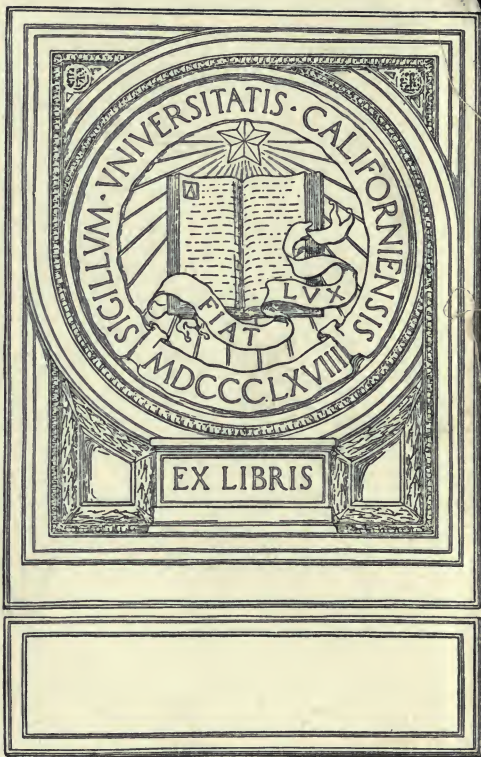


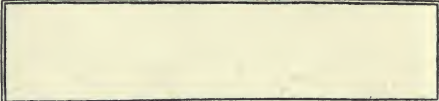


FROM A FRIEND

DO NOT FORGET ME NOT



EX LIBRIS



The Bancroft Library

University of California • Berkeley



LEWIS & BROWN, N.Y.

The fall of Bunker.

THE FALL OF BEXAR;

A TEXIAN TALE.

BY B. J. LOSSING.

As fondly the mother her darling caresses,
Her tears falling down her cheeks like the rain:
She tells of her husband while tearing her tresses,
Ah! never, my child, will you see him again.
The flag led him on by the light of its star
To freedom and glory; he fell at Bexar.

F. L. Waddell.

FIRMLY seated in the Executive chair, holding almost imperial sway over the fallen realms of Montezuma, and looking with an enlightened mind, with proud and haughty contempt, upon the priest-ridden rulers of the dependent provinces, Santa Anna, the Napoleon of the West, held an exalted station among the list of conquerors and political benefactors. With a policy supported by those salutary principles upon which our happy Republic is founded, he led on the legions of Mexico against the mercenaries of

the mother country, and succeeded in breaking [the bond which bound them to the throne of Ferdinand. Such a glorious achievement won for him the bright laurels of a patriot, and his joyous countrymen, in the plenitude of their grateful emotions, clothed him with the chief executive power, and acknowledged him as the Dictator of all Mexico. To the eye of the warm-hearted Americans, he seemed like a kindred spirit with those who battled upon the field of our revolutionary struggle; and they were ready to risk their fortunes and their liberties to the discretion of such a ruler. Texas, the Garden of Mexico, as respected richness of soil, was a vast uncultivated waste, whose riches were buried beneath the dense forest, or the wild grass of the prairie, for the want of enterprise and industry to exhume them. Such a field for American enterprise, when once known, could not long remain unexplored by the adventurous sons of the west, especially when the supreme government gave such warm encouragement; and the banks of the Brazos and the Colorado were soon peopled with the industrious yeomanry of the Mississippi. Elated with the golden prospects that shone upon

their efforts, they held out every inducement to their friends to follow—and the rich wilderness of Texas was fast becoming a fruitful garden. The mud cottages of San Antonio were hastily disappearing before the steady march of improvement, and neat mansions occupying their humble stations.

But while all this glorious realization of the most sanguine dreams of the colonists, was adding increased strength to enterprise, the uncurbed ambition of the Mexican chief, that had succumbed to temporary restraint by the hand of policy, began to grow eager for an exercise of its strength, and the patriot Santa Anna looked with hope and expectation upon the imperial purple that fell from Iturbide the usurper. By degrees he changed his cabinet, drew tighter the reins of government, abridged the suffrages of the dependent republics, and began the operations of a scheme to nullify their representative privileges, and consolidate the legislative power into sovereign centralism. The people of Texas were the first to observe this increasing abridgment of their liberties, for the other provinces were peopled with a population who had never tasted the sweets of settled and undisturbed freedom.

