

## **Appendix B**

Reports and other documents from the Meeting for Sufferings, printed by direction of the Yearly Meeting, but not read in it for want of time.

At a Committee on ISAAC SHARP's visit to the FAROE ISLANDS &c., held 2<sup>nd</sup> of FIRST Month, 1863.

A narrative of the visit of our said friend, during the early months of the year just closed, together with Asbjorn Kloster as his companion, to the Faroe Islands has been prepared, and is submitted to the Meeting for Sufferings. An account of expenses during the visit has been produced, which having been examined is approved.

On behalf of the Committee,

THOMAS NORTON.

Particulars of the religious engagement of ISAAC SHARP (accompanied by ASBJORN KLOSTER), in the FAROE ISLANDS, in 1862; not included in the notes sent from thence to his relatives and other near connexions.

On returning from Iceland in the autumn of 1861, my mind was often under exercise, in reference to the unfulfilled portion of the service included in the certificates granted in that year. I believe it may be said, Greenland was abidingly and almost continually before me; but the time had not yet come. By degrees the Faroe Isles took deeper hold of my mind, and the Fourth Month, then next ensuing, appeared to present so clearly, as the right time for the visit there, that it felt best and safest, to follow the apprehended pointing of present day; and on writing to my dear friend and companion in Icelandic travel, Asbjorn Kloster, it was to the strengthening of my faith, to find that the time proposed was the only one which allowed of his going with me, circumstances having arisen to prevent his leaving Christiania later in the season for this purpose.

Asbjorn Kloster left home on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Fourth Month. The departure of the steamer had been delayed from the severity of the weather, a canal some miles in length having to be cut through the ice to enable the vessel to get away.

We left Middlesborough on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. In the evening of First-day, the 20<sup>th</sup>, went on board the Arcturus steamer at Grangemouth, and on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, landed at Thorshaven, the capital of the Faroe Islands, containing a population of about eight hundred. After some search, there being no inn at this place, we found comfortable accommodation at the residence of I.Hansen, one of the factors resident there. It now became a matter of serious deliberation, how to proceed for the best; weather, wind and wave often setting arrangements aside, however carefully made; the rapid flow of the ocean currents between one island and another required also to be kept in view, when arranging either for departure or return. Sudden squalls often arise with great rapidity, and the gusts from the mountains render sailing, at times, both difficult and dangerous.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> meetings were held at Sandoe and Nalsoe, two islands not far distant from Thorshaven, and in the evening of First-day, the 27<sup>th</sup>, about 270 assembled in the Court House, the Governor and his wife, with many of the principal inhabitants, as well as their poorer neighbours being present. It was a season in which my companion and myself were, I thankfully believe, enabled to speak with an ability not at our own command. The Governor, who speaks English fluently, remarked after the meeting, how closely and literally Asbjorn Kloster's rendering, as interpreter, had been.

We left the next morning for Eide, a principal merchant station on Osteroe, where about 170 came together; and our visit of Christian love appeared to be appreciated in the minds of some who were present. Many of the remote districts of Faroe are much cut off from instrumental help; a pastoral visit from the appointed minister, owing to the distance and difficulty of travel, being paid at intervals, varying from three to six times a year. In the interim, according to the rules of the "Lutheran Church," the portion for the day is read to those who assemble in the kirk in each parish, on First-days and on some other days.

Great is the difficulty and distress to which these islanders are constantly exposed, in the event of sudden illness or accident, there being at present but one doctor for seventeen islands, occupying a space of nearly sixty miles from north to south, and forty from east to west; notwithstanding which, and the hardships and privations they undergo, the average duration of life does not appear to be low.

Our visits were continued from place to place on various islands till the 6<sup>th</sup> of Fifth Month, when we returned to Thorshaven, up to which period seventeen meetings had been held. Having slept for some nights in succession in very damp beds, my health suffered considerably and compelled me to remain quietly at our lodgings at Thorshaven, for a short time, during which period the North Isles of Fugloe, Svinoe, Videroe, Boroe, Kunoe, and Kalsoe, and Kalso, pressed on my mind with much weight; and accordingly, on the 13<sup>th</sup> we again set sail, and in about eight days were favoured to visit these isolated islands, some of which are by no means easy of access.

