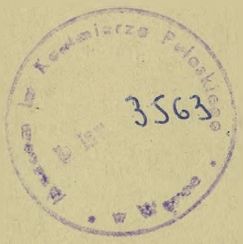
Little Journeys

EMINENT ORATORS

PATRICK HENRY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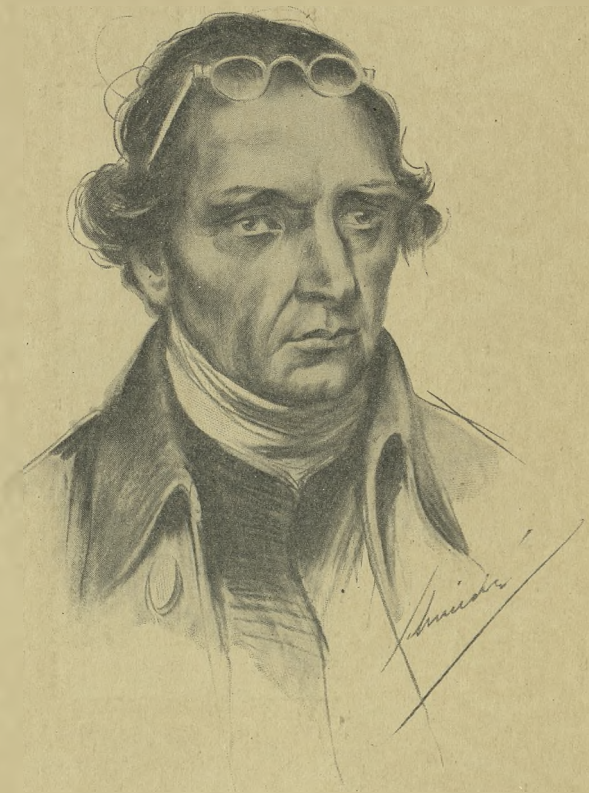


Patrick Henry

Little Journeys

To the Homes of

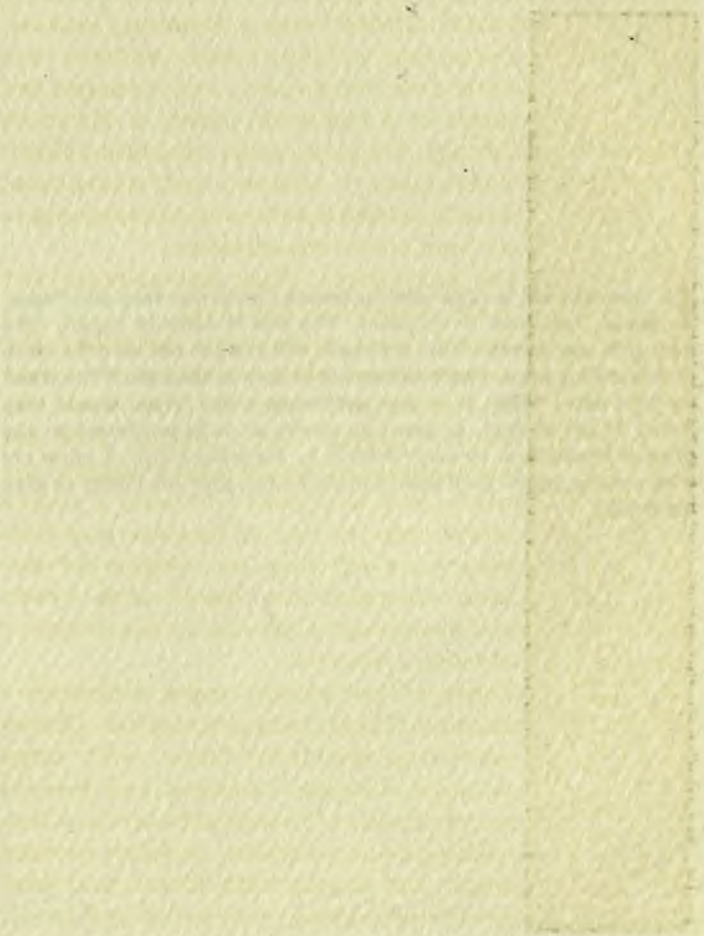
EMINENT ORATORS

Henry

Written by Elbert Hubbard and done into a Book by the Roycrofters at the Shop, which is in East Aurora, New York, A. D. 1903

PATRICK HENRY

IT is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, peace; but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God!—I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!