Yet *they* at length saw the aggressions of their chief, and in concert with Texas, asked for a restraint upon the strides of his ambition. Santa Anna saw the disaffection, knew there was no time to be lost, and resolved to secure the throne of Anahuac while power was yet in his hands, with a promise of aid from the other provinces. Texas unfurled her banner, and declared, not hostility to the government, but allegiance to the spirit of the constitution. The chief saw *his* danger, the priests saw *their* danger, and their combined power was directed against chivalric Texas. Zacatecas, Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosi, and one or two other provinces, raised the standard of revolt; but when the anathemas of the growing tyrant went forth, "Viva los Santa Anna!" rang along their lines, and these cowardly and hypocritical allies left Texas to stand or fall, as destiny might determine.

Now was the time to test the courage, the patriotism, the unwavering determination of the sons of those who battled upon the green at Lexington, the brow of Bunker Hill, and the bloody heights of Yorktown—and nobly did they exhibit the chivalry of their sires. A convention was called, a provisional gov-

ernment formed, an army organized, and Houston placed at its head. Success attended the Texian arms, until the Mexican chief appeared in person and besieged the Alamo at Bexar. Thus we have taken a bird's-eye view of the events prior to the tragedy there enacted; and we will leave the task of penning the subsequent political facts which transpired, to a more able pen, while we record some instances of individual bravery.

Jose Hernanda, son of a proud Hidalgo of Tenochtitlan, fired with a love of liberty and liberal principles, had left his native city, where it existed but in name, and took up his residence among the free-minded people of Texas: when the encroachments of Santa Anna were complained of, his importunities were sent among the rest, and he implored his father to use his influence in checking the invasion of the chief. But his father, who was warmly attached to Santa Anna and to Popery, refused his prayer and discarded his son as a rebel. Fearing to return to become reconciled to his parent, and still clinging fondly to the reared standard of liberty, he threw his life and his fortunes into the arms of Texas, and joined the standard of the intrepid Hous-

ton. Previous to this, and while the smiles of prosperity gladdened the hearts of all Texas, he had contracted a matrimonial alliance with the daughter of an American merchant at Harrisburg, and their nuptials were now only delayed by the change of political circumstances. He owed a duty to his adopted country, superior to considerations of self, and mutual pledges were exchanged for the consummation of their marriage, as soon as victory should perch upon the standard of Texas. It was with acute feelings of pain, that the young Mexican gave a last embrace to his betrothed Mary, whose tears bespoke the emotions of her heart.

“Go,” said she to Hernanda, “and may the God of battles give strength to your arm and weight to your sword. I freely renounce my happiness for the cause of Liberty, and should your grave be dug upon the battle-field, I will search it out and water its herbage with my tears. My hourly prayer shall be for your success; let your watchword and war-cry be God and Liberty.”

Hernanda left her with emotion, and joining the eager volunteers, who were impatiently waiting his coming on the banks of a

little stream not far distant, he endeavored to calm his feelings by reflecting upon the field of glory that spread out before him. Hearing that the forces of the Texian army were concentrating for the purpose of forming a power sufficient to besiege San Antonio, they made a rapid march thither, and joined them the evening previous to their departure. Here Hernanda witnessed several scenes of parting, similar to his own, and it seemed to give his bosom relief, when he could communicate his feelings to sympathetic hearts.

It was just at evening when they reached the banks of the Brassos, and they resolved to delay the crossing until morning, as few were acquainted with either bank. Hernanda strolled to the dark shade of a sycamore, where he sat down to indulge a few moments in memory of the past, and the pleasing anticipation of future happiness, when the tumult of war should cease, and his destiny become identified with that of his beloved Mary. While indulging in this pleasing reverie, he was suddenly startled by a horseman, who dashed by at full speed in the direction of their little camp. Hernanda hastened thither, and found him surrounded by the eager soldiery,

who were listening to the gloomy message which he brought. He had been commissioned by the authorities of Harrisburg, to communicate to the army the fact, that upwards of two thousand Mexicans were on the march for that place, and calling upon the Texian arms to defend them. Hernanda heard the messenger coupling the names of Mexicans and Harrisburg, and he burned with anxiety to fly to the rescue of his betrothed. He pressed forward, and seizing the hand of the messenger, demanded his attention.

