

# THE STAR OF THE NORTH.

John East

W. Weaver Proprietor.

Truth and Right—God and our Country.

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**ADDRESS OF  
ION. GEO. W. WOODWARD.**  
OF WILESBARE.  
Delivered on the occasion of the erection of a  
Monument to the Memory of Francis R.  
Shunk, Montgomery County, Pa., July 4th,  
1851.  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—FELLOW CITI-  
ZENS: Whether the time, the place, or the  
occasion be considered, it is good for us to  
be here.

The time is auspicious. It is the anni-  
versary of our Nation's birth-day. Seventy  
five years ago this day, in that city, the roar  
of those cannon, ushering in this glorious  
morn, has scarce died on our ears, a transac-  
tion was consummated which made thir-  
teen subject colonies free and independent  
States, and made its authors immortal.

And here we are assembled in one of  
those thirteen States—on a spot endeared to  
every Pennsylvanian as the birth-place and  
the grave of a most worthy son of our noble  
State—in a county distinguished for its  
wealth, its fertility, its industry, and for the  
number of able men whom, from time to  
time, it has sent into the public service, and  
which, moreover, bears the illustrious name  
of MONTGOMERY—a name suggestive of  
"the mountains that tried men's souls" and  
which re-stamps the memory with the gallant  
scenes before Quebec.

And the occasion is full of significance  
and interest. We come not to pay  
our court to living greatness. We come  
not to offer propitiatory sacrifice to  
power. We come not, even, in the full  
tide of gushing grief, to mourn the recent  
dead, and with funeral pomp to consign  
"dust to dust." Our purpose is higher still.  
The occasion belongs to Patriotism—to In-  
tegrity—to purity of life and morals—to  
that heroic patience, which content to toil,  
achieves as its just reward, a victory over  
the adverse circumstances of life. It is  
virtue which we come to celebrate. We  
build up these material substances—we  
carve these lines and emblems—we crown  
this monument, as signs and memorials of  
the goodness and the greatness which we  
rejoice to honor, and which we desire to  
perpetuate.

The time, the place, the occasion, then,  
are worthy of this vast assemblage. It is  
meet that old age, and vigorous manhood,  
and hopeful youth and female beauty should  
gather around this consecrated place, sacred  
to the memory of FRANCIS R. SHUNK, and  
on this day, hallowed in the annals of hu-  
man liberty, unite in recording a solemn act  
of testimony to the signal virtues of the  
man whom, living, we loved, and who,  
though dead, lives in the affections of his  
admiring countrymen. It is good for us  
to be here!

It has been said that in good works there  
is no need of a precedent; but if we need  
precedents for what we do here, we  
could find them in every age and nation  
of our race. Mausoleums, Monuments, and  
Pyramids—Temples, Towers, and Tombs,—  
the sculptured marble, the chiseled stone,  
and the engraved brass, have all been used  
to perpetuate the memory of great events  
and of distinguished men. The most solid  
and enduring materials have been resorted  
to, as if to hinder death and time from ob-  
literating the virtues of those whose frail  
bodies, obedient to the universal decree,  
have crumbled into dust. "All these people,  
says Diodorus Siculus, speaking of the  
Egyptians, "considering the duration of  
human life as a period extremely short and  
unimportant regard with the utmost atten-  
tion the immortality which virtue leaves be-  
hind it. It is for this reason that they call  
the houses of the living *inns*, as affording  
only a temporary residence, whilst they  
give the name of *eternal habitations* to the  
tombs of the dead, from whence none ever  
issues. Hence the indifference of their king-  
s in the edification of their palaces, and their  
unbounded profusion in the construction of  
their tombs." And hence came, we may  
add, these vast pyramids in the valley of the  
Nile, that seem "like the funeral gates of  
Egypt, or rather like triumphal arches,  
reared to the memory of the illustrious  
dead. Pharaoh is there, with all his people,  
and his sepulchres are round about him."

