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SISTERHOOD

OF

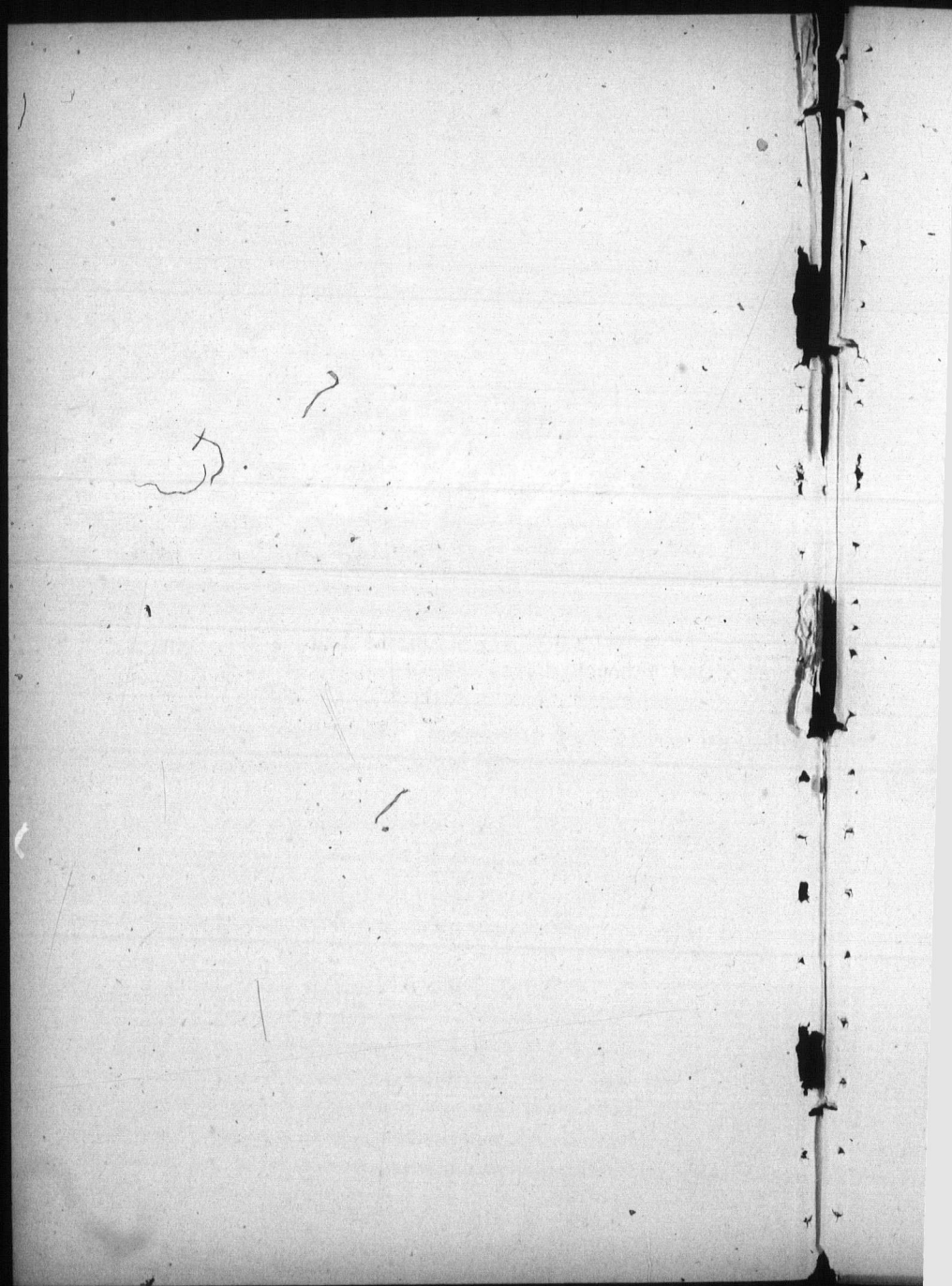
S. John the Baptist.

REPORT, 1874.

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Sisterhood of S. John the Baptist.

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The Church Sisterhood has now been in existence, and at work, for a little more than two years. A record of its history and labours was presented towards the close of the first year, and was largely circulated throughout the country.

During the past year the management of the affairs of the Sisterhood has passed into the hands of Miss Mulkins; and although she has suffered from illness, which has interrupted her work, yet to have secured her services is a matter of sincerest congratulation. Her fellow worker, Sister Sarah, has also devoted herself to all good works, with her usual energy. The following record will show with what efficiency they have given themselves to the service of the sick and suffering, for the Master's sake.

I. During the past year, thirty-two special cases have been visited, nursed and relieved. It is impossible within the limits of this report, to enter into the details of these instances of suffering; but a reference to the House Record will show their character. The miles of walking, the days and nights of watching and of care, the anxiety and often danger involved in the fulfilment of these offices of Christian devotedness, ought to secure from those who will endeavour to realize what such work must be, and how urgently it is required, a larger measure of sympathy than it receives.

II. Beside these special cases of illness and distress, there are a multitude of others occurring almost every day, which though not of sufficient importance to be mentioned in the Monthly Reports, or to have a separate entry in the House Record, do nevertheless call for a large measure of exertion, and often prove of the greatest use to the sufferers themselves.

III. In addition to this, there is the general visiting of the industrious classes, on various errands of kindness, amounting to nearly 400 visits a month, when this work is not interrupted by special duty, or by indisposition on the part of any member of the community. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the good effect of this wide intercourse with the surrounding population, in abating prejudice, and disposing them to accept the good offices of the Sisters in time of need.

