PICTURESQUE ISLES
OF THE SOUTH SEAS

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Picturesque Isles of the South Seas
CLOSE to Australia lies an enchanting world, entirely different, ever new and interesting to the pleasure-seeking traveller. A few days, a few hours—and you are in another realm, glamorous in its charm and novelty.

Isles of the Pacific, set like jewels in shimmering seas of blue and green that glisten like silk in the vivid sunshine; soft winds that gently stir the graceful palm trees; virgin beaches that gleam milk white against a background of verdant tropical growth, and over all the quietude of Nature in restful mood. The clang and noise characteristic of centres of civilisation are absent. Noise incidental to native communities is less mechanised, less strident, therefore less torturing to human ears. One still hears the voices of birds, the sough of the wind through the trees, the murmur or roar of the ocean, all blending with the surroundings. Always there is the peace of Nature—at exquisite morn, during the steady heat of noon, at that ethereal moment between sunset and dusk when colour in supreme beauty is spread across the heavens before perfumed night, her robes pierced by diamond points of stars, enfolds the world in sleep.

One senses more keenly the beauties of Nature in these outlying corners of the world. Perhaps this is the reason why many are seeking newer, fresher fields for travel, away from the stereotyped holiday resort. Close to Australia we have these lands of our dreams—a vast and as yet unspoiled pleasure ground, the sun-kissed Isles of the South Seas.

Their very names breathe romance—New Guinea, The Solomons, and scores of others. For centuries they were lands of mystery, the objective of celebrated navigators, venturesome traders and intrepid explorers. To-day, through the enterprise of shipping companies and the courage and industry of pioneers, these lands are being opened up and made available, not only for trade and development, but for their charm and beauty as resorts for the traveller, the tourist and pleasure-seeker. Twenty, fifteen, even ten years ago those who journeyed to Papua, New Guinea or The Solomons did so because they had some business, some specific study or object in view. As places ideal for holiday travel they were not even thought of; ships were few and far between, comfort was conspicuous by its absence. To-day, it is a different story altogether. Fast, smooth travelling vessels, equipped with every imaginable modern comfort, and even luxury, maintain frequent and regular sailings between Australia and the important ports of the Islands of the South Seas. Science and medical knowledge have practically banished the dread of fever and other tropical diseases, and the climate in most places is pleasant and healthful during the greater part of the year. At Port Moresby, for instance, the temperature of the cooler months rarely exceeds that of a Sydney summer. Europeans who have lived in the islands for any length of time rarely wish to leave except for a holiday period, and they almost invariably enjoy good health.

Island life has a charm all its own. Time there is not a hard task-master, and one has leisure for the quiet pleasures of reading and study, while golf, tennis, yachting and fishing are available for healthful exercise. Added to these advantages there is the inestimable boon of ample service and attendance, with numerous "boys" available for household tasks and irksome domestic duties.

The regular shipping services, supplemented by ever expanding facilities for air transport, keep European residents well in touch with affairs in the outside world. To the visitor, however, part of the charm of life in the islands is its remoteness from the stress and strain of modern civilisation.

From Australia a trip to "The Islands," as this territory is affectionately designated, can be very easily arranged. Regular services are maintained and, as already indicated, the ships have been specially built for travel along these tropical routes.

Fortunate indeed are those headed for lands that are different, peoples that are strange, scenes and customs that will enchant and amuse them—The Picturesque Isles of the South Seas.
Papua

First port of call after leaving the Australian coast, Port Moresby introduces the visitor to Papua, the south-eastern portion of the vast island of New Guinea. The European town is built on a narrow strip of land between two hills, the jetties lying directly in front, and in the background the verdant tropical bush. The picturesque native villages are on the far side of the bay, and the visitor may reach them direct by boat across the harbour, or enjoy the walk along the winding pathway which extends half-way up the hillside. The villagers have built their homes right over the water, the little houses standing on long, slender piles, their roofs consisting of a leafy thatch made from the sago-palm, and the floors mere planks through which glimpses of the water beneath may be seen. The natives themselves are a happy, carefree race, and are usually engaged in pottery-making or, perhaps, preparing meals.

