

for the erection of this testimonial, and Hon. William Jennings Bryan, who, by special invitation, delivered the principal address.

MR. BRYAN'S SPEECH

Mr. Bryan said:

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: I esteem it a great honor to be invited to participate in these exercises, and especially to have the invitation endorsed by an immediate descendant of the illustrious man in whose memory this monument is erected.

Monuments and memorial days proclaim the merits of the living as well as the virtues of the dead; we would prove ourselves unworthy to enjoy the blessings purchased by the labors of the dead if we were indifferent to their sacrifices and their achievements. This memorial testifies to your grateful appreciation of the rare qualities of General Sam Houston and of the manner in which he performed the Herculean tasks that fell to his lot. The fact that you have reared it and assembled at its unveiling is evidence that the spirit that animated him awakens a response in your breasts. I shall not attempt a sketch of his life; your children learn of him in the schools. His life was so full of dramatic incidents as to prove that truth is, indeed, stranger than fiction. Had a novelist imagined such a career and pictured it on the printed page, the character would have seemed overdrawn so far do actual facts outrun the fancies of the mind. No one would have thought it possible for a human being to leave such a unique record.

General Houston was born in Virginia in 1793, and at the time of his birth and boyhood the Old Dominion vibrated with the praise of three of her sons, each a world-leader in his line of work—Washington, the successful general and incomparable executive, whose sword won independence and whose wisdom directed the ship of state as it started upon its course; Patrick Henry, whose eloquence aroused a nation to arms; and Thomas Jefferson, the greatest constructive statesman of all times—the civic law-giver who even from the grave is instructing the nations of the earth in the art of government. The influence of these three men molded the thought of the period covered by Houston's youth and could not have failed to awaken the latent fires in his heart.

After the death of his father, which occurred in 1807, his mother removed to Tennessee and this change of residence brought him into contact with the iron-willed hero of New Orleans, Andrew Jackson, who was destined to exert a marked influence on the life of Houston and who, in turn, admitted Houston to the circle of his intimate friends.

It is not necessary that we shall claim for General Houston freedom from faults and "easily besetting sins." God builds his earthly structures out of human material, material flawed with the frailties of the flesh and He utilizes even our weaknesses in the absence of stronger stuff. We take our elemental traits and tendencies as our wives take us at the altar, "for better or for worse;" the good and the bad in us are as hard to separate as the wheat and tares. Even our virtues have their near-by vices, and faults restrained may be made to yield some advantage. Caution, for instance, can degenerate into over-caution and over-caution into inactivity, while rashness can be moderated into zeal, and without zeal we would not undertake large things. Great forces are always difficult to direct; as the polish of the stone is proportioned to its hardness, so the cost of conquering usually measures the value of the conquest.

Houston was as consistent in his eccentricities as he was persistent. The spirit of independence that led him, as a boy, to seek the freedom of an Indian wigwam rather than submit to what he regarded as injustice at the hands of older brothers led him, later, to risk his life in resisting what he regarded as injustice done by the Mexican authorities to the settlers in Texas. The same power over himself—the same willingness to subordinate himself to things which he regarded as more important—that enabled him to resign a governorship and turn his back upon a promising political career, preferring, as he said, to ruin one life than two—enabled him to throw himself into the breach to save his people when great interests were at stake. A weaker man would have given his friends less anxiety in his earlier years, but he might have been less useful in those crises which require extraordinary firmness.

I shall not attempt to record the achievements of General Houston; they are a part of the na-

tion's history, the very foundation stones upon which this great and growing state was built. Neither will I discuss the controversies in which General Houston became involved with those who were his co-laborers. He was not a diplomat in the sense in which the term is generally employed. His imperious will made him command where others would have argued. It is not surprising that there are conspiracies against him—it required combination to match his strength. Whether he might have gained more by conciliation than by fighting is not a question which it is worth while to consider; he must needs be for himself and do his work in his own way. Unusual talent is likely to be expressed in unconventional ways; when we accept the benefits we must take the risk which accompanies them. We cannot dispense with fire merely because it sometimes gets beyond control; we cannot do without water even if it does sometimes appear in the form of a flood; we must have air, although it becomes destructive when it rushes upon us in the hurricane.

I shall content myself on this occasion with an enumeration of those extraordinary qualities which distinguished General Houston, and I enumerate them that the generations to whose care this monument will be intrusted, when his personal acquaintances and friends have passed away, may know that the fame of the hero of San Jacinto rests upon an enduring foundation.

While General Houston was a man of unusual intellectual proportions, he was still a normal man. He passed through the three stages that characterize the natural growth and development of the individual. His youth was given up to physical enjoyment; his body absorbed his attention, and he made himself the very picture of health and strength—his figure would attract attention to any company. Afterward, his mind became his master and he planned upon a gigantic scale. Still later, the moral element asserted its supremacy and the intrepid warrior became an humble follower of the Prince of Peace, the orator whose voice was accustomed to sway the multitude, was proud to employ the words of Him who spake as never man spake; the statesman who had framed laws for a republic sought to square human institutions with the sermon on the mount.