SARAH SYME was a blooming widow, thirty-two in June—such widows are never over thirty-two—and managed her estate of a thousand acres in Hanover County, Virginia, with business ability. That such a widow, and thirty-two, should remain a widow in a pioneer country was out of the question.

She had suitors. Their horses were tied to the pickets all day long.

One of these suitors has described the widow for us. He says she was "lively in disposition," and he also uses the words "buxom" and "portly." I do not like these expressions—they suggest too much, so I will none of them. I would rather refer to her as lissome and willowy, and tell how her sorrow for the dead wrapped her 'round with weeds and becoming sable—but in the interests of truth I dare not.

Some of her suitors were widowers—ancient of days, fat and falstaffian. Others were lean and lachrymose, with large families, fortunes impaired and futures mostly behind. Then there were gay fox-hunting holluschickies, without serious intent and minus both future and past worth mentioning, who called and sat on

the front porch because they thought their presence would be pleasing and relieve the tedium of widowhood.

Then there was a young Scotch schoolmaster, educated, temperate, and gentlemanly, who came to instruct the two children of the widow in long division and who blushed to the crown of his red head when the widow invited him to tea.

Have a care, Widow Syme! Destiny has use for you with your lively ways and portly form. You are to make history, help mold a political policy, fan the flames of war, and through motherhood make yourself immortal. Choose your casket wisely, O Widow Syme! It is the hour of Fate!

THE widow was a Queen Bee and so had a perfect right to choose her mate. The Scotchman proved to be it. He was only twenty-five, they say, but he was man enough when standing before the Registrar to make it thirty. When he put his red head inside the church door some one cried, "Genius!" And so they were married and lived happily ever after.

¶ And the name of the Scotchman was John Henry—I'll not deceive you, Sweet!

John and Sarah were well suited to each other. John was exact, industrious, practical. The wife had a lively sense of humor, was entertaining and intelligent. Under the management of the canny Scot the

estate took on a look of prosperity. The man was a model citizen—honors traveled his way: he became colonel of the local militia, county surveyor, and finally magistrate. Babies arrived as rapidly as Nature would allow and with the regularity of an electric clock—although, of course, there was n't any electricity then.

¶ The second child was named Patrick, Jr., in honor and in deference to a brother of the happy father—a clergyman of the Established Church. Patrick Henry always subscribed himself "P. Henry, Jr.," & whether he was ever aware that there was only one Patrick Henry is a question.

There were nine altogether in the brood—eight of them good, honest, barn-yard fowls.

And one was an eagle.

Why this was so no one knew—the mother did n't know and the father could not guess. All of them were born under about the same conditions, all received about the same training—or lack of it.

However, no one at first suspected that the eagle was an eagle—over a score of years were to pass before he was suddenly to spread out strong, sinewy wings and soar to the ether.

Patrick Henry caused his parents more trouble and anxiety than all the rest of the family combined. Patrick and culture had nothing in common. As a youngster he roamed the woods, bare of foot and bare of head, his only garments a shirt and trousers held in place by a single gallus. He was indolent, dreamy,

procrastinating, frolicsome, with a beautiful aversion to books, and a fondness for fishing that was carried to the limit. The boy's mother did n't worry very much about the youngster, but the father had spells when he took the matter to the Lord in prayer, and afterward, growing impatient of an answer, fell to and used the tawse without mercy. John Henry probably did this as much to relieve his own feelings as for the good of the boy, but doubtless he did not reason quite that far.

Patrick nursed his black and blue spots and fell back on his flute for solace.

