been more lying about storage-batteries in general, during the last few years, than about any other commercial scheme before the public. Thus far, these batteries do not appear very prominently in this country. In view of the novelty and importance of the subject, both scientifically and commercially, it is to be hoped that the competing systems may be submitted to thorough tests by the boards of examiners of electrical exhibitions.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*** Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.*

Minerals near Philadelphia.

PERMIT me to call Philadelphia mineralogists' attention to a new locality for garnets and green muscovite. The garnets are found in a small quarry of talcose rock, about one mile below Lafayette station, on the Pennsylvania and Susquehanna valley railroad. The quarry is a short distance below the soapstone quarry, and on the edge of a small stream. The garnets are very fine in color and shape. Green muscovite occurs plentifully a few hundred feet below the garnets in the side of the railway-cut.

JOSEPH T. MEEHAN.

Philadelphia, Oct. 6.

The Delaware estuary.

In your notice (No. 86) of the 'Estuary of the Delaware,' you erred in the authority for the surveys. The hydrography upon which the study was based was executed by H. L. Marindin, Lieut. H. B. Mansfield, and Lieut. E. B. Thomas, assistants in the coast and geodetic survey. J. A. SULLIVAN.

Boston, Sept. 27.

[We thank our correspondent for calling our attention to what was an accidental omission in our notice of the recent report of the coast-survey study of the 'Estuary of the Delaware.' — ED.]

American pearls.

I beg leave to ask the assistance of the readers of *Science* in gaining information regarding the finding of American pearls in either fresh or salt water; also the weight, color, lustre, and value of the same, with the name of the mollusk in which they were found, and date of finding.

A preliminary paper on this subject was read at the Philadelphia meeting of the American association. The paper will be published in full by the U. S. fish-commission. Due credit will be given for any information. GEORGE F. KUNZ.

With Tiffany & Co., New York, Oct. 6.

A wider use for scientific libraries.

I noticed in the last number of *Science* a proposition to render the libraries of the various scientific societies more useful by circulating the books somewhat by mail, among persons located in small towns.

If those having charge of those libraries knew what a blessed boon such an arrangement would be to a man situated as I have been for a few years, I am sure they would heartily second the proposition. Colleges are often located in small towns, and are very poorly supplied with the means for scientific study or investigation. Professors in such institutions would be delighted with any arrangement, not involving *very great* expense, which would give them access in any way during term-time to a good scientific library. Would not some such arrangement as this be a wise one? — Require a person wishing for the privilege of taking books from the library to give bond for a sum sufficient to meet all possible liabilities, and charge to his account all the actual expenses incident to packing and mailing or expressing books to him, and also any books not returned. Charge him, also, a small annual fee for the use of the books. In that case, he would pay only the actual expenses, and for the use of the books.

I earnestly hope our scientific societies may consider this question, and give to those of us who are isolated from the rest of the world, in small colleges and small towns, the benefit of the wealth of learning idly hoarded up in their libraries.

W. Z. BENNETT.

Wooster, Wayne county, O.,
Oct. 7.

Systematic earthquake observation.

The mention of my name in several recent articles in your columns and elsewhere may excuse the seeming egotism of the proposal which is the object of this letter.

I am much interested in the recent suggestions of *Science* looking toward the closer intercourse of those who are interested in practical seismology. We have not in the United States, at least in the eastern part, any such promising field for observational work as that occupied by the Seismological society of Japan; and the number of persons at present interested in the study is not large, perhaps too small to make advisable the formal organization of a seismological society. But my records, kept now for a dozen years, make it quite evident that earthquakes, even on the Atlantic seaboard, are by no means such infrequent phenomena as is generally supposed; and I am convinced that systematic instrumental observation would largely increase the number by the detection of minor shocks and tremors which now pass entirely unrecognized and unsuspected.

As to the second point, also, it is quite probable there may be more persons interested in the subject, and willing to do some work for it, than are known to me. In the effort to find out the number and the names of such persons, I am quite willing to serve as the medium of communication for the present; and I would therefore venture to suggest that all such persons communicate with me, either through your columns or by mail directly, with the view of ascertaining whether we are sufficiently numerous to make concerted observational work possible and desirable. C. G. ROCKWOOD, jun.

Princeton, N.J., Oct. 10.

The prime meridian.

Permit me to add to your remarks in No. 88 of *Science*, concerning the present confusion resulting from too many initial meridians, a few facts from a recent German periodical. The 'nautical almanacs' published by England, Germany, France, and the United States, refer, in part at least, to the meridians