“Tell me,” said Hernanda, “have the people fled Harrisburg, or are they left to the mercy of an armed enemy?”

“Some have fled,” said the courier, “others have armed for the defence of the town, while a great many of the lower classes are either unable to arm or fly. Mr. ———, the acting magistrate, is endeavoring to rally a force sufficient to repel them until aid may arrive.”

“Signor, ———!” cried Hernanda, with emotion, for it was the father of his Mary; “does his family still remain amid the threatening danger!”

“I cannot tell,” answered the courier, “nor have I time to answer further questions.

Here," said he, pulling a letter from his bosom, "is a dispatch given me by a charming young lady for one Jose Hernanda. Does such an one belong to this battalion?"

"It is I!" exclaimed Hernanda, eagerly seizing the proffered letter. He drew away from his companions and broke the seal. It was from Mary—she wrote thus :

"The Mexicans are advancing—the fires of their camp were seen last evening—Harrisburg is all confusion, and we know not whither to escape. If you have influence, use it for us, and save us from the power of Cos. God give you strength.

Yours, in danger,

MARY."

Hernanda was almost frantic, and he used every argument to induce their commander, Col. F——, to turn his steps towards Harrisburg. But the success of Texas depended upon securing the strong-hold of San Antonio de Bexar, while it yet remained weakly guarded, and the next morning they reached the opposite side of the Brassos, and made a forced march towards the Colorado. Gloomy indeed was that march to the young Mexican, for although his heart glowed with the love of liberty, yet the pure and holy flame of affection for Mary occupied a large space therein,

and the danger to which she was exposed increased his love.

It was early in the morning when they reached the vicinity of Bexar, and they were surprised to see the national flag of Mexico floating over the Alamo. But the secret was soon told by a deserter from the enemy. The determination of Cos was to attack Harrisburg, but hearing that a force was on their march for Bexar, he immediately turned his army and made a forced march for that place, which he reached by an almost parallel route a few hours previous to the arrival of the Texians. This information gave Hernanda joy, and feeling conscious of the safety of his treasure, he gave up his whole soul to the momentous proceedings around him. Before him frowned the walls of a fortress filled with an unknown number of his countrymen, thirsting for the blood of patriots, while around stood a few brave men ready to encounter the savage legions. His zeal had secured the favor of the commander, and he had given him a situation at the head of a company of riflemen from Nacogdoches. Every preparation was made on both sides for the contest, and the sun had scarcely emerged above the horizon, before

the bugle within the fort sounded to the charge. Like a fierce torrent, the Mexicans poured forth, expecting to crush the besiegers at once with an overwhelming force ; but they braved the onset with an almost unbroken front, and hundreds of the enemy rolled in the dust. The inhabitants of San Antonio covered the rear of the valiant Texians, armed with whatever seemed like an instrument of death, and in less than two hours, a cry for quarter came from the dark wreaths of smoke that curled around the battered battlements of the Alamo. The contest ceased, and the Mexicans screened from view by the dense smoke that yet hung around the battle-ground, commenced a sudden retreat ; but Cos, who was wounded, and several other officers, were taken prisoners. Hernanda was the first to enter the embrasure over the bodies of the slain. A deep groan that issued from beneath a bloody flag against the base of the fort, attracted his attention, and removing it, he discovered an aged soldier, with his visage deep scarred by the blow of a broad-sword. He raised up the dying soldier, and endeavored to ameliorate his misery, for humanity bade him

treat with lenity the unfortunate of his native soil.

Suddenly Hernanda started back and gazed upon the old man with a look of horror. It was his father? Memory, ever faithful to the heart where filial affection dwells, pointed out to the young Mexican the tender parent of his childhood, in the blood-sprinkled form of the old soldier. When the first violent feeling of excited grief had subsided, Hernanda sprang forward to embrace his parent, and receive a parting blessing from his lips. But those lips were palsied forever—the last fearful struggle was over—the soul had evacuated its earthly tenement and soared to its native heaven.

