

simplicity of the man and of his utterances arrested attention. There was marvellous pathos and power, for example, in the statement: "I have been asked why I did not bring any gods of the Aneiteumese home with me. The fact is that when I was coming away I thought of doing so and went in search of them among the people, but I found none; they had all been destroyed."

Dr. Geddie's reticence was, however, quite atoned for by the rare gift of conversation possessed by Mrs. Geddie. Everyone young and old was charmed by her vivid accounts of life among the cannibal savages. The New Hebrides, and Aneiteum especially, were made as real as the people and places about. It is a matter of profound regret that these descriptions and conversations have not been reduced to print. There has been no more heroic or picturesque missionary experience in any land than that of Dr. Geddie and his brave wife, the pioneers from Canada in the foreign field, the pioneer missionaries indeed so far as the present writer is aware, of any British colony to the heathen.

#### REMINISCENCES OF ANEITEUM.

By Mrs. Geddie.

It was on a bright July day in 1848 that we landed on the lovely island of Aneiteum. Let me say in passing that the natural beauties with which it was our good fortune to be surrounded were a great compensation for our isolation. The exquisite scenery and wonderful tropical foliage were a constant source of joy and refreshment.

The Rev. Thomas Powell, one of our good friends of the London Missionary Society, with his wife and children, accompanied us from Samoa and remained a year. My husband and he at once began to visit the villages within reach, and with Simeona, the Samoan teacher, who had been for some years on the island, to interpret, they explained to the savages their object in coming among them.

As the accommodation in Simeona's house was very limited it was necessary to set about building one for ourselves. A frame and some material had been brought from Samoa and the work was progressing rapidly when the Samoans took ill. Few of the natives could be persuaded to help, even for payment, so the two missionaries had to complete it themselves.

How thankful we were to have that little home! The walls were of wattle and plaster, thatched roof and floor of coral covered with mats, as boards were an unobtainable luxury. Another building to serve as church and school-house was also put up.

Crowds came to watch the white men

building and while the white men wrought with their hands, they seized every opportunity to acquire the language. Sometimes the natives refused to tell meanings of words without remuneration, and biscuits, known as "hard tack," proved a convenient exchange.

On the sixth Sunday after his arrival, Dr. Geddie addressed the people in their own tongue. To quote his own words: "Our knowledge of the language is, of course, very limited, yet we can tell this benighted people some of the simple truths of the Gospel in their own tongue. This is the object to which I have looked forward with desire for years, and I thank God that I have been spared to see they day when I can tell perishing sinners for the first time of a Saviour's love."

In less than three months the hand printing press given by friends in Pictou was set in order and the first hymn in the language printed. After that sheets of alphabets, syllables and words for the schools and then portions of Scripture.

His methods of work in those early days are best described in his own words: "When we see a native at his work or amusement we request him to follow us and so go on until a little group is collected. Sometimes we collect five or six, sometimes ten, sometimes twenty and sometimes thirty. Then we sit down under the shade of a tree, or by the side of a path or by the seashore, and tell them, as best we can, of sin and a Saviour from it."

Our first impressions in regard to the natives were much too favorable. They appeared gentle, though cold and indifferent in manner, and we began to think the tales of the fierce savages of the New Hebrides somewhat exaggerated.

Soon Dr. Geddie was charged with the crime of offending the "Spirits," who ruled land and sea, by taking coral from the reef to make lime; also, by blocking their path to the sea by enclosing a piece of ground for the church. The fence, it was declared, being an insurmountable obstacle to the spirits, who were either not sufficiently athletic or too dignified to jump it. These charges, absurd as they sound, were likely to cause difficulties or at least strained relations between the heathen and ourselves.

Dr. Geddie's method in such cases was to make every concession possible and to respect the customs of these people, whose ideas of right and wrong are so different from ours.

The time for setting heathen superstition at defiance had not yet come. So, on condition of being allowed to use the coral already on shore, he promised not to take more without permission, and so it was that the floor of our house remained unplastered.

As to the second charge, he explained