Inland from Port Moresby, about twenty miles distant, are Rouna Falls, well worth a visit for the journey itself is delightful. The way lies along a road bordered by jungle, grim mountains frowning down upon the adventurer, mysterious gullies yewning through the hillside, and ever darting here and there bright-hued butterflies. All around is the perfume of the bush, the music of strange birds. Bock again in Port Moresby canoe racing, in which the natives compete, should not be missed. They are excellent navigators and the odd-shaped sails of their quaint craft lend novelty to the scene.

An important and attractive centre in Papua is Samaroi, a fairy-like island lying a few miles off the extreme south-eastern portion of the mainland. The island is only about fifty acres in extent, but every inch of it is beautiful, and the winding pathway which has been made round the place enables one to walk the short distance in about twenty minutes. The town covers the whole island and boasts Government buildings, a couple of hotels, business premises and comfortable bungalows—all in a garden-like setting with gay crotons and hibiscus glowing against the lush green foliage. Tennis courts, bowling green and gardens provide the white population with facilities for recreation.

Samaroi is an important centre for native life as well as the white population, and the harbour is usually full of luggers and trading schooners, little boats, big boats and launches, and is a meeting place for traders and others from every point of the compass. It has been called the Venice of the Pacific. Captain Moresby discovered Samaroi in 1873, and it was first christened Dinner Island, a somewhat prosaic name for so lovely a spot.

Other islands along the Papuan coast are Yule Island, centre of the Roman Catholic Mission; Sariba and Rogea, small in area; Kiriwina, Nada and Woodlark, mostly of coral formation.

On the mainland of Papua, stretching from east to west, is a rugged mountain chain known as the Owen Stanley Range, the highest point of which is Mount Victoria (13,200 ft.). Papua is well watered and possesses several fine rivers. The Fly River is the largest—near the junction of Dutch, ex-German and British New Guinea. It is about 650 miles long and the influence of the tide from the Gulf of Papua is noticeable as far up as 200 miles from the mouth. It is navigable for a distance of 500 miles. The volume of water from this river would supply over 100 gallons a day to every inhabitant in the world!

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A wonderland is to be seen in the fish of brilliant colours and quaint shapes, and the beauty of the marine growth and coral formations delights the eye. Of edible fish there is endless variety—mullet, trevally, oysters, crayfish and crabs. Pearl oysters, pearl shell, beche-de-mer or trepang, constitute part of the industry of the Territory. The Papuans also cultivate the ground, growing sweet potatoes, taro, yams, sugar-cane, bananas, tobacco, coconuts, etc. In contrast to the coastal natives, with their houses built over the water, the inland people sometimes choose the branches of trees wherein to build their homes.

The lover of Nature finds unending interest in the rich and varied flora of Papua—plants of economic value as well as mere beauty. The strange fauna, too—very Australian in type, but also varied. At some far distant period of world history, New Guinea must have been joined to the Australian mainland, for wallabies, tree kangaroos, bandicoots, pouched mice and flying opossums, as well as other animals, are found in the Territory. The dolphin and the dugong are among the marine inhabitants. Birds in endless variety belong to New Guinea—600 species to be exact, the largest being the cassowary. Magnificent crowned pigeons, birds of paradise, aspreys, pigeons, doves, eagles, owls, frigate birds, white herons, scrub hens, guail, parrots, cockatoos, are some of the species. Turtles and hawksbill (which provides tortoise shell) and a varied family of reptiles are native to this prolific country.

The planting industry is one of the largest in the Territory—coconuts, sisal hemp, rubber, coffee, cocoa, cotton, millet, sugar, castor oil, rice and soya, are all cultivated successfully.

Papua has produced gold, copper, tin, lead, zinc and osmirldium and other minerals.

The people themselves are an interesting study, for there are three definite types—the short negrito, the so-called true Papuan, whose ancestors probably came from the Malay Peninsula and the Philippines, when the configuration of the land masses was different to what it is now; the lighter-coloured people along the coasts; and the tall negroid type. The language is mixed, the Motuan tongue being spoken in and around Port Moresby.