With a heart filled with sorrow, Hernanda took the star from the breast of his father and placed it upon his own, for now he was the rightful owner of the honor and its titles. He buried his parent with all possible decency, and notwithstanding the soldier was an enemy to Texas, his comrades dropped a tear of sympathy over his grave, for Hernanda was beloved by all. When this solemn ceremony was performed, they immediately made preparations for the disposal of their force, as it

was unnecessary for all to remain in defence of the fort. They had taken from the enemy a great number of muskets, one brass nine-pounder and two howitzers ; and the only thing wanting for a small force to defend it with success, was a supply of ammunition and provisions. It was well known that the Mexicans were rallying their forces, and would probably attack them in return, and dispatch was consequently necessary. Cos and his officers were released on condition of never again serving in the army against Texas ; but the humane victors little dreamed of the black treachery that lurked in his heart. Contrary to expectations, the Mexicans, instead of hovering about Bexar, took up their line of march to the southward to join the forces of Gen. Urrea, who, with nearly five thousand men, was preparing to march into Texas and crush the rebellion at a single charge.

In the mean time the valley of the Mississippi was giving an almost daily largess of volunteers, eager to join the hitherto victorious standard of struggling patriots. Among them came that personification of true courage, Col. Crockett, who as little feared the approach of a Mexican lancer or dragoon, as

he did the growling bruin of his native forests. Having been accustomed from infancy to brave danger, he was a stranger to fear, and his personal safety was never reckoned into the account, when objections arose to the obeisance of the impulses of his generous heart. By his side came a handsome and beardless youth, upon whose cheeks bloomed the rose of beauty, and in whose dark eye burned the fire of patriotism. He was habited in a citizen's dress, and wore a peculiar cap which nearly concealed his face. A broad-sword hung upon his thigh and a pistol in his belt.

“This youngster,” said Crockett, who had taken him under his charge three days previous, “is all grit—stuffed as full of courage as an egg-shell of meat, and vows that he would rather die fighting for Texas than to be Santa Anna himself. And who would'nt, when so many brave hearts have sworn his destruction?”

The youth was silent, and used every means to conceal his face, yet the emotions of his heart were pictured upon his glowing features. When the commander was shown him, he stepped forward, and bowed respectfully; and drawing a letter from his bosom,

made a humble request in the Spanish tongue, that he might be permitted to battle in the ranks with the brave Mexican with whose name it was endorsed. That name was Jose Hernanda. The request was granted, and the letter delivered to the young Mexican, who, as soon as he broke the seal, embraced the messenger as a bearer of joyous tidings. The letter was from Mary, and stated that Harrisburg was spared; a party of Mexicans had been entirely cut up in a skirmish near Galveston—and requesting Hernanda to be at rest about her safety, as she believed that the chains which the Tyrant had prepared for Texas, would never be cast upon his intended victim. In his joy, Hernanda would again have embraced the youth, but he modestly interposed, and asked, as the only reward of his services, that he might be made a member of the corps under Hernanda's command.

Fortunately for the tender age and delicate form of the youthful stranger, Hernanda's riflemen were selected as a part of the force who were to remain in defence of the fortress. In a few days, the little army who had gained so glorious a victory, was augmented to nearly double their original number; for the cap-

ture of San Antonio inspired every bosom with hope, and the plough was left in the furrow, the hammer was silent at the forge, the counter of the merchant was deserted, and one hope, one desire, one common interest, made every Texian a volunteer in the service of his oppressed province. Flushed with victory, they departed from the Alamo with the determination to drive their oppressors from their purchased soil.

Hernanda became deeply interested in the youthful hero who had joined his standard, and that interest was increased from the near resemblance of his features to those of his betrothed bride. Various were the thoughts that revolved in his mind as he gazed upon the meditative stranger, and he desired to know his name and parentage. But the taciturnity of the youth, and his immediate evasion of questions touching the subject, prevented the gratification of Hernanda's curiosity, and he resolved to be content with his friendship. One lovely moon-lit evening, they strolled together to a little grove a few yards from the fort, and while conversing upon home and its associations, Hernanda recollected having heard Mary speak of a young

brother who was a resident in Natchez, and he doubted not but the one before him was the kinsman of his beloved. Pleased with the thought, he immediately asked, "Do you know Signor —— of Harrisburg?"

