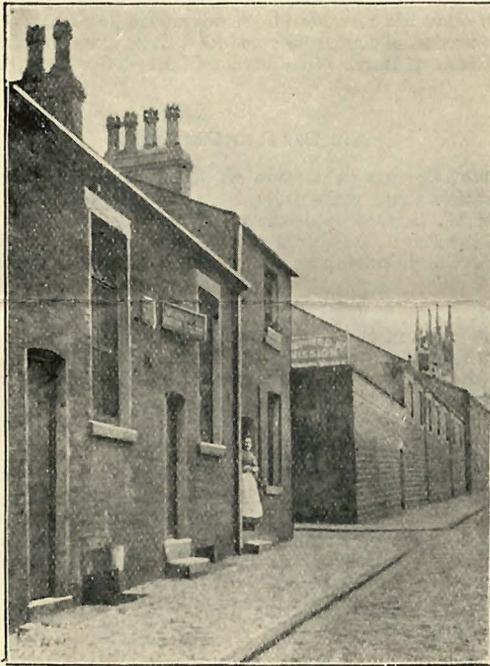


(Reprinted from "The Preston Guardian," December 10th, 1910.)

SHEPHERD-STREET MISSION.

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OPENING OF NEW SHELTER PREMISES.
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DR. R. C. BROWN'S COMMENDATION OF THE WORK.



THE OLD SHELTER.

The new Night Shelter which has been erected in Laurel Street in connection with the Shepherd Street Mission at Preston was formally declared open by Dr. R. C. Brown at a well-attended ceremony on Wednesday afternoon. The shelter work of the Mission was commenced for the assistance of men on the road without means, and as an experiment cottages were rented where the old shelter now stands. One was used for the purposes of a shelter, one for a boys' home, and one for the caretaker. The provision of the shelter was so greatly appreciated that the cottages soon became too small for the purpose. The boys were then removed to rented premises, and the Children's Home begun. The cottages were furnished and enlarged, and as much room allowed for the shelter as was possible.

This alteration, however, also became inadequate for the demands made upon the shelter, and in 1902 a large plot of land, with stables, a workshop, and three cottages, in Laurel Street, were purchased for £1,100. A new workshop was built, and the land where the cottages stood reserved for a shelter and other necessary accommodation when the Mission was able to proceed with building operations. The Mission succeeded in getting out of debt twelve months ago, and the present new shelter premises were commenced. These provide suitable accommodation for the different classes of men and youths who apply for help.

A large room on the ground floor constitutes the shelter. Men who are without means work for their supper and shelter, and pass on their way the following morning. Those who attend after working hours pay one penny for shelter. The room above with beds is for the use of some of the regular men and those who show a desire to do better for themselves, and for youths who have strayed through various causes. There are also rooms for the caretakers, Corporal and Mrs. Purslow, for those constantly employed, for men whose aim is to start life afresh and get out of lodging-houses; and another feature is the provision of rooms for remanded cases from the children's courts at Preston, Blackburn, Barrow-in-Furness, Chorley, Garstang, and Leyland.

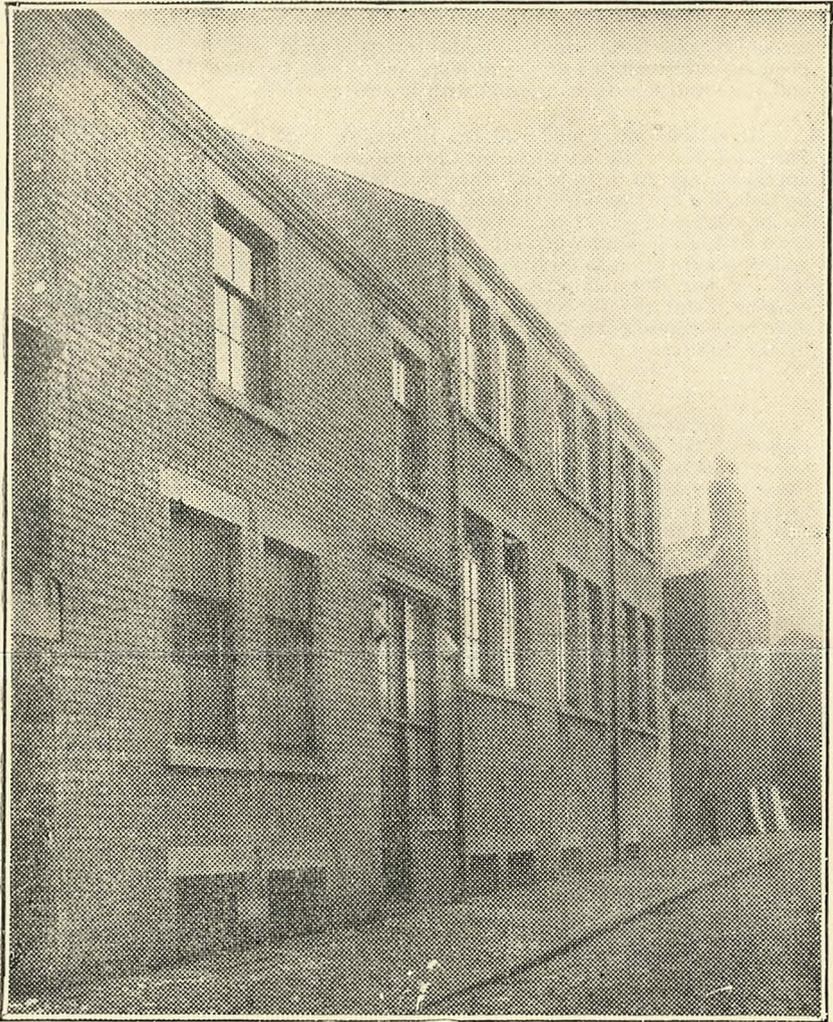
THE OPENING CEREMONY.