After one such seance, when he was twelve years of age, he disappeared with a colored boy about his own age. They took a shot gun, fishing tackle and a violin. They were gone three weeks, during which time Patrick had not been out of his clothes, nor once washed his face. They had slept out under the sky by camp-fires. The smell of smoke was surely on his garments, and his parents were put to their wits to distinguish between the bond and the free.

Had Patrick been an only child he would have driven his mother into hysteria and his father to the flowing bowl (I trust I use the right expression). If not this, then it would have been because the fond parents had found peace by transforming their son into a Little Lord Fauntleroy. Nature shows great wisdom in sending the young in litters—they educate each other, and so divide the time of the mother that attention to the

individual is limited to the actual needs. Too much interference with children is a grave mistake.

Patrick Henry quit school at fifteen with a love for 'rithmetic—it was such a fine puzzle—and an equal regard for history—history was a lot o' good stories. For two years he rode wild horses, tramped the woods with rod and gun, and played the violin at country dances.

Another spasm of fear, chagrin and discouragement sweeping over the father on account of the indifference and profligacy of his son, he decided to try the youth in trade, and if this failed, to let him go to the devil. So a stock of general goods was purchased and Patrick and William, the elder brother, were shoved off upon the uncertain sea of commerce.

The result was just what might have been expected. The store was a loafing place for all the ne'er-do-wells in the vicinity. Patrick trusted everybody—those who could not get trusted elsewhere patronized Patrick.

Things grew worse. In a year, when just eighteen years old, P. Henry, Jr., got married—married a rollicking country lass, as foolish as himself—done in bravado, going home from a dance, calling a minister out on his porch, in a crazy quilt, to perform the ceremony. John Henry would have applied the birch to this hare-brained bridegroom, and the father of the girl would have stung her pink and white anatomy, but Patrick coolly explained that the matter could not be undone—they were duly married for better or for worse, and so

the less fuss the better. Patrick loved his Doxey, and the Doxey loved her Patrick, and together they made as precious a pair of beggars as ever played Gypsy music at a country fair.

Most of the time they were at the home of the bride's parents—not by invitation—but they were there. The place was a wayside tavern. The girl made herself useful in the kitchen, and Patrick welcomed the traveler and tended bar.

So things drifted, until Patrick was twenty-four, when one fine day he appeared on the streets of Williamsburg. He had come in on horseback and his boots, clothing, hair and complexion formed a chromatic ensemble the color of Hanover County clay. The account comes from his old time comrade, Thomas Jefferson, who was at Williamsburg attending college.

"I've come up here to be admitted to the bar," gravely said P. Henry to T. Jefferson.

"But you are a bar-keeper now, I hear."

"Yes," said Patrick, "but that 's the other kind. You see, I 've been studying law, and I want to be admitted to practice."

It took several minutes for the man who was to write the Declaration of Independence to get it through his head that the matter was n't a joke. Then he conducted the lean, lank, rawboned rustic into the presence of the judges. There were four of these men, Wythe, Pendleton, Peyton and John Randolph. These men were all to be colleagues of the bumpkin at the First

Continental Congress at Philadelphia, but that lay in the misty future.

They looked at the candidate in surprise; two of them laughed and two looked needlessly solemn. However, after some little parley, they consented to examine the clown as to his fitness to practice law.

In answer to the first question as to how long he had studied, his reply was, "About six weeks."

One biographer says six months, and still another, with anxious intent to prove the excellence of his man, says six years.

We had better take Jefferson's word—"Patrick Henry's reply was six weeks." As much as to say, "What difference is it about how long I have studied? You are here to find out how much I know. There are men who can get more in six weeks than others can in six years—I may be one of these."

The easy indifference of the fellow was sublime. But he did know a little law, and he also knew a deal of history. The main thing against him was his unkempt appearance. After some hesitation the judges gave the required certificate, with a little lecture on the side concerning the beauties of etiquette and right attire as an adjunct to excellence in the learned professions.