"I do," replied the youth.

"Do you know his daughter, Mary?"

"I do."

"Then you are a brother?"

"I am not."

"Not a brother, and so like? Why I could have sworn that the features I now look upon and those of Mary ——, were the same, did I but see those rich curls beautifying them that always shaded her lovely face. Not a kinsman!"

"I have been intimate with her from infancy," said the youth, "and her inseparable companion. I know that you love her, and that your love is warmly requited. She daily, nay, hourly, prays for your salvation from the weapons of the enemy; and though her sex denies her the toils of the battle-field, yet she would willingly share the privations of the camp with Jose Hernanda. If patriotism ever burned in the breast of woman, it is in hers, and while an oppressor treads the soil of

Texas, she would glory more in bearing the sword and helmet of War, than the wreath and olive-branch of Peace."

Hernanda was enraptured by this unexpected burst of eloquence from the taciturn young hero, and he embraced him as the representative of his soul's idol.

"Nay, cease not," cried he, "your words have given me new life, and courage can never forsake, misfortune can never crush one who has such a brave and lovely interceder at the shrine of the God of battles. Another month, and the star-lit banner that waves over yonder battlements, will float victorious over every citadel of Texas where the name of *Liberty* has been whispered. Peace shall outspread her umbrageous wings—"

A bugle awakened the echoes of the forest, and the two friends started to their feet. Another bugle note was heard, and the next moment a tremendous shout broke forth from the bosom of the dense forest that surrounds the southern side of the Alamo, immediately succeeded by the clangor of armor, the tramp of horses, and the rumble of heavy artillery.

A wild and fearful shout mingled its echoes with the discordant din of the approaching

multitude, and a cry of "*Mexicans! Mexicans!*" arose from the walls of the Alamo. Hernanda and his companion flew to the fort unscathed, amid a shower of musket balls, where everything was in the greatest confusion. They had been taken by surprise—all were enjoying their evening siesta when they were aroused by the shout of the enemy. So secure did they deem themselves that even the few sentinels were asleep on their post, and became the first victims of the savage foe. But the little band within the fort soon rallied for action, and reserved their fire until the enemy believing few were within, or the fort deserted, marched up in a solid column within a few yards of the outer breastworks. A momentary silence ensued, and nothing was heard but the voice of the giant-like commander of the Mexicans and the tread of the advancing column. Suddenly a poised sword within the Alamo glittered in the moonlight as a signal to the Texians, and the next moment the flash of an hundred rifles glared fearfully from the walls of the fortress. The column of the Mexicans was broken and filled alternately by the platoons which marched up to fill the places of those who fell, and at every advance

they approached nearer to the broad and only entrance to the fort. As the prospect of their entrance increased in probability, the energy of the Texians was redoubled, and they kept up a constant fire. Still the enemy pressed forward notwithstanding the dreadful slaughter, until the commander with a desperate effort leapt into the embrasure, followed by his blood-thirsty and desperate soldiers. Hernanda and his companion stood near the entrance, and being in a portion of the fort which was entirely shaded, did not observe the movement until the massive sword of the Mexican chief was gleaming above the head of the tender youth. The rifle of Hernanda caught the blade as it fell, and with a violent effort he laid the warrior at his feet. His followers, seeing their chief fall, retreated in dismay, and the firing soon ceased.

This respite gave the gallant Texians an opportunity for organizing and making preparations for a siege—a siege which they knew would be protracted if the enemy became convinced of their numbers. Ere the dawn of morning their labors were completed and everything prepared for action. The ordnance which they took from the enemy was placed

in its proper place, and just at sunrise they observed the Mexicans forming their line for battle. A more glorious day never dawned upon the springing beauties of nature, and it seemed that the quietude and harmony that reigned among the inhabitants of mountain, woodland and river, should have taught man a lesson that would prompt him to lay aside the rod of oppression and the sword of battle, for the plough and the reaping-hook of peaceful industry. But ambition, whose rapacious maw can receive and contain, and digest objects as extensive as the universe, shuts the eyes and the heart to the glorious and ever-salutary precepts of Nature, and binds man to the throne of his malevolent passions.

