



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY

OF THE

FINE ARTS.

REPORT

OF THE

Board of President and Directors

TO THE

STOCKHOLDERS.

June 2, 1851.

PHILADELPHIA:

T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.

1851.

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS,

EXHIBITION OF 1851.

Estimated value of the paintings and sculpture belonging
to the Academy, \$34,955

Do. do. do. to Mr. Robb, 20,295

Do. do. do. to foreign artists, con-
signed for competition, &c., 8,800

Do. do. do. to all others, 25,410

Total amount, \$89,460

Which is distributed as follows:

Southeast Gallery, \$14,500

Northeast do. 15,035

North do. 22,315

Northwest do. 9,225

Southwest do. 18,160

Rotunda, 10,225 — \$89,460

Other paintings are in the Academy, not now in the
exhibition, worth probably \$25,000 more.

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The Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts was held at the Academy, June 2, 1851.

On motion, Bernard Henry, Esq., was called to the Chair, and Caleb Cope appointed Secretary.

Mr. Gilpin, on behalf of the Board of President and Directors, presented a report, whereupon the following resolutions were adopted:—

Resolved, That the thanks of the Stockholders are hereby tendered to the Board of Directors for the valuable services rendered to the Institution during the past year, and for the Report presented to the meeting on this occasion.

Resolved, That the Report be referred to the Board of Directors to be chosen at this meeting, with a request that they publish the same in such form and manner as they may deem expedient.

BERNARD HENRY, *Chairman*.

CALEB COPE, *Secretary*.

OFFICERS OF THE ACADEMY.

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**PRESIDENT,**

JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL.

**DIRECTORS,**

HENRY D. GILPIN,

CALEB COPE,

HYMAN GRATZ,

JAMES R. LAMBDIN,

P. F. ROTHERMEL,

JOHN T. LEWIS,

CHARLES MACALESTER,

Rev. H. J. MORTON, D.D.,

D. M. ROBINSON,

J. FRANCIS FISHER,

GEORGE S. PEPPER,

SAMUEL WELSH.

HYMAN GRATZ, *Treasurer.*

JOHN T. LEWIS, *Secretary.*

ELIZA SUSS, *Janitress.*

## REPORT

OF THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTORS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS TO THE STOCKHOLDERS, JUNE 2, 1851.

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SINCE the destruction of a large portion of the buildings and property of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts by fire, on the 11th of June, 1845, nearly six years have passed away. In the progress of these, the liberal encouragement of the citizens of Philadelphia, and the efforts made by those more immediately connected with the Institution, generously aided by that encouragement, have enlarged the number of its stockholders, restored and augmented its ruined edifice, increased its property, improved in many respects its organization, and advantageously furthered the objects for which it was originally established. It has been thought by the President and Directors that, at the present annual meeting, it would be satisfactory to those interested in the prosperity of the Academy, that, in addition to the summary statement of its finances usually presented, an account of its progress and present situation should be exhibited to them.

On the first organization of the Academy, in the year 1807, each share of stock in the corporation had been fixed at the sum of fifty dollars, subject to an annual contribution of two dollars, and a right of free admission into the Academy at all times within the hours appointed for public exhibition. In the year 1843, the amount of each share of stock was reduced to twenty-five dollars, subject to an annual payment of one dollar, or, in lieu thereof, a commutation payment of five dollars; the right of free admission continuing as before. In

the month of June, 1845, the number of shares of stock was three hundred and four. Among the many evidences, in various forms, of generous interest which were called forth by the disastrous conflagration which then occurred, was an immediate and voluntary increase of the number of subscriptions to shares of stock, embracing, in every instance, the commutation for annual payments. This has been continued through the succeeding period, so that the number of shares has now risen to six hundred and fourteen. While this increased number of permanent contributors has been of essential benefit to the Academy, in the augmentation of its property and resources, there are other considerations which make it still more valuable and gratifying. To spread as widely as possible, throughout our community, an interest in this Institution; to enlist among those immediately connected with it as large a portion as possible of our fellow-citizens; to obtain for it that countenance and participation in its progress which such a connection creates and promotes, are objects which have been regarded as primary from its first foundation. It is, therefore, to be hoped that the increase of its stockholders, which arose in the desire to retrieve the disasters of 1845, may continue, so as to further the useful ends for which it was originally established.

