

tant question. More than one hundred years, however, before the message of President Washington, our distinguished founder, William Penn, the philosopher, statesman and public educator, looking into the future, beheld the magnificent growth of our country, and inaugurated at the beginning a system of education to meet the wants of the coming Republic. At the second session of the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly, in 1683 a law was passed providing for the 'good education of youth and to the end that the poor as well as the rich may be instructed in good and commendable learning, which is to be preferred before wealth.' In the petition for the grant of a public school charter, in 1697, the petitioners, among other things, set out 'that it hath been and is much desired by many that a school be set up and upheld in this town of Philadelphia where poor children may be freely maintained, taught and educated in good literature. This was the beginning of the William Penn Charter School. The seal of the corporation had engraved upon it the significant inscription 'good instruction is better than riches.'

"Dr. Wickersham, in his excellent work on the history of education, says: 'The advanced educational opinions of the founder of Pennsylvania and his immediate followers do not seem to have been entertained or acted upon by those who succeeded them in the management of the affairs of the Province, for little affecting the interest of education can be found on record emanating from either the Proprietors, the Governors, the Provincial Council or the General Assembly from Penn's time on to the breaking out of the Revolutionary war. The first three-quarters of the 18th century are almost a perfect blank so far as anything was done by the public authorities to provide an education for the people.' This indifference was broken by the effort of Benjamin Franklin, 1743, to establish the 'Academy and Charitable School of the Province of Pennsylvania.' As a result of his efforts a charter was procured in 1753. This semi-public academy subse-

quently developed into the magnificent University of Pennsylvania.

"When the Provisional Constitution of the Commonwealth of 1776 was framed, the article upon education provided that 'a school or schools shall be established in each county by the Legislature for the convenient instruction of youth, with such salaries to the masters, paid by the public, as may enable them to instruct youth at low prices; and all useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more universities.' After the Revolution, when the State government was organized, the Constitution of 1790 provided in Section 1, 'The Legislature shall, as soon as conveniently may be, provide by law for the establishment of schools throughout the State in such a manner that the poor may be taught gratis.'

"In Section 2, 'The arts and sciences shall be promoted in one or more seminaries of learning.' This article without change was incorporated into the Constitution of 1838 and continued until the Constitution of 1874, when the article on education provided that 'the General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public schools wherein all the children of the Commonwealth above the age of six years may be educated, and shall appropriate at least one million dollars each year for that purpose.'

"Such has been the sentiment of the people of the Commonwealth from time to time as expressed in their fundamental law. While seminaries were encouraged and university education provided for, State financial aid was sought and obtained. Considerable sums of money were granted. In a report from the Committee on Education in the House of Representatives, in 1833, the chairman writes: 'It is true that the State has frequently and liberally contributed to the aid of academies and colleges for the higher branches of learning, and it is lamentable to think that many of these institutions are either dead or expiring for want of sustenance which on-