

# The Montrose Democrat.

"WE ARE ALL EQUAL BEFORE GOD AND THE CONSTITUTION."—James Buchanan.

J. J. Garrison, Publisher.

Montrose, Susquehanna County, Penna., Thursday Morning, September 9, 1854.

Volume 15, Number 30.

## ADDRESS

**E. B. CHASE, ESQ.**  
Of Wilkes Barre, at the recent dedication of the public school building at Hyde Park. Published by request of the School Board, and of the State Teachers' Association.

Ladies and Gentlemen:—I wish I could flatter myself that I could frame an address worthy of this occasion and of this subject. I speak in all sincerity when I say that I hardly know how to address myself to you properly. I earnestly desire to say something that will be remembered, something that will live beyond the present hour—that will make an impression upon the minds of those who are controlling the course of education in this community, and that will spring up and bear fruit hereafter to the common good. I feel more encouraged to hope that I may be able to do so, when I observe around me these lasting and noble monuments to the intelligence of our citizens, and the sacrificing energy which has characterized their efforts in the cause of common education. We may assemble to dedicate this temple of learning to its noble uses. We may be proud of your achievement, and we may indulge in the most ardent and zealous anticipations for the future of our community, your people and your youth. I take it for granted that men who have had the determination, the perseverance and the love for the cause sufficient to overcome the thousand obstacles always thrown in the way of an enterprise like this, by the prejudices of some, the suspicions of others, and the meanly-dreaded worldly-mindedness of still more, have their hearts sufficiently enlisted in the work to profit by any suggestions that experience or observation may throw out, regardless of the source from whence they come.

When reflecting upon the subject of our school system I have often thought that the principle upon which it is based—the foundation upon which it rests, is very imperfectly understood and appreciated by the masses of the people. There does not seem to be that general intelligent conception of the reason why our government takes upon itself the prerogative of supporting a great school system by force of taxation upon all classes alike in accordance with their means to pay, regardless whether they have children to educate or not, that it has been in the past, and is here, and hereafter, it is to be here. It is here, they have seemed to suppose, that it had an objection founded upon principle, and I will do them justice to admit, that on its face, it bears more of that color than any other objection I have ever heard of. There is an apparent unfairness in the proposition to force one class of citizens, by law, to pay for the education of the children of others; but it seems to me that when we come to consider the principle upon which the system is founded, —when we come to trace, if we can, the principle back and connect intimately with those great principle of popular government that underlies the structure of our social and political institutions,—when we come to show how nicely and wisely each part of our political machine is adjusted to the other, and how important it is to the well-being of the whole,—I say when we come to connect our school system, through the principle upon which it is founded with all these great and fundamental principles of the government itself, and make it a part of them, then it becomes the duty of every citizen who loves his government and feels his obligations to preserve it, to throw his objections to the necessary incidents to the protecting of his person, his property, his rights and even his citizenship itself. He is thus bound to protect the system from ruinous innovation, as much as he is bound to protect the principle of his State sovereignty, or any other principle of government, and if he feels that it may sometimes encroach upon his rights of personal acquisition, he is bound to regard it as one of the incidents of a democratic government, or of a well regulated society, under which we are all required to relinquish so much of our absolute rights as may be necessary to the well-being of the whole people. Looking at the system in this light, every good citizen will rally to its maintenance with all the ardor and alacrity, that have ever distinguished the American people in the support of their institutions, as well as their country's fame and honor. And then their country's fame and honor, in showing that no difficulty, no matter how insuperable, is too great for the government, which is based on one of the fundamental principles of the government. It is not a mere arbitrary enactment, which has taken the form of law through peculiar influences brought to bear for the time being upon the Legislature. Farther from it possible. It is the result of a grand and lofty idea in the science of popular government,—a great practical form and substance of the great principle upon which this Republic is based. By this I mean, the general idea of popular education by common schools, and not any particular enactment for that purpose. And now do you ask me on what one of the fundamental principles of the government I base the school system? I will answer, —

