

proprietary family that they promoted the design as long as they continued to preserve any influence in the province.

Mr. Timothee having vacated his office, Benjamin Franklin, one of his sureties, offered to take his situation for the current year, in consideration of Timothee's having been serviceable to him: he occupied the station of librarian for three months and a day, and was succeeded by William Parsons. During the period of Franklin's service as librarian, the room was agreed to be opened but once a week, on Saturdays from four to eight, it having been observed that borrowers rarely came on Wednesdays, and four hours was found amply sufficient to supply all applicants. The librarian's salary was then reduced to £6.

The increase of books was supposed to raise the value of a share annually ten shillings, and I find the price gradually increased.

1737. On the 12th of December, 1737, the directors were informed by their secretary that the proprietor was pleased to say, that nothing remained to delay his grant of a lot of ground he intended to bestow on the company for their library. In May, 1738, a letter was received from John Penn, with a present of an air pump. The first paragraph conveys information highly honourable to the company. It is dated London, 31st January, 1738, and begins:

"Gentlemen—It always gives me pleasure when I think of the Library Company of Philadelphia, as they were the first that encouraged knowledge and learning in the province of Pennsylvania."*

A suitable reply and a vote of thanks for the lot and the air pump were ordered to be returned the generous donor. The pump excited considerable curiosity among the citizens, frequent notices of applications to borrow it being minuted; a committee was appointed to provide a case and frame for it, with glass lights in the door, "to look ornamental in the library room."

1738. The first, and I regret to add one of the very few presents of money made to the institution, was from Dr. Walter Sydsere of Antigua, in 1738, who having the sum of £58. 6s. 8d. due him in this country, generously presented it to the company. In his letter he expresses a hope that it may be the means of others being prevailed on "to lend a helping hand to promote so great a good, by which your infant colony will in a few *ages* be ranked the first in the kalendar of all the American settlements." It is impossible to foresee what a few "*ages*" will bring about, but to this time very little money has been bequeathed or given. An idea seems always to have prevailed that the institution was *wealthy*, but that can never be the case until its means enable it to procure a copy of every valuable book which money can purchase.

Mr. Breintnall appears to have had the interest of the

institution much at heart; the following minute made by him is both curious and interesting:

1739. In June, 1739, the number of members had been increased to seventy-four.

"December 4th, 1738. N. B. The library affair has hitherto been many ways fortunate. The books sent for to England have always come safe to hand, and without damage; very few of the books have been lost or defaced; a good agreement has for the most part subsisted in the company, and all the officers have proved faithful in their several trusts as far as hath been discovered. The library has received many benefactions from several benefactors and well-wishers, and increases in its reputation, and not one subscriber is deceased that I have heard of except Joseph Growden, who died the 22d of May last. Another seven years as successful as the foregoing must see the library company in a very flourishing condition, and to be more publicly known and esteemed."

1740. On the 7th of April the books were removed to "the upper room of the westernmost office of the state-house," the use of which had been lately granted to the company by the assembly. In December, of the same year, it was agreed that one dozen sheep-skin covers or cases for folio books be procured, to put on them when they are lent out!

1741. In a catalogue printed in 1741, in my possession, there is a short account of the state of the institution. Shares were then granted at the price of £6 10. In this year John Penn, Esq. presented a microscope and camera obscura, still in the company's possession.

1742. On the 3d of May, 1742, a charter of incorporation was received from the proprietors. On the 13th of December it was "ordered, that the secretary write fairly on a large sheet of paper, to be placed in open view, the names of the benefactors to the library; those who had bestowed great gifts, and those who had bestowed books!"

1743. Peter Collinson having during a period of twelve years acted as agent in London without fee or reward, asks as his compensation, that the directors will admit his friend, John Bartram, an honorary member, without any expense, and to have a free access to the library, which was agreed to, "Mr. Bartram being also in their esteem a deserving man." This is the only instance on record of an honorary member having been admitted, unless Mr. Breintnall's son's share may be considered in that light. After B.'s death, in consideration of his services, the directors voted his wife £15, and a share to his son George.

1746. Samuel Norris bequeathed the company £20.

1748 to 1752. About this period many of the minutes are missing, and I have only to note the reception of a telescope and a number of valuable books from Thomas Penn, Esq.

1752. "A noble present of antient medals" was received through Mr. Peters from Mr. Grey, member of parliament for Colchester.

1759. In August of 1759, a letter was received from Peter Collinson, "in which he heavily complains of ill treatment from the directors," and resigns his agency. A vote of thanks was minuted for his past services; he continued to forward books, however, until 1761, when Thomas Beckett, bookseller of London, supplied Collinson's place.

1762. In 1762, Charles Thomson, who afterwards became secretary to Congress, was elected a director, and in April the long expected patent from the Penns for a lot of ground, in Chesnut near Ninth, was received. The lot was enclosed with a post and rail fence, and continued for many years to yield a small revenue. On Dr. Frank-

* This would seem to be erroneous. In the year 1689, only seven years after the foundation of Philadelphia, a public school was established in this city, by members of the Society of Friends, which was incorporated so early as 1697, and received a final charter from William Penn in 1711. James Logan was desirous of founding a college, and to this end offered a lot on Sixth street, free of cost; it appears from his papers in my possession, that the offer was declined, *Fourth street* being considered high enough *up town*. James Logan's reputation seems likely to outlive that of all his cotemporaries excepting Penn and Franklin; his collection of books, still the best made by an individual in this country, will assist to transmit his name to posterity as a learned and generous man.