In 1845, the buildings appropriated to the uses of the Academy, and occupying the valuable site on Chestnut Street belonging to the stockholders, consisted of the large central rotunda; the northern gallery appropriated to pictures; and the eastern gallery, in which was placed the valuable collection of plaster casts, embracing well-preserved models of nearly every *chef d'œuvre* of ancient and modern sculpture. Of these buildings, the two galleries were entirely destroyed, and the rotunda was greatly injured. Of the pictures, many of the most valuable were consumed or irreparably damaged; many suffered so much as to be capable of reparation only by the greatest caution, expense, and care; of the noble collection of casts, scarcely a vestige remained; and the models, before which the drawing-table of the student of art was so

constantly placed, were totally obliterated. Possessing no resources but in the accumulated property thus destroyed or largely injured—with an income barely sufficient, even with economy, to meet its passing expenses—the Academy must have perished under this disaster, but for the prompt and generous interposition of the citizens of Philadelphia. On the day after the conflagration, at a public meeting, they adopted measures for the restoration of the Institution; many ladies generously enlisted themselves in the same cause; and the community generally answered the appeal with a spirit and liberality which gave evidence that, amongst them, a love of the arts and ready assistance in sudden and unavoidable misfortune go together, hand in hand. In addition to the increased subscriptions to the stock, numerous and liberal contributions were voluntarily made, among which the munificent sum of \$9550 95 was received from the committee of ladies, as the proceeds of their successful efforts.

With this encouragement, no time was lost in repairing the disaster of 1845. On the 22d of May, 1847, the Academy was again opened to the public. The edifice had been rebuilt, enlarged, and improved, so as to form a series of galleries at once commodious in arrangement, and in construction adapted to display to the most advantage the works of art with which they were to be filled. The walls, the floors, and the roof were all made completely fire-proof, and of the most substantial character. The best plans for warmth, ventilation, and light, as well in the evening as through the day, were adopted. In lieu of the two galleries which were destroyed, five new ones of excellent proportions were erected around the rotunda, communicating from it and also with each other, so as to present a continuous suite. A separate school for practical instructions in art was provided. Arrangements were made with a view to a large lecture-room at some future period; and accommodations were provided for the comfortable residence of the Curator within the building. It may be safely said that, in no city of the United States, is there an edifice so well combining all that is requisite for the uses for which it has been



designed. Situated too, as it is, in the heart of the city, the intrinsic value of the property is very considerable. No incumbrance chargeable upon it exists, with the exception of a mortgage of \$8000, and a ground-rent originally annexed to the lot, for the payment of which the rent received from the buildings thereon, not attached to the Academy, is more than sufficient.

Many of the valuable and beautiful works of art which adorn the galleries of the Academy, and afford a source of great attraction and interest at all times—independently of the additions which are specially but temporarily made during the periods of the Annual Exhibitions—have been deposited there by the generosity of persons to whom they belong. It has ever been the effort of the Institution to make it a fit receptacle for such deposits; and, equally by the care taken for the preservation of works so confided, and their appropriate display, to promote the wishes of the depositors, and to protect their property. These objects may now, more than ever before, be accomplished from the enlargement of space and security against risk, which result from the reconstruction of the buildings.

But the principal portion of the pictures, statues, and casts which permanently adorn the Academy, are the property of the stockholders themselves. The collection has been gradually made through a series of years, partly from generous donations, and partly by such purchases from time to time as the means of the Institution have authorized.

The pictures thus forming a portion of the property of the Academy are of great intrinsic value. They embrace fine specimens of the genius of distinguished painters, both American and European. They include the productions of many of those celebrated schools of pictorial art which have existed in different countries during the present and the last three centuries. Some of them, it is to be regretted, were irreparably injured in 1845, but most of those which were then damaged have been skilfully repaired and restored; and, it is scarcely necessary to say, that no expense or care was spared

to effect this. Since the reconstruction of the buildings, it has been among the most constant and persevering efforts of the Academy to continue this plan of a gradual and judicious collection of pictures. In so doing it has been aided by the generous efforts of many friends of the Institution, and has been able also to appropriate to this object, from its own resources, a sum but little short of five thousand dollars. The paintings thus obtained are not only permanent and valuable additions to the attractions of the galleries, but they are specimens of art well calculated to exhibit, to the student and the amateur, the merits of the schools to which they belong.

