

SECRET NEWS SERVICE.

MYSTERIOUS WAY IN WHICH THE NEWS SPREAD IN THE PACIFIC.

Information About Secret Fleet Diffused From Island to Island in a Manner Unaccountable—Remarkable Instances—First News of Samoan Storm.

A great surprise which awaits a newcomer in any south Pacific archipelago is the way in which his acts and plans become known, not only to those whom they may concern, but even more distinctly to those whom they do not.

It is practically impossible to trace the channel of the news. One may surround himself with servants who know not a word of English and may be as secret as a lodge in discussing plans, yet knowledge of them spreads with speed and with an accuracy which becomes less and less in proportion as the distance is greater.

Some explanation may be imagined to account for the rapid spread of news from place to place on a single island, or from island to island of a single archipelago. But the mind cannot comprehend the diffusion of knowledge from archipelago to archipelago, where there is no intercommunication except by the most roundabout ways.

Here is an instance: Last year a distinguished student of the Maoris of New Zealand, S. Percy Smith, surveyor-general of that colony, made an extended tour of Polynesia. Before going to Apia, his last stop was at Rarotonga, 600 miles away.

Yet another instance: The press associations of this country had accounts of the strained relations of the American and the German squadrons in Apia harbour as they existed in February, 1889. The news was published in the first week in March. There was no possible way of learning a single thing as to the outcome.

Made Into Islands.

Here is the report of an occurrence which took place at a night school. 'Williams,' asked the instructor, 'which is the largest island in the world?'

young man to whom the question was addressed.

'I am speaking of islands Williams. These are continents.' 'I think not sir,' drawled Williams. 'When the Suez Canal was cut, it made islands of both of 'em sir. Come to think of it, sir, the largest is Asia and Europe. It's all one piece of ground.'

ANTIQUER OAK THAT IS OLD.

Beautiful Specimens With Some Pieces Buried Under Chicago 7,000 Years Ago.

White oak logs that have been buried under the site of Chicago for 7,000 years have just been put to use. Prof. Osian Guthrie, the Chicago geologist, who has studied the local strata and helped to unearth the remnants of some of these prehistoric trees, has just come into possession of two toilet brushes, made from this ancient oak, that have surprised the manufacturer of imitation 'antique' woods by the wonderful polish and color of which the genuine antique oak is capable.

Most of these prehistoric logs have been resurrected from the 7,000 year old graves to be divided up among the museums and universities of the country. Walnut willow beech and most of the modern native woods have been dug up under these glacial deposits and alluvium of seventy centuries, but the white oak, the same tree evidently that flourishes in the parks today, has been preserved best of all.

Some fearful cyclone appears to have bent and laid low the trees at first. The iron fibre is bent and twisted in nearly all of them at one particular spot in the trunk, and it is evident that this was the cause that first buried the giant forests under the sands and alluvium. Some of these trunks have been followed by Prof. Guthrie in the excavations for street and houses for many feet. One trunk, in Sheffield avenue, was unearthed for seventy feet.

Evidently this forest was the first growth after the glacial period. It lies close to the glacial clay, under the alluvial drift, at a general depth of fourteen feet. The cyclone apparently laid the forest low, and the sand and drift were blown up from the lake and covered it. The water formed an air-tight capsule about the trunk, and kept it from decaying.

Of late years, however, the surface sewers have drained the water away from the trunks and the bark and outer layers of wood have gone to decay. The iron fibre of the inner wood is still intact in most of them, however. The wood from which Prof. Guthrie's souvenirs are made was dug up near the corner of Calumet avenue and Thirty-ninth street, where many

of the trunks are being chopped away in sewer excavating.

No imitation antique wood has ever attained the singular beauty of this old oak. It is dark, almost a greenish black, the result of hundreds of years' discoloration by the surrounding water. The polish which it has attained is unlike anything ever seen by wood importers. The fibre of the wood was found almost as tough as fine wire in working it up.

The usual process of antiquing is to steam and rub the dark color into the wood with bayberry wax, the latter imparting the greenish tint. This tint in Prof. Guthrie's specimens has never been attained in the imitation antique, however.

Doctoring the Hippopotamus.

The animals in the New York 'Zoo' got sick, now and then, and when the case is serious the Z o becomes the scene of ingenious medical treatment. Some time ago, for instance, says the Sun, Caliph, a big hippopotamus, was unwell. He had been sick two days before the keeper told Mr. Smith about it, but as soon as the director found out that there was trouble he began a course of energetic dosing.

administering the medicine in the food which the hippopotamus ate. After a while Caliph got too sick to eat, and then Mr. Smith was in a quandary. He spent a sleepless night over the matter, for the hippopotamus is worth the neat sum of five thousand dollars and Mr. Smith felt himself responsible to an uncomfortable degree. The next day, after the public had been turned out of the house, the director ar-

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ed himself with a big force-pump and a stiff dose of strychnin, and kept all the keepers down to where the sick hippopotamus was languishing. First he had the water drawn out of the tank; then he had the keepers drive the animal up to the front of the cage, and prod him so that he opened his mouth to emit snorts of resentment. When the hippopotamus opened his mouth, Mr. Smith took aim with the force-pump, and fired a good dose of the strychnin down his throat. He administered two doses in this ingenious fashion, and then set to work to get the hippopotamus into a perspiration, or the state of body which would correspond to perspiring in a human being. He divided the keepers into two forces, one up on the platform and the other down in the empty tank. One group prodded the hippopotamus until he went down into the tank, where the other group prodded him till he ran back to the platform. They kept this up until the poor creature was exhausted; but the treatment proved effectual, and Caliph was well in less than two days.

Sufficient Reward. John Howe, the famous Puritan divine became Cromwell's chaplain in 1757. He was much respected by men of all parties and in the ticklish times of the Commonwealth his help and protection were often asked for and never in vain. Yet he was never known to ask a favor for himself. In 'The Life and Work of John Howe,' this incident is given: One day Cromwell took notice of this self-denial, saying to him: 'You have begged favors for every one but yourself, Mr. Howe. When will you ever turn come?' To which Howe returned this answer; 'My Lord Protector, my turn is always come when I can serve another.'

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