The fact that he knew from experience during his earlier years, as well as by observation throughout his life, the dangers of the drink habit, made him the more earnest in the advocacy of total abstinence, and, aided and encouraged by his devoted wife, he became the exemplar of Christian virtues in his home and among his neighbors, growing in grace with the years.

A man's inner self can be judged by the company he keeps, and his value as a man can be measured by the character of the friends whom he draws to himself. The fact that Andrew Jackson admired, trusted and loved General Houston is proof that the latter deserved admiration, trust and love. For a quarter of a century the two were confidential friends. Houston journeyed from Arkansas to Washington to denounce a slander which an enemy of Jackson's aimed at the president through Houston, and Jackson was Houston's adviser during the long trial in the national house of representatives that followed Houston's attack upon the member of congress who uttered it. Jackson gave Houston a letter of introduction to Thomas Jefferson, the letter being among the papers left by Houston. When General Jackson was stricken with his last illness and saw death approaching, he sent for Houston and the latter left all and hastened from Texas to the Hermitage, taking with him his wife and infant son. He reached Nashville a few hours after Jackson expired, but had the melancholy satisfaction of learning that the last words of his friend were: "Has Houston come?" He carried his son into the room to view the remains of "Old Hickory" and, with a broken voice, begged the child to try to remember that he had looked upon the face of Jackson.

General Houston's wife sang at the funeral. Jackson and Houston were alike in many ways; each prized the other's friendship and the fact gives assurance that he whose ashes repose here was cast in no ordinary mold.

But let us measure General Houston by another standard. His greatness was recognized in every group in which he appeared. At the age of twenty-five he studied law; a few months afterward he was made adjutant general of the state with the rank of colonel, and as soon as he was admitted to the bar he was elected district attorney. In 1823 he was elected to con-

gress and two years later was re-elected by unanimous vote. In 1827 he was elected governor of the state by a majority which was, at that time, overwhelming and the legislature elected at the same time was entirely made up of persons friendly to him politically. These victories, won when he was between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-four leave no doubt as to the impression that his character and talents had thus early made upon those who knew him. Then came the self sacrificing exile, which was to all appearances to terminate the brilliant career upon which he had entered. During his stay among the Indians he won the heart of the red man as he had won the heart of the pale face and the affection was reciprocated. He ever afterward supported the Indians' demand for justice, and had frequent opportunity to answer charges made against them. After his death, representatives of the tribes came at night to his grave, and, performing the ceremonies to which they were accustomed, gave evidence of their sorrow.

In 1832 he bade farewell to the Cherokees and with a party of friends removed to Texas.

His superior talents were at once recognized and in 1833 he was made a member of the first convention ever held in what afterward became the republic of Texas. The convention prepared a state constitution and a memorial to the Mexican government. Two years later, General Austin, recognizing Houston's military genius, offered to resign the command of the army to Houston, but Houston declined, insisting that Austin had been elected commander and was entitled to the position, but he assisted the general in every way possible. Next he was a member of the council of war and assisted in framing a provisional declaration of independence. A little later he was, without dissenting voice, elected commander-in-chief of the armies of Texas and conducted the campaign, which, seventy-five years ago today, resulted in the epoch making victory of San Jacinto and gave independence to Texas. The declaration of independence was adopted during the preceding March, and upon the second day of the month, the forty-third anniversary of Houston's birth.

In the fall following, he was elected president of Texas by acclamation, thus becoming the first president of the republic chosen by the people, and, the provisional president resigning, Houston was inaugurated on the 22nd day of October, 1836. The constitution made him ineligible to succeed himself and he retired from office at the end of two years, but was recalled to the presidency as soon as the constitution would permit and he began his second term in 1841. Upon the admission of Texas to the union, Houston was elected United States senator and afterward re-elected. In 1859 he was elected governor and his term covered the exciting period preceding the withdrawal of Texas from the union. His official career was brought to an end by a legislative resolution deposing him because he refused to join in the steps that led up to the state's final action.

Surely the honors conferred upon General Houston in youth and during the latter part of his life give conclusive proof of his eminent abilities. He was chosen for every kind of public service. If the crisis required a soldier he was the choice of those who were to serve, a compliment the sincerity of which can not be doubted for, when men feel that their lives must pay the forfeit if the choice is not a wise one, they have every reason to select with care. If a legislator was required Houston measured up to the responsibilities of the occasion, in convention and in assembly he was always a leader. If a proposition needed to be presented with persuasive power, his associates yielded to him as the one best fitted to represent their side. He was no less efficient as an executive, mingling prudence with firmness and uniting a comprehensive grasp of the subject with care for details; and, to these he added a sense of justice, and a singleness of purpose in administering it. As soldier, as orator and as statesman he towered above his compatriots, and many of them were strong men. In fact, nothing so challenges the attention of those who review the career of this remarkable man as this extraordinary comingling of the qualities that make the leader upon the battlefield, the leader in the forum and the leader in the council chamber.

A military leader must have physical courage; he must have self-control; he must have mathematical talent—the ability to grasp a situation, to estimate quickly, to calculate accurately, and to do all amid conflict of opinions, and in the presence of danger; he must have the ability to command; and, at the same time, must be able