We next took the east of Osteroe from place to place, and having held sixteen meetings, returned to Thorshaven once more, late in the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Fifth Month; the prospect of a little rest being very pleasant. These journeys were not unattended with difficulty and danger – often wet, weary and chilly, exposed by sea in open boats, or in going on foot over the Fells by land. We were nevertheless so blessed as for the most part to feel our mental and physical strength, from time to time, wonderfully renewed; nor were we strangers to a peaceful and thankful heart, while sensible, through Divine goodness, of our own weakness.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> another meeting was held at Thorshaven; it proved less lively than many we have had in this land. On a calm review I could remember with comfort the exercise of soul which had preceded its appointment, with some ability to commit all to the tender compassion of the Great and Good Shepherd. On the 26<sup>th</sup> we set out for the more southerly portion of the Faroe group, and went from island to island to Myggennes, the last of the seventeen inhabited isles. A meeting was held the next day at Sorvaag on Waagoe, from whence, greatly needing rest, we returned to Thorshaven, on Fifth-day, the 5<sup>th</sup> of Sixth Month.

The island of Myggennes is the most westerly of the entire group, and between it and Waagoe the ocean current is often very strong. With a crew of ten we left Sorvaag in an open boat soon after 6 in the morning. As appears usual, when entering on a hazardous enterprise, the boatmen sang a hymn while yet in the still water of the bay. The morning was fine, and in this respect greatly in our favour; but on nearing the island, it was found impracticable to land at the usual place, owing to the heavy breakers on the rocky shore; our boatmen, therefore, steered for the eastern end of the island, and entered a little cove, under shelter of a few projecting rocks, from whence our ascent began. After climbing up some 40 or 50 feet, a sloping ledge of rock, barely wide enough for passing one at a time, brought us to the foot of a difficult and almost perpendicular ascent, where a chain, hanging loosely against the rock, but secured at the top and bottom, presented the only means of access to the heights above.

Two of the boat's crew, accustomed as fowlers to climb, first ascended, carrying one end of a rope of hair, and my turn having come, the other end, by a secure knot well tested, was fastened round the waist. In this manner the ascent of some 50 to 60 feet was made by climbing up the chain, aided by the men above who held the rope. The mountain slope on reaching the top, was for a considerable distance steeper than the roof of an ordinary house. My valued companion and myself were mercifully preserved from fear during the ascent, and felt no giddiness, but the strain on the muscles was great and exhausting. For nearly an hour we continued to ascend the ridges of the Fell, in some places rocky, and steep, and veiled, as the mists of the mountains came sweeping by. On nearing the hamlet we met seven men on their way to the rocky ledges to seek for sea birds and for eggs, - a dangerous enterprise, much resorted to in some of the islands of Faroe. The object of our visit was explained; they told us it was too far for them to go back, their arrangements for the fowling having been previously made, but that they were willing to go with us a little space to the sheltering brow of a hill. This being done, the opportunity was embraced to tell them that although in their hazardous employment they were accustomed to leave their homes, exposed to dangers which at any moment might end their earthly course, there is a death more terrible far than the death of the body, and that it is the bounden duty of each daily to seek a preparation for the life to come, &c. The men were respectful, and listened attentively; soon we parted company and journeyed on, they in one direction, we in another. Between 11 and 12 we reached the hamlet; but the Kirkevegr, the principal man of the place, told us plainly, there had been service in the kirk that morning already, and he did not care for any more; if the people wished to attend our meeting they might, though not at his house; but we were welcome to come in and rest. We entered and soon found his wife more favourably disposed towards us; by degrees her husband softened, and not only prepared a room for the meeting, but gave notice to his neighbours to attend, and accordingly, between 12 and 1, nearly fifty persons assembled, among whom my companion had an open time, and subsequently interpreted the portion which fell to my lot to communicate. It was a good meeting, and the Kirkevegr afterwards warmly and very cordially acknowledged the visit. Some sea birds were boiled for dinner, which, with potatoes, rye bread and butter, a cup of coffee, and a few biscuits, furnished a refreshing meal. The waves were still too high to allow of our departure by the usual landing, so taking leave of the Kirkevegr and his family, we set off on foot over the mountains, conscious in passing along of the peril which awaited us on reaching the chain.

The descent though not easy, was accomplished in safety; we were soon once more in the boat, and after a tossing on the tidal waves which rose and fell with a majestic sweep, reached Sorvaag about 8 in the evening, with a peaceful sense on our spirits of the providential care mercifully extended to

us in the time of need; truly the promise was again fulfilled, ‘As thy days so shall thy strength be.’ A meeting was held on the following morning, and about 11 o’clock we left, reaching Thorshaven between 6 and 7 in the evening to recruit and rest, after which the opportunity was embraced for going to Saxon and Haldersvig, in the north of Stromoe, which places continued to press on my mind, and from whence there was a peaceful return. On the evening prior to our departure a meeting was held at the Court House at Thorshaven, which was owned, I thankfully believe, by the Great Head of the Church.

