

SSM21

HELP FOR DESERVING PRESTON MISSION.

(BY OUR COMMISSIONER.)

The Shepherd-street Mission has many phases of beneficent help. I was in the slums last December, saw how the hungry children were fed, and am glad to say that as the result of the appeal we then made a total of £32 12s. 6d., comprised mainly of small sums, was sent to Mr. Williamson. The balance from the previous year had been £1 0s. 6½d., donations amounted to £23 8s., and this, added to the "Daily Post" Fund of £32 12s. 6d., made a total of £62 1s. 0½d.

The result of our appeal was not only money, but a great quantity of stockings, shoes, and clothing was sent in. Every starving child was well clothed, and had new boots or clogs and warm stockings, and the nightly suppers were kept going all through the win-

THE FAMILY CUPBOARD.

I was driving round to certain day schools the other day with him in his brougham, and I noticed a tin vessel in which were coffee and the odds and ends from his table. These are sent up to the home daily. The doctor visited the Park Hotel recently, and learning that the leavings from the tables went into the waste tins, asked the manager if he would give them to the Oxford-street Home. He gladly consented, and this has proved a grand daily addition to the family cupboard.

This is the 29th years' work of the Shepherd-street Mission. The old Crow Hill House long ago was too small for the demands made upon it, and an Extension Committee was formed, composed of Alderman Rogers, J.P. (chairman), Alderman Margerison, J.P., Messrs. A. Foster, Ed. Myres, G. H. Kirlew, H. Dalo, J. Williamson, and R. E. Smalley.



THE HOME.

Photo by G. Toulmin and Sons.

ter. The cost of 15,980 snappers, &c., was £37 13s. 9d.; the bills for repairs to the supper room were £4 4s.; 257 pairs of clogs cost £18 5s. 9d.; the sum spent on labour amounted to £1 12s. 6d., the total being £61 15s. 11d., leaving a balance of 5s. 1½d. to be carried to next year.

COMPREHENSIVE WORK.

The work of this mission is comprehensive. There are simple Gospel expositions in the common lodging houses on the Sunday, and many a tramp has resumed his road pilgrimage all the better for the counsel he has received. Weekly Band of Hope meetings have been held; tracts and simple illustrated periodicals have been distributed in the slums, and the people in the lodging-houses visited weekly. Occasional tea parties are given to the lodging-house habitués, who are talked to, not in any superior Pharisaical fashion, but in simple earnestness, and often in the rough vernacular.

At the Labour Yard, men are given work at wood chopping, and are found in food and have a night's shelter. A number of men have been found regular work, and some have secured steady employment and are doing well. The Bible is read, there is prayer and a few brotherly words are spoken to the men in the shelter each night. Tickets of 1d. and 2d. each are supplied by Mr. Williamson (whose life is devoted to this mission work without any fee or reward), so that people troubled with beggars can give tickets which secure a night's shelter and food.

THE CHILDREN'S HOME.

The Children's Home is at the top end of Oxford-street. Here Mr. and Mrs. Williamson have acted in the place of parents to scores of poor children; have fed them, lodged them, trained them aright, and have established them in good useful lives. The measure of blessing cannot be appraised. Here

Contributions were sent in, and plans for the extension were entrusted to Messrs. Myres, Veevers, and Myres.

The necessity for the alterations was great. There were 24 boys and girls and four adults, and the sanitary conveniences were not adequate for such a family. The bath was in the washhouse, and the place too cold in winter and inconvenient at all times. To get to three of the bedrooms one had to pass through the washhouse! It took a long time to bathe the children and caused tremendous work, as the water was heated by an ordinary washing boiler. The home was short of bedrooms and beds, lodgings having to be taken and paid for when emergency cases turned up. There was plenty of land to furnish the accommodation needed; the builders are now busy, and the home is being extended and put in a condition of complete structural efficiency. The total cost with furnishing and equipment will be about £800, and £400 is needed.

WHAT BECOMES OF THE CHILDREN?

If we could only afford space for illustration, we could soon show some extraordinary transformations. From guttersnipes, children have been, to use the term of a decent old man busy in good works in the slums, "transmogrified." Some have been sent out to Canada. One is a large farmer, and others will be in time. They love the old home, and write in most grateful strains and send what they can. Five children are being sent out to Canada this year. The sum of £50 has been given, and another £20 is needed.

Some girls have been sent out to service. Other children are put to learn trades and live at the home. One lad, a sailor, turned up one day and left £1, and he sent another sum afterwards. This is substantial, honest Christian work indeed.

Last year 24 children were fully maintained; five were admitted to the Home; one was sent to Canada, one to service, three put to other trades in the town, and seven sent to other homes. The



GROUP OF THE CHILDREN.

Photo by G. Toulmin and Sons.

there is a work proceeding more truly Christian and more efficacious than can be matched by a score of parishes and paid pastors.

Mr. and Mrs. Williamson take these children to their hearth under all kinds of circumstances. Some are orphans; other deserted, and some have only one parent living. What fine little ones they are growing into! It is astonishing what you can do by training and good environment. It is an evolution from lower to higher forms, and you have here children (who would probably otherwise have been found among the criminal ranks) blossoming into sweet, buoyant, trustful, and affectionate boys and girls.

They honour and obey their foster father and mother; they are dressed plainly and neatly, are fed simply and nutritiously, and are sent to the elementary day schools of the denomination to which their parents belonged, where they were connected with any Church at all. Generous-hearted people send parcels of clothing, and food comes in from various sources.

Help is somehow vouchsafed in money or in kind. Those who have parcels of old clothing to spare can feel a sense of satisfaction in sending them here. They will be all used up. Food comes from various sources. Dr. R. C. Brown, amid his myriad acts of beneficence, is a friend of these poor children.

number of bundles of wood made and sold were 254,544, and the number of bags sent out 2,253. A night's shelter was provided for 13,086 destitute men, and suppers or breakfasts were provided for 5,930, each man doing his portion of work towards earning his food.

THE HOUSE EXTENSION.

Messrs. Myres, Veevers, and Myres have made a most effective and convenient plan to yield, in the house extension, as much convenience as possible within the estimate. On the ground floor is a vestibule with staircase, and on the left-hand side are boys' and girls' lavatories, and girls' and boys' dining room. There is also added to the existing house on the ground floor a large lavatory and pantry, and easy access to the new department. On the first floor of the extension is a large girls' bedroom, and another for the boys to hold eight beds each; and in addition to that there are two bedrooms for attendants, with an oversight to the dormitories. Then there are two bathrooms with lavatories, all rooms easy of entrance from the landing. Outside is the girls' playground. The work will be completed in about a month's time.

The collectors go out this week-end appealing for the mission. Their task should be an easy one.