That learned philosopher, Aristotle, once observed, that "it is of the very nature of a republic that the science of politics belongs to all the citizens, because there it is especially true that all citizens are and govern by term, and are therefore participators in the republic, each in his own lot." This was written many years before our government was formed, and when such a government existed nowhere on earth. The rights of the citizen to an equality in the government rightly belonged to the sciences of government, and as the sciences were principles often spoken of and written about by ancient philosophers and school men, but they were regarded as the vague speculations of visionary theorists, of no practical value to the world, and even not susceptible of practical operation. But they have taken governmental form and substance in our republic, and one of our wisest statesmen has given expression to the idea in much better language than even Aristotle,—and in a sentiment that sums up the whole matter,—giving a whole volume of elaborated truth in one short sentence. "All are partners in a republic." We have come then to the first principle of a Republic. It is a mere partnership of interests,—of persons associated for the purpose of government, and the articles of the partnership are: the Constitution. In this consists the secret of the instrument, just

as an association of individuals regard the contract upon which they enter a business arrangement as sacred in all its parts,—so sacred that when any one or more seeks to violate it, the laws of this country, with their penalties, and their coercive power, step in at the bidding of another, and compel its observance. To satisfy ourselves how applicable this definition of a Republic is, I hope, when you shall have opportunity, you will take the Constitution of the federal government and examine closely in all its parts. You will be struck with the beautiful simplicity of the instrument, and you will observe, perhaps, as you never observed before, how clearly it defines the powers of the association. You will find that after it provides the frame of the government, its officers, &c., it then sets out to describe the powers and objects of the partnership. It lays down a schedule of rights that are vested in the government. It gives to the Legislative department its powers for the regulation of the concern, defines them with great accuracy and clearness. It then takes up the executive and judicial departments and defines their duties and powers, and so through the whole range of the instrument, winding up with the broad declaration that all powers not expressly granted therein are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people thereof. Thus you have the partnership of a Republic. Every man is a partner, and the aggregate of the nation make the association. The Constitution is the contract to which they have bound themselves, and the general rights and interests of the people make up and constitute the stock of the concern.

These rights and interests are equal for the plain reason that all men are equal before God, and the Constitution makes them all equal before that. We are all then, equal partners in the Republic; our interests are all equal, our rights are all equal, and our duties all equal. We govern the association by the ballot-box, which is equally accessible to all, and through which medium the poorest in worldly goods and possessions, has an equal power with the most wealthy. So it will be observed that even property does not enter, in any manner, into the general consideration of this partnership. That is left entirely to the partners themselves,—to operate as an individual inducement to maintain the association in its utmost integrity, for the greater the interests the individual may have on his own account, the more important it is to him that he should be amply protected by the power and strength that the aggregate association gives him.

The people then in this government constitute the power,—the controlling principle. They are sovereign within the articles of the partnership to do what they please. They pass judgment upon their rulers,—and upon everything connected with the policy of government. They justify or condemn every measure that is originated, whether for good or ill. Their judgment is law when authoritative is expressed. They make laws,—and laws are in fact adopted,—and upon these measures that the fate of Empire may hang upon, and that the destiny of countless millions, may be controlled by. They carry out doctrines of foreign policy that may slowly but surely revolutionize the world. They carry their commands to the thrones of Kings, and register their judgment in the parliament houses of Nobles and Emperors. The American citizen who in fact discharges his whole duty to his country,—who in fact carries out faithfully his part of the compact as a partner in the Republic, must of necessity be himself a statesman,—if not in the active sense of the term, he must be in a sense equally important, that of examining with intelligent scrutiny every question of public political policy, in its national aspect and in its relation with other governments of the earth. He must at least be in a full capacity to pass judgment upon a full assortment of the questions presented, and that judgment is a verdict from which there can be no appeal.