This country is too new, and the people  
have been too much occupied in subduing  
forests and building cities and towns, to  
present to the eye of the traveller those nu-  
merous and gorgeous memorials of departed  
greatness that are found in older countries.  
And possibly our republican institutions are  
unfavorable to such displays of posthumous  
honors. But yet we have many events and  
characters in our history, brief as it is, which  
are well worthy of commemoration by all  
the means which genius, and art and wealth  
can command. Nor have we been alto-  
gether unmindful of monumental commemora-  
tion. The Washington Monument at  
Baltimore, the Bunker Hill Monument, and  
that which, delayed too long, is at last being  
built by the nation to the memory of him

who, "first in war and first in peace, was  
first in the hearts of his countrymen," as  
well as numerous other structures in various  
parts of our country, attest our sensibility to  
the worth and effect of such expressions of  
gratitude and affection. Not to mention  
others, I would remind you that General  
Montgomery, already referred to, and whose  
name this county has appropriated, a warm  
hearted Irishman, and as brave and accom-  
plished a General as ever led an army to the  
tented field, earned for himself a monument  
of pure marble, like this, which Congress  
erected to his memory, with emblematic  
devices, in front of St. Paul's Church, New  
York. But Pennsylvania has been peculiarly  
backward in this species of devotion,  
owing, perhaps, in part, to the severe sim-  
plicity of Quaker manners, which reject all  
ostentatious expressions of gratitude and  
reverence, however honorable and patriotic,  
and however due they may confessably be.  
And yet, what State has more of storied  
greatness to tell to future generations than  
Pennsylvania? Founded by deeds of peace,  
where is the material and visible sign of our  
gratitude to Penn? Nurturing and claiming  
for her own, Franklin, and Godfrey, and  
Rittenhouse, and Muhlenberg, and Wayne,  
and Wilson, and Shippen, and Ruah, and a  
host of others, whom she reckons among  
her jewels, where are the Pennsylvania  
monuments to any of these men? In Penn-  
sylvania, the Declaration of Independence  
was signed, and the Constitution of the  
United States adopted. In Pennsylvania,  
some of the most decisive battles and trying  
events of the revolution had their location.  
Here, almost in sight of us are Valley Forge  
and Germantown. Pennsylvania has always  
poured out her wealth and her blood to  
defend the country's honor and our common  
liberties—and yet no Pennsylvania monument  
lifts its head to the clouds to tell of the  
great deeds of which she has been the  
theatre, and of the great men who have il-  
lustrated her annals. It is vain to say that  
such memories are worthless, for we all  
feel that they have power to animate, and  
encourage, and instruct—still more vain to  
presume them enduring, without aid from  
external and visible objects, for all mere  
memories are like shells gathered on the  
shore, or like figures inscribed in the sand,  
to be swept away and obliterated forever by  
the next surge.

Our present work, therefore, is not with-  
out precedent, though precedent be not  
needed, and among its recommenders is  
the possibility of its becoming itself an ex-  
ample for Pennsylvania imitation.

FRANCIS RAWN SHUNK, was of German  
descent. He was born at this place, "Trappe,"  
Montgomery county, on the 7th day of  
August, 1788. The house in which he was  
born, like the tabernacle of flesh in which  
dwelt his soul, has passed away, but it is an  
interesting fact that there are but about three  
hundred yards of space between what was  
his cradle and what is his grave. A brief  
space for the career of an immortal being!  
And yet, the segment of a circle resting on  
these points, was found sufficient for the  
display of the energies and the virtues of  
his character, and for the full and useful  
employment of his life.

The unpropitious name, "Trappe," was  
derived from a house of public entertain-  
ment kept here at an early day, which had  
steps up to the front door, and as there was  
no sign, it was called the Trappe, which is  
a German word for steps. Governor Shunk  
had on the seal he wore three steps, and a  
motto which, with exquisite taste, has been  
traced on his monument. His father, John Shunk,  
was the son of Francis Shunk, who emigrated  
from the Palatinate of the Rhine, in  
Germany, about the year 1715. His mother,  
Elizabeth Rawn, was the daughter of Casper  
and Barbara Rawn, the former of whom  
also emigrated from the Palatinate in Ger-  
many. These ancestors of Governor Shunk  
are all held in most respectful and affection-  
ate remembrance for the many virtues that  
adorned their lives and sweetened social in-  
tercourse. In the case of Governor Shunk,  
as in the history of almost every man who  
has raised himself above his fellows, the  
mother exerted a controlling influence in  
the formation and development of the char-  
acter of the boy; and, like most men who  
have been blessed with a good mother, he  
felt the full measure of his indebtedness to  
her, and cherished her memory with filial  
piety to the last hour of his life. "His pa-  
rents were not able to furnish the means, or  
spare his time to secure, in the ordinary  
way, even the rudiments of an education.  
Much of the time of his childhood and  
youth was devoted to manual labor; he was  
hired out when not more than ten or twelve  
years of age, to the neighboring farmers, to  
aid them in their agricultural pursuits. He  
has been heard to say that, among the sweet-  
est hours of his existence, were those,  
when returning from the toils of the week  
to the home of his childhood, he was per-  
mitted to repose his aching head upon the  
lap of his mother, and listen to the soothing  
accents of her voice, consoling him under  
his trials, and encouraging his hopes for the  
future."

