

Syng for engraving the seal of the company, and Franklin for printing notices, each two years."

In October, 1732, the first importation of books was received by Capt. Carnock in good order, T. Hopkinson informing the directors that he had received advice from T. Cadwalader and P. Collinson in adding and omitting various books, and that "Peter Collinson who had given great assistance, had moreover made the company a present of two valuable books." His claim is thus established of having been the first donor to the yet infant library. As this gentleman long served the institution as agent in London, it may not be uninteresting to quote his letter.

"LONDON, July 22d, 1732.

Gentlemen—I am a stranger to most of you, but not to your laudable design to erect a public library. I beg your acceptance of my mite, Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy and Philip Miller's Gardener's Dictionary. It will be an instance of your candour to accept the intention and good will of the giver, and not regard the meanness of the gift. I wish you success, and am with much respect,
Yours, PETER COLLINSON."

Benjamin Franklin returned a suitable letter of thanks, and from the date of this importation and first donation, the institution seems to have swept through the succeeding years of its existence with prosperous gales. Its history it will be our next object to trace.

CHAPTER II.

The importance of the step thus taken, although it was on a small scale, can be justly appreciated only by a knowledge of the fact which is stated in the reply to Peter Collinson, that there was no manner of provision made by the government for public education, either in this or the neighbouring provinces, "nor so much as a good bookseller's shop nearer than Boston."

The books were taken "to Robert Grace's chamber at his house in Jones's Alley," and there placed on the shelves, a catalogue made out, and Dr. Franklin undertook to print the blank promissory notes for the librarian to fill up, and get subscribed by those to whom he lent books. The rules and regulations adopted were few and simple. The first librarian, Louis Timothee, gave attendance from two till three on Wednesdays, and on Saturdays from ten till four. He was allowed to permit "any civil gentleman to peruse the books of the library in the library room, but not to *lend to or suffer to be taken out* of the library by any person who is not a subscribing member, any of the said books, Mr. James Logan only excepted." Timothee it appears occupied Grace's house, and he was to receive at the expiration of three months "three pounds lawful money certain," and a further "reasonable reward" as should be agreed on in consideration of services and rent.

In December, 1732, several new applicants presented themselves, and were admitted. Dr. Franklin produced the printed catalogue, which he presented without charge.

At a meeting in January, "it was resolved that the books of the library should be covered with *sheathing paper*, and that Stephen Potts should be spoke to do it, for preservation of the binding."

Rees Lloyd was the first person who forfeited his note of hand for thirty-two shillings, for not returning the *Travels of Cyrus*, in two volumes, in due time. The subject was "largely debated," says the minutes, and without permitting it as a precedent for future offenders, his fine was mitigated on account of his distance from town, &c.

The original number of fifty subscribers was not com-

pleted till 22d of February, 1733, when Joseph Growden signed the constitution, being the fiftieth member.

The simplicity of the establishment and the necessary attention in regard to expenditures at this period, is manifested by the proceedings of the board; and the following notice of the first purchase of a book in America is a proof that the directors were not disposed to part with the money entrusted to them without value received.

"One of the subscribers having some weeks ago brought to the library a book for the directors to see, and buy if they pleased, belonging to a gentleman lately from London, who is a transient person, the committee this night agreed to buy it for the library, and ordered the librarian to pay the price of fifteen shillings for it—that being less than a cent on the first cost, and the book undefaced. To be paid out of money received for forfeitures or penalties from borrowers of books delinquent. 'Tis a Voyage to the South Seas and along the coasts of Chili and Peru in the years 1712-13 and 14, by Mons. Frezier, in folio, with thirty-seven copper cuts, and well printed and bound, on good paper."

William Rawle appears to have been the first American donor, having on the 12th of March, 1733, presented "six volumes or books of the works of Mr. Edmund Spenser." The minutes state that "the directors kindly received this gift for the company," and the secretary quaintly adds, "the famous old English poem called Spenser's Fairy Queen is included in these works."

On the 15th of May, of the same year, it was agreed by a committee of directors to draw up an address to Thomas Penn, proprietor, "in order for his countenance and protection in an affair so useful and well intended as the library, and which the proprietor signified through his secretary, Mr. George, that he approved and designed to encourage." Some of the directors, on the essay being produced, objected to it on account of the language, which, several being members of the Society of Friends, thought should have been such as they were accustomed to use, but as any alteration would have been attended with delay, it was adopted as it stood. It set forth the warmth of their affection for the son of the great and good William Penn, and as these addresses preserve in some measure the manners of the age, I shall be excused for inserting here a few passages.

"Your province of Pennsylvania, sir, happy in its climate and situation, and in the constitution of its government, is thought to be no less happy in the native genius of its people, prone as it is to industry, and capable of every kind of improvement."

It proceeds to lament the want of any provision for public, generous education, and that the library was instituted with a view to obviate in some measure this deficiency, and concludes with the following extensive wish:

"May your Philadelphia be the future Athens of America; may plenty of her sons arise, qualified with virtue, learning and politeness, for the most important offices of life; and as this must be owing to the wisdom and benevolence of your honourable family, which gave being to the province and its happy constitution, may every kind of human felicity attend the proprietary house through all ages to the latest posterity."

Signed by order of the directors,

JOSEPH BREINTNALL, Sec.

Mr. Penn replied that he took the address "kindly," with the assurance that he should be always ready to promote any undertaking so useful. He presented several articles to the institution, and it is to the honour of the