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Rev. John Geddie, D. D.

By REV. GEORGE PATTERSON D. D.

Concluded.

THE mission band landed on Aneiteum in July 1848. It consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Geddie, Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Powell, a teacher from Nova Scotia and his wife, and several native teachers from the Eastern Islands. They immediately commenced work vigorously. They erected dwelling houses and a building to serve both as school-house and chapel. As soon as possible they explored the whole island. By means of two Samoan teachers, who had been on the island, they were able to communicate with the natives. Mr. Inglis says of Mr. Geddie: "He had a great readiness in acquiring the native language. He had a most retentive memory, he could remember minute particulars for any length of time. Hence, if he got hold of a word or phrase he seemed never to forget it." In six weeks after landing he made his first attempt at telling the story of the Cross to the natives in their own tongue, and thereafter regularly held service in it. The audiences he could collect were at first small, often not more than half a dozen, their appearance strange, all being nearly naked and the men coming armed with spears and clubs, though taught to leave them outside the place of worship, and their conduct something different from what we see even in the most disorderly assemblies of Christian lands, though even for that they thought themselves entitled to pay. But he bore all patiently only feeling more deeply for them, that they knew no

better. But the chief means adopted for reaching them was by itinerating. Wherever the missionaries could collect a few,—under the shade of a tree, by the side of a path, or on the sea-shore, they told them as best they could of sin and the Saviour. The printing press was erected. The language was reduced to writing. Alphabets, sheets of words, sentences, hymns, portions of Scripture were printed. Schools were attempted but for some time with little success, parents and children being alike insensible of the value of education and expecting their attendance to be paid for.

The reception they met with at first was not worse than they expected. They found coldness and indifference. Occasionally they were treated with rudeness, their goods were stolen, and sometimes the superstition threatened to suspend their operations altogether. But for some time their lives were in little danger. The prejudices of the natives had been excited by the conduct of white men, but they soon saw the difference in the conduct of the missionaries and their confidence was gained. Mr. Geddie had a peculiar tact in dealing with savages so as to gain their good will. He threw himself unreservedly among them and by the confidence which he placed in them won similar confidence in return. In subsequent intercourse he always seemed to know when it was wise to yield to their wishes or when regard to himself or the honour of the Master required him firmly to resist. But the quality by which he specially gained the hearts of the natives was his deep sympathy. Under the repulsive appearance and degraded moral condition