

(Private) Danville Penn<sup>a</sup> May 20. 1845

Thomas Ritchie Esq<sup>r</sup>.

Dear Sir,

A Stranger to you personally you will probably be astonished at this intrusion - as a Democrat who has for 35 years been an active member of the Democratic party, and although about to leave the stage of action, I feel an interest in every thing belonging to it and an anxiety for its prosperity - The Newspaper at Washington which is considered the organ of the party has a powerful influence throughout the Country in giving tone to the operations of the party and to do so ought to be confined to the diffusion of correct information on matters of government and Democratic principles and not filled with the idle tales of mercenary letter-writers, most of them false, or extravagant flattery of individuals - Such a paper ought to have a character for integrity, so that it can be relied upon by members of the party as a text -

I have been led to make those remarks, by reading in the Union, (to which I am a subscriber altho not in my own name) several letters from Phil<sup>a</sup> of the kind I have named, containing all the City talk and puffing individuals - Several of the latter I know not only to be extravagant, but false, having a tendency to palm men upon strangers for what they are not, and coming from the organ of the party of course are taken for orthodoxy - This might do for common newspapers but not for the Democratic official - I will briefly notice one -

In a letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> of May the writer says, "I conversed this morning with that veteran soldier and veteran Democrat the Hon. Calvin Blythe, &c." - Does serving one campaign on the Canada frontier make a

"veteran Soldier?" If it does I have equal claims to the title, but I should be ashamed to claim it, for in all my political contests I never would suffer my services to be named, I only done my duty - Or does Calvin Blythes advocating and using his influence to get all the mammoth acts of incorporation, of all kinds passed by the Legislature of Penn<sup>a</sup>, which have almost thrown our State into the arms of the Whigs, - or his advocating the U. S. Bank with all its enormities - or his denouncing Gen<sup>l</sup>. Jackson for removing the deposits from the Monster - or his resigning his Judgeship a few years since to act as President, at a salary of \$2,000 per year, of a rail road and coal company, which became insolvent, or many other such, which want of room will not permit me to enumerate, go to make him "a veteran Democrat" - what I have stated cannot be denied and is it not a vile slander <sup>on the party</sup> to call him "a veteran Democrat" Your letter writer shows how <sup>little</sup> he knows of matters in Penn<sup>a</sup>, <sup>his disregard of truths</sup> when he compares Blythes popularity with that of Henry Horn; I will grant that among the Aristocracy and the Cow Boy politicians Blythe is popular and Horn unpopular and for this very reason Horn is "a veteran Democrat" without spot or blemish "An Israelite without guile" and of course hated by Blythes friends, ~~and~~ among the genuine Democrats he is looked upon as a pilot to the party - Blythe the reverse - His Democracy consists in his cunning and making himself the tool of Whigs and demagogues and living on the best offices which he gets mainly by the influence of James Buchanan whose protegee he has always been - It was by the zeal of Mr. B. aided by a host of "Cow Boys" that Blythe obtained the Collectors office under Mr. Van Buren and those very

men by the aid of the Mail Contractors whose minds were poisoned  
by S. R. Hobbie 1<sup>st</sup> Asst. P. M. Gen<sup>l</sup>. lost Mr. Van Buren the vote of  
Penn<sup>a</sup>. in 1840 — I opposed his appointment then as I would now  
Give us Democrats to fill offices, repudiate the common practice under Dem-  
ocratic Administrations of continuing Federalists in office, through courtesy or to  
gratify private friendships, and no party paupers — I have given you this  
case as a proof of the correctness of my first assertion, that the organ of the party  
ought not to fill its columns with the trash and fabrications of ~~the~~ letter  
writers, — It was with regret, that I read the notice of the death of the  
truly Veteran Democrat and honest man W. H. Roane of Virginia, all you  
said of him is true, and you might have said more without being chargeable  
with exaggeration. I knew him intimately while I was in Con in —  
— greps the two  ~~Sessions~~ Sessions he served in the Senate — He was a last  
tower of strength to the party and by his advice and example kept more  
than one who wavered from going over to the enemy — There was no  
time serving with him and no notions of expediency could induce  
him to abandon his principles — Would God we had more such  
men — I shall soon join him beyond the grave having been confined  
to my bed for 15 months unable to write I have to use the pen of another

When I endorse this as private I mean only not for publication I  
care not who sees it I have no secret opinions of political men or measures  
nor do I ever place implicit confidence in a converted Federalist for  
"the blood is in them" and in a general way they will, sow like, "return  
to their wallow" — The person who forwards this for me knows nothing  
of its contents — I hope you may enjoy health to enable you to discharge  
the arduous duties you have commenced — Very truly your friend  
Daniel Pettkin

David Ritchie

1845

Thos. Ritchie Esq<sup>r</sup> "  
Editor of the Union  
Washington City  
D. C.

1 go to  
the