



Pink squealing pigs are pets among Kanakas of Yap. The women as well as the men have the lobes of their ears pierced as in this photograph.

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men owns them in common, but it is only the Twelve Kings who may issue them orders. A barbaric, but not a savage, trio of islands, is Yap.

### An Eccentric Centre

Palau is south of Yap, in the extreme south-east of the North Pacific. The far-sighted Japanese, however, had made it the administrative centre of their South Seas Territories long before occupation of the Indies made it the geographical centre also. Planes fly from here dead east to Philippine Davao (500 miles), south to Timor (1000 miles) and west to Rabaul (1500 miles). Tradesmen and labourers have worked a decade of overtime flattening Palau's airfields, enlarging the natural sea-basins, and artificially complicating the maze of coral channels which surrounds it. In fact, fed by its own tropical gardens, this group of islands may be still holding out when Tokio surrenders—a Base without anything based on it.

At present Palau is getting attack from both sides. Planes from the carriers off Saipan wave to pilots up from New Guinea. The New Guinea land forces will, however, shortly be making for somewhere nearer—the island of Halmaheira—a large and fantastically-shaped structure that is perhaps best described as four arms without a body. New Zealanders who have visited Halmaheira can probably be numbered on the thumbs of one hand, and I doubt if over a score could have placed it as animal, vegetable, or mineral up to a fortnight ago. Yet Halmaheira was the land best known to the Spaniards and Portuguese who pioneered the exploration and exploitation of these regions. When Sumatra, Java and Celebes were mere dotted lines on their charts, they had Halmaheira already carefully plotted in all its re-entrant complexity.

### The Isles of Spice

The natives of Halmaheira are mainly forest nomads, living in bough shelters, hollowing out sago palms for food, and breaking down coconuts for drink. (Strangely enough, in one region they are Polynesians—a pocket of population

left behind by the great migration that swept through Micronesia to Tahiti and New Zealand at some prehistoric date). Why, then, should Alphonso d'Albuquerque have groped through the whole labyrinth of the Indies immediately on reaching Malaya and halted nowhere until his ships arrived here? Why should Magellan, seeking the same spot round the opposite flank of the globe, have sailed round and about once he reached the Marianas and Philippines until he, too, sighted Halmaheira among its smaller sisters, the fabulous Moluccas, or "Isles of the King"? And why should Francis Drake, after the exploration of California, have taken on cargo nowhere but off this island of jungle nomads? The nature of that cargo—four and a-half tons of nutmegs and cloves—supplies the answer. Halmaheira was the Land of Spices when spices were to world trade what tin and rubber are to-day.

To-day Food Controller Llewellyn would probably swop all the nutmegs in the world for just one more egg per person per year. But in pre-preserving days, "spices" were such a necessity to Europe that Africa and America were both rounded in the greatest race of all time to reach them, and rivalry in the Moluccas themselves was furious and

fast. Scarcely were the Portuguese established than the Spaniards broke in. Scarcely were the Portuguese swallowed by Spain than the Dutch arrived. Then the English took the main Dutch "factory." But scarcely had Dutch and English combined on paper in London to despoil the earlier arrivals than their representatives on the spot staged a massacre. And then the Sultan of Ternate, who had given the Dutch a monopoly of spice trading in return for help to conquer all four arms of Halmaheira and two of Celebes, turned on his allies when they interpreted the treaty as meaning that he must pull up his own spice gardens.

A barbaric region, but again—not a savage one. Ternate itself is the metropolis of Halmaheira, though situated on a larger edition of Rangitoto, just off the coast at the point where east and west coasts come within five miles of each other. Its Chinese-Malay-Portuguese population had no excitement other than eruptions (70 of them) between the revolt of the Sultan and the arrival of the Japanese. In their good stone houses among their wealth of trees their main ambition, activity and achievement has been indolence. Many and great jungles and swamps still wait between Noemfoor Bay and Manila. But it will be a relief to jungle troops to break through into a region which, if not civilised by American plumbing standards, has some comforts and a culture to offer them in welcome.

## The Entertaining Tenor

ENTERTAINING the armed services in camps about Auckland is just about a full-time job for Owen James (New Zealand-born tenor), who has organised a concert party under the direction of A.E.W.S. and the NBS. Six months ago, he returned to New Zealand after 12 years spent studying and working in Australia, the last two years of the 12 as an entertainer in the Army.

Did he come back to stay, or merely for the trip? we asked him.

To stay, he said firmly. New Zealand, he said, would do him; he intends to teach—when the war is over.

Did he go to Australia to stay, or merely for the trip? we asked him.

He went to study. First he went to Melbourne, and later to the Sydney Conservatorium. In Melbourne he had lessons from Adolf Spivakovsky, brother of the pianist Jascha, and the violinist Tossy.

And did he spend all his time in Australia, until he went into the Army two years ago, studying? we asked him.

Oh, no, he said; he worked as advertising manager for an industrial firm; in his spare time he studied and gave broadcast recitals and took part in concerts. And at first he was just an ordinary soldier in the Army—until they took him into the entertainment unit.

We gathered that the advertising business earned him his bread and butter (he was in the army by the time rationing was introduced) and singing brought him the icing on his cakes.

So we asked him about his present work. In his concert party he has a pianist and men and women singers, and he always includes a comedian. At the moment he has one in the party whom he describes as very excellent, the reason for this excellence being that the comedian makes jokes that are clean as well as good.



OWEN JAMES  
To stay and to teach

Mr. James told us that he has three programmes, a very light, a medium light, and an educational. In six weeks he plans to give about 20 concerts round the district. He doesn't repeat the same programme, of course, on a second visit to any particular camp. All the members of the party have extensive repertoires, and there's no danger of running out of light, medium light, or educational items. The songs and items range from Irish and Scots traditional songs to grand opera; and anyone who sings from grand opera always gives a version of the story—"in terms that can be understood by the audience." Mr. James demonstrated for us, taking "Your Tiny Hand is Frozen" as his example. We felt it would probably go down in a big way with the camp audience.

Listeners to 1YA have heard Owen James in recent studio recitals.