

got a missionary. We are again disappointed. We are very badly off for preachers, and have too many vacancies. My second son who was lately licensed, is about to be ordained to a district about 80 miles from Sydney. Another young licentiate is ready, and we have two more who will be ready this year. But we could take a dozen more. I am amused at the course of "Report" in exaggerating circumstances. The tablet I got erected to the memory of Dr. Geddie was of wood, hung up on the wall of the church at Aneityum. In the *Canadian Record*, it is now stated to be *marble*. This is copied in the *Free Church Children's Record*, &c. I am glad the words I chose meet with such world-wide celebrity, though I do not deserve the credit. They were suggested to me by the record of an ancient historian, regarding Gregory of Cæsarea, that "there were only 17 Christians when he went there, and there only 17 heathens when he died."

ROBERT STEEL.

#### LETTER FROM REV. J. ANNAND.

Aneityum, 7th September, 1878.

We are still enjoying good health and plodding along in our work. We are receiving encouragement enough to make us hopeful for the future, but not sufficient to warrant us to call upon you to rejoice with us. Progress is undoubtedly being made, but it is not of such a marked kind as calls for any special notice. There is very much that is dark and saddening amongst us yet; still I can confidently state that the work is in a better and more healthy condition than it was a twelve months ago. The people are all quiet and they are attending very fairly to all the means of grace within their reach. This is true in reference to the whole island. Since last writing you we spent three weeks in Mr. Inglis' late charge. While there I visited all the schools on that side the island—twenty-six in all. The people were very kind to me, and did all they could to facilitate my work among them. The food provided was so abundant, that after leaving one half for our friends there, we had a good boat load home with us.—I mention their liberality in giving us food, because, that in the eyes of a native is the very strongest evidence of good will that they can possibly shew a person. These people are not exactly epicureans, but they do certainly give great attention to the things that perish... I can cheerfully say that I found christianity in a more healthy state amongst the mass of the people than I expected. As is the case on our own side the isle all the districts are not equally advanced. However giving an impartial statement as to the relative condition of the two sides, I must say that there are a

greater number of the encampments farther advanced on the Anname side than on our own side. There is a smaller proportion of wild young men on that side also. Still the worst district on the whole isle belongs to that charge namely Ananunse. Even there all is quiet now; and when I preached there a fortnight ago all the people attended the services, even all those who were engaged in heathen dances last year.

#### WHOLE ISLAND VISITED.

I have now visited every encampment on this island, forty-eight in all. Though the isle is only about thirty-two miles in circumference by water, yet that statement gives but a very poor idea of the actual distance by the native paths, or of the labour expended in walking around the island. This isle is just one mass of high hills and deep ravines. The highest peak is 2788 feet. Some of the school-houses are down in the ravines where the hills rise almost perpendicularly more than a thousand feet on each side; while others are situated on sheltered nooks on the hill sides. The scenery is grand in some parts of the island. While visiting the Anname charge I took a new census, which reveals anything but a hopeful prospect for the future of these people. Since October 1876, when Mr. Inglis completed his last lists until the middle of August, 1878, there have been eighty-two deaths and only thirty-one births. The total population now on that side is 622. It is not the old and the feeble alone that are dying but all classes, the majority being young people. A year ago we had 604 on this side, so that you see the total number is falling every year.

#### DEATH OF WILLIAMU.

While we were staying at Anname, Williamu, an elder and chief, who was home to Britain with Mr. and Mrs. Inglis some seventeen years ago, died after only twenty-four hours illness. He had been suffering for some time previously with Rheumatism in his legs and feet, but was able to walk about. On a Wednesday night he took what seemed like a cramp in his feet and legs which gradually extended over his whole body, and on the next night he died. We did not know that he was seriously ill until he was dead. He had charged the parties waiting upon him not to tell the people that he was ill. He was a very intelligent native, and the one who has done more than any other to spread the gospel on his own side the island. You may remember something about him from letters published years ago. The people respected him more highly than they do any one now remaining. Their mourning for him was sincere and prolonged. Perhaps a few words descriptive of their customs with the dead might not be uninteresting to you.