The bugle sounded, and with a formidable front, headed by heavy artillery, the Mexicans advanced to the charge. Hernanda caught the eye of the youthful warrior who had joined his band, which seemed to burn with an intense and unearthly light as he gazed upon the approaching battalion; and his heart sickened at the thought that one so young, so fair, so patriotic, so like the idol of his affections, perhaps in one short hour might be numbered among the slain. His own safety he consulted

not, but an involuntary regard for the youth created these painful suggestions and fears. Hernanda touched the arm of the youth and beckoned him away from the ranks. The young hero followed, but whither he knew not. Hernanda led him to the inner court of the Alamo where were a number of wounded, and requested him to remain in attendance. "Your tender age and delicate limbs," said he, "are better fitted for offices of kindness than to be exposed upon the ramparts of a fortress, battling with a savage foe."

"I do not fear the enemies of Texas," said the youth, "and it would be a glorious martyrdom to die in so holy a cause. Let me fight the enemies of freedom by the side of one so brave as Jose Hernanda, and with the consequences I shall be satisfied."

"Nay, listen to my advice," said Hernanda, "and thus you can serve me best. Your devotion to me I believe sincere, and if fate should mark me as one of the wounded or slain, you can best serve me by binding up my wounds, or soothing my pangs in the hour of death."

The youth was about to importune, when a

gun from the enemy's advance column called the young Mexican to duty.

"Stay! stay! I beseech you!" cried Hernanda, as the youth prepared to follow; "it is my wish, my desire, my *command!*" and he flew to the walls of the fortress.

The young man obeyed, although reluctantly, and notwithstanding the balls from the enemy were falling in all parts of the fort, yet his attachment to Hernanda made him forgetful of danger, and he placed himself in a position where he might see the issue of the contest. Several of the Texians were slain before night terminated the sanguinary contest, and the slaughter without was dreadful. More than three hundred of the Mexicans were left dead around the Alamo when the army retired to recruit. Thus for four successive days did the siege continue, until the little band within the fort was decimated to only seventy men! On the morning of the fifth day, just as daylight appeared, a loud shout of acclamation rang through the Mexican camp, and "*viva los Santa Anna!*" fell from every lip as the President of Mexico with a reinforcement appeared and joined the thinned ranks of the enemy. With him came the chivalry of the

south, among which was the perjured Cos, faithless to the stipulations of his releasement, and third in command against those who had generously saved his life and given him liberty. A blood-red flag immediately floated over the Mexican camp as a signal that no quarter would be given. Now came on the desperate struggle. Col. B—— was severely wounded, and Lieut. D——, whose wife and child were within the fort, lay sick with a fever. Hernanda was left highest in command, and right valiantly did he do his duty. For six hours they kept up a continual firing until only thirty Texians remained, and their ammunition was exhausted. There was no alternative, and they resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible. The intrepid Crockett was among the number, and placing himself near an angle of a wall at the entrance, he resolved to defend the passage to the last. As soon as the firing ceased within, the Mexicans with a shout of exultation rushed over the dead bodies of the slain to take possession of the fort. But a few patriots yet remained, and for nearly an hour disputed the passage with the overwhelming force, but at last the hero of Tennessee received a blow from the butt-end of

the gun of a Mexican musketeer that brought him to the dust, and Hernanda and his worn-out companions were obliged to yield. An indiscriminate massacre of the remaining few commenced. A Mexican officer, who by his badge seemed to be a man of rank, perhaps a *hidalgo*, rushed forward and seizing Hernanda thrust him upon the ground and raised the reeking blade for his destruction. A wild shriek stayed his arm for a moment, and the youthful friend of Hernanda rushed in and threw himself on the body of the victim. "Spare him! spare him!" cried he with maniac emphasis, "Spare him, and let your blade drink the blood of *this* heart."

"Boy!" said the stern Mexican, as he gazed upon the face of the youthful suppliant, "thy tender age is all that spares ye both. I do not glory in spilling the blood of children. But no rebel among *men* shall escape the penalty of their crime. Off with thee, rash child, that justice may be satisfied."