I have taken these statements from an  
excellent discourse on the life and character  
of Governor Shunk, by Dr. De Witt, an elo-  
quent Divine of Harrisburg, and I introduce  
them here for the purpose of making two  
remarks. The first is on the importance  
and value of maternal influence. I have  
already hinted that, the biographies of al-  
most all distinguished men reveal the fact so  
distinctly stated by Dr. De Witt, in regard to  
Gov. Shunk, that the moulding-influence of

the mother, more than all other agencies,  
gave shape and direction to the character of  
the man. The first and most vivid impres-  
sions of the child are associated with the  
family circle, the household, and the hearth-  
stone; and these associations, while they  
are the earliest and the fondest, are the most  
enduring and distinct—absence cannot  
weaken them, and the cares of life, though  
they come in like a flood, cannot overwhelm  
them. From every point of life, not excepting  
the bed of death, the heart goes back to  
the scenes of childhood, like the shadow  
on the dial of Ahas. The heart is forever  
young—

"Forever young—though life's old age  
Hath ever nerve unstrung;  
The heart—the heart is a heritage  
That keeps the old man young."  
And there, in that home of the heart, among  
those endeared scenes of childhood, shut  
out from the vulgar gaze of the world, sits  
enthroned maternal love, that lends enchant-  
ment to the place, and makes it all that is  
meant by the magic words, "HOME—SWEET  
HOME!" Oh, is it strange that gentleness,  
and piety, and love, such as a mother's, is  
in the midst of subduing scenes and influences,  
should be able to tame the wild and wayward  
spirit of the boy—to revive his desponding  
hopes—to point his eye onward to prosper-  
ity and renown, and upward to an inheri-  
tance that is incorruptible, and fade not  
away? Let mothers seize their power  
and understand their mission. God estab-  
lished this family relation for great and bene-  
ficial purposes; and these are to be work-  
ed out chiefly through a wise exercise of the  
mysterious power with which he has clothed  
the mother. When young Shunk pillow-  
ed his head in his mother's lap, that power  
set its seal on his spirit; and now behold  
this monument that has been reared to his  
memory, and this waiting throng assembled  
round his grave, and read in these the re-  
sults of her counsels and her influence.—  
Could that fond mother have seen her boy  
with the eye of faith, as

"—he, above the rest,  
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,  
Stood like a tower,"  
about to take upon himself the highest in  
this great Commonwealth; could she see  
what fearless integrity he wielded the pow-  
ers his countrymen so cheerfully confided to  
him, and yet, what meekness he bore his  
blushing honors; could her eye have  
caught, through the shadows of the future,  
the outlines of this graceful shaft and this  
vast group; could her ear have heard the  
voice of eulogy which a nation's gratitude  
has raised to the boy she nurtured, oh, how  
would her bosom have swelled with emo-  
tions too big for utterance. Then would  
she have understood her relation to these  
results—that she was the motive power in  
that character destined for so illustrious a  
career; and whilst I know not that the pro-  
spect could have stimulated her to do more  
than she did to train up her son in the way  
he should go, and how she has seen her  
ward in that, when he was old he did not  
depart from it. Mother and Son both rest  
now from their labors; and we may trust  
that, in the family of the redeemed in Heav-  
en, they enjoy the full fruition of that de-  
lightful intercourse which, commencing in  
the domestic circle, shall know no change,  
but increase, through the countless ages of  
eternity.

The other observation to which I referred  
is, that this story of Governor Shunk's boy-  
hood should encourage the sense of poverty  
and toil to aim at those distinctions in life  
which, under our most happy political in-  
stitutions, are open to them as well as to oth-  
ers. Dr. De Witt adds, in regard to young  
Shunk, "Notwithstanding his want of opor-  
tunities for securing an education, his un-  
tiring industry, combined with his earnest  
desire for self-improvement, enabled him to  
make such advances in learning that, at the  
early age of fifteen, he became the teacher  
of a small school, and soon after the in-  
structor of the village school where he was  
born. From that time until 1812, he seems to  
have been employed as a teacher; during the  
few months of the year the school was con-  
tinued, and the rest of the time in the pur-  
suits of agriculture. The intervals of toil  
were devoted by him to the improvement of  
his mind, in every useful branch of indus-  
try."