It needs no elaboration to show to an intelligent mind that the idea of our government is based upon the hypothesis that the people are sufficiently intelligent to govern themselves. Here is the ground work of the system. In giving the right of suffrage, the means by which the government is controlled, to the people themselves, it is to be supposed that every man who exercises it, is capable of judging of the soundness of the principles involved, and the merits of the respective candidates for office. I admit that this may be violated, but rather shows the importance of providing for the general diffusion of education,—intelligence, precisely the point to which our efforts are to-day directed. A Republic cannot long exist where the people are generally ignorant. If proof of this self-evident proposition were needed, we might find plenty of evidence on our own continent among the Republics so-called, Mexico and Central America. But it is well understood and by none more than the advocates of monarchical governments, the world over, the history of such govern-

ments has presented but the one unvarying peculiarity,—that of ignorance among the masses of the people. And another fact, no less worthy of our notice in this connection, which is this, that in all such governments, just in proportion as the people have become intelligent, that in that proportion has the sovereign been obliged to yield one privilege after another, granting them more and more freedom, till in some instances, like England for example, the throne only exists by sufferance of the people, being simply tolerated so long as it does not infringe upon the liberties of the subjects,—and so long as it recognizes the fundamental principle—the right of the people to a full participation in the general affairs of the government. All this shows that in proportion as the people became intelligent in that proportion are they capacitated for self-government. But the proposition is too plain for elaboration.—It is denied or controverted by no one. In a government then like ours, resting entirely upon the people's will, controlled entirely by their voice, it can be readily seen that its great rock of safety depends upon the capacity of the masses to understand the affairs of government for themselves. How are they to understand, or to be capable of deciding the great questions of national interests which are constantly arising and being presented to their judgments, unless their minds are developed and enlightened by the principles of science, and the great lights of a disciplined education. Of course they cannot be, and hence it arises that it is the interest of every partner in this Republic that his fellow partners should be equally or more intelligent than himself. Such a mighty nation as ours surely requires as much intelligence to control its affairs as any other nation on the face of the green earth; and it will not do to content ourselves with the idea that this intelligence can be safely confided to a few, for we have ambitious and unscrupulous men as well as other nations who will not hesitate to secure their own purposes at the peril of the national welfare, if they can be obtained in that way. In such contingencies what does it suffice if we have a few, comparatively, who are capable of wielding the national destinies for the nation's good? They may easily be overborne, by that vast host of ignorant and vicious, who are ever ready to rally to the standard of bad and unprincipled men.

We may consider the proposition then not only as self-evident but as proved and admitted, that this government, with all its precious blessings,—with all its hopes and promises to civilization and the race, rests entirely for its support upon the intelligence and virtue of the people. To their care is confided the greatest charge ever committed to man,—that of illustrating to the world the great principles of Republicanism,—and demonstrating beyond cavil the capacity of man to govern himself without the aid of Kings and Nobles. The future destiny of this principle no one can measure or foresee. In the three-fourths of a century in which it has been in active operation here, it has worked marvelously its influence, through Republicanism, has reached every people on earth where ever there has been a home; and at this moment, like even in the measure, it is gradually wringing concession after concession from the hand of royalty in the old world, as well as every reason to believe, in its own good time it will leave the whole lump, and man will everywhere burst the bonds of hereditary entailment, and stand forth in the full armor of his being, clothed with all the attributes of his Maker God. Such, my friends, is the destiny of our civilization and the principle upon which it is founded, if true to ourselves and the charge committed to our care and keeping.

