

THE LODGE,
LIVERPOOL ROAD,
HOOLE, NEAR PRESTON,
October, 1918.

DEAR SIR OR MADAM,

I have reached the time of life when it is no longer possible for me to continue the work at the Shepherd Street Mission and the Children's Home as in days gone by. The following extract from our Annual Report (now being published) will show that I am giving up all responsible work and the reasons for doing so :—

It is with keen sorrow and regret that I conclude my active official connection with Shepherd Street Mission as Hon. Sec. and Superintendent.

I find it is no easy task to abandon what has been the cherished purpose of a lifetime ; but time and tide wait for no man, and having almost reached the allotted span of life, " three score years and ten," and not being able to keep pace with the many-sided and extensive activities of the Mission, or to stand the strain and anxiety connected therewith as in days gone by, I feel it is due to

myself and for the future well-being of this work that I must relinquish my task. Somewhat reluctantly I step aside for a younger man.

For over 43 years (for the work was commenced twelve months or more before it was recognised as a Mission) it has been the whole object of my life, and of others, to spend and be spent for the well-being of the helpless, and it is most pleasant to look back upon it, and exceedingly gratifying to know that our labours have not been in vain. It has been God's work, and He has smiled upon it.

If the incidents of the past 43 years could be gathered up and presented as a complete whole, what a marvellous record it would be ! Volumes of encouraging cases, aye, and discouraging ones too, could be written. It has not all been pleasant easy work by a long, long way. There was pioneer work to do, and hard digging it has been. Not only have the flotsam and jetsam of society been elevated and rescued, but the Mission has been helpful to many Christian workers as well.

The following is an extract from a letter received from a Church Army Captain :—" I have much to thank you for, Mr. Williamson, for allowing me to work in connection with your Mission *re* lodging-house work. I look upon those days as my training ground. The help I got has stood me in good stead in dealing with young men, and I hope that many more may take advantage of the privileges offered **them.**"

The Rev. J. W. Dickson, who is now minister of the Doncaster Road Congregational Church,

Rotherham, and who is a Prestonian, and well known in his early days as a Band of Hope and Sunday School worker, while at Sheffield, wrote :—" Let me assure you that I owe much to the Shepherd Street Mission. The twelve years' voluntary work, when a young man, as a co-worker with you, have done much to equip me for Christian work in the ministry. The lodging-house addresses and visitation in which I engaged gave me experience and fitness for entering college and the ministry. The probability is that I should never have become a minister of the Gospel but for the work I was called upon to do at Shepherd Street. It was a practical training of the highest value, and now that you are retiring from the work let me say that I am more indebted to you and the late Mrs. Williamson and other workers than words can express. May your remaining years be filled with abundant peace and joy and God's richest blessings."

I should not like to think that I was laying aside all Christian work, but it is my intention to continue to be useful in the Sunday School, Band of Hope, and other Mission labours, when possible. I am not weary of the work, but somewhat weary in it.

I ask to be excused this personal note. It is the first time I have ever ventured to sound that note. And I do it now only because I am giving up the greater portion of my life's work. Let me acknowledge before the world that it is only through deep-rooted conviction and the grace of God I have been enabled to carry on and endure through all these years, and accomplish the little done. At the

same time, I venture to believe the Mission has been a success, and in every way justified.

And lastly, I take this opportunity, and from a grateful heart, to earnestly thank all those kind, good friends of many years who have given their money or their help and services in so very many and varied ways; and not least Messrs. George Toulmin & Sons for the generous sympathy and support received from them and through the *Lancashire Daily Post*.

Past and present workers, we have been fellow-labourers together in the vineyard of the Lord; nay, we have been fellow-labourers with God our Saviour in the Great Harvest Field of the world; and we have gathered in some precious sheaves for the garners above; and—

If we can live
To make some pale face brighter, and to give
A second lustre to some tear-dimmed eye,
Or e'en impart
One throb of comfort to an aching heart,
Or cheer some wayworn soul on passing by:

If we can lend
A strong hand to the fallen, or defend
The right against a single envious strain,
Our life, though bare,
Perhaps, of much that seemeth dear and fair
To us of earth, will not have been in vain.

The purest joy,
Most near to heaven, far from earth's alloy,
Is bidding cloud give way to sun and shine;
And 'twill be well
If on that day of days the angels tell
Of us, "They did their best for these of thine."

Yours faithfully,

J. WILLIAMSON.