmians to the Indian population of the Sitkan archipelago generally, including ten tribes, which he enumerates. In some cases the transfer is made simply by substituting 'Prince of Wales Island' for 'Queen Charlotte Islands' of my notes; in other instances a more elaborate procedure is adopted: but in no case that I can find in chapter iii. is any part of my description credited to the Queen Charlotte Islands, nor is the name of that well-known group so much as mentioned in the chapter. Had Mr. Elliott confined himself to generalities, it would not have been so inexcusable; but he descends to details, and, as an instance, actually adopts the measurements given in my report for a house at Virago Sound, Queen Charlotte Islands, leaving it to be understood by the context that it was met with somewhere in the Sitkan archipelago, and measured by himself. I should add, that the measurements were made to the nearest inch, and that Mr. Elliott has followed six of the dimensions correctly, but misquotes two of them (p. 49).

As an example of the jaunty style which Mr. Elliott manages to impart to the original, I quote only the following, in which some evidence of originality certainly appears. Many pages occur in which the style of the original is considered satisfactory, and the incorporation made verbatim, or very nearly so.

*Our arctic province* (pp. 56-57).

"But the 'loudest' feed of these savages consists of a box, just opened, of semi-rotten salmon-roe. Many of the Siwash have a custom of collecting the ova, putting it into wooden boxes, and then burying it below high-water mark on the earthen flats above. When decomposition has taken place to a great extent, and the mass has a most penetrating and far-reaching 'funk,' then it is ready to be eaten and made merry over. The box is usually uncovered without removing it from its buried position; the eager savages all squat around it, and eat the contents with every indication on their hard faces of keen gastronomic delight — faugh!"

*Report on Queen Charlotte Islands* (p. 111 B).

"Both the Haidas and Ishmians have the custom of collecting salmon roe, putting it in boxes, and burying these below high-water mark on the beach. When decomposition has taken place to some extent, and the mass has a most noisome odor, it is ready to eat, and is considered a very great luxury. Sometimes a box is uncovered without removing it from the beach, and all sitting round eat the contents."

Mr. Elliott, in his introduction, refers to the great amount of literature which has appeared on Alaska, and adds, "In contemplation of this, viewed from the author's stand-point of extended personal experience, he announces his intention to divest himself of all individuality in the following chapters, to portray in word, or by brush and pencil, the life and country of Alaska as it is, so clearly and so truthfully that the reader may draw his or her own inference, just as though he or she stood upon the ground itself." Possibly wholesale unacknowledged appropriation is Mr. Elliott's idea of 'divesting himself of all individuality.' He has certainly succeeded in divesting most of the facts contained in his third chapter of all individuality, by applying them to a region and to tribes not intended by the writer. Why should Mr. Elliott leave the extensive tours on