

Missionary Proceedings of the Synod of the Canada Pres- byterian Church.

At the recent meeting of the Canadian synod, one evening was devoted to Foreign Missions, and especially to the hearing of the Rev. Mr. GEDDIE. Rev. Dr. TAYLOR, of Montreal, introduced Mr. Geddie to the meeting. We give Mr. Geddie's address and the brief discussion which followed:—

“Rev. Mr. Geddie on coming forward, said it gave him pleasure after many years residence in a foreign land, to be present at such a meeting. They had assembled that evening to hear of the progress of the Redeemer's cause, and to consider the claims of their fellow men who were perishing for lack of knowledge. Might they enjoy much of God's presence amongst them, and be stirred up to greater exertions! He had recently returned from an interesting portion of the mission field. More than eighteen years had elapsed since he left Nova Scotia for that distant region, and he would now proceed to give a statement of his operations. The New Hebrides, to which in the Providence of God he was led, lay between the 13th and 14th parallel of South Latitude in the Southern Pacific. These islands for fertility and extent had no rivals in that part of the world. The population was a branch of the Papuan race, numbering about 150,000 souls. The islands were perfect gems, so fertile was the land. But the chief object of interest was the state of the people who inhabited them, who for the most part were ignorant of the true God, and still continued to practice the most disgusting and abominable crimes of heathenism. The first effort to spread the Gospel in that region was made in 1839 by the late Mr. Williams, of the London Missionary Society. He (Mr. Geddie) visited the spot where Mr. Williams fell, and was well acquainted with the man who killed him. That man gave his land for missionary purposes. (Hear, hear.) The next attempt was made in 1842. In that year two missionaries, Messrs. Turner and Nesbet, landed on one of the Islands. They were favourably received by the natives, and labored with success; but after being a few months on the Island a fatal disease broke out, and they were obliged to flee to save their lives. The last effort was made in the year 1848. It was then that the speaker landed on one of the group, forty miles in circumference, and with a population of four thousand souls. He was the first allowed to remain there by the natives. The external appearance of the latter was very repulsive indeed. The men were painted and the women wore nothing but a girdle round the waist. When he landed

among them they were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. They knew little of the things of this world, and still less of the world to come. In all things relating to religion their minds were enshrouded in the greatest darkness. But these people had a religion of their own. They believed in an invisible world and in the existence of gods or spirits, most of them malignant beings and feared by the people. They had a system of priesthood, made prayers and offered sacrifices and retained the rite of circumcision, which was practised among male infants. He felt thankful for these remains of religion as a basis to work upon. War was incessant among them, the people bitterly hating one another. Cannibalism was practised and friends and foes were the victims; infanticide was almost of daily occurrence, and a great many of the children were put to death. The slaughter of widows was a thing of common occurrence and persons who were troublesome to their friends or sick, were either put to death or allowed to die of neglect. Consequently there was scarcely an infirm person to be found on the Island. All the crimes of which nature was capable were perpetrated by these people and they took pleasure in them. His first effort when he landed was to learn their language. They could not speak to him in their tongue and he could not speak to them, and he was obliged to learn theirs. Otherwise the work could not have been so successfully carried on. People had always had a prejudice in favor of their own tongue, and it would always continue to be the case. When Paul addressed a Jewish audience in the Hebrew tongue ‘they kept the more silence.’ Mr. Geddie in commencing his labours amongst those Islands endeavoured to adhere as much as possible to the Saviour's command, and just preach the Gospel to them. Instead of assailing their superstitions and arousing their evil passions he presented Jesus to them as the Saviour of fallen man, and this was the truth which seemed to touch them. When he commenced his labors amongst these Islanders he encountered much opposition, especially from the priests. They could say nothing, however, against the holy truths which were taught and the holy conduct recommended. A short stay among these people soon convinced him that little impression could be made by a solitary missionary. It was his practice therefore when a native turned from heathenism to christianity to make him a worker for his own people. After getting together a little party at his own house they were scattered abroad, spreading the truths they had heard amongst others. Every individual had some influence amongst his friends, and in this way the word of God was diffused throughout the whole Island. The result of all this