Though some efforts had been made, from an early period, to include works of sculpture among the other objects of art in the collection permanently acquired by the Academy, yet the fewer opportunities which occurred of obtaining them, their cost, and the risk of transportation, combined to limit these acquisitions almost entirely to busts and figures of merit in design and execution, but not aspiring to the higher efforts of the sculptor's art. The taste and sentiment of the American people has already evinced a strong predilection for this class of the productions of artistic genius; and it has met a remarkable response in the many evidences, lately given, of the skill and talent of our sculptors—more than one of whom seem destined to be justly placed in the highest rank of those whose works are to merit and receive the approbation of our own times. The Academy has not been insensible to the advantage of forming in their galleries a permanent collection of marbles, whose beauty and acknowledged excellence shall accord with this growing sentiment. Since 1847, a sum, equal to that expended for the acquisition of pictures, has been devoted to this object; the foundation has been laid for the successful development, it is hoped, of this design; and the time cannot be far distant, if the same liberal spirit which has heretofore fostered the efforts of the Academy shall still attend it, when its collection of statues shall be among the most attractive objects it possesses, and shall conspicuously and advantageously exhibit the works of our own sculptors, as just objects of

pride and admiration, and models to encourage and guide the future artist in the same career.

The loss resulting from the conflagration of 1845, which was most complete and irreparable, was that of the gallery of casts. It was entirely destroyed. Originally formed, at an early day, by a generous donation, from Mr. Joseph Allen Smith, of excellent models of several of the most celebrated of the antique statues, it had been increased and adorned by many other models, presented, it is understood, by the Imperial government of France, through General Armstrong, at that time the minister there of the United States. Occasional purchases, together with donations by artists and individuals, had so augmented the collection as to make it more than usually complete; and it was a portion of the property of the Academy, which possessed a value beyond its intrinsic cost, because it had been a school, scarcely to be found elsewhere, to which the student daily resorted to study and copy the forms and designs best fitted to cultivate a classic taste. The resources of the Academy have not enabled it, since the reconstruction of the buildings, to replace this excellent collection; but to do so, as early and as judiciously as possible, is among the first objects it is desired to pursue. Towards it some efforts have been already directed; and it is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when it will have been successfully accomplished.

Fortunately, the small but valuable library of the Academy was rescued, with little injury, from the peril of the conflagration of 1845. This collection, embracing some of the most celebrated works published in France and Italy, to illustrate ancient and modern art, was commenced by a donation from the Emperor Napoleon, made also through General Armstrong. It has been carefully preserved, and has always, when occasion offered, been made subservient to the purposes of instruction and study. Every care was taken to repair as much as possible whatever injury it suffered; and every opportunity has been since sought to increase it, as well by the

addition of engravings as of works connected with art. Though this does not present a costly portion of the property of the Institution, and the department is one subordinate to, and necessarily less prominent than others, it merits and will receive its due share of that attention, which seeks to combine everything that can contribute to the proper progress and promotion of art.

From this review of the present situation of the Academy, of its actual resources, and especially of the result of the efforts made, since 1845, for its restoration and progress, it will be seen that it is possessed of a large amount of property, serviceable to the arts, of great intrinsic value, and that, step by step, in the course of time it has gradually grown into an Institution fulfilling the object, announced by those who founded it more than forty years ago, "the promotion and cultivation of the fine arts in this country; and the erection of a building, in the city of Philadelphia, for the reception and exhibition of statuary and other specimens of art."

With the reconstruction of the buildings and the restoration and increase of the property and resources of the Academy, another object was united, and has been steadily pursued. At the same time that it was re-opened in the spring of 1847, such changes were made in its arrangements and organization, as experience and reflection seemed to dictate.

The privileges of the Institution, and a participation in its property, have been extended, so that any academician who shall present to it an original specimen of his productions in the arts, of the value of thirty dollars, receiving the approval of the board of directors, may become a stockholder and member of the corporation, free from any annual or commutation payment. Persons paying ten dollars in advance are created life members. The privileges of an election to honorary membership are extended to liberal patrons of the Academy and distinguished friends of the Fine Arts, and also to distinguished non-resident artists, free from contribution or charge; and the privileges of visiting the Academy have been

generally placed upon the most liberal footing. Artists of good character, whose works have been received at a public exhibition, are admitted under suitable regulations, and while they continue in the actual practice of their art, to study during the academic term, in such parts of the Academy as are not for the time occupied by the schools or by any public exhibition; they are also entitled, on application, to receive tickets of admission to the exhibitions. Provision has been made for selecting from among these artists, a number, not exceeding forty, of "Associates of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts," on whom the privileges of Life Members are conferred, and from among whom thirty "Academicians" may be chosen, who are to have the privilege of stockholders.

