Review: Colombia

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appeared in the *Proceedings of the Washington Academy of Science*, will be brought together later in a series of technical reports which will fill several volumes. They will cover the fields of geology, palæontology, zoology, and botany; they should make a valuable contribution to science, and give a well-earned reward to time, money, and energy well expended.

WILLIAM LIBBEY.

COLOMBIA.

'Nueva Geografía de Colombia.' Por F. G. Vergara y Velasca. Tomo i. Geografía General, Bogotá. 1902.

This royal 8vo, of about 1100 closely printed pages, although claiming to be only a geography, treats extensively of the physical features of Colombia, productions of the soil, geology, mineral wealth, commerce, history, ornithology, fauna, flora, ethnology, and geography of the neighbouring states of Venezuela, Ecuador, and Brazil. It is extensively illustrated with locally engraved views and small page maps which are interesting and valuable. Its usefulness is somewhat impaired for want of proper classification of the immense quantity of useful data it contains, while the small type, poor paper, and crowded pages make its study difficult. The labour of collecting its varied information must have been prodigious, and the author merits the highest praise for his industry and perseverance in a task which must have required interminable patience, more especially in a land where knowledge of value is hard to acquire, and frequently almost impossible to verify. Aside from this, probably the obstacles to the printing of such a volume at Bogotá, in the midst of one of the most sanguinary civil wars Colombia has known, must have been formidable; but, with the scantiest means, it has been published, "for account of the Government, in the printing office of the *Boletín Militar*." The aid thus extended to the author speaks well for the intelligence of the rulers of the state, and if it can produce such an important work under such great disadvantages, we may hope that, when peace again smiles on that land of marvellous resources, we may find Señor Vergara's facile and intelligent pen entrusted by the Government with the task of dividing his great 'Geography' into several volumes.

G. E. C.

PACIFIC.

MARSHALL ISLANDS.

'Die Stabkarten der Marshall-Insulaner.' By A. Schück. Hamburg: H. O. Persiehl. 1902. Fscap, 37 pp. and 11 pls.

With characteristic German thoroughness, and after much correspondence with museum curators all over the world, Herr A. Schück, of Hamburg, has studied all the material he could gather concerning the stick-charts of the Marshall islanders. It has long been known that these skilful navigators construct frameworks of thin sticks of wood or strips of bamboo to serve as charts. Some of the sticks constitute the frame, while the others indicate the directions of the currents, together with the tracks to be taken by the canoes when sailing from one atoll to another in the group. At appropriate relative spots are fastened small shells, stones, seeds, or even knots of thin string to represent the atolls or islands. When the skeleton charts are held in an appropriate direction, which at night can be determined by the pole-star, the mariners know in which direction to steer in order to fetch the island for which they are making. Some of the charts are employed to instruct the lads in the geography of this island group; others are charts that include the