

## EARLY LOUISVILLE LIBRARIES

lin suggested to the Junto, a group of kindred spirits interested in public welfare, that since their books were often referred to during their regular discussions, it might be convenient to bring all the books together in a common library. Then each would have the advantage of the other members' books. This arrangement lasted a year, during which Franklin witnessed the spectacle of books made common property treated as no man's property. It must have been disillusioning: if indifference was the rule among the club members, cultivated and educated men, what kind of treatment of books could be expected from the many on lower levels of culture, if they were to be given access to good reading?

But Franklin was not discouraged. He recognized that responsibility for the care of the property had been overlooked in planning the library. In any similar undertaking it must be provided for. It occurred to him that a library for subscribers was the answer. By the very condition of personal investment a lively and abiding interest and feeling of obligation could be counted on. The new project was launched with the payment of about ten dollars each by fifty underwriters, who pledged ten dollars more annually. By November, 1732, it was possible to dispatch a substantial sum to a London agent instructed to purchase and forward a carefully selected list of books. Eleven months later they arrived: GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, Milton's PRINCIPIA, the ILIAD and ODYSSEY, possibly in Pope's translation, the Magna Charta, a book on gardening, and Montaigne's essays--a list which should afford some notion of the intellectual climate of the time.(13)