

The New Hebrides.

This group of islands extends about four hundred miles north and south, and is fourteen hundred miles west of Australia, in Western Polynesia. Thirty of the islands are inhabited, the principal ones being Santo, Malekula, Efaté, Erromanga, Tanna, and Aneityum. Magellan discovered the group in 1520, and in 1774 Captain Cook gave to it the name it still bears, because its lofty mountains reminded him of the Scottish Hebrides. These islands are rich in tropical verdure and fruits, but when first discovered the people were sunk in the lowest depths of moral degradation. They were cannibals, and frequently offered human sacrifices to their cruel gods.

In November, 1839, John Williams, the brave "Martyr of Erromanga," left his family on Samoa and went to the New Hebrides to carry the Gospel message. He touched at Tanna and Futuna, and then proceeded to Erromanga, where he was slain a few days after by the treacherous natives. Subsequent efforts were made to reach these savages, but all in vain, until 1848 when Rev. John Geddie settled in Aneityum, the most southerly island of the group. Mr. Geddie was the *first foreign missionary* of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada, and was sent out and supported by the Synod of the Church in Nova Scotia. Dr. and Mrs. Geddie toiled alone for many years in their chosen field of labour, and had the very great satisfaction of forming the first Christian Church—the first among the Oceanic Negro or Papuan race—in May, 1852. Timely help came soon after, Rev. John Inglis and Mrs. Inglis being sent out by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In December, 1872, Rev. Dr. Geddie passed peacefully to his reward from Geelong, Australia. The story of his life work is expressively told in the words on his memorial tablet: "When he landed in 1848 there were no Christians here, and when he left in 1872 there were no heathen."

In 1858 a gallant band of missionaries—Rev. J. W. Matheson and wife, from Nova Scotia, and Rev. J. G. Paton and Rev. J. Copeland, from the Reformed Church of Scotland—settled in the island of Tanna. This noble company of men and women laboured faithfully with some measure of success for several years, when Mr. and Mrs. Matheson both died, and eventually the others