The climate of Papua is healthy and there are two distinct seasons in the year—May to November, when the south-east trade winds blow; and December to April, the season of the north-west monsoon. In the mountains, and on the tablelands, the air is bracing and cool, and as these regions become more accessible there will be additional inducement for the white man to take up his residence in the country. It is notable, also, that Papua is outside the hurricane zone. Europeans who settle down in this part of the world rarely desire to forsake it, and are always eager to return to "The Islands" after a trip to Europe or Australia, and once more fit in with the leisurely life that is part of the delight of existence in the tropics.
New Guinea

A ROUND trip, embracing calls at numerous ports in New Guinea, is a happy experience to which the traveller can look forward with keen pleasure, whether it happens to be a first visit to this part of the world or a return after an absence of any length of time.

The attractions of New Guinea as a tourists' paradise are becoming more and more widely known, and already travellers from America and Europe plan their itineraries to include a sojourn among "The Islands." Australians are already "island conscious" and make regular journeys to the big pleasure ground of the Pacific whenever time and opportunity offer.

Regular sailings and comfortable ships contribute to the popularity of these tours, and anyone with a month or so at his or her disposal cannot do better than visit New Guinea, for this change is a complete change—climate, people and surroundings. If variety is the spice of life, then truly a trip to The Islands of the South Seas is the right way to seek and find it.

This new, old land is so different, so fascinating in every way. Its history is redolent of mystery and adventure from the sixteenth century onwards. First came Portuguese discoverers and they named the country "Island of Gold," believing that great riches lay there. The Spaniards followed them, sailing from Peru, westward across the Pacific, in search of new worlds. In 1606 Torres annexed the country on behalf of Spain, and during the next one hundred and fifty years several famous navigators found their way along the route of the earlier adventurers. In 1793 the British East India Company took possession on behalf of England but there was no effective occupation and it was left to the Dutch, slowly extending their influence in the East Indies, to annex the western portion of the great island in 1828. Already during the middle of the eighteenth century, German traders were well established in the Bismarck Archipelago, and the operations of a big business firm, who formed a syndicate for the purpose, resulted in the annexation of the north-eastern portion of New Guinea for Germany.

Australian statesmen urged England to annex part of the country, and in 1883 the Queensland Government went so far as to hoist the flag, but England failed to ratify the action. The following year, however, diplomatic negotiation between Britain and Germany resulted in the south-eastern section being acquired by Great Britain.

At the outbreak of the world war German New Guinea was seized by the Australian Expeditionary Force. A detachment left Sydney in August, 1914, and, after training for a short period on Palm Island, off the Queens-land coast, joined the troopship Bermea and steamed direct to New Britain, landing at Kokopo and marching inland to Bita Pake, where they took possession of the wireless station. This was not accomplished without loss of life, five Australians making the supreme sacrifice. Following this encounter, the troops re-embarked and sailed round to Rabaul, landed and took the town. Since 1920 the Commonwealth Government has administered the territory of New Guinea under mandate issued by the League of Nations in December of that year.

And now a word or two regarding some of the ports at which the tourist will call, for New Guinea is rich in fine harbours and attractive settlements.

Rabaul, the capital of the Territory, lies on the northern coast of the large island of New Britain. It is a beautiful spot, and the approach through rich-hued tropical waters, studded with tiny islets, the mountains of New Britain looming misty in the distance, and the rich verdure of the land right to the water's edge, is a picture which etches itself upon the mind. The harbour itself is sheltered and has deep water to within a few feet of the shore. In ages long past it must have been a huge crater, for the island is highly volcanic. In mid-channel two gigantic rocks rear their rugged proportions straight from the water. They are known as the Bee Hives and were probably cast up by volcanic action many years ago. Government buildings, business places and bungalows nestle among trees and palms. The streets are well laid out and bordered with casuannas, mangos and other graceful trees. On the outskirts of the town are the Botanic Gardens, and not far away, in the European cemetery, lie the graves of the five Australians killed on the road to Bita Pake, in 1914. For those interested in native arts and crafts, a visit to the museum is another attraction. Here you will find tools and weapons, stone mortars, weird images and many other strange and fascinating objects. While the vessel remains in port there is time for visits to coconut plantations, a motor run along beautiful Kokopo Road, a trip to the adjoining island of Matupi, and excursions to native villages.