I would that I could address myself now  
to every boy, and especially to every poor  
boy, not only in Montgomery county, but  
throughout our land. I would point them  
to the elements which combined to give  
success to young Shunk—"untiring indus-  
try," and "his earnest desire for self-im-  
provement." It is not the blazonry of the  
Herald's office—nor pedigree—nor dusty  
records of genealogy—nor family—nor  
friends—nor wealth—nor anything but "un-  
tiring industry" and an "earnest desire for  
self-improvement," that will make full-pro-  
portioned and useful men. And these, thank  
God! never fail. What boy is more scant  
of means—more straightened in circum-  
stances, than was Francis R. Shunk? and  
yet, he overcame the disadvantages of birth  
and fortune, and made himself a name more  
enduring than the materials of his monu-  
ment.

I love to contemplate such examples. I  
love to withdraw my eyes from the tinsel  
foppery of our cities; from the mining gait  
and the mustached lip; from the wasp-like  
form and the faint complexion of the beau-  
monde, and fasten them on the hardy and ro-  
bust sons of toil. It is refreshing to see how  
firm they tread the earth; how stalwart, and  
solid, and healthful they are.—And there is  
something in agricultural labor, let me tell

the farmer boys of Pennsylvania, better cal-  
culated than any other employment, to de-  
velop, not only the physical proportions of  
the man, but the judgment, and all the stern  
qualities of the intellect. And such labor  
affords intervals, when books, if well  
chosen and rightly used, may be not only a  
refreshing recreation, but the means of qual-  
ifying for other spheres of duty and usefu-  
lness. Study the example of Shunk; catch  
its full meaning; ye sons of toil, condemned  
to indigence; and as ye pause in labor, and  
wipe the sweat from your eyes, look here!  
See this Monument. Be still. Listen to its  
eloquent teachings. It is voiceless to the  
ear of flesh, and yet it speaks a language  
your inner man can hear. It tells you to  
love the political institutions of your coun-  
try, which recognize no distinctions of birth  
or wealth; "to shield them, to save them,  
or perish there too;" it bids you to cultivate  
"untiring industry" and "a desire for self-  
improvement;" to fulfil duties to which you  
may be called with fidelity; to live the life  
and die the death of a christian man; and  
as ye return to your labor, and pursue it till  
the evening, bear these lessons on your  
heart of hearts.

In 1812, whilst the Government was still  
at Lancaster, Mr. Shunk was appointed by  
General Andrew Porter, then Surveyor Gen-  
eral under Gov. Snyder, to fill a clerkship in  
his department, and here he won the confi-  
dence and friendship of both of these distin-  
guished men. When the Government was  
removed from Lancaster to Harrisburg, he  
had charge, in connection with Captain  
McCallister, of the removal of the Records  
of the Surveyor General's Office, which they  
carried in a team wagon. A great part of  
the way Shunk walked, but occasionally rode  
the off-horse of the team, by the side of  
Captain McCallister. Such was the en-  
ergy of the future Governor of the Common-  
wealth into the Capital of the State.

