

The Siege of the Alamo.

All was bright and beautiful without, in March, 1836, when marching orders were received by the little band of soldiers, scarce numbering 200, to go the inland route and occupy the "Fort of the Alamo" and hold it as long as possible against the advancing horde of Mexicans under command of Santa Anna, and restrain him from further depredations in Texas.

A brilliant sunshine flooded all the land with light. Under foot stretched the lush green grass, spangled with thousands of brilliant flowers. The colors varied from pure white to scarlet, pale lilac to deep purple; the lovely little coral plant with scarce a touch of green, surely left to commemorate the industry of the little insects under the sea; the sweet wild violet, and many others stretched out as a soft carpet 'neath the feet of the buoyant band of soldiers as they left.

Everywhere along their route they were entertained generously, whether in the wigwam of the Indian or the cabin of the pioneer, some future cattle king. At last, weary and toil-worn, they reached "the Alamo" with undaunted hope and energy. Food was scarce, but the citizens round responded willingly.

Very different was the fort then and now. Then several acres of ground were enclosed, space enough for military practice, a large hospital, rooms for sleeping; and all promised fair for the little band. In a few days Travis called his men together and said:

"That brave and sagacious scout reports Santa Anna

on the march here in command of an army that numbers eight thousand well-equipped, well-drilled soldiers. ~~This~~ means, if we refuse to surrender, not one man shall be left to tell of it. The advanceguard is even now encamping on the opposite side of the river."

The men answered with a loud hurrah. The next day they ~~the~~ *Enemy* began operations in trying to dam the river to cut off the supply of water to the besieged. They were soon driven off with loss, however. They made another attempt with like disaster. Travis told his men if Santa Anna demanded surrender the only reply would be a cannon ball. Soon came the demand, and over the lovely little city, surrounded with flower-decked hills, over its peaceful streets and across the flowing stream the fiery message for answer came and burst in the camp of the foes.

A few days after that Travis called his men together and addressed them:

"Men, we may not expect ^{no mercy from the} seven thousand soldiers ~~who~~ surround us. For myself, I am determined never to surrender! Here will I draw a line; all willing to die with me for freedom please step over the line. Those unwilling, I will have put outside the wall. None shall say Travis forced death on his men."

One dread moment of profound silence - then a ringing cheer that surely reached heaven, and every man stepped over the line, and America gave the grandest tribute to Freedom ever offered by any nation.

"Thanks, thanks, my brave men!" said Travis, but a deep ^{wash} groan at the end of the line, and poor Bowie, unable to stand,

beat from over the river, and splash of a hundred boats of Mexicans crossing the river told that the ~~message~~^{charge} had begun. Soon the sun shone upon the black banners of death, and the Mexican bands played The March of Death. On they came, surrounding the Alamo, eight thousand strong. They placed scaling ladders on the walls. All undaunted were the brave 165. Travis had directed Silent Evans, in control of the powder magazine, when all hope was over to blow up the magazine. He stood with lighted match, then a wild yell told him a breach had been made in the wall, and the foe poured in by the hundred. He leaned forward with his match, when a blow struck him dead, and his life and the lighted match went out together. The fight was now hand to hand. It lasted but a short time, then a dead silence of a moment. The last man had fallen. Then came the brutal command:

"Pull forth the Mexicans, pile the Americans, saturate with oil, and apply the torch."

And soon their ashes were blown to the four winds of heaven. The glorious sacrifice of America to Freedom was complete. Hence glory to them whilst time endures or men live. The Alamo is the most glorious record of humanity.

Mary Autry Greer.

George of Adams

1842

is the most important lesson of the day.

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