

The utility and success of this measure, caused other libraries to be commenced, but it soon appeared to be more conducive to the interests of literature, that there should be one large rather than several small collections of books, and coalitions gradually took place among them, till the Amicable, the Association, and the Union companies were blended with the Library Company of Philadelphia, the title conferred by the charter.

Since this period the members and property of the company have continued to increase, the former being eight hundred and thirty-six in number; the number of volumes exclusive of eight thousand six hundred and sixty-three in the Loganian Library, (of which there is a separate catalogue,) permanently annexed to this institution, at present amounts to thirty-five thousand two hundred and twenty-one, the selection being generally of a character to promote the more important interests of society; this stock is continually increased by occasional donations, importations, and purchases of American productions of merit.

Besides the books, the personal property consists in some available funds yielding interest, the sale of shares, the price of each of which since 1793 has been fixed at forty dollars, and the annual payments of four dollars from each member. The real estate of the company consists of the lot and buildings where the Philadelphia and Loganian libraries are kept.

The members dispose of their shares by transfer or will, but the assent of the directors, as well in such cases, as in case of an original purchase, is previously necessary; a restriction early adopted, in order, as much as possible, to prevent improper persons from having access to a collection of a nature peculiarly liable to injury.

Of the value of the library as a whole, it is sufficient to refer the inquirer to the accompanying catalogue, which, however incomplete in some of its departments, will, it is believed, compare advantageously with any in America. The influence which it has exerted, and con-

John Bleakley, Esq. who had been a much esteemed director of the institution bequeathed to the company the sum of one thousand pounds, which was paid to the treasurer of the institution, in November, 1804, by Joseph P. Norris, Esq. the executor of his last will.

In 1803, the Rev. Samuel Preston, rector of Chevening, in Kent, Great Britain, bequeathed to the company above two thousand five hundred volumes, many of them very splendid works; and two shares of the stock of the first Bank of the United States, the par value of which was eight hundred Dollars. In August, 1804, the company received from London the books, prints, &c. bequeathed by the Rev. Samuel Preston, and an elegant portrait of him, painted by our celebrated countryman Benjamin West, presented to the institution by Mrs. West.

The late William Mackenzie, Esq. of this city, bequeathed five hundred volumes to be chosen by the directors from his English books; he also made a liberal bequest to the Loganian Library, and by an arrangement made with the executors of his last will and testament the residue of his valuable library was purchased on very liberal terms by the two institutions.

Dr. Thomas Parke, who had, with great fidelity, served the institution as a director for nearly fifty-seven years, bequeathed to the company a perpetual ground rent of fifty dollars per annum, free from taxes—valued at one thousand dollars.

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