

picked up the language very rapidly, and won, to some extent, the confidence of the people. For the keenly observant natives marked that Dr. Geddie had no cannon, no firearms, no weapons of offence or defence in his hands, or on his premises, that his wife and little ones were among them trustfully, while on the other hand the Jesuit Mission and the establishments of the sandal wood traders were guarded by cannon and furnished with firearms. Schools were opened for old and young; instruction in reading, writing and counting was given wherever possible. Constant intercourse was kept up over as wide an area as could be overtaken. At first the Sabbath services were attended by few, for they thought that to attend such services was to confer a special favor on the missionary, and they would ask for payment. The Lord's Supper was celebrated for the first time on Aneityum on the first Sabbath of September, 1848; Dr. Geddie preached in Samoan and in English. Not one of the Aneityumese took part in that communion.

The first person on the island who asked Dr. Geddie to conduct worship was a little boy whom he met one day, and who said, putting his hand to his forehead and covering his eyes, "Come, let us do this." A few other boys were gathered together, and the missionary held a service with them. This boy afterwards became a faithful teacher.

Before the Geddies were many weeks on the island two widows were strangled, their husbands having died. The practice was that the nearest relative of the widow—a son, a brother, or even a daughter—should do the horrible deed. Any feeble, helpless children of the family were also put to death. The missionaries tried at once and earnestly to put a stop to these "horrid cruelties," and the chiefs promised they should cease; but eight cases of widow-strangling came to the knowledge of Dr. Geddie the first year of his sojourn here. Even the widow herself was often a resolute accomplice in the tragedy.