About 160 miles from Rabaul is another fine harbour—Kavieng, on New Ireland. The approach to this centre is also picturesque, and the town itself, which lies along a coral ridge, is pleasantly situated. Here, also, the ter-ritory boasts a fine motor road, along which one can enjoy a run of more than a hundred miles down the coast. Back towards the mainland of New Guinea are two small islands named Tumleo and Selelo, at which the vessel sometimes calls. The harbour of Madang on the mainland itself is important, for the district is the centre of vast coconut plantations. Nature is here seen in a riot of tropical verdure, dense growth of palms, and almost unspoiled beauty.

Continuing down the New Guinea coast, calls are made at Lae and Salamaua. The former, at the mouth of the Markham River, is the headquarters of Guinea Airways, which maintains a regular passenger and transport service to the goldfields in the Morobe area. Wau is the administrative centre of the fields—Bulolo and Edie Creek—and the journey from the coast, which formerly occupied eight days over mountainous country is now com-pleted in twenty-five minutes by aeroplane. Two or three times a day the planes arrive with passengers and freight, the latter comprising anything from bullocks and other live stock to pianos and motor cars. Southward again another call is made at Samarai, the lovely island just off the coast of Papua, and which has already been described.

After visiting New Guinea one cannot help but be impressed with the great future which is undoubtedly hers. Rich mineral deposits, great agricultural possibilities, and a wealth of commercially valuable marine products place the Territory in that delectable class known as "The Fortunate Isles."
Bronze-skin islander of Alexishafen, New Guinea, in his dugout canoe.

Photo—R. A. Christie.
An island of gem-like beauty, Samarai lies near the coast of Papua and is a centre of commercial importance as well as scenic charm.

Photo—R. A. Christie.
On the Kokopo Road, Rabaul, a favourite run with residents and visitors.

Photo—Wm. J. Jackson.
Graceful in her grass skirt and necklace of sharks' teeth, the youthful Papuan girl is an attractive figure.

Photo—R. A. Christie.
With kundu (drum) and bag decorated with dogs' teeth, this warrior of the inland, near Madang, is a striking figure.

Photo—Wm. J. Jackson.
Typical of the rugged country lying between the New Guinea coast and the goldfields in the Morobe district. The journey across the ranges to Wau, the headquarters on the goldfields, which usually occupied seven or eight days on foot, is now covered by aeroplane in half an hour on the trip inland and in even less time on the return.

Photo—H. L. Downing.
NEW GUINEA VILLAGE SCENE

View taken from the interior of a house-boy’s hut in a native settlement amidst a grove of palm trees. New Guinea.

Photo—H. L. Downing.
THE RISING GENERATION

Children of villagers living on the coast of Manus Island, in the Admiralty Group, Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

Photo—Wm. J. Jackson.
Watut Mountains and river at the junction of Watut and Snake Valleys, New Guinea.

Photo—H. L. Downing.

Left—New Guinea native hut with fish traps suspended from the branches of the trees.

Photo—H. L. Downing.
Ingenuity and skill are shown in the making of the decorative head-dresses worn at sing-sings and ceremonial gatherings. The plumage of birds is intricately woven into striking patterns.
C QUARTER, SA
M SalamaLa, New Guinea, was the starting point for miners and prospectors proceeding to the goldfields.

Photo—R. A. Christie.
Chubby babyhood at Lindenhafen, New Britain. Distortion is still practised in some districts as shown in the binding of the infant's head.

Photo—R. A. Christie.
Salamaua, the port for the Morobe goldfields, New Guinea.
Photo—H. L. Downing.

Below—Bridge across Bulolo River in New Guinea.
Camera study by H. L. Downing.
Natives of Numa Numa, Bougainville, wearing characteristic Buke hats made from woven fibre. The m.v. "Macduff" in harbour.

Photo—R. A. Christie.
Copa, chief of South Sea island industries, employs the greater part of the population throughout the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. The natives are seen splitting coconuts before extracting the flesh, to be cut up and dried for export in due course.

Photo—H. L. Downing.

