



Brief History of the New Hebrides Mission.

EXTRACTS FROM ADDRESS OF REV. H. A. ROBERTSON, AS
MODERATOR OF SYNOD, 1894.

I HOPE you will bear with me while I endeavor briefly and generally to trace the history of this Mission from its inception. We may pass over the first eight or nine years, which include of course the first attempt to introduce the gospel, and the martyrdom of John Williams, for these are matters of history, written and well known. Beginning with the year 1848, for it was then that the foundation of the Mission was really laid by that prince of Missionaries, the never-to-be-forgotten John Geddie, we find the whole of the New Hebrides sunken in utter darkness. Alone Mr. Geddie toiled until 1852 when Mr. Inglis joined him. By the faithful labor of these two able men, and their brave self-denying wives, in a few years Aneiteum became a Christian island, and for many long years helped to carry the glad tidings to at least four or five other islands of the group.

In 1857, G. N. Gordon and his wife, from the Church in Nova Scotia that sent out Mr. Geddie, were settled on Erromanga. The following year Messrs. Paton and Copeland of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which sent out and supported Mr. and Mrs. Inglis, arrived; also Mr. and Mrs. Johnston from Nova Scotia. Except Mr. Copeland these were all settled on Tanna; Mr. and Mrs. Paton, and Mr. and Mrs. Johnston at Pt. Resolution, and Mr. and Mrs. Matheson at Kwamera. After between three and four years of great suffering, trial and danger, the Missions on Tanna and Erromanga were broken up. During these terrible years Mrs. Paton and child died; also Mr. Johnston, and Mr. and Mrs. Matheson and child; and Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were killed on Erromangá. It was at this point that Mr. Paton began that work of visiting and arousing the Australian, Scottish, and American Churches, gathering money, obtaining missionaries, and building mission ships, which has since made his name famous.

When I first landed in this group, 5th June, 1864, there were only two missionaries in the field—Messrs. Inglis and Copeland—