

team, and commenced amongst its degraded inhabitants those labours which God has since so signally blessed. Although the Native Teachers had done well in maintaining their ground and continuing their efforts, yet very few amongst the Islanders, when our Brother landed, evinced in their character a change of heart.

To afford some just conception of the degradation and cruelty of the people of Aneiteum up to the time when Mr. G. commenced his labours, the following extract is given from a letter of the Rev. Thomas Powell, now of the Samoan Mission, but who was for a short period associated with Mr. Geddie:—

“All the heathen customs,” wrote Mr. P. under date Aug 1st, 1849, “are still practised here. *Eight* women, to our knowledge, have been *strangled* during our residence. How many more it is impossible to say. The last I attempted, though in vain, to save. Soon after I came here there was a native very ill: the poor creature was reduced to a skeleton. I found him lying outside his hut; his wife, an interesting young woman, was sitting by his side. I administered a little medicine with the design of abating the severity of his sufferings, but not with any hope of his final recovery. In prospect of his decease, I requested later, the chief of the village, to forbid the strangling of the wife, and he faithfully promised to do so; but it resulted as I feared. About noon of the 23rd ultimo, our attention was suddenly arrested by the commencement of the *death wail*. We knew whence it proceeded, and anxiety filled our minds for the safety of the poor widow. I hastened to the spot. The corpse was lying in the open air, surrounded by a number of women, who were rubbing it with broken leaves, and at the same time wailing in the most piteous manner. Tears were pouring down their cheeks; many of them were pulling their hair in seeming excess of grief; while so deafening were their lamentations and their shrieks, that I could not stand near them. I looked anxiously around for the poor widow, but she was not there, and I hastened to a house where I hoped to find her, but the search was vain. I returned to the place of weeping, and there she sat. I said, ‘This woman must not be strangled,’ and several women joined me, and said, ‘Oh no, do not let her be strangled!’ I commenced leading her away; but immediately several young men, her relations, seized her, and attempted to lead her in another direction. One of these men pushed me aside, and held up his club in a threatening attitude, and by this time another of her relations, a powerful young man, had seized her by the necklaco, and commenced strangling her therewith, as the proper instrument had been taken off her neck. I made an attempt to interrupt the murderer; but he tried to kick me, and pushed me aside with one hand while he held his victim with the other. Meanwhile several were standing around with uplifted clubs, and one especially behind me, ready to prevent effectually any interference on my part. I called aloud for the chief to come and forbid it, but in vain; and prudence dictated that I must stand aside, and allow the fearful scene to proceed, the particulars of which are too shocking to describe.”

Mr. Geddie in common with the Native Teachers, suffered much, and was often in peril, during the first years of his Missionary work, especially when success began to crown his efforts, and the heathen in their rage endeavoured to arrest the progress of the Gospel. Frequently plots were laid against him, and once, at least, his house was set on fire; but through the good hand of their God he and his devoted partner were preserved in safety, until at length they could rejoice over the heathen population of the island, who, with few exceptions, made a public profession of the Christian faith. In 1852 Mr. Geddie was joined in Aneiteum by the Rev. J. Inglis and Mrs. Inglis, agents of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland; and the wonderful change which they have since witnessed will be seen in a few particulars selected from the report of the visit of the “John Williams in 1858.

At that time there were only about forty professed heathen remaining. Sixty villages had each a school house or a chapel, with a resident Teacher, and these Teachers, with the exception of two Samoans, were the fruit of missionary labour on the Island. The number in Church fellowship was 235, of whom fifty-seven had been admitted within the year. Nearly the whole of the New Testament and some Books of the Old had been translated; and a large proportion of these late-