

## No. 7.

ST STEPHEN'S ORPHAN HOME, PARNELL.

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT of the MANAGERS, being for the Year ending  
31st March, 1884.

THE Board of Management have again to congratulate the subscribers on the continued prosperity and usefulness of the institution.

There are at the present time 64 children in the Home, namely, 46 boys and 18 girls, as against 54 children at the commencement of the sessional year. The largest number ever in the Home at one time was 67, in the year 1879. The past year ranks next in number. It will be noticed that the disproportion between the two sexes not only continues, but is materially increased since the last annual report. The accommodation for boys afforded by the present building has lately been extended, and is now taxed to its utmost, regard being had to the proper separation of the sexes and the necessary hygienic regulations. Indeed, the Board for want of more room have lately been obliged in several cases to refuse admission to boys. This points to a necessary enlargement of the Home at an early date if its usefulness is not to be cramped.

The ages of the children in the Home range from two to fourteen years, the preponderance being of children about eight years of age. The following are the numbers furnished from a recent return to the Government Department of Education: Children two years and under three years of age, 4, three and under four, 2, four and under five, 5, five and under seven, 10, seven and under ten, 20, ten and under thirteen, 18, thirteen and under fifteen, 5. Of these, 57 are scholars of the day school, all of whom receive instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, Holy Scripture, geography, object-lessons, and vocal music, while 24 are taught English grammar and composition and history, and 48 children, namely, 32 boys and 16 girls, are taught needlework.

During the past year, 21 children have been admitted into the Home, 4 being in the nomination of Government, making 19 children at present in the Home towards whose maintenance Government contributes. Three children have, during the year, been placed at service, while seven have been removed by relatives.

One death has occurred in the Home during the year, that of a young child who had been an inmate of the Home for only a few months, and who no doubt at the time of its admission was suffering from cerebral disease, from which death ultimately resulted. The health of the other children has been remarkably good.

The income for the year amounts to £1,246 11s. 11d., and the expenditure to £1,321 18s. 6d., for particulars of which subscribers are referred to the Treasurer's statement of accounts. By comparing that statement with those of previous years, subscribers will find a serious falling-off in the amount of subscriptions received during the past year, many ladies who in former years have canvassed so very successfully on behalf of the Home having this year made no effort whatever for its support. The Board regret that such should have been the case after the appeal made in last year's report to the friends of the institution not to diminish the liberal support hitherto given by them. This falling-off no doubt has arisen from the supposition that the Board would be placed in ample funds from the bequest of the late Mr Costley. But the fact is, as the Board anticipated, that the distribution of Mr Costley's estate has not yet been effected, and, even had it been so, the Board consider that they can only deal with that bequest as an endowment for the institution. In consequence of this diminution in subscriptions the Board have had to obtain a temporary overdraft from the bank to meet present requirements.

The Board have long felt the want of a room in which the children might play and amuse themselves in inclement weather. They therefore during the past year have erected, at a cost of £220, a new building, containing two large rooms, one set apart for this purpose and the other as a laundry drying-room. This building has been found a great acquisition to the Home, and is very much appreciated by the children.

In August last the Board applied to the Diocesan General Trust Board for a