While employed in the Surveyor General's  
Office, he commenced and prosecuted the  
study of the law with Thomas Elder, Esq.,  
of Harrisburg.  
In 1814, he marched as a private to the  
defence of Baltimore against an invading  
enemy.  
Soon after, he was chosen, first, an assis-  
tant, and then the principal Clerk of the  
House of Representatives, to which office he  
was annually elected—whenever the Demo-  
crats were in majority—for sixteen years. I  
speak without fear of contradiction, when I  
aver that the various, complicated, and re-  
sponsible duties of that office were never  
more faithfully or skillfully performed, than  
by Francis R. Shunk. Indeed, my impres-  
sion is, that his administration of that Clerk-  
ship has become an acknowledged model.  
The Journal of the House, kept by the Clerk,  
must exhibit from day to day, an exact  
transcript of the proceedings of the body.  
No matter what confusion prevails—no mat-  
ter what blunders the Speaker or the mem-  
bers on the floor may make, the Clerk must  
fall into neither confusion nor blunders. He  
must understand parliamentary law perfectly,  
and be familiar with the duties of the Chair  
and the course of legislation. His eye must  
be ever ready to see who rises to a motion,  
and his ear open to hear what is moved;  
though his hand may be engaged in enter-  
ing a motion made the moment before. A  
resolution, or motion, or amendment, is  
sometimes sent to the Clerk's desk in a  
chirography that would defy an unpractised  
eye, perhaps that of the writer himself; and  
sometimes a member, in the haste of the  
moment, or from want of practice in com-  
position, repeats or omits words, or parts  
of a sentence, until he makes confusion  
where confusion would not be. On such occa-  
sions, the name of Shunk would rise on the in-  
stant, and in a clear and distinct voice, would  
read off the resolution, the motion or amend-  
ment, as readily as if it were in print, and  
in the perfectness of language in which it  
ought to have been expressed. Often have I  
heard members of the House express their  
grateful feelings to him for the assistance  
rendered them on occasions of doubt and  
difficulty, and for the grace and good nature  
with which he rendered it, causing them no  
embarrassment or mortification; but help-  
ing them to results which they were too ig-  
norant or too awkward to attain by them-  
selves. He was wont to direct inexperienced  
and to encourage modest talent on the floor;  
while, all the time, his own appropriate  
duties were performed with exactness and  
promptness. In the transcribing room, his  
systematic habits and his ever-vigilant eye  
preserved, through all the changeable stages  
of legislation, the laws that were passed, in  
the accuracy of the letter. As Clerk of the  
House of Representatives, he had, more-  
over the disbursement of large sums of  
public money, for the expenses of the House,  
and while the history of that office shows  
that the most scandalous speculation is pos-  
sible, the fair fame of Francis R. Shunk is un-  
tarnished by the breath of suspicion. "It is  
required of a Steward that he be found faith-  
ful;" and faithful was this man ever found,  
but never more scrupulously faithful than  
where it is most easy and common to err, in  
the keeping, disbursement and accounting for  
of public money.—His reputation was so  
high as Clerk of the House of Representa-  
tives, that on the organization of the Board  
of Canal Commissioners, he became Sec-  
retary of the Board, and addressed himself  
with his customary assiduity, to arranging  
and systematizing the details of business in  
that most important office. In this situation  
he made himself familiar with everything  
connected with our system of internal im-  
provements, of which he was at all times  
an intelligent and devoted friend.

That for so many years he performed du-  
ties so important and various, to the perfect  
satisfaction of the public, is a fact that goes  
far to justify the honor we are here this day  
to do to his memory. And let it be consid-  
ered that those duties were comparatively  
humble. How little is there in the incessant  
tool of a Clerk to reward ambition? His du-  
ties, like those of the housewife, are ever  
recurring and never finished. Complaints  
and reproaches are ready for him if his work  
be not well done and in good time; but if it  
be, it is considered a matter of course that  
his work should be well done, and the world  
continues to gaze at more conspicuous ob-  
jects.

In the winter of 1838-9, whilst Shunk  
still held the Clerkship, that memorable  
epoch in our political annals known as the  
"buckshot war," occurred. During those  
stormy days of terror and threatened vio-  
lence, Shunk stood firm and unmoved in de-  
fence of the Constitution and the usages of  
the House. His counsels were continually  
sought and highly esteemed; for they were  
the counsels of wisdom, and prudence, and  
patriotism, and firmness. The incipient  
steps to an organization of the House were  
taken under his direction, as Clerk of the  
last House; and to his unflinching courage  
and fidelity were due, in a great measure,  
the final and constitutional organization of  
the Legislature of 1839, and the preservation  
of the State from frightful scenes of blood-  
shed and civil war.

Directly on the accession of Gov. Porter,  
in 1839, he appointed Mr. Shunk Secretary  
of State, and he became in virtue of his  
office, Superintendent of the Common School  
of Pennsylvania. As Secretary of State, he  
maintained the reputation he had gained in  
inferior stations, whilst he bent all the ener-  
gies of his position to the accomplishment  
of the benign purposes of the Common  
School Law. Having himself been schooled  
in poverty—knowing with all the fullness and  
truthfulness of personal experience, the de-  
plorable desolation of poor children in respect  
to education, and holding, as an elementary  
truth of his political creed, that it was the  
duty of a paternal Commonwealth to relieve  
their unblest condition, he entered upon the  
duties of Superintendent of the Common  
Schools of Pennsylvania with a zeal and en-  
ergy that showed his heart was in his work,  
and which, if he had continued in office,  
could not have failed to produce the most  
beneficial results for the poor.