And now, my friends, I am prepared to show to our objects wherein the school system is founded upon the State principle, wherein it embodies the first principle of our government, and therefore why every good citizen should support and uphold it as one of the pillars in the edifice of our national greatness. "Salus republica suprema lex,"—the safety of the Commonwealth is the highest law.—is a legal maxim as old as the Roman law itself. We have seen that the safety of this republic depends upon the intelligence of the people, and that it is the source of all power, and that it is impossible that ignorance, with all its train of vice and degradation, can long govern a great nation and a free people. The safety of the Republic is the supreme law, and therefore it is that the government—our state governments for all such sovereignty is left to the State governments by the federal constitution, is not only justified, but required by the supreme law of the land, that there be a general system of education. The first duty of the government is to take care of itself,—to provide for its safety and perpetuity,—and it is the duty of the citizen to provide the government with the means to carry this out. Where then is our objection to the school system because it lays taxes, burdens some taxes if you please, to educate the people, and by contributing his share to the support of the republic to the common partnership interest. He is bound to discharge that great duty to his country,—that country that throws over him the broad banner of its protection, that he is bound to discharge as an American patriot. He is but contributing his mite to preserve what cost our fathers so much blood and treasure, and suffering. He is but discharging that high and holy duty that he owes to humanity and the race, towards carrying forward and onward the destiny of American civilization and freedom. It is not all of life to live for ourselves alone. The future of our country, our posterity,— unborn generations, all, have demands upon us. That God of nations, to whom we are indebted for our being even, also demands our service, as instruments in his hands to carry out his purposes among the nations.— purposes connected with the blessing of civil rights and religious freedom, which he has vouchsafed to our own loved country, and which we are bound to preserve. O! what a mean, low and narrow mind must be that, that will draw tighter the purse strings, denounce the school system as unjust and constantly throw obstacles in the way of its mission because it takes from him a few shillings, or a few dollars in shape of taxes, and because he has no children to educate. Well, such a man ought to have no children and it may be another evidence of the goodness of Providence, that he has none; and the poor driveling soul would rather teach them their duty to their country and their race, than permit others to do it for him. As a partner in the Republic, the government has a right to demand of every parent that he

devote his child in some measure to the use of the State,—that he shall prepare him to discharge the duties that will devolve upon him, when he, too, shall be called upon to enter the association of partners, as an active and equal member, and do man has a right to refuse obedience to this just requirement. It has a right, too, to take so much of his property as may be necessary for the use of the partnership, to protect its interests and the interests of its other members. Lycurgus, the famous Spartan law-giver when Sparta was a Republic, ordained that every child born in the State should be educated by the rich and the poor alike, and no parent was permitted to interfere with that education, or out short the time prescribed that his child should attend the institution of learning. So effectual did this prove in its influence upon the State, that the government of Sparta remained unchanged for a period of 500 years,—longer than that of any other government that has been founded on earth. And so may ours exist and pass onward under the great name of Liberty, if we but discharge our whole duty, as partners in the Republic, in preparing the minds of our children for their part when to their hands shall pass its political destiny. The energy and power of the government will be strengthened and invigorated in proportion as the people shall be educated, and thus prepared to adopt and maintain wise measures of national policy at home and abroad. An intelligent people can never be enslaved—so an intelligent people in a free government will never abdicate its policy to the hands of any man or class, and it will increase in all the elements of national greatness and perpetuity as the cycles of centuries shall roll by.

