second figure only, and 9 cases in which both of the figures are formed by one or other of them. These latter are especially distinctive. This method has five merits—medium, short, or very short steps can be taken according to the character of the lineation at any point; there is no trouble about orientation; the bearings are defined without a protractor, the work can be easily revised, and the correctness of the records may be checked by comparing the sums of the small coordinates leading to a point of reference, with their total values as read off directly.

A method of signalling is also in use for military purposes, in which positions are fixed by coordinates, afterwards to be connected by lines. F. G.

BRITISH NEW GUINEA.¹

MR. THOMSON'S work on British New Guinea has been looked for with some impatience. Now that it has come it falls short of our expectations. We had hoped for a comprehensive work marshalling into order and

visited New Guinea, if we may judge by internal evidence, although his phraseology in many places is not unlikely to lead the reader to suppose that he has had a share in the results presented in its pages. Had the author had some personal acquaintance with the country of which he writes he would have formed opinions, we believe, different from many of those he has expressed on his own account throughout the book.

The work opens with a sketch "of the historical aspects of the whole of the great Papuan land," but we miss in it the names of many who deserve honourable mention for their contributions to the "making" of New Guinea. We find no mention of the investigations of Dr. Otto Finsch carried on in all three possessions, of those of Mr. O. Stone, of the missionaries in Geelvink Bay, of Mr. Romilly, of the Special Commissioners Sir Peter Scratchley and the Hon. John Douglas, of Mr. Milman, and of Commanders Pullen and Field, who have all contributed to our knowledge of different regions.

FIG. 1.—Native suspension bridge across the Vanapa river.

summarising the observations and investigations made in the British part of New Guinea, by so many missionaries, explorers, naval and government officers and scientific men, for many years. Instead of this we find that the book is made up almost entirely of the explorations during the past four or five years of the administrator, boiled down out of the official reports by Mr. J. Thomson, the secretary of the Queensland branch of the Geographical Society of Australasia. Throughout the volume there is everywhere evidence that its author is new to literary composition. In consequence, the terse and vigorous English of the original reports suffers severely in the process, so much so that we regret that their important parts have not been presented to us as extracts in the explorer's own words. Mr. Thomson has himself never

¹ "British New Guinea." By J. P. Thomson, F.R.S.G.S., &c. (London: George Philip and Co., 1892.)

This chapter is prefaced by a quotation from the writings of Plinius Minor:—"It appears to me a noble employment to rescue from oblivion those who deserve to be eternally remembered, and by extending the reputation of others, to advance at the same time our own." These words are the true key-note of the book from which our Brisbane Pliny—Plinius Major—has never once deviated throughout his task. It is doubtless no small compliment to any man to have his deeds held up in the light of "eternal remembrance" by one of his fellows, but the task requires the delicate hand of a judicious fellow; and we fear that our Pliny has marred the compliment in the paying. So inspired with veneration for his patron is he that every act of his appears almost extraordinary, and his name too august ever to be mentioned without the humblest obeisance expressed in the constant recapitulation of his titles, dignities, and office, which must be as nauseous to

that officer as to every reader of Mr. Thomson's book. In this "noble employment," however, we hope that our historiographer for Papua may reap the reward hoped for by his prototype.

The next two chapters deal with Sir William Macgregor's explorations in the Louisiade and D'Entrecasteaux archipelagoes. In Chapter IV. is an account of the pursuit and punishment of the natives of Chads and Cloudy bays for the murder of European traders visiting their shores. The

noisy with the "joyous shouts" of "merry children"! It is difficult to comprehend why Australian writers on New Guinea will so persistently—for Mr. Thomson is not the only author who thus sins, nor have we quoted the only specimen of this style of writing in his book—overlaud the capabilities and "the vast natural and artificial resources" of the country, heedless whether they may induce their too trustful readers to embark in hopeless enterprises in this "never, never land."

FIG. 2.—Highlanders of Mount Musgrave.

country lying to the south-east and north-west of Port Moresby forms the subject of the following two chapters. Speaking of that portion to the south-east Mr. Thomson says, "It may not be altogether unreasonable to assume that in the future . . . fields once the scene of battle and feudal strife may be beautified by sites of local industry and manufacture, and enlivened by the joyous shouts of merry children and the harmonious peals of village bells."

The seventh chapter, containing an account of Sir William Macgregor's splendid feat of the ascent of Mount Owen Stanley, is naturally the most interesting portion of the book. During this expedition almost if not *the* only native bridge yet known in New Guinea was met with. It was suspended from trees on each bank, and is very similar in every respect to those built by the Malays of Sumatra and the Dyaks of Borneo. How elegant

FIG. 3.—Fly River natives.

Quite forgetful of this happy picture, which he thinks is reasonable to expect, he sums up in the closing lines of his recapitulatory chapter the climatic aspects of the possession as "of an exceptional character, and their influence on Europeans so severe that very few constitutions can withstand their effect, a feature which will always be a great hindrance to settlement and a constant menace to life"—quite the region likely to produce European homes

and picturesque a construction it is may be seen by the illustration on page 345.

On Mount Musgrave friendly relations were established with the highland tribes, and a photograph of great interest and value, which we are personally in a position to pronounce very characteristic, was obtained by Mr. Goodwin. This also, through the courtesy of the publishers, we are enabled to reproduce here (Fig. 2). Sir William

Macgregor says that the features of these people, which are "remarkably good, indicate more character and strength than those of the coast man, and the cheek bones in many are rather broad and prominent. The nose is generally of the semitic type, with nostrils either not arched or much more so than is usual in Papuans. The chin and under jaw are stronger." They may be compared with the Fly river people, also here figured (Fig. 3).