¶ Young Mr. Jefferson did n't wait to witness the examination of his friend—it was too painful—and besides he did not wish to be around so as to get any of the blame when the prayer for admission was denied.

So Patrick had to find Thomas. "I've got it!" said

Patrick, and smiled grimly as he tapped his breast pocket where the certificate was safely stowed.

Then he mounted his lean dun horse and rode away, disappearing into the forest.

AS a pedagogic policy the training that Patrick Henry received would be rank ruin. Educational systems are designed for average intellects, but as if to show us the littleness of our little schemes, Destiny seems to give her first prizes to those who have evaded all rules and ignored every axiom. Rules and regulations are for average men—and so are average prizes.

Speak it softly: There are several ways of getting an education. Patrick Henry got his in the woods, following winding streams or lying at night under the stars; by mastering horses and wild animals; by listening to the wrangling of lawyers at country lawsuits, and the endless talk of planters who sat long hours at the tavern, willingly leaving the labors of the field to the sons of Ham.

Thus, at twenty-four, Patrick Henry had first of all a physical constitution like watch-spring steel—he had no nerves—fatigue was unknown to him—he was not aware that he had a stomach. His intellectual endowment lay in his close intimacy with Nature—he knew her and was so a part of her that he never thought of her, any more than the fishes think of the sea. The

continual dwelling on a subject proves our ignorance of it—we discuss only that for which we are reaching out

Then, Patrick Henry knew men—he knew the workers, the toilers, the young, the old, the learned and the ignorant. He had mingled with mankind from behind the counter, the tavern bar, in court and school and in church—by the roadside, at horse-races, camp-meetings, dances and social gatherings. He was light of foot, ready of tongue, and with no thought as to respectability, and no doubts and fears regarding the bread and butter question. He had no pride, save possibly a pride in the fact that he had none. He played checkers, worked out mathematical problems in his mind to astonish the loafers, related history to instruct them—and get it straight in his own mind—and told them stories to make them laugh. It is a great misfortune to associate only with cultured people. "God loves the common people," said Lincoln, "otherwise He would not have made so many of them." Patrick Henry knew them; and is not this an education—to know Life?

¶ He knew he could move men; that he could mold their thoughts; that he could convince them and bring them over to his own way of thinking. He had done it by the hour. In the continual rural litigations, he had watched lawyers make their appeal to the jury; he had sat on these juries, and he knew he could do the trick better. Therefore, he wanted to become a lawyer.

The practice of law to him was to convince, befog, or

divert the jury; he could do it, and so he applied for permission to practice law.

He was successful from the first. His clownish ways pleased the judge, jury and spectators. His ready tongue and infinite good humor made him a favorite. There may not be much law in Justice of the Peace proceedings, but there is a certain rude equity which answers the purpose, possibly, better. And surely it is good practice for the fledgelings: the best way to learn law is to practice it. And the successful practice of the law lies almost as much in evading the law as in complying with it—I suppose we should say that softly, too. In support of the last proposition, let me say that we are dealing with P. Henry, Jr., of Virginia, arch-rebel, and a defier of law and precedent. Had he reverenced law as law, his name would have been writ in water. The reputation of the man hinges on the fact that he defied authority.

The first great speech of Patrick Henry was a defiance of the Common Law of England when it got in the way of the rights of the people. Every immortal speech ever given has been an appeal from the law of man to the Higher Law.

Patrick Henry was twenty-seven; the same age that Wendell Phillips was when he discovered himself. No one had guessed the genius of the man—least of all his parents. He himself did not know his power. The years that had gone had been fallow years—years of failure—but it was all a getting together of his forces

for the spring. Relaxation is the first requisite of strength.

The case was a forlorn hope, and Patrick Henry, the awkward but clever country pettifogger, was retained to defend the "Parsons' Cause," because he had opinions in the matter and no reputation to lose.

First, let it be known that Virginia had an Established Church, which was really the Church of England. The towns were called parishes, and the selectmen, or supervisors, were vestrymen. These vestrymen hired the rectors or preachers, and the money which paid the preachers came from taxes levied on the people.

