

REPORT

OF THE

Woman's Missionary Society

OF THE

Diocese of California.

For the Three Years Ended September 1st, 1883.

The Woman's Missionary Society of the Diocese of California, was organized on the 2nd of February, 1880, as a branch of the Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions. A report of the organization, and of the first half year's work, was submitted to the general meeting of the Auxiliary, held during the last session of General Convention.

A good beginning was made. The Secretary reported the value of boxes sent, as \$672.85.

The work since then has gone on well, with growing interest, and a widening knowledge of the Church's needs.

The Treasurer reports the following cash receipts :

For the 4 months ended January, 1881,	- - -	\$ 98.00
For the year ended January, 1882,	- - -	236.50
For the year ended January, 1883,	- - -	307.55
For the 8 months ended September, 1883,	- - -	227.65
		-----\$ 869.70

The annual subscription, which constitutes membership, is \$1.00. Members also hold mite chests, which are opened at Christmas and Easter. These sources furnish a small, regular income ; but by far the larger contributions are in material, clothing of all kinds, books, toys, etc., as the following table will show:

Value of boxes sent to Missionaries:

For the 4 months ended January, 1881,	- - -	\$ 423.45
For the year ended January, 1882--14 boxes	- - -	629.50
For the year ended January, 1883--20 boxes	- - -	1049.00
For the 8 months ended September, 1883--10 boxes	- - -	452.00
Total	- - -	-----\$2553.95

We have a steady increase in membership. Forty new members were added during the past year. Removals and deaths deducted, the present list numbers one hundred and seventy-five. The membership is drawn from the parishes of San Francisco and Oakland, with the exception of three ladies, resident in the interior.

The Society has no regularly organized branches. The ladies of St. Paul's Guild, Oakland, and of the Presidio, for convenience, make up their contributions of clothing separately. We meet every week during Lent and Advent; fortnightly at other seasons, except during the summer vacation at the close of the Easter work. These meetings are held in the parish rooms of the city churches, in rotation. For many reasons, a fixed central place of meeting would have its advantages, but experience has shown that these are far outweighed by the benefits arising from the interchange of interest which a visit from church to church is sure to bring about. Besides, many women whose quiet lives keep them in the routine of parish work, can only thus be brought within our influence.

Our Sister Societies may wish to know what special features of the work commend themselves to us as worthy of increased attention.

First of all should be put, I think, the provision of vestments, altar linen and chancel furniture—as far as the last is possible—for our young missionary stations. The good of a service, decently begun, is incalculable. The Church sends a man to minister to a scanty flock; his salary may give him a living; his people may be able to rent a hall for Services; this, likely, and nothing more. If he is to save himself from church sociables and fairs as a means of buying the holy things of the Sanctuary, he must be helped from outside, and to none should he turn more hopefully than to his friends of the Auxiliary. The reverent Services, our everyday blessing, should quicken our sympathies for the scattered brethren, many of whom, in a well appointed chancel, will find, not only a help to inward reverence, but all, perhaps, that is left them of the old home life that is not only a memory. Our Anglo-Saxon race is a moving race, and nowhere does one know this so well as in California. Here, in country missions, people from Old England, aristocrats of broken fortunes, rough miners of no fortune, meet our brethren of the Eastern States, their kindred, with only wilder instincts of travel and adventure. A common altar, and a common prayer, alone can unite and root them in this most alien soil. The curse of California has been the lack of *homes*. The Church must foster the home instinct, and we may thus help her to do it.

Hardly second in importance is the provision of clerical suits. Pitifully has it been said to us: "I would rather have a new clerical suit than anything else." The reason is not on the surface. The Missionary's wife may turn her clothes upside down and wrong side out; his children may stay home from school, and even Church; but none of these things are possible to him. His personal appearance is very apt to be taken as an indication of the value which the Church puts upon him. By all means let us help him to that decency of outward apparel which shall free him from cruel embarrassment. Our help in these things has not been all that we could have wished, but we have constant testimony to its efficacy. Within the period reported, we have supplied ten clerical suits, and four clerical overcoats; three surplices, five stoles, six sets of altar linen, and three sets of chancel hangings—the last wholly, or in part. Most of this work has been done in the past two years, and two sub-societies have, for a special object, the making and embroidering of altar linen and vestments for our Missionary clergy.

A sketch of the work would be incomplete without a review of the circumstances of its inception and growth. For many years, Bishop Kip with his clergy, worked in his far-away diocese, separated from all association with the Church in America, by a wide continent of almost hostile savagery. Dioceses sprang up and linked us to the past. The railroad has made our country one, *in fact*—but California is California still; a moving, restless, anxious people, hurrying to “get rich.” Foreigners of every race breathe our air; houses of heathen worship, and God’s Houses of almost every creed in Christendom, vie to show men the way to happiness. The Church of Rome was here before us, and wise in her generation, as her valuable property everywhere attests. Our Bishop came to us with only his missionary stipend, meagre in this land of great expenses, with no endowments, no investments of any kind save those of faith. He has lived to see his fair diocese grow, as it could have grown but by God’s blessing on the means he had to use.

The cry comes to us from all over the State: “Give us the Church.” The agricultural interests have received an immense impulse during the past three years. Small fruit farms and vineyards are planting in the valleys and uplands. Their owners have put their all, perhaps, into these new ventures of hope. At present, they can give but little to the Church, as they have but little with which to buy food and clothing. The Church must go to them. About one-half of our churches are missionary stations. Towards their support we receive only one thousand dollars from the Board of Missions.

For these reasons the Society has done little beyond the bounds of the diocese. Its very existence has depended on concentration of effort and purpose. Work which holds its own in California is good work. But, thank God, the Church is doing much more than this! Statistics will hardly tell all the story, so much must first go downward that the growth be real. Our little Society is a kind of pulsometer; we feel the earnest zeal of the devoted Missionaries thrilling with quickening power through the current of surging life that is coming to possess our mountains and valleys. The tokens are not always great ones, but they are sure.

But, perhaps, our greatest blessing is yet unrecorded. We, the workers, would here thank God for all the Society has been to us—a common ground where all opinions have met and harmonized—a sacred tie uniting our parishes in sweetest intercourse—an interest impersonal, catholic, drawing us closer to each other, and to Christ!

SUSAN S. LAWVER,

SAN FRANCISCO, September 1st, 1883.

Secretary.

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