Dinner with a veteran of the First World War.

There was a famous concrete seat on the waterfront at Papeete called the "Pirate's Bench". Here were usually to be found odd characters such as beach combers and the like. All well known old-timers, who had interesting yarns to tell of life on the islands.

One day, I noticed a well dressed man seated by himself, whom I had not seen before. Sitting down beside him, I engaged him in a conversation.

I found him to be a cultured gentleman, a retired colonel of the First World War. A note of sympathy soon made itself felt in that we had both been seriously wounded. I sustaining the loss of an eye and he—"Well, if a woman had been wounded where I was wounded, she would not have been wounded at all".

He lived in a quiet and beautiful spot beside the sea in a remote part of the island, and was looked after by a dear old crone housekeeper, who had been with him for years. In spite of his terrible affliction, he was a happy jovial man, who rarely came to town and gloried in his isolation. We had a drink and parted the best of friends.

One day, having business to do in his direction, I telephoned asking whether I might call on him. He was delighted, and would I dine with him and stay the night. I was made to promise not to be shocked at anything I saw. On Tahiti nobody was surprised at anything.

His home was very artistically furnished. His drinks poured in the finest crystal. Everything spotlessly clean and immaculate. Soft music from a radiogram, holding a dozen records, came from the dining room. All was peaceful and lovely.

"Mon colonel, le diner est servi" from the old lady and in
We went. We were to dine by candle light.

My chair was back to the entrance to the kitchen.

A rustle of feet behind me and then with a "Pardon monsieur", a bowl of soup was placed before me by an exquisitely proportioned Tahitienne of about 18. Her only covering being a Tiare Tahiti blossom behind her left ear. My host received separate attention by another beauty likewise attired. And so it went on throughout the meal. No sign of familiarity. Just the perfect decorum of well-trained servants.

After dinner, reclining on the veranda, sipping Napoleon Brandy, my host turned to me and said quietly, "To me, disqualified wretch that I am, good food and good wine always taste better if served by a beautiful woman such as God made her."