

## GEOGRAPHY

## Island Again Above Water

Falcon Island, in the Goro Sea southwest of Apia, and between the Fiji and Tongan Islands, is again above water after years of submergence. This is indicated by word received by Dr. Andrew Thomson, director of the Apia Observatory in Samoa. Heralded by a slight earthquake on September 30, great columns of smoke were observed from Nukualofa in the Tongan Islands issuing from the sea on October 4. Three days later the site was visited by the British warship Laburnum, and a new island was found about 300 feet high at its central point and three miles in circumference.

Puffs of smoke shot up about every 20 minutes to a height of from 4,000 to 5,000 feet, the tops of the smoke columns being lost in the clouds. With each outburst ashes and cinders were thrown into the air, to fall back and build up the central cone. Late in the fall the island was reported to be erupting steam at intervals of about once a minute along its entire length.

"The island was discovered in 1865 by the British cruiser H.M.S. Falcon, when it was a low-lying reef," says Dr. Thomson. "In 1885 an eruption took place, which built up a cone, which in 1889, after four years weathering, was found to be over 150 feet high. A slight volcanic outburst occurred in 1895. Since then the island, which was composed entirely of cinders and ashes, gradually slipped down into the sea.

"The area around the little South Sea Kingdom of Tonga is of great seismic activity. The earthquakes equal in intensity and frequency those of Japan. Some of the earthquakes are directly due to submarine volcanoes; others are caused by a readjustment of the earth's crust along a line of great ocean depths, which stretch from the Samoan Islands to New Zealand."

Science News-Letter, January 21, 1928

## PHILOSOPHY

## Limitations of Method

Quotation from **SYMBOLISM: ITS MEANING AND EFFECT**—Alfred North Whitehead—Macmillan.

The nineteenth century exaggerated the power of the historical method, and assumed as a matter of course that every character should be studied only in its embryonic stage. Thus, for example, "Love" has been studied among the savages and latterly among the morons.

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## PSYCHOLOGY

## A Versatile Psychologist



KNIGHT DUNLAP

If you stepped into Dr. Dunlap's office you might find him at his desk putting the finishing touches to a paper to be presented at a traffic conference, setting forth some specific and practical ways of simplifying signs and signals to lessen the motorist's confusion. If you passed that way in the course of the next week and asked casually, "Well, how's traffic?" you would find that Dr. Dunlap was still very much interested in traffic problems, but just then he was working up pictures to go with an experiment, indicating that the mouth is the most expressive feature in the human face.

The next time you happened in, this professor would be reading proof sheets of an article on a new theory as to why men and women wear clothes. And so on, indefinitely. For Dr. Dunlap has a way of looking into any situation that catches his interest and seeing there some point to be explained or some missing fact to be drawn out by experiments. And once he has confronted himself with a problem, it has to be tackled.

This is all by way of saying that the head of the psychology department of Johns Hopkins University is both busy and versatile. This year Dr. Dunlap is on leave from the university to serve as chairman of the division of psychology and anthropology of the National Research Council.

In student days of degree collecting, Dr. Dunlap acquired a Ph. B. and M. L. at the University of California, in his native state, and then an A. M. and Ph. D. at Harvard.

Science News-Letter, January 21, 1928

## ARCHAEOLOGY

## Ancients Had "New" Ideas

By R. V. D. MAGOFFIN

Dr. Magoffin is president of the Archæological Institute of America.

As the ancient world gives up its dead it seems as though there is nothing new in the world.

A foreign firm of world famed makers of glass proclaimed some time ago the discovery of the method of making perfectly clear yellow-white glass; a few weeks later came the real discovery. In Egypt, a complete table set of clear yellow-white glass of 150 pieces comes unbroken from the excavation of an ancient city in the stratum that dates from the second century B. C. Behold, a glass idol shattered!

In clearing away the old wall on the Acropolis hill at Athens, which Themistocles about 500 years B. C. had to build very hurriedly using anything that came to hand, there were found in the debris two marble slabs with sculptured reliefs on them. One of them shows a fine fight between a dog and a cat. But the other portrays the start of a real struggle. In the center of the sculptured slab two young men stand, hockey sticks in hand, the ball on the ground between the sticks, and the referee about to give the signal for the game to begin.

Our boys whip tops at the regular top season. The boys in ancient times did not know that sport, we may be sure. So we thought, until a few years ago. In a museum in Baltimore there is now an ancient Greek dish that was painted and fired some 2500 years ago. In the center of its bowl a painted design shows two persons, a man and a boy, and some sort of object on the ground between them. The man holds a short stick, from which hang five little strips painted black. They represent leather. The object on the ground is a big wooden top. The man is whipping it, and it spins there as nicely as any top of the most modern make.

But of course the ancient Greek or Roman boy did not know the luxury of that greatest juvenile necessity, a pocket knife. Didn't he, though? There have come to many of our museums in the last few years from the recent excavations, scores of ancient pocket knives, a good many with the blades of bronze still in them. Bronze will cut as sharply as steel, but it must be honed or stropped more often. If, however, our knife blades are a bit better than those of two or three thousand years ago, the handles of bone and ivory on the ancient knives

(Just turn the page)

### Ancients Had New Ideas

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are beautiful, whereas ours are ugly. One handle of ivory is carved to represent the figure of an Atlas, another is like a marble table leg, another represents a full armed gladiator, another is like a fish, and so on for scores of different handles of beautiful shapes.

A half century ago a fortune was made by the invention of the safety pin. Some ancient person will rise from the dead one of these times and sue for accumulated royalties. The safety pin in bronze, in silver, and in gold, with pin, bow, catch, and all—except that all the thousand varieties are artistic in shape without losing safety value—are now by the hundreds in every good museum, and many of them go back in date a thousand years more B. C. than we are since.

But of course we beat those ancients in sewers. If digging them up and keeping them in public view is the criterion, we certainly do. The excavations of Sir Arthur Evans at Cnossus in Crete laid bare a sewage system of some 2500 years or so B. C. about as good as ours of today. The lead water pipes in Pompeii and Ostia are only 2000 years old. Yet in one of the houses in the Street of Abundance at Pompeii which was excavated only last summer, you can turn on the ancient faucet, just like ours, and the fountains will play for you from the same openings through which the water sprayed or shot two millenia ago.

It begins to look as if we do nothing that they also did not know how to do. They shot craps, they played checkers and parchesi, they had perfect form in leg action in the sprints and the distance races, they threw the discus, they used "knucks" instead of gloves in boxing, they wore clothes as short, as brilliantly colored, and as diaphanous as any that show off the dancer, the actress, or the debutante of today. Icarus had no harder luck than many an aviator of this day of grace; Tantalus was just as thirsty as any modern American. Many a winning charioteer drove as many races as any modern jockey ever rode and made as much money; the ancient gladiator had even more lady devotees than the modern prize fighter.

Was it Solomon who said there was nothing new under the sun? No wonder he is famous as a wise man.

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Maryland has more automobiles than telephones.

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