It has been already stated that, in the plan for the reconstruction of the buildings, arrangements were made for a school of practical instruction. This is made to embrace the various departments of the arts, or such of them as may from time to time be judged expedient. An academic term has been established, commencing in August, and continuing till April; and it is contemplated to widen still further the scope and benefit of the schools, by the appointment of such professors as may be judged expedient, to lecture publicly in the several departments of the fine arts, and in the sciences connected therewith. Where young persons are commended by their talents, meritorious character, and want of pecuniary ability otherwise to prosecute their studies, they are provided with gratuitous instruction, and students of the arts, not pupils of the schools, may, also under due regulations, enjoy the privileges of visiting the Academy, and using its collections of art. There is every reason to hope that in the persevering and successful development of these plans, the Academy may serviceably contribute to the cultivation of early genius, and that the stores and models which it collects and exhibits, may not alone afford gratification to those who view them, but become the means of inspiring, fostering, and guiding the youthful intellect in a career which presents the

brightest promise of attractive occupation and honorable distinction.

Nor has it been solely to the encouragement of the student of art, that the arrangements of the Academy have been directed. Annual exhibitions of works of merit in the several departments of the arts have been opened, in its capacious galleries, with entire regularity during every season since the reconstruction of the buildings. At these exhibitions, two of the galleries have been set apart for the display of original productions, not before exhibited at the Academy. The cost of transporting these productions has been borne by the Institution, and arrangements have been carefully made for their selection, reception and disposition.

In each year since 1847, the number of visitors, and the amount of the receipts have successively increased. The interest and approbation of the community have rewarded the efforts and encouraged the hopes of the Academy. Living artists, not from our own state alone, but from various parts of the Union, and even from Europe, have contributed their productions. Individuals whose travels and love of art have enabled them to procure works of beauty and merit, have found a satisfaction in furthering the plans of the Academy by placing them upon its walls; and our city has witnessed during these exhibitions, in each succeeding spring, a place of favorite resort, where the artist has seen the labors of his hand and genius happily displayed, and the lover of refined intellectual gratification has always been rewarded.

In addition to, and as a part of, the Annual Exhibition, the institution of premiums to living artists for original compositions was adopted, under such regulations as should at once offer an adequate reward for their efforts, and insure an impartial decision upon their merits. This portion of its plan the Academy was able to carry into effect for the first time at the exhibition of last year. By a circular widely addressed to artists throughout the United States and in Europe, it was announced that five premiums, amounting altogether to two thousand dollars, would be placed at the disposition of compe-

tent judges, who should award the three first premiums to the artists, respectively, who might compete for them by the delivery at the Academy, of pictures on some historical, scriptural or domestic subject, in size not less than fifty inches by forty, and esteemed by the judges to be performances of merit, and entitled to a prize. The two remaining premiums were to be awarded, in similar manner, for pictures to consist of landscapes or marine views, in size not less than fifty-four by forty inches. The cost of transportation of the pictures offered for competition, both from and (if returned) back to the artist, was assumed by the Academy. The five for which the premiums were awarded became its property, and the unsuccessful productions were to be returned, or, if desired by the artist, might remain for sale, being taken care of without charge or expense, so as to be disposed of to the best advantage.

This effort of the Academy to extend its encouragement and resources, for the benefit of the arts, was received and responded to in a corresponding spirit, in the United States and abroad. Fifty-one pictures, from thirty-eight artists, of whom thirteen were American and the rest from various schools of European art, were delivered at the Academy in competition for the premiums, and adorned the galleries throughout the exhibition. Embracing every variety of subject, from the historical and scriptural scenes, to landscapes, and domestic and still life, many of them were of more than common excellence. It was with no little regret that some of these were excluded from the decision of the judges, owing to accident or inattention on the part of the artists, in regard to their dimensions; or by limitations as to price, inconsistent with the classification of the premiums, which had relation to the subjects as well as to the merits of the productions. The decision of the judges, who were residents of New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia respectively, is understood to have been unanimous; and the five paintings for which premiums were awarded, and which now adorn the walls of the Academy as a portion of its permanent property, are works of such merit

and beauty, as to afford a proof that the design of the Institution was successfully and happily accomplished.

In the view thus presented to the stockholders and the community of the position, property, progress and future plans of the Academy, satisfactory evidence is exhibited of the attainment to a high degree of the objects it was intended by its establishment to promote. It needs but the continuance of that general interest and fostering care from our community which, especially through the last six years, it has happily experienced, to promote these objects in a still more extended and beneficial manner. Will it receive this encouragement? To ask the question is to know the answer. Philadelphia has been ever foremost in works of public utility; ever conspicuous for the taste, the beauty, and the devotion to true principles of art which have been practically combined in those works. Is it too much to say, that the best if not the only real source of these, must spring from an institution such as this; and the adoption and development of such plans, emanating from and connected with it, as have been described? If so, the Academy may look forward to that generous aid which will give to it yet brighter prospects, and sanction and effectually encourage its voluntary and gratuitous, but not less zealous, efforts in behalf of the Fine Arts.