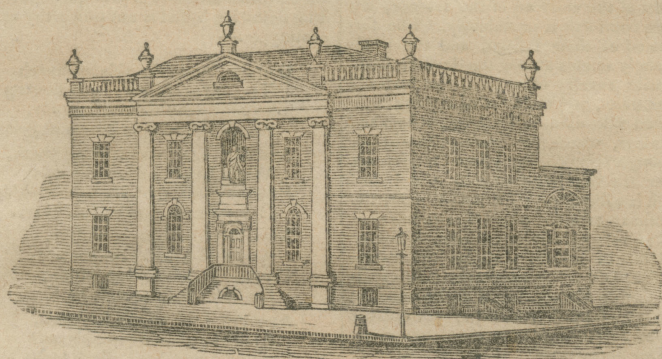


DEAF AND DUMB ASYLUM, PHILADELPHIA. Oct. 1829.

A Front View of the Philadelphia Library.

IN FIFTH STREET, OPPOSITE INDEPENDENCE SQUARE.



This noble Institution, a fitter subject for civic pride than statues or public monuments, owes its origin to the literary taste and public spirit of FRANKLIN. In 1731, he suggested to a number of his friends the union into one collection of their different stocks of books, which thus united, were at first kept in a small room in Pewter-platter alley. The plan soon became popular, for the books were not, as in some of the public libraries of Europe, confined to the apartment, but the members were allowed to carry them to their own houses, and study them at their leisure. The instrument of association, signed by thirty-eight members, is dated July 1, 1731. The first importation of books from England by the company, amounting to £45 15s. sterling, arrived in October, 1732. The library was in 1773 transferred to the Carpenter's Hall.—The advantages arising to the public from this institution were so apparent, that several similar associations were soon after formed, under the name of the Amicable, the Union, &c., which were, however, in a few years amalgamated with the first company, and the whole were united in a charter, with the name of "The Library Company of Philadelphia." In 1790, the present neat and ornamental edifice was erected, on the east side of Fifth street, opposite Independence Square. It is well arranged internally for the purposes of a library, and over the front door is placed a marble statue of Franklin, executed in Italy, and presented by William Bingham, Esq. The collection of books in this institution has increased from year to year, by purchases and donations, until it now forms probably the most extensive library of useful books in America. Twice in each year are received from London all the new English works of value, and every American production of merit is regularly procured. In 1803, an accession of very valuable and costly works, to the

number of 2500 volumes, was received by the bequest of the Rev. Mr. Preston, rector of Chevening, in Kent, England. The number of books at the present time is about 24,000, exclusive of the Loganian collection, and the number of members is upwards of 800. The price of a share in this institution is forty dollars, besides which, an annual payment of two dollars is made by each shareholder. Persons who desire to see or peruse books at the library, are permitted to do so free of charge. It will surprise strangers to learn, that this invaluable institution is open to the public only from two o'clock in the afternoon until sunset, which in the winter season gives little opportunity to the present large number of members to exchange their books. Attempts have frequently been made to produce a change in this respect, without success. A dislike to innovate on ancient usage seems to prevail with a large portion of the members. The affairs of the institution are managed by ten directors, chosen annually, in the month of May.

Annexed to the City Library, and under the same roof, is a most valuable collection of ancient and classical works, principally in the Greek and Latin Languages, the collection of the celebrated James Logan, and of some of his descendants, and by them appropriated to public use, together with the income from various property, for the gradual increase of the library: the amount of this fund is now about \$10,000. The number of volumes is about 5000.

Considerable additions of books have been made to the institution since the foregoing description was written, which has materially extended its usefulness; and it is fair to infer from its present improving condition, that, at no distant day, it will rival the oldest established libraries of Europe, and become one of proudest boasts of the new world.

From the "Casket" December 1829—

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