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Americanism

Ry LEONARD WOOD

may take, but as for me, give

me liberty or give me death!

-Patrick Henry: Speech before

VERY American schoolhoy knows

this speech of Patrick Henry. In ecent years serious speakers have

avoided it as a text and rarely have used it as a quotation. Why? Simply

because it is so well known and has been repeated so many times in the

years past for public platforms that

the thought has been it is worn

threadbare. There even have been

those who have looked upon it as a

bit of "spread-eagleism" and therefore

not to be used in what they call dig-

The men who look upon this utter-

ance of Patrick Henry in this way lose sight of the spirit of the times

and the immediate spirit of the occa-

sion which induced its utterance. It

was a ringing and a daring speech and it meant Americanism at a time

when only the fearless were thinking

of Americanism in all that the word

Freedom, equality of men before

the law, those inalienable rights of

mankind, which the Declaration of

Independence, only one year after

Henry spoke in Virginia, made as

plain as John Hancock's signature so

Patrick Henry in this speech said

that he did not know what course

others might take. There were then

men who feared to follow the path

that liberty with equality could be attained, or if attained could be main-

tained. The doubting ones drew Jes-

sons from the past and predicted like

happenings in the future. America

has given the answer to the doubters

There is but one course that men

nay take if they would insure the

preservation of those institutions

that all men might read.

in this country.

holds liberty priceless.

nified discourse.

the Virginia convention March,

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By JAMES MORGAN

Five Minute Chats

on Our Presidents

(Copyright, 1920, by James Morgan.) JOHN TYLER

1790—March 29, John Tyler born in Charles City, Charles City county, Va. 1827-36 United States senator. 1840—Elected vice president. 1841-April 6, became tenth pres-

ident, aged 51. 1845-March 3, signed Joint resolution for annexation of

1861—President of the peace convention in Washington. Elected to Confederate congress.

1862-Jan, 17, died in Richmond, Va., aged 71.

REATNESS and the presidency J found John Tyler down on one knee, playing "knucks" with his boys in a pathway of his dooryard in Williamsburg, that stately old vice-regal village of colonial Virginia. He had not even heard that Harrison was ill until destiny, without steam, wire or rail to carry it, sped to him from Washington by boat and buggy with the news that the president had been dead a day and that the empty presidential chair was awaiting the vice president.

Tyler belongs among the third or fourth-rate presidents. Although s clean-handed, kindly man of good presence and polished manners, he was a mediocre country lawyer and a narrow-minded politician, with a gift for getting offices that he had no gift for

As John Tyler stepped into the White House, its door closed against the party which had elected him only five months before. Death had turned out the Whigs after 30 days of power and caused a political revolution.

Clay looked upon the accidental president as only a regent for the Hatri-

son administration and for the Whig party. Early in the extra session of congress, that impression of the senator from Kentúcky was sharplý corrected by a presidential veto of one of his own bills—a banking bill.

The Whigs were wild with rage; the Democrats filled with glee. The Democratic senators hastened in a body to the White House, where they were patting Tyler on the back while a Whig mob outside in the yard was making a vociferous, but futile protest. When the next veto came in Clay himself called the cabinet to gether and the members, with one ex-

ception, agreed to resign.

The exception was none other than that of the secretary of state, Daniel Webster, "Where am I to go?" the god-like Daniel thundered in his bewilderment. Some told him to go to one place, some to another. He held on for two years, until he had concluded the negotiation of the Ashburton treaty, which fixed the disputed boundary between Maine and Canada and then he resigned.

Upon Webster's retirement, Tyler installed in the state department his mentor and idol, John C. Calhoun, and thus completed the overturn. The cabinet was now out and out Demo cratic and of the pro-slavery brand.

Texas find seceded from Mexico which had abolished slavery, and its American settlers, who were facing the choice of slave labor or free labor, were anxious to be admitted to the Union. The slave holders of the southern states wanted to expand their power over the vast Texan empire as an offset to the rapid expanwhich led to independence, and there sion of the free states in the great were other men who did not believe West. But northern sentiment was

> At an opportune moment for the annexationists, the ubiquitous John Bull, with his omnipresent gunboat, appeared on the Texan scene as a mediator between Mexicans and Temans. His entry gave the slave in terests the needed villain for the play, and the cry went up that we must annex Texas to keep the British from grabbing it.

which were in Patrick Henry's mind when he demanded liberty and made Nevertheless the senate rejected death preferable if it were to be deoverwhelmingly the treaty of annexanied. Americans born here or born tion. Thereupon Tyler proposed to elsewhere have liberty in their hands beat the devil around the stump, and to keep or to throw away. American-Texas was annexed the last night of ization has but one object, the teachthe administration by a simple joint ing of that kind of citizenship which resolution, rushed through the two

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