

FLORENCE, 23d October, 1836.

SIR:—Congress having failed to authorise the purchase of Count Bontourlin's library, I address myself to you in the hope that your state may be prevailed upon to buy it. There are upwards of twenty thousand volumes, for the most part, rare and costly works, richly bound, and more than two hundred MSS. some of which are unique. A printed catalogue of this Library was sent to Washington and another to Boston, and the report of the Library Committee, and the proceedings of the Senate at the last session, will doubtless have already given you a general idea of its contents and value. I subjoin a note of a few of the MSS.

The collection embraces the earliest and finest specimens of printing, the first Greek and Latin Classics, the Aldine and other celebrated editions. It is most complete in those departments of Literature and Science in which our Libraries are generally most deficient, particularly in the ancient authors.—Belles Lettres, Literary History, the Fine Arts and the Standard Authors of France and Italy. The number of English works is small and some of these as well as others, may be duplicates; but they all being in good preservation, may readily be sold, whenever it is not advisable to retain both copies on account of their utility or the difference of date.

After a careful examination of the catalogue and of the books, I have no hesitation in saying that the Library is an excellent one, and would be a great acquisition to any of our Literary Institutions. There is nothing like it for sale at present in Europe, and it would require much money and a long time to collect such a one. It cost Count Bontourlin upwards of a million of francs and many years labour. Fifteen thousand pounds sterling are asked for it now; for which sum the heirs of Count Bontourlin engage to deliver it in America. If desirable the payments may be made in ten annual instalments, scrip being issued pledging the faith of the state, with a very low interest, say five or perhaps even four per cent. Will you not use your influence to prevail upon your Legislature to purchase it? If not, we may lose it entirely,