Leaving this train of thought and coming down to the practical system of the present in our own State, I may observe that the signs of the time are full of hope and promise. Pennsylvania was slow to provide an efficient system of common school. The act of the Legislature and its supplements which the State has since passed, point in the right direction, but it lacked practicality, vigor and force. Then, too, it worked its own ruin by leaving its adoption to the votes of the several districts,—some of which under the influence of prejudice, pecuniary or other interests, rather than of public duty, would have adopted and attempted to carry it into practical operation. Hence one of our most noble and patriotic statesmen would have no law at all. They should consequently no system about it. What was law in one locality was not in another, and as might have been foreseen the schools of the State were in confusion without a central controlling power anywhere. "What is everybody's business is nobody's," and hence common school in the most localities languished for the want of a stimulating power. The German element of the State, who slowly but steadily were making their way into the settled maxims and habits of their fathers, were exceedingly tardy in taking hold of the system. They could not bear the thought of free schools, and their fathers had taught them to live independently,—to each pay for what he had and no more. They did not understand that Republicanism that would force upon them a burdensome taxation which they should reap any benefit from it or not. They chose the path of the old and well-worn path of supporting their select schools, though at an expense far greater than though they had adopted the free system; and thus in some of the wealthiest counties of the State, previous to 1840, free schools were hardly known. The friends of the free school felt the inadequacy of the law most keenly and labored zealously to prepare public opinion for a thorough and radical change. In the meantime they had the honor to act an honorable part, and whatever may be my destiny in the uncertain future of this life, I shall carry to my grave the remembrance of my part in that struggle with more earnest pride and satisfaction than all the other incidents of a brief public life. It was a long and an arduous struggle. Its opponents were not the quarter and radical change. In the meantime they were vanquished, returned with more zeal to the contest. The friends of the bill had carefully avoided the fatal rocks of the old law. They had given their proposed system a head, a vital and centralized power by the appointment of the State and county superintendents; and they had secured enough of a central power to carry out their intentions. It is a law,—compelling the districts to accept it,—regardless of their whims and caprices, their prejudices or their passions. They thus asserted the principle of the right of the government to provide a school system and compel the people to sustain it. It became a law after one of the most exciting and certain one of the ablest contests ever fought in the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania,—passing that body near the close of the session, long after the hour of midnight and by a force of the most overwhelming nature. It was a great triumph. Would that that body were always engaged in as good a work in its midnight hours! For look already at its achievements. It has brought order out of chaos,—it has given life and vigor and impetus to the schools everywhere, even in those localities of which I spoke a few moments since, you will now find some of the most flourishing schools in the State. It was forced upon them, but when it tried, it has driven prejudice to the winds where it had the most zealous opposers. Everything is bright and cheering. True, much remains to be done before a system, necessarily complex, can be fully tried in all its parts and such amendments perfected as it may need. We do not claim for it perfection, for that is a term unknown to human legislation; but we do claim for it a nearer approach to that term than any system heretofore known in this Commonwealth; and it is a most gratifying fact, that the opposition to it has dwindled down till it has come to be understood as a settled fact among the people, that in its essential features the school system of Pennsylvania is a fixed fact—a settled principle in our government. And well it is that it should be so, for what after all we most want is some settled line of policy,—something that can be relied upon,—and that, even though it be not perfect, it shall be such that we can build upon it, cultivate it, and make a system that shall "blossom and blossom in due season." But we have a system so far perfected now that it most needs to be let alone by our law-givers. "It is founded upon the right principle,—that of the

right and duty of the government to provide for the general education of the people,—as partners in the Republic, and the administration of the law in the hands of competent men, will supply minor details. And now, my friends, surrounded by all these prospects that are calculated to give courage and hope and confidence, we approach the practical business of to-day.—that of dedicating to its noble purpose this monument of your liberty and patriotism;—this temple in which if "the gods may not dwell," at least the minds of your youth shall be instructed and developed in the ways of science and of virtue. Deep drawn emotions of gladness and pride may well swell your hearts, as you gaze upon this edifice, now to be dedicated to the education of your children and those that are to come after you. You feel a consciousness of duty discharged,—a duty to your country and your race. You feel that as partners in the republic who have lived out years of its blessings,—who appreciate its great responsibilities and who realize that upon you rests the mantle of the fathers who have gone before, and who now sleep the long sleep, but whose spirits nevertheless hover over the transactions of earth,—as such you feel that you have erected here a monument to Duty and your country. God bless the effort, and Heaven smile upon those who have made it! Such is my prayer to-day, and such will be the earnest exclamation of hundreds of youth in the future, who will here receive that mental discipline that shall prepare them in a free government to do and suffer the duties of life, equipped for its responsibilities to their country,—to God and humanity. But your duty is not yet done,—your responsibilities not yet ended. Your school must be properly organized, and then it will require your constant and watchful care. It will not do, my friends, to rest now with the feeling that all will be well. If a community would interest its youth in the subject of education, the parents must manifest a continued earnest interest themselves. This is best shown by frequent visits to the school room, by unwearied attentions to those events that students always look forward to with palpitating anxieties,—the last day of school with its round of exhibitions and examinations. There are the pride of the child, and they are opportunities for the parent to manifest his interest, and thus give encouragement to the youth that is lasting and most beneficial. There are a thousand little arts that the parent may use, so small in themselves and so depending upon the circumstances of the moment; that we cannot repeat them in such an address as this, and which serve to keep alive and in active operation the ambition and emulation of a child at school, and give an opportunity to the parent to be a part in the teacher's labor to advance the pupils, while at home the pupil is never greeted with a word of encouragement,—while they never hear from the lips of those who sit with them around the family hearthstone, an inquiry of the school and their own advancement. But, further than this, you have neglected your duty,—with a view to your own country. You are preparing then to take your places when you shall have passed the home of the fathers. The little boy is now learning his 's's' and 'o's' who will one day wield the destinies of the nation. Will in these walls will soon receive their first lessons, who will go out into the world and give laws to a free people,—who will one day occupy the Judicial Bench, be elevated to the destinies of political honor, or fill the most humble but none the less important positions of trust and responsibility among the partners of the republic. How important that they should be educated aright. How important to that youthful mind, upon which impressions are always so lasting, that it should not be poisoned with those fanatic theories that always carry in their train the miseries of the constitution and their country. Here let them be early taught those great principles of practical human freedom, that have already made our country the greatest and the purest on earth. See to it that they learn to worship with patriotic devotion at the altar of an unquenchable nationality, so that when they step upon the theatre of life, and take into their own hands the destinies of the nation, they may be thoroughly imbued with those exalted and comprehensive views that our fathers cherished, and which have so far made as one people, and our land favored of Heaven. Thus shall you discharge your whole duty to your country,—your children, and those who will come after them. The widow's prayer will bless you,—the orphan, here instructed and prepared for the great battle of life, will conquer the soil shall have grown greener over your graves. My friends, God bless you all, and may the richest favors of Heaven ever rest upon this enterprise which we now dedicate to the noblest purposes of the present and future.