The Mayor of Preston (Alderman N. Miller) presided at the afternoon's ceremony, at which there were present Dr. Brown, Mr. A. A. Tobin, K.C., M.P., Alderman W. E. Ord, Alderman J. Ormrod, Councillor T. Houghton, Dr. Collinson; the Revs. B. Nightingale, W. Machin, J. B. Ashton, and L. D. W. Spencer; the Chief Constable; Messrs. R. E. Smalley, Booth, D. Lindsay, and others.

The Mayor referred to the good work done by the Mission and shelter, and the admirable service rendered by Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, and said subscribers to the work could rest assured that the money would be well spent. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. R. E. Smalley, in the course of a financial statement, said the cost of the shelter had been £1,267, and if they had paid all that was owing they would have overdrawn at the bank £1,231. Mr. Smalley urged the claims of the institution for support, and said there was not a charity throughout the length and breadth of England where so much of the money actually subscribed reached the source for which it was intended. There was no filtering of the funds for heavily-paid officials, for out of every pound subscribed for the Mission 19s. 11½d. reached that destination. (Applause.)

Dr. R. C. Brown said he had much pleasure in declaring the new shelter completed and ready for use, and in commending it to the people of Preston as an object which deserved their sympathy and support. It was interesting to consider for what class of men the shelter was provided, and how its work was accomplished. It was intended for penniless men who were travelling from town to town in search of work, but not for the professional tramp; indeed, it was found that few such characters visited a place of that kind. The men had to cut up a certain quantity of wood in return for their supper and shelter, and then passed on their way the following morning. Those who went after working hours paid a penny for one night's accommodation in the shelter. The number of men on the road seemed to be constantly on the increase, and at times there were so many that it was difficult to find work for them. During the past year 15,677 were provided with a night's shelter.



THE NEW SHELTER.

EARLY METHODS.

In the early stages of the Shepherd Street Mission it was the custom when destitute men applied for assistance to give them some food and to pay for their night's lodgings, but it was found that in many cases the food given to them was sold, and the money paid for night's lodging given up to them by the lodging-house keeper. Although it was well known that there were a great many men asking for assistance who were too lazy to work, and who spent in drink whatever money was given to them, it was not sufficiently

recognised that there were multitudes tramping from town to town who were penniless and really deserving of help, and it was for these that the shelter and the arrangements associated with it were provided.

About two years ago, said Dr. Brown, he went with a lady to see the Shepherd Street Mission Home for Children and the men's shelter. The lady appeared very much surprised when she found that at the shelter there were no beds, but she was quite satisfied when it was explained to her that it would be impossible to provide beds for penniless men who were on their way from town to town in search of work, who were at the shelter for one night only, and who were often so dirty that they were unfit to be placed in an ordinary bed. It was also pointed out to her that the shelter was the alternative to walking about the streets all night exposed to wet and cold, or sleeping on doorsteps or in unoccupied houses, and running the risk of being apprehended by the police.

WORK OF MR. AND MRS. WILLIAMSON.

Dr. Brown said he could not conclude without expressing his great appreciation of the self-denying labours of Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, who for so many years had spent the whole of their time in carrying out, without fee or reward, the various good works which were associated with what was known as the Shepherd Street Mission. (Applause.) He must not omit to mention also those who constituted the Committee, and who render so much personal service. What a blessing it would be to the town if more of the inhabitants would assist in the good work of the Shepherd Street Mission, either by contributing to the fund what was required for carrying it on or by personal help. (Applause.)

Mr. Tobin, M.P., proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor and to Dr. Brown. He said he did not think there was a chapter in any book that any of them read so often or with more interest than the chapter in the Bible about charity—charity not in the sense of merely giving out of surplus to the necessitous poor, but charity in the true meaning of the word, a warm heart full of love for those less well off than themselves, and which seemed to bridge over the gulf between those who were rich and those who were poor. It was because that great work of trying to bridge over that gulf had been attempted by Mr. and Mrs. Williamson for so many years that he felt it his duty, as certainly it was his pleasure, to be present that afternoon at what was one of his first public duties since his re-election to Parliament for the borough. He felt he was voicing the feelings of everyone when he expressed the sympathy of the people of Preston with the good work carried on at the Mission, and of appreciation of the splendid work done by Mr. and Mrs. Williamson. (Applause.)

Alderman Ord seconded, and the vote of thanks was carried with enthusiasm.

The company present afterwards paid a visit of inspection of the new premises and also the old shelter.