

Without warning two large islands loomed ahead, apparently overlapping each other. Upon a nearer approach it seemed as if nothing short of a miracle would save us from destruction. A sigh of relief escaped us as we saw that

vessels, fishing boats and native canoes.

Beyond the long stretch of valley, with its pure white streets lying at the feet of sharp-peaked mountains, an unbroken view of iron roofs belonging to the French houses is seen, and then the Cathedral of white stone on its high promontory, a shining light to the way-worn traveller.

Before the city lies the broad bay, broken by its little islands, behind are the blue-tinted hills that stretch away in the distance, cutting the clear atmosphere like great spikes.

A small steamer came out to meet the incoming mail. "The Semaphore has thrown up its arm," as the inhabitants say when an English mail arrives, and the jabbering Kanakas and chattering Frenchies created such a babel of sound that I was glad to be sent



A Type of New Caledonian Beauty.

these islands were a majestic gateway opening a channel which eventually carried us into the Noumea harbour. At the end of this channel are two islands inhabited by convicts. The most desperate of the men live on Ile Nou, the island to the left, while on Goat Island, to our right, live those who are classed as petty offenders.

A little further on we approached a huge limestone cliff standing straight up from the water's edge, with forts cut out of the solid stone. It looks across the foaming sea—a giant watch tower.

At this point a signal is given, and the steamer veers to the left, disclosing to our curious eyes a most beautiful harbour.

Now the sea is live glass, and we catch glimpses of men-o'-war, merchant steamers, traders, timber



A Native Girl.

ashore in a private boat.

Cabs awaited us. Not a jimrikisha did I see, but the nicest of landaus with a "cabby," who yodded as we rolled along the clean streets.