"Will ye then murder him," cried he, "will ye spill the blood of your own countryman—one of your own nobility," and he tore the golden star from the vestment of Hernanda and threw it at the feet of the Spaniard.

He took it up, examined its central bearings, and his dark eye lit up with the fire of the fiercest rage.

“Wretch! Rebel! Parricide!” cried he, looking with awful fierceness upon Hernanda. “Well mayest thou ask innocence to plead for thee, inhuman wretch! This is the star of thy murdered father! Thank God, thy life is spared, for all Mexico shall now behold thy degraded form, and curse thee for thy perfidy. Wretch! the blood of thy father is upon thee. Canst thou ask for mercy? Mercy herself would shudder and turn pale to look upon thy blood-stained hands. Look upon me if thou canst, and call me *brother!*”

Hernanda rose, and with a firm voice—the voice of conscious innocence,—and looking the enraged Mexican full in the face, said, “*Brother!*” and extended his arms to receive him.

The hidalgo drew back, and with a dark frown bade him beware how he laid his bloody hands upon him. “Thou art no longer a kinsman of the house of Hernanda,” said he, “but a denationalized and doomed rebel. Soldiers! advance and bind the parricide.”

Hernanda submitted with composure, for he knew the character of his belligerent brother,

and was aware that entreaties or resistance would be vanity. The youth who had so nobly saved his life begged the boon of sharing his captivity and shame—but that boon was denied, and Hernanda placed under a strong guard. Still the youth importuned—on his knees supplicated mercy for the prisoner, but he was talking to hearts of stone. They at length became weary with his entreaties, and threatened him with death if he did not desist. Hernanda placed his finger upon his lip in token of silence, and beckoned his companion away. The devoted young hero departed with a reluctant step, but pausing for a moment as he stood upon the threshold of the Alamo, a flush passed over his pallid cheek and his grief-dimmed eye sparkled with renewed enthusiasm. He had suddenly conceived a design, and hope urged him to the execution of it.

Hernanda with two or three other prisoners, among whom was the wife of Lieut. D——, were all that remained of the valiant band who were left in defence of the fort. A small detachment of soldiers with a sergeant as leader were sent with them to Victoria, on the San Felipe, there to await the arrival of

the conquering army under Santa Anna. Hernanda's heart was heavy; not on account of his own bonds, but he anticipated a perpetual banishment from the society of his betrothed. All hopes of the consummation of their nuptials were destroyed by the gloomy prospect of either death or perpetual imprisonment that appeared in the perspective. The little party encamped at night in a recess of a dark jungle, on the borders of a prairie which they intended to cross on the morrow. The prisoners were arranged in secure order and a competent guard selected for their security. They had scarcely laid down for repose when a rustle among the leaves within a few rods of them startled them all to their feet. They listened, but all was silent. Again they heard the rustling, which was immediately succeeded by the crack of a rifle, and a sentinel fell to the ground. The next moment and a volley of musketry from the jungle, made nearly every Mexican a stiffened corpse. The assailants then rushed forward and secured the remainder, who immediately threw down their arms and cried for quarter.

Twilight had now closed, and yet the evening was a starry one and afforded sufficient

light to recognize features. Hernanda was the first to speak. "Tell me," cried he "who is the leader of these valiant deliverers that I may bow at his feet in gratitude."

His youthful friend of the Alamo stood before him. "It is I, noble Hernanda," said he, "who have fulfilled my duty to my commander. These brave men who heard my story of your bravery, your patriotism, your devotion to Texas, believed me and offered to fly to your rescue. Providence gave direction to our steps, and strength to our arms; let *him* noble Hernanda have the praise. These bands but ill befit so valiant a soldier," and he loosed the cords that confined him. Hernanda embraced his deliverer, and with every expression of gratitude offered to resign into his youthful hands the command.

"I have no longer a brave few to follow me," said he, "the wolves of the prairie are feasting upon them. Your valor has won recruits—to your command I bow."

