

TO THE HONORABLE, THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE
OF NEW YORK, IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY CONVENED:
The Memorial of "The Board of Education for the
City and County of New York," praying for an ap-
propriation for the purpose of purchasing a Library
for the Free Academy in that City, respectfully re-
presents

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THAT,

The Free Academy has been established under an Act of the Legislature, passed May 7, 1847. The Act provided, that the question whether such an Institution should be established or not, should be determined by the votes of the electors of this City and County, at the charter election held next after the passage of the Act. The question was so submitted, and was decided affirmatively, by an almost unanimous vote. A site was purchased at a cost of \$25,000 and building erected at a cost of \$48,000, capable of accommodating nearly one thousand students. The building has been fitted up, supplied with the text books necessary at the period of organization, and furnished with all the appliances of a Chemical Laboratory, at an additional expenditure of about \$15,000. The further sum of \$5,500 has been appropriated for

the purchase of Philosophical and Chemical apparatus. These sums form an aggregate of nearly \$100,000, expended by the City and County of New York for the the establishment of the Institution.

The object of the Free Academy is to furnish the means of education gratuitously, to pupils entering it from the Common Schools of the City, and its admissions are confined to them. They are received upon a strict examination in the studies which are taught in the Common Schools, and only after having passed a good examination in such studies.

The Institution was opened for the examination of pupils applying for admission, in January 1849. These examinations are semi-annual. No applicants are admitted except such as are well qualified. At the examination in January 1849, one hundred and forty-three were admitted, and at the examination in July following, fifty-nine.

In its influence upon the cause of popular and Common School education, the Free Academy holds a position which no other Academy or any College in the State occupies. Its examinations for admission demand a very thorough preparation in all the branches usually taught in the Common Schools. It is not designed to furnish instruction in the branches commonly taught, and which ought to be thoroughly taught in these Schools,

Its aim is to take the pupils in the best state of preparation and advancement to which they can be trained in the Common Schools, and give them a thorough education of a high order, and of a character adapted to qualify them for more efficient usefulness in the various industrial occupations which they may

purpose to pursue. The thorough examination of the pupils applying for admission operates to produce more accurate and efficient instruction in the Common Schools, to elevate the standard of education in the latter, to afford the means of comparing them with each other, and discover in what respect any of them may have failed to fully realize the results which they ought, and which they should be made to accomplish. It is believed that such an institution cannot fail to improve the character of instruction in the Common Schools, and thus furnish the means of a more thorough education for the tens of thousands who will receive only such as can be acquired in these Schools. It is also believed that such an Institution was greatly needed for the purpose of educating the teachers who are to conduct our Common Schools, and that it will render in this way a most important public benefit.

The Free Academy is destined to become one of the most important educational Institutions in the State. The high attainments of its instructors, their superior capacities for teaching, the character of studies pursued, the aim to educate pupils with a view to fit them for greater usefulness in the various departments of productive occupation, rather than for professional life, are all calculated to render it one of general and permanent usefulness.

The course of instruction is so arranged as to enable those who cannot spend but a brief period in the Institution, to pursue such of the subjects embraced in a full course, as may be deemed most important with a view to qualify for the occupations on which the pupils may design to enter, as their occupations for life. It is believed that the Free Academy will furnish

a scientific education at least equal to that which can be obtained in any Institution in the State. Within a brief period there will be within its walls many hundreds of students, comprising the choicest pupils of the Common Schools. They will go out from time to time into the pursuits of active life, qualified by their thorough education to be of great benefit to society in all the diversified departments of industrial occupation. Numbers will go forth to serve the great cause of education, as highly educated teachers, It is the purpose of the institution to furnish to the children of the masses as thorough and valuable an education gratuitously, as those more favored with means can acquire in the best endowed College in the State. In order that it may accomplish this purpose successfully, it is necessary that in all its appliances it should be placed on as high a footing as any other Institution.

The chief support of the Institution is to be derived from the treasury of the City and County of New York. By the Act, \$20,000 per annum may be appropriated for this purpose. The only other means of support will be the share of the income of the Literature Fund, which it will receive on the same footing as the various Academies throughout the State; proportioned to the number of pupils who have pursued during four months classical studies, or studies in the higher branches of English education.

