

lor, Mr. Forrester, Mr. Lyall, and Mr. McLeod; the Moderator, Convener.

The Presbytery adjourned, to meet here on Tuesday the 24th June next, at twelve o'clock, noon.

(From the *Free Church Missionary Record*)
HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

HARRIS.

The following interesting communication has been sent to the Committee by the Rev. Donald McRae of Kilmorie, who visited Harris and the adjacent islands in July and August last. In the present condition of the Highlands, we beg to direct attention to its contents. The facts detailed respecting the spiritual and temporal destitution of the people are deeply affecting.

Surely ways and means may be devised for wiping off the reproach that at this time of day there exists within our bounds one community in which there is not an individual able to read the Word of life:—

1. DIFFICULTIES OF MISSIONARY WORK

I left home on the 15th July, and landed from the *Broadbune* at Tarbert, in Harris, three days after. I was previously, to some extent, aware of the difficulties attending missionary work in that district of the Long Island, but a short experience convinced me that I had very much underrated these difficulties. The rocky and inaccessible spots into which the people have now been crowded cannot be reached but with great labour. There is no road through the inhabited portions of the island. Indeed a road could not be made there. There is, however, a road throughout the whole length of the parish from north to south, but then it passes along the west side of the island, where nature points out plainly enough the fitting localities for the inhabitants, but where they are no longer to be found. It would take the strength and energy of two of our most robust and zealous ministers to overtake ordinary ministerial work in Harris.

2. HOW TRUE RELIGION HAS BEEN UPHOLD

In a population of about 4500 souls, about fifteen families only have continued their connection with the Established Church.—A disruption took place in Harris six-and-twenty years ago; and during a period of nearly twenty years, the salt was preserved from losing its savour very much through the instrumentality of one of their own men, John Morrison, the Free Church catechist in that parish—a man of genuine poetical powers, and of eminent Christian attainments, and whose lately published elegy on Dr. Macdonald of Ferrintosh has elicited the highest praise from some of our most eminent Gaelic scholars and divines, on account of the genius and piety therein displayed.

3. SPIRITUAL DECLENSIONS.

There are to be met with here and there, among this people, some deeply experienced and advanced Christians, but amidst much that cheers and refreshes, there is also much of a discouraging nature. A period of eighteen years had elapsed since I formerly passed through the island of Harris. At that time almost the whole of the population were seemingly in a promising condition. No labour was reckoned too arduous in attending the means of grace. During the darkest winter nights, a whole district might be seen illuminated with torches, carried about by multitudes thronging to a place where a diet of catechising was held. Like the inhabitants of many other localities in our land, many of the people of Harris "have lost their first love," and there prevails a lamentable indifference to eternal things, particularly among the young.

4. ENCOURAGEMENTS.

I have satisfaction, however, in testifying to the readiness with which the people always came out, and sat on the hill-side, listening to the message of salvation; and also to their anxiety to afford me all the facilities in their power for visiting the various districts. For example, if I intimated my intention of preaching on a given week-day in the island of Scalpay, or in the more distant island of Scarp, a boat and crew were sure to be in readiness to convey me to the appointed place of meeting.

5. INTERESTING ISLAND OF SCARP.

Of the different localities I visited, not the least interesting was the remote island of Scarp. I received a favourable impression of its twenty-four interesting families previously to my visiting them, and I was not disappointed. I preached on the evening of the day of my arrival, and also on the following day. Tossed about during a great part of the day among the billows of the Atlantic, I did not feel myself in a fit condition to preach on my arrival. I was not, however, many minutes on the island when I heard a horn sounding. This, I was given to understand, was a summons to the whole community to meet in a house formerly occupied as a Gaelic school-house, to hear sermon. Of course it was no time for hesitation, and we all repaired to the appointed place of meeting. The horn was sounded next day at the hour appointed for service, and as the twenty-four houses in the island cover no more than a couple of acres of ground, the whole community readily assembled at the sound of the *Scarp bell*.—The islanders hold three separate diets of worship every Sabbath-day,—the religious exercises being presided over by the worthy elder of the island.

6. RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL DESTITUTION, ESPECIALLY IN SCALPAY.

I generally preached on the Sabbath-day^s