Various in this religious engagement has been the exercise, both of faith and patience, but over all there has been permitted a prevailing sense of the love and mercy of our Heavenly Father, through his dear Son, both to the visitors, and to the visited in their respective lot: there have been seasons, also when the monition has arisen with instructions –

“Where thou canst not draw the veil,  
Let thy faith and trust prevail.”

Precious peace has often spread over abiding exercise, while sensible alike both of need and of help.

In one place, where the greatest indifference appeared, some were present, who, with apparent sincerity, acknowledged the visit with thanks; and there were evidences of appreciation in other places of a more decided character. One man said, after an evening meeting held in one of the usual places of worship, ‘I have been here sixty-four years, and never heard the like in this kirk before. God grant his blessing may rest upon it.’ In another place, one of the Lutheran office-bearers, who before the meeting was far from cordial, said, ‘I have seen and felt the vanity of an empty profession, and acknowledge the goodness of God in sending his messengers to bear witness of the truth.’

For the most part our meetings were held in the ‘Rogstue,’ usually the largest apartment in the house, having an earthen floor, with benches or boxes on two or three sides; and this we preferred, as to such a place the people came with less constraint. Occasionally we were requested to occupy the place for public worship. Such was the case at Videroe, where the pastor and his wife, with a congregation of eighty, assembled one Seventh-day morning in the ‘Kirk.’ At this place we were received with much openness, and entertained with marked hospitality. F. Feilberg and his wife both speak English fluently. As we sat at table, partaking together of a parting meal, I felt my mind much clothed with prayer, and proposed, ere we took leave, that for a little space, we should sit down together. Considerable tenderness was evinced, both by the pastor and his wife, on whose behalf, and for their beloved children and household, the prayer arose. For the wife, that wisdom might be granted to guide her affairs with discretion; for the husband, ability rightly to discharge the duties of his office, and for his preservation on the mighty deep; that the Lord would graciously direct their hearts, more and more, into his love, and into the patient waiting for Christ; and for all, that they might grow in grace. We left shortly after: the pastor descended the rocks with us to the water’s edge; his wife and the little ones came to the heights above, and took leave of us very cordially. On parting F. Feilberg said, “I shall never forget your visit, and shall often remind my congregation of it. May God bless you wherever you go, and lift upon you the light of his countenance.” Throughout the entire journey we have met with great openness, and but little opposition, although the doctrine of a spiritual life and walk appears new to many. To outward baptism and the bread and wine they cling exceedingly, and it is greatly to be feared many rest therein, not seeing sufficiently beyond it. There is a deficiency of the Scriptures in Faroe, especially as regards the Old Testament; the New

Testament is to be found in most places, but sermon books and prayer books bear evidence of being much more read. A form of religion is strictly observed, but in too many instances, it may be feared, without a corresponding life and power. Education is much neglected, and is at present, except at Thoshaven, at a very low ebb. Strong drink has many votaries, and its effects are very deadening.

In the course of this engagement fifty-nine meetings have been held, the attendance at which has rather exceeded one-third of the whole population of Faroe, computed at 8000. We have travelled on and among the islands about 514 miles, including seventy on foot, and have to commemorate many preservations by sea and land. Still having the company of my friend Asbjorn Kloster, it was my privilege to return to Middlesbro' in safety, bearing sheaves of precious peace, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Sixth Month.

In passing from island to island a little seed has been sown in faith. The result is committed with confiding trust to the Great Husbandman, who in the richness of his love in Jesus has been pleased, from time to time, graciously to grant the help of the Holy Spirit and the owning of his presence.

Under a sense of feebleness for the service, and the trials inseparable from a want of knowledge of the language (however ably the deficiency may be supplied by an interpreter), there have been times in this journey in which the query has been ready to arise, Can it be that the Lord of the harvest hath in very deed called me hither? – but far more frequent have been the seasons in which the power to trust has been so granted as to forbid the rising doubt, and very often has the remaining portion of Iceland and Greenland been confidingly before me. In an earthen vessel, truly, has been the treasure; but, in exceeding mercy, peace with God, through his dear Son, has often clothed my spirit, while in an humbling remembrance of his goodness, thanksgiving has been the utterance of the heart to Him, who alone is worthy of the glory and the praise.

ISAAC SHARP

Middlesbro', Sixth Month 30<sup>th</sup>, 1862.