It will be seen then, that the inhabitants of the City and County of New York have been taxed to the amount of about \$100,000, in order to establish the Free Academy, and will soon be subjected to a tax of \$20,000 annually for its support. This tax has been imposed upon themselves with great unanimity, by

their own votes, from their settled conviction of the great advantages to result from a thorough education of the masses, and as well those engaged in trade and mechanical pursuits, as in professional life. A large proportion of those admitted would have been unable to enjoy the means of education which they are now improving, if the people of the City had not been induced by considerations of public utility, and of an enlightened philanthropy to furnish them at the public expense.

No provision has yet been made for the purpose of furnishing a Library. A single small appropriation of \$500 has been made to purchase a few books of reference, which seemed to be indispensable for purposes of illustration in the departments of knowledge that are now prosecuted. The object of the present application to the Legislature, is to obtain the means of supplying this great want.

The large sum of money that will be requisite cannot be obtained from any of the sources of revenue that this Institution has at its service. The private Academies receive a portion of the income of the Literature Fund for the purchase of works and apparatus, and the Colleges throughout the State, with which the Free Academy can be more properly compared, as to the expansive character of its instruction, and its need of an ample Library, have received from time to time large appropriations, and some of them now receive important aid from the State.

It seems superfluous to allude to the importance, or rather to the necessity of supplying the Institution with a good Library. It may be regarded as the settled policy of the State, to encourage efforts to advance the

cause of popular education, and to grant some support to the various public Institutions which give promise of decided advantages in the system of instruction, or of furnishing the means of more thorough and comprehensive education to enlarged numbers of the children of all classes and occupations.

The Legislature will appreciate the great benefits that would be secured by giving to the Professors and Teachers the means of keeping pace with the progress of knowledge, increasing the power of their teaching and directing the students to the sources of knowledge. The pupils of the Free Academy will need more than the students of any other Institution the advantages of a Library. The pecuniary circumstances of a large portion of them will preclude them from the enjoyment of any such advantages at home.

They have earned for themselves by their industry and improvement a place in the Free Academy, and ought now to be furnished with the opportunity of consulting works of acknowledged merit.

It may be considered desirable, too, that when they shall have left the Institution, when they shall unite the science they shall have acquired to the labor which is to be their future vocation, they may have the opportunity of pursuing still further, by their access to the Library, the branches of knowledge which they are directing to useful and practical ends.

Very important benefits might result to the cause of popular education, by opening the Library to the teachers of the Common Schools, and furnishing them with such additional facilities for their own improvement, and adding to their efficiency in teaching, and

the power and practical character of their illustrations.

There is at present in this respect a great difficulty in our educational arrangements, and this view of the uses of the Library is particularly interesting. The teacher must have and must use the means of mental improvement, if he is to conduct his work successfully. It is by this means that the profession of teaching is to be elevated to higher dignity. And it is only by highly trained teachers, animated with the spirit of acquiring, and the zeal of communicating knowledge, that our Common Schools can be brought up to a high standard.

If the means were available, or if the Legislature should make an appropriation commensurate with the wants of the Institution, the sum of fifteen or twenty thousand dollars could be advantageously applied at once to the object. A well selected and tolerably complete Library is needed at this time, especially in the various departments of science, and would require additions gradually out of the revenue for annual support. The strength of the Library should be in works of science, rather than in those of miscellaneous literature. It should be made up mainly of modern books, that have superseded those of older date. It should furnish a valuable repository in all the Arts. It should furnish the means of information relating to the application of principles, to the various branches and departments of human industry, and be selected with particular reference to continued improvement, rather than to present mental entertainment.

A large apartment has been fitted up in the Free Academy Building, for a Library, sufficient to hold from ten to fifteen thousand volumes, besides containing the complete and valuable philosophical apparatus that has been ordered.

The public and free character of the Institution, the position it occupies as part of the Free School system of the State, its elevated and at the same time practical aims, the liberal scale of its endowment and support, its prospects of extended usefulness, the strong assurance there is that its advantages and the relatively small price at which they are procured, will induce the people to establish other like institutions in other parts of the State, and the character and needs of its students seem, in the judgment of your memorialists, to eminently entitle it to the favorable regard and fostering care of the Legislature.

The undersigned, therefore, on behalf, and in the name of, and in obedience to a Resolution passed by the Board of Education of the City of New York, respectfully pray the Legislature to grant to it an appropriation of \$15,000 for the purpose of purchasing a Library for the Free Academy in said City.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 22d, 1849.

ROBT. KELLY,
THOS. DENNY,
J. S. BOSWORTH,
S. A. CRAPO,
WM. T. PINKNEY,

*Executive Committee for the Care, Government,
and Management of the Free Academy.*