

not the proper place, and it is not our intention to discuss them now. The site of the hall was given to the Society by the State in 1786, to be used by them for the purposes of the Society. It was not contemplated that there should ever be a transfer of the property for any other purpose. Least of all was it designed that property which is regarded as sacred by every citizen of the Union, should be thrust into the market as a matter of profit, and with the risk of having it submitted to ignoble uses. But the City, by acquiescing in the bargain made between the Society and the federal government, may waive all right to dispute the purchase, and we may have a piece of Independence Square cut off from the main body so irretrievably, that it will be impossible to make any use of it in future in a manner to harmonize with other necessary modifications of the adjoining City buildings. It is for this reason that we would urge upon Councils the necessity of resisting the proposed action of the Legislature, and compelling the United States to erect their court-house on some other of the equally convenient and equally cheap lots that may be found all around the neighborhood.

And what, after all, is the American Philosophical Society, that claims the right of disposing of a piece of Independence Square, and making a good speculation off a bit of hallowed ground? It may be answered that it is the most ancient scientific association in America; that Franklin assisted in establishing it; that John Penn patronized it; that Fitch's discoveries were encouraged by it, and that it has acquired a peculiar odor of sanctity from its historical and scientific associations. Still this gives no right to barter away the ground given to it by the State for its own particular uses and for no other. Moreover, with all the antiquity and venerable air of the Society, what is it now? It is doubtful whether one man in a hundred, in the city of Philadelphia, knows that such an institution exists. A few respectable gentlemen, who are uncommonly well versed in science, and can tell us all about fossils, and know a great deal about bones and organic remains of all kinds, keep up the semblance of a living institution, which is sufficient to preserve the corporate succession and claim the privileges and property which the State, in an extraordinary fit of generosity, granted to their predecessors. Now and then a volume of "Transactions" is published, which is pronounced intensely wise and scientific; but no one ever thinks of buying it, and a little edition of a couple of hundred is distributed among the members or among other institutions, in exchange for their works. This is the way the American Philosophical Society diffuses knowledge. It may do more than this; but it keeps its secrets so well that no one knows aught of its operations.

Now, in the days of its dotage, it is seized with a speculative fit. It grows tired of its old homestead, which cost it little or nothing, and sells it to the United States for \$78,000, and then, when the bargain is closed, asks the State to give it her sanction. If it were a live, motive, energetic institution, like the Franklin Institute, the Academy of Natural Sciences, or some others that we could name, there would be some pretext for asking such a favor. But what advantage is to be gained by extending the sphere of its uselessness? Why should the Legislature be called on to assist in or countenance the spread of the intense dullness of the American Philosophical Society? What right has such a society to barter away its birth-right, which is the only valuable thing about it? Why should it go into the Real Estate market, and speculate upon a bit of choice ground that it was permitted to use for one special purpose, and for no other? This may be American, and it may be philosophical, but the American Philosophical Society was not chartered for the promotion of such American Philosophy. We protest against the sale of the property for such a purpose,

and we trust that, before it is too late, the City Councils may make a more emphatic and more efficient protest.



THE MISSION HOUSE IN BEDFORD STREET.—The Young Men's Home Mission, laboring in Bedford street and vicinity, yesterday had Divine service for the first time in the Chapel of their Mission Building, located in Bedford, between Sixth and Seventh streets. The dedicatory services were held at 3 P. M. Bishop Scott preached the sermon, and was assisted in the services by Rev. W. Cooper. The words found in the 8th verse of the 25th chapter of Exodus, "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them," was the very appropriate text of the Bishop on the occasion.

The discourse, of which we took very full notes, was replete with argument, and most telling and forcible illustration—tending to show the influence of the sanctuary and its service on all the material, educational, moral and religious interests of the community in which it is found. The absence of the sanctuary, and the easily observed and felt evils, resulting from such destitution, was presented with telling effect in a reference made to his late official visit to the Pacific Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and from which he has so recently returned. Of Aspinwall, he said it had no sanctuary, and as a consequence no Sabbath: no place of worship in all that large and rapidly growing town. And though our own language was spoken, and the gait, forms and faces about him there were mostly American, yet the isolation from the great throbbing parent heart of the United States seemed to his feelings perfect, while it was not so in California and Oregon.

It was announced after the sermon that the building, costing between eight and nine thousand dollars, and which is most admirably adapted to the purposes of education and worship, had yet a debt upon it of twenty-three hundred and eighty dollars. We have seldom witnessed a more pleasing scene than that presented in the rapidity with which the votive offerings of the persons interested was taken by the Secretary, until in a short time it was announced that every dollar of its debt was provided for. Thus passed off the services of dedication to the Great Head of the Church, of a sanctuary located amidst scenes of sin and misery, in the heart of the plague spot of our city: may it prove, indeed, a house of mercy to the children and adults of the wretched and sin-stricken population in the midst of whom it is found: a Pharos, throwing its light over the abyssal depths of night, and guiding to the port of sobriety and competence and religion many a wretched and lost one.

Earthquakes in Philadelphia.

EDITORS OF THE BULLETIN—Gentlemen:

As your paper was the first to notice the earthquake shock on Tuesday night last, I send you the following, that may be interesting to some of your readers, viz:—

"EARTHQUAKES.—In Oct. 1727, shocks of earthquake were felt at night, at Philadelphia and New York and Boston, which set the clocks to running down and shook off china from the shelves.

