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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

Ratak and Ralik chains of islands in the Marshall group; others, again, are confined to the Ralik chain, while some take in only the southernmost islands. A von Chamisso first discovered a map at Guam about 1817, which related to Ulea, in the Caroline group, but no further inquiries appear to have been made. In 1862 an American missionary, Dr. L. H. Gulick, who resided in Ebon, gave a short but very good account of these charts, which was published in a missionary paper and in the *Nautical Magazine*, vol. 31, p. 304. The first specimen appears to have been brought to Europe by Consul F. Hernsheim, who published an account of it in his 'Beitrag zur Sprache der Marshall-Inseln,' 1880, p. 88. Since then several descriptions have been published. This careful study by Herr Schück is illustrated by seven plates, containing figures of forty-seven stick-charts, and one plate of Marshall island canoes. The remaining three plates are from material supplied by Dr. A. C. Haddon, which demonstrates that although the Papuans of Torres straits do not make sailing-maps, yet they have a fair idea of the geographical features of this district, which they can depict with intelligence. The islands at which a culture-hero stopped, on his way to Murray island from the west, are recorded by stones in a sacred spot, the meaning of which is taught to the lads when they are initiated. Herr Schück has published a paper entitled "Die nautischen und astronomischen Kenntnisse der Bewohner der Karolineninseln" (*Aus allen Welttheilen*, 1882), for which he was specially qualified by his experience as a practical mariner; but he is known mainly for his laborious work in calculating, mapping, and discussing magnetical observations.

MATHEMATICAL AND PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

GEOMORPHOLOGY.

Wissenschaftliche Charakteristik und Terminologie der Bodengestalten der Erdoberfläche.' Von August Neuber. Vienna and Leipzig: W. Braumüller. 1901.

This bulky volume, which is the outcome of twenty years' study on the part of the author, is largely polemical in character. Field-marshal von Neuber, who occupies a high place as a military topographer, has long been convinced of the unsatisfactory character of existing terminology respecting the forms of surface of the globe, and this opinion has been strengthened rather than diminished by the publication of Baron von Richthofen's 'Führer für Forschungsreisende,' and Prof. Penck's 'Morphologie der Erdoberfläche,' in which those writers put forward their respective schemes of classification of the morphological features of the Earth. He is inclined to lay the blame on the insufficient knowledge possessed by most geographers of the science of topography, on which he has already published a volume, and which, he holds, can only be properly understood by those who have themselves had a thorough practical training in the representation of the surface features on maps. In the present volume he gives a detailed review of the forms, both of water and land, on the surface of the globe, frequently criticizing the views of his predecessors, and setting forth his own ideas as to the most rational scheme of classification. The greatest objection to the book, from a practical point of view, is the difficulty of arriving at any notion of the general principles on which the author proceeds in his task, for he begins at once with the detail of his subject, and it is only with regard to individual features that we are able, without wading through the six hundred odd closely printed pages, to learn the grounds on which he is at issue with generally accepted methods.