Retiring from the Cabinet of Governor  
Porter, Mr. Shunk removed his family to  
Pittsburg, and there established himself in  
the practice of his profession. He had mar-  
ried, many years before, a daughter of the  
late Governor Findlay, and they had reared  
an interesting family at Harrisburg. The  
many friends whom he had made in every  
part of the State, by his obliging manners in  
the various positions which he had held,  
found always a hearty welcome to his hos-  
pitable mansion, and were entertained with  
affectionate civility. Agreeable, however, as  
were the civilities and hospitalities of this  
excellent man, and his amiable family, they  
were less honorable to him than were the  
shelter and support which he afforded to his  
aged father, whose last days he soothed with  
the most affectionate care. He extended  
protection and assistance, also, to his father-  
in-law, the late Gov. Findlay, in the days of  
that excellent man's adversity.

Nor were his charities confined to his own  
kinsfolk. With a big, warm heart in his bosom,  
that could feel for his fellow man, his  
hand was ever open to relieve the destitu-  
tion and distress that came under his eye.  
I have said that he removed to Pittsburg,  
to practice his profession; and I have reason  
to believe that he looked forward to long  
years of happy retirement, in that city, from  
the turmoils of public life. There, in the  
bosom of his family—whose idol he was—  
in the midst of a large and wealthy popula-  
tion, whose confidence as a man and a law-  
yer he enjoyed, he had a right to anticipat  
exemption from the harassing cares of of-  
fice, and a lucrative practice of his honor-  
able profession.

But his dreams of domestic retirement  
and of his professional prosperity, were as  
unsubstantial as the dreams of public men  
generally are. There were highly respecta-  
ble citizens who had long looked to him as  
the Governor of the Commonwealth. A ven-  
erable man on the Juniata told me, that he  
had voted for Francis R. Shunk for twenty-  
five years before he was nominated. There  
were many others whose thoughts had long  
turned to him in connection with that high  
office, though they had not manifested their  
wishes by so direct an expression. In 1844  
the canvass became active between the  
friends of the Honorable Henry A. Muhlen-  
berg, of Berks county, and those of Francis  
R. Shunk. The nomination was to be made  
on the approaching fourth of March; both  
candidates were native Pennsylvanians, and  
both were Germans; both had served faith-  
fully and acceptably in various public trusts,  
and both were eminently qualified in all  
respects, for the Chief Magistracy of this  
great State. The contest was animated, but  
honorable. Before the Convention met, pub-  
lic opinion seemed to be in equipoise be-  
tween these two favorite sons; but, on the  
assembly of that body at Harrisburg, on  
the 4th of March, 1844, the friends of Mr.  
Muhlenberg were found to be in majority,  
and he accordingly received the nomination  
of the Democratic party for the office of  
Governor. The friends of Shunk acquiesced  
in the result, and the ranks of the party col-  
losed up in support of Mr. Muhlenberg. Shunk  
ever loyal to his principles, gave his unre-

served support to the nomination, as Mr.  
Muhlenberg, equally loyal to the same prin-  
ciples, would undoubtedly have done had  
his competitor been the nominee. In the  
course of the ensuing summer, however,  
Mr. Muhlenberg, by a sudden summons of  
Divine Providence, was taken from this  
scene of trial to his reward on high. All  
hearts mourned this sudden taking off of  
their selected Chief; but all eyes turned in-  
stinctively to Shunk as the man to take the  
place of the lamented Muhlenberg, and to  
be the standard bearer of the Democracy in  
the approaching contest. The same Con-  
vention met again, and placed Mr. Shunk in  
nomination; and the friends of Mr. Muhlen-  
berg yielded to him the same generous  
support which had been accorded to their  
favorite.—Thus, in one and the same cam-  
paign, occurred two beautiful illustrations,  
one by each side of the party, of sincere  
devotion to the usages of the Democracy,  
and of unqualified submission to regular  
nominations.

The Whig party had for their candidate in  
1844, a worthy and distinguished citizen,  
who combined in himself the elements of  
popularity in an eminent degree; but nei-  
ther the popularity of General Markle, nor  
the repugnance which was felt to Mr.  
Shunk's radical opinions on various sub-  
jects by men who were his personal friends  
and admirers, could avail to defeat his elec-  
tion. His hold on the affections of the peo-  
ple of Pennsylvania was too strong—he had  
been tried too long, and was too well known  
as an upright man, a sagacious Statesman,  
and a faithful public servant, to render his  
election doubtful. His majority was decis-  
ive.

