

a small American whaler our missionaries doubled Cape Horn, and reached the Sandwich Islands. For three long weeks their little brig battled for life with the tremendous storms at the Cape, and their case often seemed hopeless; but at length they reached sunny seas and favoring breezes, and in 170 days from New England, found themselves the happy guests of the American Board's missionaries at Honolulu. From the Sandwich Islands Mr. Geddie obtained a passage to Samoa, a voyage of 38 days. Here he spent some time in happy fellowship with the agents of the London Missionary Society, and in planning his future campaign.

The Rev. Thomas Powell, of Samoa, accompanied the Geddies in the 'John Williams' to the New Hebrides, and remained with them in the work for one year. After a voyage of observation through the group, it was decided to settle on Aneityum, the most southerly of the islands. This island is about forty miles in circumference,



A CHIEF OF ANEITYUM.

of volcanic origin, mountainous and picturesque. It is surrounded by a coral reef, which at one place, Anelcauhat, forms a safe and beautiful harbor.

The missionaries being left alone on this island home, Mr. Geddie writes, 'We now felt for the first time, something of the stern realities of missionary life, cut off as we were from the endeared society of Christian friends, and surrounded by a degraded and barbarous people. But though severed now from those with whom we could take sweet counsel we were not alone. O, no! I believe that we have his presence at whose command we have come hither, and whose promise is, 'Lo, I am with you always.'

The first work was to build a house, then a small chapel and school-room. Geddie was peculiarly fitted for a work among a barbarous people, by reason of the mechanical genius he had inherited from his father, and the knowledge of house-building, boat-

building, printing, and medicine which he had acquired before leaving Nova Scotia.

But he found it easier to build house and chapel than to reach the natives. It would be impossible to imagine a people lower in the moral and social scale than were the natives of Aneityum and the other islands of the group as Geddie found them. Their religion was little more than a constant terror of evil spirits whom they sought in various ways to propitiate. In some of the islands human sacrifices were offered. Widows were strangled or buried alive with their dead husbands. Infanticide was common. Cannibalism was as universal as war. Petty tribes separated from each other by a mountain or a stream treated each other as deadly foes, to be slain and eaten. Falsehood, theft, treachery, cruelty, bloodshed, licentiousness were matters of such common occurrence as to excite no comment. All society was a dead sea of pollution.

The toil, the loneliness, the danger, the hair-breadth escapes, the disappointment, the heart-sickening disgust, of those first years, during which the Geddies were alone on Aneityum, will never be known. We have time but to glance at results and cry, 'Behold what God hath wrought.'

In May, 1852, a church was formed on the island, the first in the New Hebrides, the first among the Oceanic Negro, or Papuan race. Fifteen were baptized. When, after an absence of two years and eight months, the 'John Williams' revisited the island, the deputation were astonished at the progress made, and reported that it would have been remarkable had there been two or three missionaries on the island.

After twelve years' labor, during eight of which he had been assisted by the Rev. John Inglis, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, who was stationed at Epege, on the opposite side of the island, he could point to the language reduced to writing, thousands of copies of lesson books and religious leaflets printed in it and circulated; the New Testament translated; sixty schools in operation, two thousand of the people taught to read, the whole population, amounting to nearly four thousand outwardly transformed; the Sabbath as well observed as in Scotland; family worship general, two church buildings erected, in which one thousand persons assembled every Sabbath, and over three hundred communicants. This among a people the most savage, absolutely illiterate, sunk in the most debasing superstitions and vices of heathenism, is one of the 'miracles of missions.'

When leaving the island, which he had found fifteen years before wholly given up to idolatry, he had sought for some of the old idols to bring home as curiosities, but, as he said in a meeting at Toronto, 'I could find no God on the whole island but the God who made heaven and earth.'

In accordance with this testimony is that now world-famous inscription on the memorial tablet in the church at Aneityum:— 'When he landed in 1848 there were no Christians here, and when he left in 1872 there were no heathen.'

Nor was this all, Many Aneityumese were trained for teachers, and sent to other islands. The fame of Aneityum, and what the gospel had wrought, spread throughout the group, so that the natives everywhere clamored for missionaries, and had men been forthcoming at the time the history of every island in the group might have been similar to that of Aneityum. The churches at home were slow to move, and thus missed golden opportunities. But in time the report of Geddie's work began to tell. Other

missionaries followed from Canada, among them the martyred Gordons. Missionaries came also from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and from the churches of Australia and New Zealand.

The New Hebrides is now cared for by twenty or more missionaries, and with the exception of one or two larger islands to the north, the people are largely Christianized.

Presbyterians in the Maritime Provinces had the honor of being the first colonial church to undertake a mission to the heathen solely on its own responsibility. They began work in the New Hebrides, organized the first Christian church among a new branch of the human family, and incited the churches near at hand to care for them.

The influence of this work of the Church at home was all that Geddie's faith had claimed it would be. Sir William Dawson, in a recent article, says: 'In Nova Scotia the New Hebrides mission was as life from the dead, as I had occasion to know in visiting



A NEW HEBRIDES GOD NOW IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

different parts of the province a few years after Dr. Geddie left. Congregations which had felt no practical interest in anything beyond their own limits were soon aglow with zeal for the work in the New Hebrides, and felt besides a new stimulus to Christian work at home.'

John Geddie led the Church in self-denying effort for perishing savages in far distant lands, and this served to deepen her sympathies, raise her to a higher plane of Christian thought, broaden her views of work and duty, and thus intensify her interest in and liberality towards every department of the Lord's work. A Church whose sons were ready to lay down their lives for Christ on foreign shores, a Church whose missionaries could tell of conquests among heathen as glorious as any related by Paul to the Christians at Antioch, a Church that had been baptised with the blood of her own martyrs, was not likely to