But the youth positively refused the proffered honor; and desired only to have the privilege of fighting beneath his standard. Urged by the young hero, and his views seconded by the volunteers, Hernanda made

immediate preparations for departure—after detaching two horsemen who had just joined them from his force to convey the lady of the murdered officer to Harrisburg—to rush forward and join the army of the brave Houston on the Brassos. While making this march they were attacked several times by scouting parties of the Mexicans but arrived safe, with only one wounded man. Houston had heard of the fall of Bexar and the massacre at the Alamo, and he enjoined his men to make “the Alamo,” their war-cry when they rushed to the charge. Fired with indignation and revenge, they started in pursuit of the enemy who were concentrating near San Jacinto.

It was about noon, on a lovely clear day, that the Texians gained the summit of an eminence that commanded a view of an extended plain which terminated in a point at the junction of the Brassos and a small stream. There in that vale of beauty, dreaming of security, reclined at ease the forces of Santa Anna. He thought Houston far away when in fact the eagle-eye of the brave American was upon him, and the feet of the Texians almost treading upon his tent-cloths.

Houston looked upon that warlike scene

with pleasure, for he felt as if now was the consummation of the struggle of Texas. Although the enemy was more than a thousand strong and his own forces not more than half that number, yet he counted much upon the valor of the Texians. Their appearance was like a clap of thunder from a clear sky to the tyrant chief, and before the Mexicans had time to prepare for battle the force of Houston was upon them, and in less than an hour the field was strewn with the slain, and the survivors of the enemy flying in dismay. The companion of Hernanda, who was taken ill the day previous, was confined to a litter, but by his request was placed in a position where he might witness the contest.

When he saw the enemy vanquished and dispersed, he forgot his debility, and nerved with the enthusiasm of the moment, he sprang from his litter and flew to the margin of the plain where the officers were collected to receive the prisoners who were momentarily brought in. Santa Anna was among the first who fled, in pursuit of whom Hernanda and a few others had gone. They returned the next morning with the prisoner, but they knew neither his features nor his rank; but Zalava,

who entered a few moments after, recognized him as the President of Mexico. A shout of joy ran through the camp at this announcement. Santa Anna, with Cos, Almonti, and others, were sent immediately to Galveston; and many of the volunteers, feeling that their work was accomplished, returned to their deserted homes.

Hernanda and his companion immediately started for Harrisburg. They arrived in safety, but found the town yet quite deserted, for the success and cruelties of the Mexicans inspired the defenceless inhabitants with terror. They soon learned, however, that Mr.—yet remained, and they flew with hasty steps to his residence. They met the merchant upon his threshold, but instead of meeting them with smiles, grief, deep and settled grief, brooded over his features, that made the warm stream of joy and love rush back with icy coldness upon the heart of Hernanda.

“Tell me,” cried Hernanda, ere the merchant had time to speak, “what is it that makes you sad? We are victorious—the Tyrant is our prisoner—peace hath returned to our borders.”

“That only can cheer me,” said the mer-

chant, and the tears rolled down his sallow cheek. "We have both lost a treasure. Mary——."

"*Mary!*" exclaimed Hernanda, "Speak! is she no more?"

"Alas! I know not," replied the father. "She has been absent many days, nor can I find a single trace of her, and I fear she has become the victim of some Mexican soldier."

"God forbid!" cried Hernanda, almost frantic with passion. "Were it so, I would devote my future hours to revenge. Texas hath driven oppression from her soil, and revenge for murders and ravishments shall plant her victorious standard upon the citadel of Tenochtitlan."

The youthful companion of Hernanda was heard to sob, and a bright tear glistened upon his muffled cheek.

"Who is your companion in arms?" asked the merchant.

"The noblest youth in Texas," said Hernanda; "but for him, Jose Hernanda would this day have been food for wolves. But do you not know him? He has said that he knew Mary well, and is he a stranger to her father?"

“The merchant, approaching the youth, had remained in silence since the meeting. “Your name,” said he.

The youth answered not, but rising from his seat he withdrew the cap and appendages with which his features were hidden, and the dark curls of Mary fell from beneath them. Her sweet smile that shone like sunshine through her tears, carried its light to the heart of the mourning father, and spread a halo of brightness over the crushed hopes of her lover.

Friend! art thou a tale-reader? If so, imagine the sequel. L.

10.000
GAL. 0.015

AY11

F57


1846

ICLF 1

M116640

AY 11
F57
1846

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY



FROM A FRIEND

FORGET ME NOT