IV. The clothing provided by the ladies of the Dorcas Society (who meet for work at the House of the Sisterhood) has been given out under the suggestion of the Sisters, who have also collected and distributed seven hundred and forty-eight pieces of old clothing to various persons in distress.

V. A large donation of Tea and Sugar from Mr. Ince, has been carefully distributed.

VI. The sum of \$172.66 has been spent for the benefit of the poor, made up by the offerings presented at the Wednesday and Friday Evening Services in the Church of the Holy Trinity; some alms from S. Luke's; and various offerings from individuals. It seems needless to say, that persons wishing their alms judiciously and effectively applied, had, in many cases, better intrust their expenditure to the Sisters, than distribute them as is often done, upon mere impulse, as they make it a point to investigate personally all the cases they relieve, and take every precaution possible to prevent or detect imposture.

VII. Three Tickets for the General Hospital have been obtained, two for the Lying-in Hospital, and seven tickets were given for St. George's Society. An emigrant, whose duty it seemed to return home, but who had no means, was provided, by the exertions of the Community, with the necessary passage ticket, beside clothing, food, &c. A man with three helpless children, under five years of age, was provided with necessary clothing and food for their passage home. Cases of this nature involve an amount of labour, which the mere mention of them fails to suggest, and from which mere impulsive charity too often shrinks.

VIII. During the present year medicines were obtained at a great reduction, through the kindness of Dr. Kertland, who was also good enough to give instruction to the Sisters in the art of compounding them. Since then they have been dispensed to between thirty and forty persons, and by this means a great reduction has been made in the outlay for medicine.

IX. The Sewing Class has been held once a week throughout the year, and has been well attended; and both directly and indirectly is beneficial to the girls who attend it.

X. A Night School for girls was held for the six Winter months, the number of pupils being over forty. A good spirit of affectionate regard for their teachers has been manifested by the girls, who were most regular in attendance.

XI. A Mothers' Meeting was held during the Winter months, and is now working again; the number attending being about eighteen, with prospects of increase.

XII. Many servants, washerwomen and charwomen have frequently been provided with work; and ladies in need of assistance in household matters have been supplied through the House.

XIII. Six District Visitors and three Sunday School Teachers have been provided for the Parish of the Holy Trinity, through the influence of the Community.

XIV. The Clothing and Fuel Club has a most active and efficient collector in Sister Sarah, who has upwards of seventy contributors on her list, whom she visits once a week.

XV. Sewing is sometimes taken in for the good of the House, and the Sisters are prepared to direct ladies to women who want work to do.

XVI. The Altar Linen used in the Church of the Holy Trinity is washed and ironed at the House; the Bread for the celebration of the Holy Communion provided; and Sister Sarah has the care of the Altar, which occupies one afternoon each week.

On S. John the Baptist's Day, Miss Mary Mulkins and Miss Sarah Turner were admitted formally, by the Bishop, as members of the Community, and sent forth with his special Episcopal Benediction, to test and prove by experience their fitness for such a life and such a work; at the same time three other ladies became "Associates" of the House, and three others propose to join shortly, in the same capacity.

Visitors, to the number of ten, have staid in the House at various times, and for shorter or longer periods during the year.

Correspondence has been entered upon during the same period with *nine* ladies who have voluntarily expressed a wish to visit the House, with a view of joining the work. Of these, three may perhaps be available. The obstacles in the other cases have usually arisen from the prejudiced opposition of friends; who in spite of repeated statements to the contrary, persist in declaring that any lady uniting herself in any way with the Community runs the risk of

losing all freedom of action ; and further alarm them by continually repeated and unfounded assertions of extreme and objectionable practices prevailing in the House. We can only hope to *live* down such foolish misrepresentations.

Among Contributions sent in during the year, may be mentioned a great deal of Fancy Work, of which a large part has been sold for the benefit of the Building Fund.

Fifty parcels of Old Clothes for distribution to the poor.

Ninety-two presents to the Community, of different kinds, have been received.

The Accounts being too voluminous to be printed, are lying at the house, 38 Gerrard Street West, and are open to the inspection of every subscriber.

The House Rent and Fuel are provided by the Committee of Gentlemen.

The Fund for Maintenance is contributed by the Ladies' Committee, and amounts to \$35.00 per month.

To maintain a household consisting of two Sisters and a Servant, the above sum (viz. \$35 per month) does not seem to be excessive, and when the vast amount and variety of good works are taken into account, the outlay is indeed small compared with the results which are effected. It is however evident, that an increase in the number of our workers, while producing a large increase in all benevolent exertions, would not be accompanied with anything like a proportionate increase of expense ; and that increase in number, notwithstanding all discouragements, we still hope to obtain. It would surely be a most lamentable thing, that at the bidding of mere prejudiced opposition, any one should dream of giving up a work so thoroughly practical and benevolent in its character. Amidst the wretched strife of controversy about exaggerated differences now raging around us, it is

by refreshing to turn to such a record of "work well done," as this Report exhibits, and to recognize in these benevolent exertions, the *practical* power of true Godliness.

What we greatly need is a permanent home. A mere rented house can never be properly adapted to our needs; and it is the opinion of several practical persons, that money could be borrowed to erect a building of a plain and inexpensive kind, calculated to meet our requirements, and that the annual interest of the money required for this purpose and the Sinking Fund for its re-payment, would be very little in excess of the sum now laid out for rent. This, and other questions relating to the welfare of the Community are earnestly commended to the careful consideration of the Committee in particular, and to the friends of the Sisterhood in general.