Below—Pearling canoe used by the natives of the Trobriand Islands, Papua.

Photo—Wm. J. Jackson.
Twixt peace and storm—New Guinea seascape.

Photo—H. L. Downing.

Left—A New Guinea baby's cradle, woven from special grasses which are mosquito-proof.

Mother and baby enjoy their morning dip together at Talasea, New Britain, Mandated Territory of New Guinea.

Photo—H. L. Downing.
The Papuan brave in full array of beads, bracelets, sharks' teeth, birds' plumage, and equipped with drum, is an imposing figure. Here you see him decked in readiness for the native dance.
Natives of the coastal areas frequently build their dwellings right over the water, relic of the time when this was done to protect themselves from raids by tribes from the interior. The latter were in the habit of descending from the hinterland on pillaging expeditions. These coastal houses are built on slender but strong piles.
The Solomon Islands

Almost four hundred years ago an adventurous Spaniard—Don Alvaro de Mendana—gave The Solomon Islands their name, to strengthen the belief that these were the lands whence King Solomon fetched gold to adorn the temple at Jerusalem. He himself firmly believed there was gold and treasure to be found there. In 1567 Mendana sailed from Callao in search of new lands to add to his sovereign’s empire. Sailing ever westward, he came eventually upon a group of islands and anchored in a sheltered bay in order to land and explore this new territory. On his return he gave descriptions of their beauty and unparalleled wealth, and urged that volunteers should make the journey in order to settle there. It was not until twenty years after his visit that he again set forth from Callao with a band of adventurers to found a new settlement. But Mendana failed to find again the islands which he had enchanted him. He came to the island of Santa Cruz, actually south of The Solomons, and his followers, seeing that the land was fertile and well watered, insisted upon remaining there. The history of the colony was not a happy one, and upon the death of Mendana, in 1595, the rest of the settlers returned to Callao, disheartened with the venture. De Quiros, Mendana’s chief pilot, visited Santa Cruz in 1605, and nine years later the islands were visited by Dutch navigators. It was Captain Carteret who, in 1767, re-discovered the Santa Cruz Group and Gower Island and Malaita, Bougainville, in the French ships Boudeuse and Eyreale, during the course of a voyage round the world, came to The Solomons, and, passing through Bougainville Straits, he named one of the island’s Choisel and another Bougainville.

On his way from Botany Bay to Canton, Lieutenant Shortland, who commanded two vessels in Governor Phillip’s fleet, came upon The Solomons and named some of the capes and mountain peaks. During this period, also, the ill-fated La Perouse was lost with his two ships, but it was not until 1828 that it was discovered the tragedy had occurred at Vanikoro Island.

A British Protectorate was proclaimed over the Southern Solomons, in 1893, and in 1900 the Northern Solomons were transferred by treaty from Germany to Great Britain.

Such is the early record of The Solomon Islands. Their later development has been achieved through the efforts of two important trading companies, and to-day planting is carried on successfully on a large scale. In addition, the islands are becoming further known as an interesting objective for a Pacific Islands tour. More than twenty ports of call give the tourist a constant change of scene and ever-varying interest in the different natives met with and their individual customs and ceremonials.

In company with other islands of the South Seas, The Solomons are the home of many beautiful birds. The palms here are, perhaps, more beautiful than anywhere else, and valuable timber exists; on Vanikoro kauri pine is to be found.

Natives of the Solomon Islands vary in different parts of the group. In Santa Cruz, for instance, they are Melanesian in type, while on the islands of Bougainville Straits they are almost coal black. Then again, at Onotong Java, Rennell, Bellona, etc., they are of Polynesian stock, indicating that these islands have moved about at various periods, migrating from one part of the Pacific to another. Indeed, they have been, and still are, great navigators. One authority has stated that it was probably the outrigger that enabled primitive ocean wanderers to spread far and wide, and that this accounts for similarity of race, language and customs in lands far apart. Out-rigger canoes are found all over the South Pacific and Indian Oceans and nowhere else.

