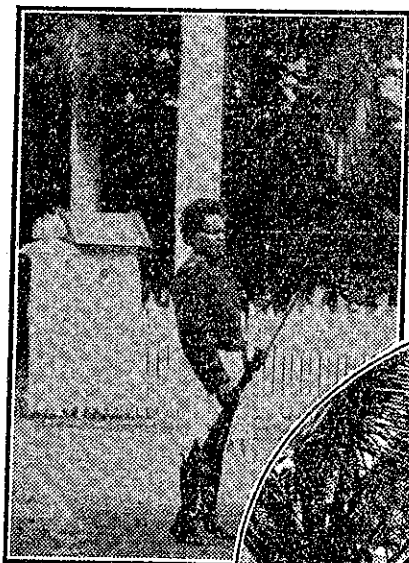




Bringing the World

THE South Sea Islands—dusky maidens weaving hibiscus flowers in their hair, singing their love complaints to a yellow moon—white men in grubby suits, swigging whisky, gambling, going to the dogs. In other words—the average talkie director's idea of a tropical island.

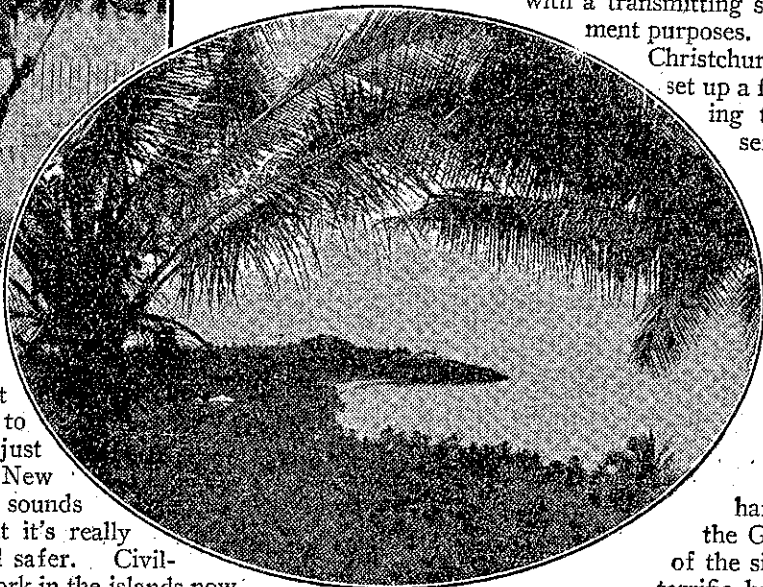
Actually it is all rather different. The dusky maidens might weave flowers in their hair and sing love complaints, but they have a lot of things to do besides.



PACIFIC BEAUTY:

Looking over the broad Pacific from a hillside in Samoa.

(Left) A native soldier on duty outside Government House, Fiji.



The white men might drink whisky, but they do a heap of work and, at night, go home to wives and children just as any citizen in New Zealand does. It all sounds horribly prosaic, but it's really much healthier—and safer. Civilisation has been at work in the islands now for a century. Not the civilisation of the five-roomed bungalow (with h. and c. and all mod. cons.), but a thing of definite use that has every respect for native customs and island beauties. There has been no ruthless ripping-out of bush, no forcing of natives into ready-made clothes and setting them to work behind grocers' counters, no infant-rearing rules foisted upon island mothers—but rather an addition to the beauties already existing in the islands of the Pacific. Boat services have brought New Zealanders and Australians to admire and wonder, white men have settled there and respected the native people, among whom they have moved; radio has broken down the isolation.

It is of radio that we want to write—radio and its uses in these beautiful islands of sunshine and blueness. Wireless is no new thing to Samoa. The Germans installed a transmitting set there before the war

and part of it is still in use. When the New Zealand Expeditionary Force landed at Samoa the set was brought into action, but little was known of the science in those days, and one of the generators was smashed in an endeavour to transmit messages. Only Morse communication is possible.

Niue had no communication with the outside world except by boats before wireless came along. The visits of boats depended on the amount of copra to be taken away, and the coming of the ships was usually limited to three visits a year. Niue now has a short-wave transmitter, installed about nine months ago—for three or four years before that its only communication was with Samoa (350 miles away) by means of a small transmitter. With the new transmitter the island is in communication with New Zealand twice daily and with Apia three or four times each day. By means of a good receiving set, Niue is now able to pick up messages from the Government steamer Maui Pomare, and so be fully prepared for that vessel's arrival. Apia is the only place in the Samoan group with a transmitting set for ordinary entertainment purposes.

A radio enthusiast from Christchurch went to Samoa and set up a five watts plant for providing the islands with a local service. It was later taken over, however, by the planters on the island.

Apia has a fair-sized white population, and there are few people who have not got a radio set. The little town stretches for a mile or so along a lovely bay, set with coconut palms and glorious shrubs. In the harbour is the skeleton of

the German vessel, Adler, one of the six warships wrecked in a terrific hurricane in 1889, and up

in the cool green bush, high above the town, is a white speck—the tomb of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Between Apia and Suva is the island of Niuafouou—"Tin Can Island," it is often called. Here one catches a glimpse of the primitive services that radio is rapidly killing. Before the days of wireless the only communication that the island had with the outside world (there are more than 1000 people living on Niuafouou) was by the "tin can" method. The mails and papers were placed in a kerosene tin, which was soldered and thrown overboard. The tin was guided ashore by a native who had swum out, holding the outward mail above him on the end of a bamboo stick. The mails are still collected and dispatched in this manner, but wireless has brought these people into touch with the outside world. Niuafouou, it is interesting to note, is a crater containing a lake, and it is not so long since it was in eruption. It has the reputation of