¶ Now the standard of value in Virginia was tobacco, and the vestrymen, instead of paying the parsons in money, agreed to pay each parson sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco, with curates and bishops in proportion ☙ ☙

But there came a bad year; the tobacco crop was ruined by a drought, and the value of the weed doubled in price.

The parsons demanded their tobacco; a bargain was a bargain; when tobacco was plentiful and cheap they had taken their quota and said nothing. Now that tobacco was scarce and high, things were merely equalized; a contract was a contract.

But the people complained. The theme was discussed in every tavern and store. There were not wanting infidels to say that the parsons should have prayed for rain, and that as they did not secure the moisture,

they were remiss. Others asked by what right shall men who do not labor demand a portion of the crop from those who plant, hoe and harvest?

Of course all good Church people, all of the really loyal citizens, argued that the Parsons were a necessary part of the state—without them society would sink into savagery—and as they did their duties, they should be paid by the people; they served, and all contracts made with them should be kept.

But the mutterings of discontent continued, and to appease the people, the House of Burgesses passed a law providing that instead of tobacco being a legal tender, all debts could be paid in money, figuring tobacco at the rate of two cents per pound. As tobacco was worth about three times this amount, it will be seen at once that this was a law made in favor of the debtor class. It cut the salaries of the rectors down just two-thirds, and struck straight at English Common Law, which provides for the sacredness of contract.

The rectors combined and decided to make a test case. The Parsons vs. the People—or, more properly, "The Rev. John Maury vs. The Colony of Virginia."

Both law and equity were on the side of the Parsons. Their case was clear; only by absolutely overriding the law of England could the people win. The array of legal talent on the side of the Church included the best lawyers in the Colony—the Randolphs and other aristocrats were there.

And on the other side was Patrick Henry, the tall, lean, lank, sallow and uncouth representative of the people. Five judges were on the bench, one of whom was the father of Patrick Henry.

The matter was opened in a logical, lucid, judicial speech by the Hon. Jeremiah Lyon. He stated the case without passion or prejudice—there was only one side to it ❧ ❧

Then Patrick Henry arose. He began to speak; stopped, hesitated, began again, shuffled his feet, cleared his throat, and his father, on the bench, blushed for shame. The auditors thought he was going to break down—even the opposition pitied him.

Suddenly, his tall form shot up, he stepped one step forward and stood like a statue of bronze—his own father did not recognize him, he had so changed. His features were transformed from those of a clown into those of command and proud intelligence. A poise so perfect came upon him that it was ominous. He began to speak—his sentences were crystalline, sharp, clear, direct. The judges leaned forward, the audience hung breathless upon his words.

He began by showing how all wealth comes from labor applied to the land. He pictured the people at their work, showed the laborer in the field in the rains of spring, under the blaze of the summer sun, amid the frosts of autumn—bond and free working side by side with brain and brawn, to wring from the earth a scanty sustenance. He showed the homes of the poor,

the mother with babe at her breast, the girls cooking at the fire, others tending the garden—all the process of toil and travail, of patient labor and endless effort, were rapidly marshaled forth. Over against this, he unveiled the clergy in broadcloth and silken gowns, riding in carriages, seated on cushions and living a life of luxury. He turned and faced the opposition, and shook his bony finger at them in scorn and contempt. The faces of the judges grew livid; many of the Parsons, unable to endure his withering rebuke, sneaked away: the people forgot to applaud; only silence and the stinging, ringing voice of the speaker filled the air. ¶ He accused the Parsons of being the defiers of the law; the people had passed the statute; the preachers had come, asking that it be annulled. And then was voiced, I believe, for the first time in America, the truth that government exists only by the consent of the governed: that law is the crystallized opinion of the people—that the voice of the people is the voice of God—that the act of the Parsons, in seeking to override the will of the people, was treason, and should be punished. He defied the Common Law of England and appealed to the Law of God—the question of right—the question of justice—to whom does the fruit of labor belong!