European names were bestowed on the chief physical features of the country passed through by the expedition "of necessity," because of its "entire unacquaintance with their orthography (*sic*) through limited intercourse with the native inhabitants." This being in Dr. Macgregor's case evidently a right and sufficient reason for the nomenclature bestowed, how can Mr. Thomson with justice animadvert, as he does on an earlier page, on the fact that "the most important affluents [of the Kemp-Welch river] have received [from Mr. Cuthbertson] European appellations? . . . This disregard of the native nomenclature is, in the interests of geography, much to be regretted." However, we are pleased to learn that the European names selected by the administrator have been bestowed "upon the broadest national sentiment, as being compatible with the principles which prompted the bestowal of an English name on the range by the officers of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*." It is not improbable that the explorer of the Kemp-Welch felt the same necessity, and was actuated by the same broad sentiment. Evidently the actor here sanctifies the act. We must, however, take exception to the statement made by Mr. Thomson that it was to the *range* that the name Mount Owen Stanley was given. It is evident from observations in his book, that the author is aware of the discussion that followed on the reading of Dr. Macgregor's paper on his ascent of the mountain before the Royal Geographical Society in London. On that occasion the president of the society clearly pointed out that this name was bestowed, as has been marked on all maps for forty years, on the *peak*, not on the *range*. Throughout the book this imperious disregard for nomenclature is exhibited. D'Alberty's name of Snake Point in the Fly river has without reason been changed to D'Alberty's Junction; Annabel Harbour, close to Boundary Cape, although marked on the official map of Sir Peter Scratchley's voyage to the north-east coast, becomes Douglas Harbour; Fort Harbour, Clayton Inlet in Porlock Bay, and the peaks named on the same occasion, as well as the region delineated by the present writer at the base of Mount Owen Stanley, are also all ignored on the map attached to the volume now being considered. One fails to comprehend what principle except personal feeling the author has followed, on the one hand in his agreeing to the change of the thoroughly established Mount Owen Stanley to a new name, and on the other, in his restoring to the Aird river, which had recently been re-christened the Douglas, the name given to it by Captain Blackwood half a century before. Not only are these arbitrary changes an unwarrantable violation of the laws of nomenclature, but they are in the remover an illegitimate assertion of authority over previous fellow-explorers, as well as an assumption of an honour to which he has no title.

Mr. Thomson has drawn on the face of his map two large red circles, from purely arbitrary centres of the equally arbitrary radius of $6^{\circ} 8' 56''$, which are tangential somewhere in the valley of the Strickland river. It is impossible to divine their purpose, except perhaps to form a seasonable puzzle for his readers.

The writer of this notice feels entitled to remark on the following observation, occurring on page 109:—"Although great care was exercised, the expedition was unable to identify places on the Owen Stanley range, named and described by Mr. Forbes. We are reluctantly constrained to omit these names." In the Proceedings of the Royal

Geographical Society, which Mr. Thomson quietly ignores, the writer has already pointed out that along the route by which the administrator approached Mount Owen Stanley, it would have been impossible to have seen the features "named and described by Mr. Forbes." Mr. Thomson, posing as a court of geographical appeal, has graciously condescended to intimate that if these names had been "judiciously and appropriately applied to well-defined places," they "would have received full recognition" from him. "It is also," he continues, "regrettable that in describing localities to which he assigns positions, that explorer has omitted to supply the data employed in their determination." To every unprejudiced person it must be evident that the map published by the writer could not have been plotted in England without data, any more than that of Sir William Macgregor, who has not supplied to the general public, so far as the writer knows, the data by which his localities are fixed. It will be time, however, to submit to Mr. Thomson these data, when it is acknowledged that a back parlour critic of a country in which he has never set foot is a competent judge of either the judiciousness and appropriateness of the names applied, or the accuracy of the localities, or the data on which they are based.

Chapters VIII., IX., and X. are devoted to an account of the administrator's ascent of the Fly river, and of his visit westwards to the Anglo-Dutch boundary, and the eleventh to his voyage along the north-east coast. D'Alberty long ago gave us a very accurate account of his 400 mile navigation of the Fly river. Sir William Macgregor carried his flag right to the German territory, and added several unknown rivers and new mountains to the map; but both in this region, as on the north-east coast, his voyages, though they contributed many additional facts, added little essentially new to the observations of his predecessors, except his account of the piratical Tugere tribe, living on our boundary line west of the Fly river, of whom so much had been heard but so little known.

This handsome volume, which presents us in a collected form with the record of the important contributions, geographical and biological, of a most energetic officer, to our growing knowledge of New Guinea, would have been more valuable and welcome, even in its restricted range, but for the bias unduly exhibited throughout its pages, the verbose platitudes by which it is marred, and the extreme looseness of its descriptions, as "Morna [an island] is of the usual formation," "features of oriental type," "the Papuan dialect," and such-like expressions, which are numerous. In a long appendix we have a *résumé* of the results of the geological, botanical, and some of the zoological collections made by Sir W. Macgregor and others. Of these the chapter by Mr. Etheridge, Government Palaeontologist of New South Wales, is specially valuable. Several important zoological groups, however, such as the birds, are, curiously enough, entirely disregarded. Vocabularies of many of the dialects spoken in widely separated districts of the possession are given, and are very valuable, and we sincerely hope that no opportunity may be lost of amplifying them. In fine, we regret to feel that this work will not yet relieve those who desire to make themselves acquainted with the accurate and complete history of British New Guinea, from the labour of searching through the original reports of the explorations, not of the administrator alone, but of the many other equally trustworthy workers who have contributed to its records.

HENRY O. FORBES.

NOTES.

PROF. R. VIRCHOW will deliver the Croonian lecture before the Royal Society on March 16, the subject to be the position of pathology among the biological sciences.