

## With "Turuku" And Other Mysteries On The Way

(they had been 4000 once) into food-providers and toddy-brewers. But then came the Morning Star, square-riggers built out of U.S. Sunday School pennies, and Kusaie, climbing again towards a 1200 population, is reported as near paradise to-day.

It is, however, the larger island, Ponape, which is the real centre of the Western Carolines. Despite rats so fierce and numerous that they are reported to have killed off the entire shipload of cats imported to exterminate them, and despite (or perhaps because of) practically continuous rain,



A Japanese girl on Ponape with a dried bonito, a luxury fish frugally pared flake by flake into the daily Japanese soup—they say it will keep for 10 years

Ponape's hitherto untouched interior is now growing scores of useful plants which the Japanese have introduced from all over the world. Its unusual truculent, coast-clinging natives are of course in a daze over all this foreign activity. But former inhabitants must themselves have been busy people. A stupendous "Stone Venice," eleven square miles in extent, exists at Nan Matal with never a hint as to the identity of its prehistoric builders.

The "Central Carolines" are those logged as radiating from the 70 islets which lie within the 150 mile reef that the Japanese call Turuku. Truk, as we spell it, is described as a yachtsman's paradise, since it offers more than a thousand square miles of warm waveless sea, a continuous gentle breeze, fruited islands, and a transparent coral floor. But no yachtsmen sail it. For that coral floor drops away in places to provide room for ships of war and transports unlimited. All Micronesia is closed country. No official figures have been issued about it since 1935. And though entry has never been actually forbidden the number of foreigners who have got past Japanese concern for their health, "temporary" restrictions due to "local epidemics" and such, and strange variations in ship-

ping timetables, has been tiny. Most of those who have penetrated, however, have been emphatic that despite Japan's terrific tempo of occupation—60,000 immigrants in 20 years—she has nothing to hide in her treatment of the natives. Only super-Singapores on the way, at Truk, Palau and Saipan can account for her modesty in not revealing to the world her good colonisation.

As for the Marianas (Ladrones) where only wild cattle until recently roamed, sugar acreage has sprung from just 50 acres in 1918 to nearly 50 thousand to-day. Only Japanese may work on the plantations and only land not already under native ownership may be taken for them—a wise profiting by our sad South Pacific experience. The Marianas, incidentally are not Kanaka islands, though Kanakas live in them. Magellan's thieves were Chamorros, a lighter-skinned highly intelligent race of 100,000 or so whose continued opposition to alien rule has quartered their number and scattered them through Micronesia. But the Chamorros long since made their peace with Spain, taking over much Spanish and Philippino blood as well as Philippino-Spanish houses and culture. They remain with guitars and mantillas a permanent cultural element in a realm where now only grandfathers greet the foreigner with *Buen 'días*. Their sons, of course, say *Gut' morgen*. Their children call *Ohayo*. Possibly the babies will soon be lisping *Pleased to meet*.



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