Before the fiery, overpowering torrent of eloquence of the man, the reason of the judges fled. There was but one will in that assembly, and that will was the will of Patrick Henry.

IN that first great speech of his life—probably the greatest speech then ever given in Virginia—Patrick Henry committed himself irrevocably on the subject of human rights. The theme of taxation came to him in a way it never had before. Men are taxed that other men may live in idleness. Those who pay the tax must decide whether the tax is just or not—anything else is robbery. We shall see how this thought took a hold on Patrick's very life. It was the weak many against the entrenched few. He had said more than he had intended to say—he had expressed things which he never before knew that he knew. As he made truth plain to his auditors, he had clarified his own mind.

The heavens had opened before him—he was as one transformed. That outward change in his appearance only marked an inward illumination which had come to his spirit. In great oratory the appearance of the man is always changed. Men grow by throes and throbs, by leaps and bounds. The idea of "Cosmic Consciousness"—being born again—is not without its foundation in fact—the soul is in process of gestation, and when the time is ripe the new birth occurs, and will occur again and again.

Patrick Henry at once took his place among the strong men of Virginia—his was a personality that must be reckoned with in political affairs. His law practice doubled, and to keep it down he doubled his prices—with the usual effect. He then tried another expedient,

and very few lawyers indeed are strong enough to do this—he would accept no case until the fee was paid in advance. "I keep no books—my fee is so much—pay this and I will undertake your case." He accepted no contingent cases, and if he believed his client was in the wrong, he told him so, and brought about a compromise. Some enemies were made through this frank advice, but when the fight was once on, Patrick Henry was a whirlwind of wrath—he saw but one side and believed in his client's cause as though it had been written by Deity on tables of stone.

Long years after the death of Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson made some remarks about Henry's indolence, and his indisposition to write out things. A little more insight, or less prejudice, would have shown that Patrick Henry's plan was only Nature's scheme for the conservation of forces, and at the last was the highest wisdom.

By demanding the fee in advance, the business was simplified immensely. It tested the good faith of the would-be litigant, cut down the number of clients, preserved the peace, freed the secretions, aided digestion and tended to sweet sleep o' nights.

Litigation is a luxury that must be paid for—by the other fellow, we expect when we begin, but later we find we are it. If the lawyers would form a union and agree not to listen to any man's tale of woe until he placed a hundred dollars in the attorney's ginger jar, it would be a benefit untold to humanity. Contingent

fees and blackmail have much in common. ¶ A man who could speak in public like Patrick Henry was destined for a political career. A vacancy in the State Legislature occurring, the tide of events carried him in. Hardly had he taken the oath and been seated before the house resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Stamp Act. Mutterings from New England had been heard, but Virginia was inclined to abide by the acts of the Mother Country, gaining merely such modifications as could be brought about by modest argument and respectful petition. And in truth let it be stated that the Mother Country had not shown herself blind to the rights of the Colonies, nor deaf to their prayers—the aristocrats of Virginia usually got what they wanted. ¶ The Stamp Act was up for discussion—the gavel rapped for order and the Speaker declared the house in session.

"Mr. Speaker," rang out a high, clear voice. It was the voice of the new member. Inadvertently he was recognized and had the floor. There was a little more "senatorial courtesy" then than now in deliberative bodies, and one of the unwritten laws of the Virginia Legislature was that no member during his first session should make an extended speech or take an active part in the business of the house.

"Sir, I present for the consideration of this House the following resolutions." And the new member read seven resolutions he had scrawled off on the fly leaves of a convenient law book.

As he read, the older members winced and writhed. Peyton Randolph cursed him under his breath. This audacious youth in buckskin shirt and leather breeches was assuming the leadership of the House. His audacity was unprecedented! Here are Numbers Five, Six, and Seven of the Resolutions—these give the meat of the matter:

Resolved, That the general assembly of this colony has the only and sole exclusive right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatsoever, other than the general assembly aforesaid, has a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American freedom.