**BURS UNDER THE SADDLE.**  
A SKETCH OF THE REVOLUTION.  
During the month of March, 1778, the British army being in Philadelphia, and the American forces at Valley Forge, the American commander-in-chief was desirous of having some information concerning the state of affairs in the city, and desired Captain Allen McLane to pick him out a few trusty men for the purpose. McLane selected five of his own men, with Sergeant John Marks for the leader, and sent the latter to headquarters to receive instructions. Marks was a very young man to be intrusted with important services, being only twenty-one years of age; but McLane had frequently marked his conduct in camp and field, had made himself acquainted with his character, and knew that he could be roughly relied on. Marks was a lank, bony fellow, with high countenance; but he had a fine, and rather large eye, his features were decidedly noble, and his countenance entirely under his control. With this he possessed great power of mimicry, which he used to show off frequently for the amusement of his comrades, and had a reputation for shrewdness. His muscular system had not yet received its full development; but his habits had made him almost as active as a panther. He was fully instructed by General Washington as to the information desired, and left at dark, arriving in a short time at Fort Mifflin, on the Schuylkill. At that point he struck a

crossed the country, and by means of having with which he was well acquainted, having been raised in the neighborhood, evaded the scouting parties of the enemy, and arrived at Mifflin before dark. Here he posted his little troops in a cedar hollow overlooking the river, while he, in the disguise of a countryman, with a sack of vegetables which he had stolen from a gardener, and a light at one of the windows, rode into the city. He not only occupied a house, but sold his vegetables to a number of Howe's staff, was taken to the General's presence, and in return for false information in regard to Washington, managed to learn some facts of importance. Promising to return in a few days with more vegetables, he was enabled to leave the town leisurely, with a passport in his pocket, and some sugar, coffee and other articles of like nature in his sack. He joined his men without suspicion, about midnight, and after the little party set out on its return. Now, had Mark kept his course by which he came, it is possible he could have reached the American lines in good time, and safety. But it happened that about a mile from the river, at a point nearly opposite Spring Mill, lived a farmer by the name of McIlvaine, who although a Quaker and non-combatant, was well disposed to the American cause. McIlvaine had a daughter named Priscilla, a young and handsome girl, to whom Marks was strongly attracted, but who had never betrayed any symptoms of affection in return. The house was a half mile or more out of the town, at a point nearly opposite Spring Mill, and was a short distance from the river. Marks, however, lived a farmer by the name of McIlvaine, who although a Quaker and non-combatant, was well disposed to the American cause. McIlvaine had a daughter named Priscilla, a young and handsome girl, to whom Marks was strongly attracted, but who had never betrayed any symptoms of affection in return. 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