

the directors by the inconvenient situation of the books, and in January, Josiah Hewes, Richard Wells, Thomas Morris, and Dr. Parke, were appointed a committee thereupon, who reported the necessity of some provision for removing the books and property of the company to some more secure place. As large bodies move slowly, the next minute on this subject is dated May, 1789, when another committee was appointed, to procure an estimate of the expense of the contemplated building. They made an imperfect report, and "it was agreed that Richard Wells should prepare a statement of the estimate of the building, and the probable mode of defraying the expenses, and that the Secretary should be requested to open the business at the general meeting of the company called for the purpose, and to point out the importance and necessity of the undertaking." At this general meeting, held June 1st, 1789, a large number of members appeared, either in person or by proxy, and a law was passed, giving the directors power to proceed as soon as one hundred new members should be added to the list—to appropriate the money on hand, reserving sufficient for the current expenses, and to sell the ground rents, and real estate, owned by the company. Bishop White was nominated by the directors, chairman of this meeting, at which he presided.

All the shares requisite, except nineteen, were soon subscribed—many of which were to be paid for in labour—the directors and treasurer and secretary, assuming to themselves to procure the remaining nineteen, the purchase of the lot, and erection of the building, was proceeded in with all convenient speed. The present site was purchased of Mary Norris and Dr. Logan, on ground rent.\* A number of plans were submitted for approval, and the one prepared by Dr. William Thornton, with some slight alterations, was adopted, for which he received a share. It may be supposed that this undertaking was not without its difficulties, and I find, that owing to the low state of the funds, the directors, treasurer, and secretary, individually, advanced sums, amounting to two hundred and fifty pounds, of which Josiah Hewes advanced fifty pounds, and the others from ten to twenty-five pounds.

1789. The first stone of the edifice was laid on the 31st of August, 1789; the minutes state, "that upon the suggestion of Dr. Benjamin Franklin, a large stone was prepared, and laid at the southwest corner of the building, with the following inscription, composed by the doctor, except so far as relates to himself, which the committee have taken the liberty of adding to it.

Be it remembered,  
In honour of the Philadelphia youth,  
(then chiefly artificers)  
that in MDCCXXXI,  
they cheerfully,  
at the instance of Benjamin Franklin,  
one of their number,  
instituted the Philadelphia Library,  
which, though small at first,  
is become highly valuable, and extensively useful,  
and which the walls of this edifice  
are now destined to contain and preserve;  
the first stone of whose foundation  
was here placed  
the thirty-first day of August, 1789."

1790. By the 30th of December, 1790, the books were all removed and ready for delivery, when it was resolved to have the room open daily, from one o'clock to sunset,

\* Since paid off.

and Zachariah Poulson was continued Librarian, at one hundred pounds salary. During the progress of the building, more than the stipulated one hundred names were added to the list of stockholders, many apprentices, having been allowed by their employers to give sufficient labour to purchase the privilege of admission; their names are faithfully recorded, and it may, in future, be interesting to their descendants to discover that they are reaping the benefits of literary instruction from the honest labour and the sweat of the brows of their progenitors.

Among the benefactors of the library, occur the names of Robert Barclay, of London, and of Abraham Claypoole, of Pennsylvania; the former repeatedly sent presents of rare or curious books, and till his death continued to correspond with his American friends, and to mention the Institution with interest. The latter left the company, by will, one hundred pounds.

1791. In January, 1791, the directors again tendered to the President and Congress, the free use of the books in the library, in as full and ample manner as if they were members of the company. President Washington, through his secretary, Tobias Lear, returned thanks for the attention, in a very handsome note.

1782. On the 18th of February, 1782, Doctor Parke informed the board, that the heirs of James Logan had made a proposition to transfer to the library company of Philadelphia, the Loganian Library, and also to convey to them, under certain conditions, a lot of ground, in Philadelphia, and certain rents charge, together with the arrearages thereof, now due from estates in Bucks county; on this subject a committee was appointed to enquire into the condition of the property, and the terms intended to be annexed to the transfer.

1792. An additional five foot lot having been purchased of Samuel M. Fox, on Library street, a building was erected for the accommodation of the Loganian books, by the library company of Philadelphia, for which the Loganian trustees pay an annual rent.

On the 4th of October, John Fitch's manuscripts, respecting the steam engine, were deposited in the library, under seal, with a request that they might be kept unopened till the year 1823,—this was done, and as they have undergone an examination, I shall not here attempt their analysis.

1793. On the 30th of August, 1793, at a general meeting of the members, the price of shares was raised to forty dollars, at which sum they still remain.

1799. In April, 1799, Henry Cox, of the kingdom of Ireland, presented a large number of manuscript volumes, relating to the history of his native country. They consist of the original correspondence of James First, with the Privy council of Ireland, from 1603 to 1615, inclusive, and a great variety of historical data, the value of which remains unknown. In one of the volumes is an original letter from Queen Elizabeth, dated in 1568. Several valuable printed books are also in this collection.

1804. In this year the institution was greatly enriched by John Bleakly, and the Rev. Samuel Preston. The former left, by will, one thousand pounds to the library, and the latter bequeathed a most valuable collection of rare and curious books, selected with great taste and judgment, together with two shares of United States Bank stock; Dr. Preston was influenced, it is believed, in selecting this library for the reception of his own, by our countryman, Benjamin West, who painted the portrait of the donor, which was, in the succeeding year, presented by Mrs. West, as an appropriate ornament for the library rooms. To appreciate the value of Preston's library, it must be examined in detail. There are in the collection many rare books of plates, &c. of the most