Resolved, That His Majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this colony, are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatever, designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws or ordinances of the general assembly aforesaid.

Resolved, That any person who shall, by speaking or writing, assert or maintain that any person or persons, other than the general assembly of this colony, have any right or power to impose or lay any taxation on the people here, shall be deemed an enemy to His Majesty's colony.

As the uncouth member ceased to read, there went up a howl of disapproval. But the resolutions were launched, and according to the rules of the House they could be argued, and in order to be repudiated, must be voted upon.

Patrick Henry stood almost alone. Pitted against him

was the very flower of Virginia's age and intellect. Logic, argument, abuse, raillery and threat were heaped upon his head. He stood like adamant and answered shot for shot. It was the speech in the "Parsons' Cause" multiplied by ten—the theme was the same—the right to confiscate the results of labor. Before the debater had ceased, couriers were carrying copies of Patrick Henry's resolutions to New England. Every press printed them—the people were aroused, and the name of Patrick Henry became known in every cot and cabin throughout the Colonies. He was the mouthpiece of the plain people; what Samuel Adams stood for in New England, Patrick Henry hurled in voice of thunder at the heads of aristocrats in Virginia. He lighted the fuse of rebellion.

One passage in that first encounter in the Virginia Legislature has become deathless. Hacknied though it be, it can never grow old. Referring to the injustice of the Stamp Act, Patrick Henry reached the climax of his speech in these words: "Caesar had his Brutus; Charles the First, his Cromwell; & George the Third—" "Treason," shouted the Speaker, and the gavel splintered the desk. "Treason! treason," came in roars from all over the house. Patrick Henry paused, proud and defiant, waiting for the tumult to subside—"And George the Third may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it!" And he took his seat.

¶ The resolutions were put to a vote and carried. Again Patrick Henry had won.

BY a singular coincidence, on the same day that Patrick Henry, of his own accord, introduced those resolutions at Williamsburg, a mass meeting was held in Boston to consider the same theme, and similar resolutions were passed. There was this difference, however—Patrick Henry flung his reasons into the teeth of an intrenched opposition and fought the fight single-handed, while in Boston the resolutions were read and passed by an assembly that had met for no other purpose.

Patrick Henry's triumph was heralded throughout New England and gave strength and courage to those of feeble knees. From a Colonial he sprang into national fame, and his own words, "I am not a Virginian—I am an American!" went ringing through New England hills

Meantime, Patrick Henry went back to his farm and law office. His wife rejoiced in his success, laughed with him at his mishaps and was always the helpful, uncomplaining comrade, and as he himself expressed it, "My best friend." And when he would get back home from one of his trips, the neighbors would gather to hear from his own lips about what he had done & said. He was still the unaffected countryman, seemingly careless, happy and indolent. It was on the occasion of one of these family gatherings that a contemporary saw him and wrote, "In mock complaint he exclaimed, 'How can I play the fiddle with two babies on each knee and three on my back!'"

So the years went by in work, play and gradually widening fame. Patrick Henry grew with his work—the years gave him dignity—gradually the thought of his heart 'graved its lines upon his face. The mouth became firm and the entire look of the man was that of earnest resolution. Fate was pushing him on. What once was only whispered, he had voiced in trumpet tones; the thought of liberty was being openly expressed even in pulpits.

He had been returned to the Legislature, was a member of the Continental Congress, and rode horseback side by side with Washington and Pendleton to Philadelphia, as told at length in Washington's diary.

In his utterances he was a little less fiery, but in his heart, everybody who knew him at all realized that there dwelt the thought of liberty for the Colonies. John Adams wrote to Abigail that Patrick Henry looked like a Quaker preacher turned Presbyterian.

A year later came what has been rightly called the third great speech of Henry's life, the speech at the Revolutionary Convention at Richmond. Good people often expect to hear oratory at a banquet, a lyceum lecture, or in a Sunday sermon, but oratory is neither lecture, talk, harangue, declamation nor preaching. Of course we say that the great speech is the one that has been given many times, but the fact is, the great speech is never given but once.

