

YMAS
1928

LY POST, THURSDAY.

SHEPHERD-STREET MISSION.

1,100 CHILDREN BREAKFASTED.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOYS "ADOPT" THE HOME.

Long before Christmas Day became light hundreds of youngsters were astir in preparation for the Christmas breakfast at the Shepherd-street Mission, and when the Mayor (Councillor Lucas), who was accompanied by the Mayoress and the chairman of the committee of the Home (Mr. W. A. Margerison), arrived at eight o'clock there was an enthusiastic and excited host awaiting the message of Christmas cheer which his Worship had to deliver.

If there be anybody inclined to grumble at the trials which Christmas often imposes a sight of this Mission breakfast would turn any tendency towards a Scrooge bias into a very definite conviction that Christmas is really worth while. No wonder that for half a century there always have been willing and generous subscribers to come forward to ensure the continuity of this treat, for a glimpse of what it means to hundreds of kiddies reveals that their money has been invested in joy and happiness and returns a wonderfully healthy dividend.

At the Mission, this Christmas morning, were marshalled under the kindly direction of Mr. Chadwick, the superintendent of the Home and his willing band of helpers, hundred after hundred of children, of all sizes and conditions. Boys and girls were noticed with shining clogs, neatly brushed hair and holeless though well-patched clothes telling their own story of the fight being made against circumstances. And the immediate companions such as these were lesser fortunates, their tatters and grime evidencing that despair, too, had strong entrenchments somewhere. But for this occasion all were rankers, children whom it was known would benefit by good wholesome food, and as they filed past Father Christmas, the very soul of geniality, there was a cheery greeting, and a carrier, containing a big meat pie, two cakes, an orange and nuts, for each one in that long thin line.

It was not meant, however, that the stomach alone should be gladdened, so when Father Christmas had done his part hearts were cheered as he directed the guests round to his "assistants," to receive rich treasure, all too little seen by these youngsters—toys and comic journals.

TICKETLESS CHILDREN.

It was, indeed, a day of great triumphs; 1,100 little ones started well on the way towards a happy Christmas, and if the workers were tired and aching when the last was dealt with their hearts must, indeed, have been light, and their minds happy in the great content that comes of worth-while sacrifice. Still in this bright spectre there were some heavy shadings, for flanking the ticketed army were scores upon scores of ticketless but hopeful ones, and had there been another 500 parcels available they would not have been wasted.

This feeding of the masses, however, was but part of the Mission's Yuletide celebrations. The children resident in the Mission's Home in Oxford-street found that Father Christmas had waited upon them in the night watches, and 43 delighted kiddies awoke to find themselves the owners of all sorts of gifts—magnificent toys, luscious fruits and goodies of every kind. Never had there been such a Christmas Day as this in the Home!

The children were "adopted" for the time being by the boys at the Preston Grammar School, and a very thorough job did this collective sort of Father Christmas make of it. Nothing was wanting. The Grammar School boys had seen to the decoration of the Mission Hall and to the Christmas supplies, and they had been generous to the point of prodigality. Their services were available to place on the tables the Christmas dinner, and they had the pleasure of waiting upon the grateful and appreciative guests, among whom were 15 "old" boys and girls of the Home.

CHRISTMAS PARTY.

It was in the evening that the climax came to this day of sheer happiness, for tea time was transformed, as if by a magician's wand, into the most delightful Christmas party imaginable, complete with a Christmas tree—which made a brave and colourful show, the numerous gifts it carried being picked out with gay tinted lights—and a very much alive Father Christmas. Mr. N. Hodgson, the headmaster of the Grammar School, had hoped to don the beard and scarlet cloak, but indisposition prevented him, and Mr. W. Wilson, junr., of Fulwood, made a capable deputy. And what a party it was—an event that should live in the memories of the participants for ever.

On Wednesday evening a kinema exhibition was given by one of the Grammar School boys, a leading item in the capital entertainment being a Charlie Chaplin adventure.

Y, DECEMBER 11, 1928.

A CHRISTMAS APPEAL.

NEED FOR RECORD SUM FOR SHEPHERD-STREET MISSION.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOYS' INTEREST IN INSTITUTION.

Since the Shepherd-street Mission was started 52 years ago by the late Mr. J. Williamson and his wife, 1,500 children have passed through the home and been turned into useful, healthy and happy citizens. During the same period 50,000 poor children of Preston have been provided with free breakfasts on Christmas Day. These are achievements to be proud of. Few towns of the same size can show such a record of consistent and generous support to those of its institutions which depend for their very existence on free-will offerings.

Unfortunately Shepherd-street has suffered more than it ought to have done from the repercussion of the industrial situation and the increasing claims that are made on the charitably disposed, and the Christmas appeal which, in accordance with a custom going back a good many years now "The Lancashire Daily Post" is making calls for special consideration.

NEED FOR INCREASED HELP.

At the beginning of the last financial year there was a balance in hand of £112. At the end of the year this had been converted into a deficit of £157, which shows a real loss on the year of £269. Included in this is a considerable amount of non-recurrent expenditure, the most serious being the new playground at the home and the central heating of the main hall, but there can be no blinking the fact that ground has been lost during the year. The drop in contributions can be partly explained by the continued trade depression which has hit the business section of the town which is at all times a good friend of the home.

Expenditure has been heavy, because more claims than ever have had to be met. At the present time there are 43 children in the home, 39 of whom are under ten years of age, so that the capacity is fully taxed, and as the chairman, Mr. W. A. Margerison, pointed out at the annual meeting, if there be anything like the number of cases seeking help this year further accommodation will have to be found.

A RECORD SUM WANTED.

It will, therefore, be seen that this year's Christmas appeal is unusually urgent, and it is hoped to make the result a record one. The committee have faith in the Preston public, and believe they will encourage them by generous support to carry on the good work.

It is a pity that more people who are interested do not visit the home. They would be struck with the happy, healthy looks of the children, the genuine home atmosphere, and the cleanliness, comfort, and convenience of everything about the place. The rows of towels and tooth-brushes, one each for every member of the big family, provide the best illustration of the careful and thorough manner in which the home is run.

The children are given a good education and a real start in life. Mr. and Mrs. Chadwick, keeping a parental eye upon them until they are really self-sufficient. Quite a number of children who have passed through the Home are now in good positions. It is saddening to think what would be the fate of many of them if they did not get their opportunity of becoming useful citizens through the home.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL INTEREST.

One of the most pleasing features of recent months has been the interest taken in the institution by the staff and boys at the Grammar School, who have undertaken to bring Father Christmas to the home and provide the dinner on Christmas Day.

As usual, breakfast will be provided for over 1,000 poor children of the town on Christmas morning, and there will be a distribution of seasonable dainties and a suitable toy to each little guest. Last year a proportion of the toys had to be purchased out of the fund, and the management would welcome contribution for the Christmas treat in this form.

Anyone looking for a sound investment cannot find a better return for their money than by making a contribution to our Christmas Appeal for the Shepherd-street Mission.