



ANNIVERSARY DINNER OF THE ROYAL MASONIC INSTITUTION FOR BOYS.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

ROYAL MASONIC INSTITUTION FOR BOYS.

THIS—the second of the masonic charities—the girls' school dating from 1788, was established in 1798 for the purpose of clothing, educating, and apprenticing the sons of indigent and deceased Freemasons. This charity, unlike most others, takes under its care the children of the brethren, without regard to religious persuasion. Hitherto the children have been educated in a somewhat desultory manner in good schools in the immediate vicinity of the residences of their parents or guardians; the great improvements which have been made in education of late years have forced on the notice of the committee and the craft the great advantages which might be derived from as many as possible of the boys being aggregated in one building, as is the case with the female children, and placed under one system of educational training, so as to render them the better fitted for holding responsible positions in society suitable to the class from which the large majority of them have sprung. In carrying out this design, however, it is not intended to lose sight of the comprehensive system of toleration on which the institution is founded; and those children whose guardians object to their being educated in the principles of the Church of England will continue to be placed in private schools as at present. In order to assist in providing a school-house at the earliest possible period—the building fund only amounting to about £2600—the R. W. Deputy Grand Master the Right Hon. the Earl of Yarborough proposed at the anniversary festival last year that a second festival should be held towards the close of the season, over which his Lordship kindly promised to preside. Before the project could be carried into effect, however, the noble Earl was seized with a severe illness, from which he has as yet only partially recovered, and it was abandoned for the time. To make up for this abandonment, more than ordinary exertions were made to get up this year a festival on a scale of greater extent than usual. Accordingly a board of stewards, consisting of forty-eight, and comprising many of the leading members of the order, was formed; and the result was that nearly 300 brethren attended the banquet, and about 100 ladies were present in the gallery.

This festival, of which our illustration gives a view at the moment when the boys were introduced to the Grand Master by the stewards, took place in Freemasons' Hall, on Wednesday, the 12th inst. The tables were elegantly decorated with vases and candelabra, and the whole presented a very imposing spectacle; whilst the excellence of the viands did great credit to the establishment.

The chair was to have been taken by Lord Lonsborough, P.S.G.W., but in consequence of his Lordship's illness the brethren were presided over by the M.W.G.M. the Earl of Zetland. In proposing the toast of the evening, prosperity to the "Royal Masonic Institution for Boys," the noble Earl pointed out the great benefits it had conferred upon the children of the poorer members of the craft—794 children having been clothed and educated by it, and there being now 70 boys on the fund. He likewise expressed his opinion that the children would be much better looked after and their education much improved if they had a school-house similar to the noble institution in which their girls were educated; and trusted that the result of that evening would materially add to the building fund, which now amounted to £2500. Several prizes (annually presented by Brother Smith, of St. Martin's-lane) were given to the boys, and a number of appropriate toasts drunk. The subscriptions of the evening amounted to between £1400 and £1500, two-thirds of which went to the building and the other third to the general fund. The musical arrangements, conducted by Mr. Donald King, gave unusual satisfaction. Mr. King was assisted by Miss Poole, Miss M. Wells, and Messrs. Francis, Winn, Cumming, and Coward, who presided at the pianoforte. Herr Rabich also played a solo on the trombone with great taste. At the conclusion of the festival the stewards and their friends joined the ladies in the glee-room, where a further selection of music was played.

We are assured that the committee of the school are now anxiously engaged in looking for a building which may be so adapted as to give the required accommodation to about sixty boys, there being little doubt that the funds will rapidly increase when the brethren once see that their cherished desire is being earnestly carried into effect.