On the 21st of January, 1845, in the  
Capital of our ancient Commonwealth, before  
the representatives of nearly two millions of  
people, and in the presence of many of that  
people, stood Francis R. Shunk—the poor  
boy of the Trappe—to take the oath pre-  
scribed by the Constitution of the United  
States and of Pennsylvania, and to assume  
upon himself the duties of Governor of this  
great State. Behold the man. Survey him  
well; his majestic form—his benevolent  
countenance—his commanding mien. He  
comes not to an inheritance of honors won  
by the brave hearts and strong arms of a  
feudal ancestry. He boasts no patrician  
blood. He bears on his manly person no  
miserable baubles as insignia of royal rank.  
But there he stands, a plain, simple, repub-  
lican citizen—sprung from lowly life, inured  
to toil, tried in public trusts, and always  
found faithful—and now about to assume  
the high office to which the free suffrages  
of his admiring countrymen have called him.  
Oh, it was a spectacle on which men and  
angels rejoiced to look! And it was a scene  
that illustrated the beauty of our institu-  
tions, which open up a pathway for the hum-  
blest cottager, from the obscurity in which  
he was born to positions of distinction and ho-  
nor. No where else in our ill-governed world,  
only in this beloved land of ours—can such  
scenes be witnessed. In other lands, the  
cottager must toil on in his cheerless and  
hopeless obscurity—thankful if tide and  
sea gatherers—if Church, and State, and  
Stewards of princely landlords, leave him  
daily bread for himself and his little ones.  
If aspiring thoughts rise up in his mind,  
the God stamped with immortality, he must  
stifle and subdue them as if they were  
the suggestions of an evil spirit. Let him  
not think of place and power—of honors  
and renown—these belong, he is told, to the  
rich and well born—his only solitudes must  
limit themselves to daily bread! To him  
the motto "raise yourself," is an unmeaning  
taunt—there are no steps for him. But it is  
the glory of our institutions that they repress  
no soul, and quench no Promethean fires.  
May they be as enduring as the race of man!

Having traced the more prominent pas-  
sages in the life of Governor Shunk, from  
his boyhood to his elevation to Governmen-  
tal honors, I shall not detain you by follow-  
ing him through his administration and his  
re-election by a greatly increased majority.  
This is not a suitable place for discussing  
the measures of his administration. His  
State papers are all marked with great abil-  
ity and a thorough understanding of the civil  
and political history of the State, and they  
exhibit the highest regard for the public mo-  
rals and the general welfare. You all know  
with what solicitude he guarded the public  
credit—with what sternness he resisted the  
tendency of capital to oppress labor, and  
with what energy he rebuked the rage for  
corporations which prevailed amongst us.  
In reference to our covenant obligations to  
sister States, no man was more sound than  
Governor Shunk. Regarding the institution  
of domestic slavery as a political evil entail-  
ed upon us by the power of the mother  
country, whilst we were subject colonies, he  
rejoiced in its extirpation from the soil of  
Pennsylvania, and was content to wait until  
other States, in the exercise of their sov-  
ereign and exclusive jurisdiction, should see  
fit to expel it from their borders. He under-  
stood the rights of the States too well, and  
he felt the force of our constitutional com-  
pact too sensibly to countenance the sedi-  
tious movements that are sometimes made  
in the northern States for the abolition of this  
institution; States which choose for the  
present to retain it.

On the whole, his administration of the  
government was highly satisfactory to the  
people, and creditable to himself. He sur-  
rounded himself with able, experienced  
and upright men, who won and retained the  
popular confidence in an enviable degree.  
In contemplating the career of Governor