The time is ripe—the hour arrives—mighty issues tremble in the balances. The auditors are not there to

be amused nor instructed—they have not stopped at the box-office and paid good money to have their senses alternately lulled and tittilated—no! The question is that of liberty or bondage, life or death—passion is in the saddle,—hate and prejudice are sweeping events into a maelstrom,—and now is the time for oratory! Such occasions are as rare as the birth of stars. A man stands before you—it is no time for fine phrasing—no time for pose or platitude. Self-consciousness is swallowed up in purpose. He is as calm as the waters above the Rapids of Niagara, as composed as a lioness before she makes her spring. Intensity measures itself in perfect poise. And Patrick Henry arises to speak. Those who love the man pray for him in breathless silence, and the many who hate him in their hearts, curse him. Pale faces grow paler, throats swallow hard, hands clutch at nothing and open and shut in nervous spasms. It is the hour of fate. Patrick Henry speaks:

MR. PRESIDENT: It is natural for man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of the siren until she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those who having eyes see not, and having ears hear not the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know

the whole truth; to know the worst & to provide for it. ¶ I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British Ministry for the last ten years, to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and this house? Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation —the last arguments to which kings resort. I say, gentlemen, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can you assign any other possible motive for it? Has Britain any enemy in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us; they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British Ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? what terms shall we find which have

not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, deceive ourselves longer.

Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned, we have remonstrated, we have supplicated, we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the Ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned with contempt from the foot of the throne. In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free, if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending, if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak—unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three mil-

lions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged; their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable—and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, peace; but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

LIFE is a gradual death. There are animals and insects that die on the instant of the culmination of the act for which they were created. Success is death, and death, if you have bargained wisely with fate, is victory.

Patrick Henry, with his panther's strength and nerves of steel, had thrown his life into a Cause—that Cause

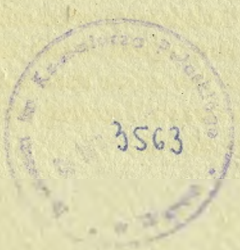
had won, and now the lassitude of dissolution crept into his veins. We hear of hair growing white in a single day, and we know that men may round out a life-work in an hour. Oratory, like all of God's greatest gifts, is bought with a price. The abandon of the orator is the spending of his divine heritage for a purpose.

Patrick Henry had given himself. Even in his law business he was the conscientious servant, and having undertaken a cause, he put his soul into it. Shame upon those who call this man indolent! He often did in a day—between the rising of the sun and its setting—what others spread out thin over a life-time and then fail to accomplish.

And now virtue had gone out from him. Four times had Virginia elected him Governor; he had served his state well, and on the fifth nomination he had declined. When Washington wished to make him his Secretary of State, he smiled and shook his head, and to the entreaty that he be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, he said that there were others who could fill the place better, but he knew of no one who could manage his farm.

And so he again became the country lawyer, looked after his plantation, attended to the education of his children, told stories to the neighbors who came and sat on the veranda—now and again went to rustic parties, played the violin, and the voice that had cried, "Give me liberty or give me death," called off for the merry dancers as in the days of old.

In 1799, at the personal request of Washington, who needed, or thought he needed, a strong advocate at the Capitol, Patrick Henry ran for the Legislature. He was elected, but before the day arrived when he was to take his seat, he sickened and died, surrounded by his stricken family. Those who knew him, loved him—those who did not love him, did not know him.
And a Nation mourned his taking off.



HERE ENDETH THE LITTLE JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF PATRICK HENRY: WRITTEN BY ELBERT HUBBARD. THE BORDERS AND INITIALS BEING DESIGNED BY ROYCROFT ARTISTS, PORTRAIT BY OTTO J. SCHNEIDER AND THE WHOLE DONE INTO A PRINTED BOOK BY THE ROYCROFTERS AT THEIR SHOP IN EAST AURORA, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER OF THE YEAR MCMIII