"Dec. 7, 1737, at night, a smart shock was felt at Philadelphia, Conestoga, New Castle, &c.

"When John Penn first arrived, on a Sunday, a strong earthquake was felt as he stepped ashore at High street wharf. It raised some superstition, and it was therefore long remembered; and besides that, when he went home, a dreadful thunder storm arose, and finally, when he next time returned here as a proprietary, a fierce hurricane arose!

"Mar. 22, 1758. A smart shock was felt between 10 and 11, P. M.

"April 25, 1772. A slight shock felt about 8 A. M.

"Nov. 30, 1783. An earthquake felt in the city, and again on 1st December, a strong one was felt.

"Jan'y. 8, 1817. The river was much agitated by the earthquake to the southward, tossing about the vessels and raising the water one foot."—*Annals of Philadelphia.*

"Mar. 14, 1742. An earthquake shock felt at 11 o'clock, A. M., at Germantown, Pa."—*Memoirandum recorded in a Family Bible, in the possession of* "OAKDALE."

February 13, 1857.

"Philadelphia Insurance Companies."

If there is anything which we as Philadelphians should be proud of, we should be so of our "Insurance Companies." We have those among us yet that started almost with the planting of the City, who have paid annually sums of money for losses which would startle the reader were he fully acquainted with the figures. And although we often hear LOUD TALK OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH against some of them—we can answer PROUDLY AND TRULY, Philadelphia city never gave birth to an institution of this kind which has failed.—INSTANCE: *National Exchange, Tontine, Webster, Henry Clay, International, Metropolis, Globe, Wall Street, Reliance, Astor, Enterprize, Metropolitan Branch*, which is the best and unanswerable argument to use to our detractors. This would of necessity not be the case had we losses among our Companies and they were not liquidated. It shows conclusively that the Underwriters of our city are men of capacity, integrity, and fully acquainted with the business in all its details. Indeed the business of insurance has become so systematized by statistical and experimental information by those engaged in the same, that it has become a matter of ease to rate any class of hazard offered with certainty as to the probable risk assumed. We note with pride, also, the true basis of insurance carried out by the Philadelphia companies, with the extended amount of capital employed in this city; also the great number of losses paid "PROMPTLY," and the large dividends declared and paid out of the EARNINGS of the companies. The citizens of the Quaker City pay less for insurance than any other one on the continent approximating to it in size and population. And this is done by the Underwriters themselves, conclusively proving they watch closely the interests of the public as well as their stockholders, giving the assured reliable security, in case of loss, at the lowest rates consistent with safety. It is an undeniable fact that the City of Philadelphia contains more houses than New York, with all its boasted superiority. And the Companies of this City insure the same as nearly one-quarter per cent. less than they. Pay more losses, divide larger dividends HONESTLY, and in fact stand on their own responsibility, and do all this without FALTERS. We are glad it is so, and we are proud of it. We are led to these remarks in consequence of the efforts made by the press of New York City to undulate the Companies of our City, who, without exception, are sound and reliable. The best proof of which is their promptness in the payment of their losses. And in this respect we can without egotism or State pride hold the Insurance Companies of our City far above our neighbors of the Metropolis, and compare favorably with any similar number as to capital, resources, integrity of the management, and capacity as Underwriters throughout the country.

QUILLS, Jc.

Feb-13-57-

Independence Square.

Most Philadelphians are accustomed to look upon Independence Square as a thing that has existed ever since the foundation of the city, as a space of ground which had always been set apart for public use, and as a spot that had never been in private hands, encumbered with private bricks and mortar, or subject to be bought and sold like common ground. The exertions at present being made by that highly respectable fossil, the American Philosophical Society, to obtain authority to sell some seventy by eighty feet of this sacred soil, have excited surprise in those who were ignorant that any private concern had the right to thus dispose of any portion of the ground, and pain and mortification that any Philadelphia institution had the will to do so ungracious an act.

The State House was begun in the year 1729, and finished about five years afterwards. Some time prior to this the Provincial Assembly had purchased, through William Allen and Andrew Hamilton, two prominent citizens, the lots of ground on the Chestnut street side of what now forms Independence Square. The ground bounded by Walnut, Chestnut, Fifth and Sixth streets had originally been laid out in building lots by the proprietor, and sold or granted to different parties when the city was founded. The property, when the plan of locating the public buildings there was first projected, was of but little value, being then far west of the built up portions of the city. In fact, until after the period of the Revolution, the State House was entirely out of town.

The first purchases made by the Assembly were the eight lots which comprised the Northern half of the Square as it now exists, and upon these lots the State House buildings were erected. The ground, which was much higher than the present line of the street, was then very prolific in whortleberry bushes, and it did not possess any extraordinary attractions to the eyes of the speculators of that early day. On the Walnut street side of the Square several small dwelling houses were erected. About the time the State House was finished the Legislature very sensibly determined to purchase the remaining portions of the Square, and this was finally accomplished after considerable delay. The buildings on Walnut street were torn down, that side of the Square was filled up to make it level with the Northern portion of the lot, and in course of time a high brick wall was put around the property.

There are sundry acts in the records of the doings of the ante-Revolutionary Assembly, which have