Shunk, we are dazzled by no coruscations  
of genius. He never achieved some great  
deed which no other man could have ac-  
complished. Military exploits which ad-  
dressed themselves most strongly to the ad-  
miration of the multitude, were never his.—  
Though a good speaker, he had no claim to  
the peculiar powers of an orator. Though  
well read in the history and laws of his  
country, and familiar with both German and  
English literature, he was not in the usual  
acceptation of the term, a learned man; and  
was neither an historian nor a poet. Nor  
was there any thing peculiar or extraordi-  
nary in the duties to which he was called.  
Many other men have occupied the same  
stations with credit to themselves and ad-  
vantage to the public. It may not be look-  
ing intently at any one part of his life; or  
any one of the many fine achievements of  
his intellect, but only by taking into view  
the whole circle, from the cradle to the grave,  
that we attain an adequate conception of the  
man. It is then we see how harmonious  
and proportionate are all the parts. The  
gradations of his life, the steps by which he  
raised himself from the field in which he  
traced his youthful frame with manual labor,  
to the Executive Chair, were rational and  
consecutive. There was no eccentric and  
no retrograde movements. All was one  
steady, measured, onward march. All was  
with the growth of his character. The af-  
fectionate, confiding, industrious, and truth-  
ful boy, became a humane, just and honest  
man—a diligent, upright and skillful officer,  
and a Chief Magistrate in whom inflexible  
integrity and unquestioned capacity were  
blended with the gentlest and most paternal  
manners. "The proverbial honesty of Gov-  
ernor Shunk," says Dr. De Witt, "was one  
principal cause of his popularity both in  
public and private life. With sterling un-  
bending integrity, he united his child-like  
simplicity of character, and unmeasured  
kindness of heart. I have never known a  
man of whom it can with so much truth be  
said that affection and kindness were the  
very elements of his being, nor one who  
manifests such unfeigned pleasure in the  
happiness of others. He seemed to revel in  
their enjoyments. The gambolings of a  
lamb, the smile of an infant, the joyous  
shout of childhood, lit up his countenance,  
and seemed to make his heart beat stronger  
with joyful emotions. The constant bound-  
ings of his affections rendered his life a glo-  
riously happy one. Despondency and gloom  
settled on his brow. There was a  
lightness, a joyousness that made his  
very step elastic in the days of his health,  
and transfused into his conduct almost a  
boyish cheerfulness, which some, unac-  
quainted with his character, looked upon as  
a weakness, and others considered as violat-  
ing the proprieties of his elevated situation.  
But he could not help it. If a kind look,  
a cheerful remark, and a cordial shake of the  
hand would give any pleasure to the poorest  
man he met, it was not in his heart to with-  
hold them. If spontiveness would make the  
children around him happy, he could not re-  
fuse it though it should be at the expense  
of the gravity of the Governor of the Com-  
monwealth."

This is an exalted tribute by his revered  
friend and neighbor, who knew him well,  
but it is all deserved. If there ever was a  
man for whom the proverb might be claim-  
ed, "An honest man is the noblest work  
of God," that man was Francis R. Shunk.—  
This praise was accorded to him by all who  
knew him, even the most heated and zeal-  
ous of his political adversaries, and what  
higher fame can a public man achieve! It  
is recorded of Aristides and Epaminondas,  
as a remarkable fact, that though entrusted  
with public treasure, they lived and died  
poor. So with Shunk. Living near the  
treasury most of his life, and in the midst  
of temptations that have overcome the vir-  
tue of many a man, his palm was never  
soiled with a bribe—malice in his phrenzy,  
never impeded to him peculation or fraud,  
and he lived and died poor. Honest amid  
abounding corruption—honest in spite of  
temptation—honest when unseen as well  
as when watched—honest in the recesses  
of the official closet, as well as in the gaze  
of the world, Shunk stands forth an im-  
mortal example of integrity, for the admira-  
tion and imitation of posterity.

And then, how beautifully does the affec-  
tionate character of his heart, as described  
by Dr. De Witt, blend itself with the ster-  
ling character of his life. You all know  
how fond he was of escaping, even for an  
hour, from the excitements of public life,  
to these tranquil scenes of his own, his native  
land. It was here that his whole heart flow-  
ed forth. Here was the home of his birth;  
and the graves of his fathers—Here was the  
good old Church, where his infant accents  
first mingled in the public worship of God—  
here the fields in which he toiled for daily  
bread—here the school-house where he cul-  
tivated his own intellect, whilst he taught  
others—and here were the children of his  
charge, now bestow marks of homage and  
affection, and pointing out to their children,  
their "good old friend, Frank Shunk." Very  
pleasant and hearty were those greetings—  
very pure and deep were the affections thus  
indulged and expressed. And here, in the  
midst of the friends of his youth—in the  
place of his early struggles and triumphs—  
he desired to be buried. Like the patriarch  
of old, he "charged them and said unto  
them, I am to be gathered unto my people;  
bury me with my fathers in the cave that is  
in the field of Ephron the Hittite."

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government was highly satisfactory to the  
people, and creditable to himself. He sur-  
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