

the proposal with a smile of incredulity." The Church had in all only thirty congregations in the Provinces, and most were poor and struggling. Mr. Geddie, however, persevered, and in the course of a few years, carried his motion in the Synod. When the proposal to seek a missionary was made, it was carried only by a majority of one! The attention of the Board was directed toward the islands where John Williams laid down his life, and at length it was agreed that New Caledonia should be the field of their mission. That island had been named by Mr. Williams to the Secession Church in Scotland as a sphere that might be occupied by their agents. Mr. Geddie belonged to that branch of the Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia. He offered himself to the work and was accepted. He knew how little could be expected in the way of support; but he was not to be daunted. After visiting all the congregations of the Synod, and endeavouring to excite a prayerful and liberal interest in the mission, he studied medicine for a time. In November, 1846, he sailed along with his wife and family. He was detained at Boston for two months before he found a vessel sailing for the Pacific, and even then the port to which a passage could be got was Honolulu, in the Sandwich Islands, far from the contemplated sphere in the South Seas. Six dreary months were spent in rounding Cape Horn ere they reached Honolulu, and seven weeks passed ere a passage could be got to Samoa. Mr. Geddie had, however, an opportunity of seeing the working of the Hawaiian Mission, and afterwards that of Samoa. When he reached the latter place, he found that no opportunity could be got to reach New Caledonia or the Loyalty Islands for six or seven months, when the mission vessel *John Williams* would call. Besides, there then seemed no opening in these islands, as the energetic Bishop of New Zealand (Dr. Selwyn) had expressed a wish to conduct missionary work there. One of the islands of the New Hebrides afforded a single gleam of hope, and Mr. Geddie, with the advice of brethren at Samoa, agreed to undertake a mission there. The venerable Mr. Murray, who still survives, was a chief adviser and helper of Mr. Geddie during this period. It was proposed that one of the Samoan missionaries should accompany Mr. Geddie for a year, and the Rev. Mr. Bullen was chosen to do so, but amidst preparation for the expedition Mr. Bullen died. The Rev. T. Powell at the last moment offered to go with Mr. Geddie, and they left in July, 1848. They reached the most southerly island of the New Hebrides—Aneityum—where some native teachers had been settled, but what was the surprise of the mission party to find eight Roman Catholic Priests and eight lay brothers already established in the island! The mission vessel then cruised throughout the group, calling at the mission stations

where native teachers had been left. It was hoped that Mr. Geddie might find a home on the island of Fate. An awful tragedy, had, however, taken place there the previous year when the *British Sovereign* had been wrecked. The crew were all saved with one exception. The natives appeared at first to treat them kindly, but it was only to allay suspicion. The whole of the survivors, twenty-one in number, each being placed between two savages in a march on a given signal were brutally massacred, and their bodies, divided among the villages, were cooked and eaten by the cannibal people. It was self-evident that a missionary could not at that time be safely settled in that quarter. The mission vessel returned to the South and Mr. and Mrs. Geddie, with an assistant, found an opening at Aneityum, where they settled under the protection of the chief at the harbour. The Rev. T. Powell remained with them for a year. The Roman Catholic Priests and brothers left soon after and never returned.

The Geddies had to pass through a hard and trying experience in dealing with a people so low and savage. Their property was stolen, their house threatened with fire, and their very lives imperilled. Meantime the horrid custom of strangling widows on the death of their husbands continued. Inter-tribal fighting was chronic, and people were afraid to go from one side of the island to the other for fear of being killed, cooked and eaten. There was little to encourage the mission party. They were, however, cheered by a friendly visit of Bishop Selwyn, who remained a fortnight on the island, and travelled on foot with Mr. Geddie to see as much of native life as he could. He kindly offered the use of a cottage at Auckland to Mr. or Mrs. Geddie should they need a change for a few months to recruit their health. On his voyage in 1852 the Bishop conveyed the Rev. John Inglis and his wife, with all their furniture, house and luggage to Aneityum. Mr. Inglis was a minister of the Reformed or Covenanting Church in Scotland; it was a pleasing circumstance that an Anglican prelate thus aided the Covenanter. Bishop Selwyn ever after kept up this friendly relation, and also introduced Bishop Patterson to these brethren. He even asked Presbyterians in New Zealand to contribute, and on one occasion brought over £100 to Messrs. Geddie and Inglis.

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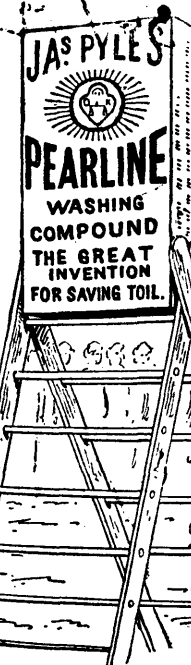
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