The canoes of the Solomon Islanders are particularly beautiful. Graceful in shape, they resemble the gondolas of Venice and the stern is always carried to a considerable height. In the large canoes both bow and stern are shaped in this fashion. The natives construct them of bent planks of wood, held together with strong thwists and cemented with a kind of gum which they obtain from the nut of a tree. Another style of canoe has a stern shaped gondola fashion, but the bow formed to represent a shark’s head. Decoration takes the form of inlay work carried out in pearl shell. Their paddles are short and thin, and are used a stroke or two on one side and then two or three on the other. Another type of canoe is solid hewn and they are usually very gracefully fashioned.

In addition to copra plantations, The Solomons do an extensive trade in marine products, including beche-de-mer, trochus and turtle-shell.

The climate is tropical but visitors choosing the right season of the year are not unduly inconvenienced by the heat, and the ships of to-day are equipped with every device for ensuring complete comfort throughout the voyage.

The “round trip” of these Pacific Islands is an ideal way to spend a holiday, and the lover of natural beauty will be enchanted by the novelty of the whole voyage. The rugged beauty of the islands themselves, their richness of colour, the riot of vegetation, the natives and their customs, mode of life and various primitive industries, are all fascinating to study. Then, there is the delight of curio-hunting, collecting exquisite shells, seeking rare and beautiful orchids. Shooting and fishing also can be indulged in at certain places.

Tulagi is the port of entry to The Solomons and the seat of government. It is an island of about three miles round, and within its harbour lies the little island of Makumbo, the headquarters of Messrs. Burns Philip (S.S.) Co., Ltd., in the Protectorate. Guadalcanal, the largest of the Group, Malaita, Florida, Yasbel, with its famous Mering Lagoon, are some of the chief islands of The Solomons. Tulagi has numerous places of interest, and the white population enjoy many social amenities, including golf, tennis, cricket and a wireless station. For variety of interest and the number of ports of call, the Solomons Group is unequalled.
Port of entry for The Solomons, Tulagi, capital of the group, is one of the smaller islands and possesses a fine deep-water harbour. Through the rich tropical vegetation gleam the white walls of the Government buildings, the red-roofed bungalows and the gay flowers of their cultivated gardens. In the centre of the beautiful harbour lies the tiny island of Makambo.
Lagoon in the Solomons group—a typical feature of island scenery. The grace of the palm trees and luxuriance of the surrounding vegetation add further beauty to the quiet waters, in whose depths lie strange and lovely treasures of the marine world.
PARADISE OF PALMS

Idyllic charm of the palm-clad islands of the South Seas is ever entrancing to nature lovers. A scene on Malaita in The Solomons.
The people of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, like many other native races, submit to the process of cicatrisation in order to enhance personal attraction as well as to conform to tribal custom. The skin is first cut and a foreign substance such as sand or some other material rubbed in, so that in healing a ridge or protuberance is formed. These scars are sometimes arranged in more or less symmetrical design.
Suω Harbour, Malaita, one of the ports of call. Plantations almost to the water's edge give some idea of the richness of tropical growth in The Solomons.
Splitting coconuts, native method, by striking on a stake fixed in the ground.

Inexhaustible in supply, the coconut is used for innumerable purposes.
Light and colour, ever present in the tropics, create the vivid contrasts that are so enchanting to the eye. In the islands of the South Seas Nature has spilled her gifts with lavish generosity and gems of scenic beauty are constantly displayed. Little beaches fringed with palms beckon temptingly in endless number.
A favourite walk with tourists visiting The Solomons is the route along the shores of the island of Tulagi. The fascination of sea-shell collecting and search for marine curios is alternated with a stroll into the bushland and perhaps the chance of orchid-hunting.
From the heights of this island of The Solomons Group a magnificent panorama is unveiled, with the waters of the harbour glinting in the brilliant sunshine.
The palm tree provides the islander with food and a refreshing milk; its root possesses narcotic properties, the dried leaves are used for thatch, mats, baskets, skirts, the husk of the ripe nut forms fuel, and the shell is made into cups and ladles.
Sunset hour in the tropics is a moment of magical beauty — the world transformed with glowing light, changing in opalescent loveliness from flame to gold and rose, from tender blue to amethyst and deeper purple, ere night in its swiftness descends upon earth and sea and sound is hushed to lower tones.