rights of trial by jury and writ of habeas corpus, except in cases of treason, and the freedom of the press were established. No man was to be imprisoned for debt, and titles of nobility and monopolies were forbidden." [1]

David G. Burnet was elected president of the provincial government, which was to administer affairs until the people could express themselves constitutionally. Lorenzo de Zavala, an enlightened, liberty-loving Mexican, was elected vice-president.

[1] Sam Houston, etc., by Alfred M. Williams.

CHAPTER VI

THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

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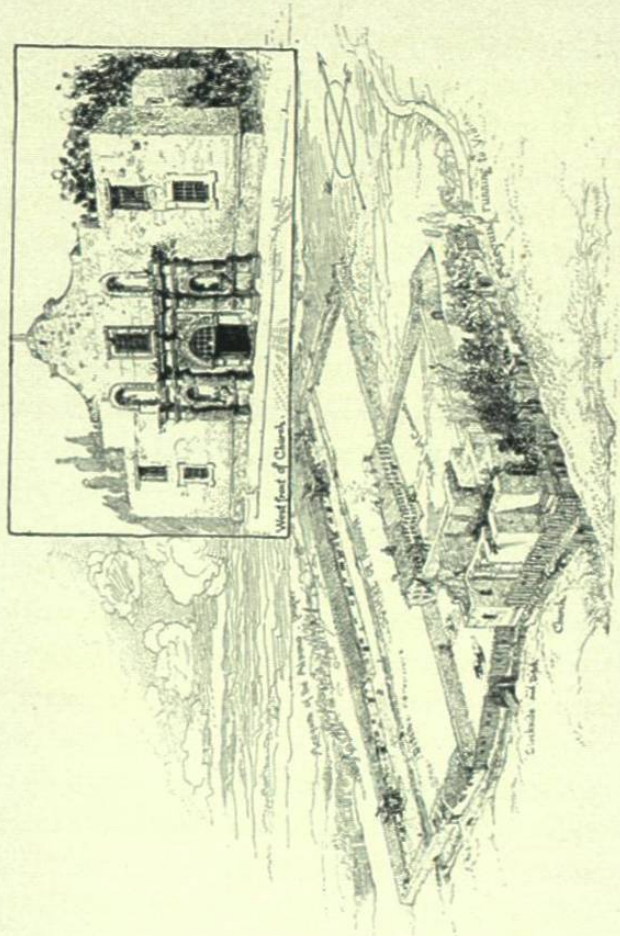
MEANWHILE, the Mexicans had been busy. On the 23rd of February, 1836, after a desperate march of one hundred leagues, from Monclova to San Antonio, across a desert country, in the depth of a Texas winter, Santa Anna with five thousand regular soldiers of the Mexican army, accompanied by a large number of camp followers and others, appeared before San Antonio. The garrison had withdrawn from the town and taken refuge in the buildings of the old Spanish Mission Del Alamo under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel William Barrett Travis, of North Carolina, a young lawyer just twenty-eight years of age. Travis was "six feet in height, erect and manly in figure, with blue eyes, reddish hair and round face." [1] South Carolinian

[1] Sam Houston, etc., by Alfred M. Williams.

historians claim that Travis should be accredited to their state, instead of North Carolina. It is a tradition that he was a foundling, and was discovered tied to the bars of a gate on the farm of a man named Travis, who adopted him and named him William Barr, not William Barrett. The Travis farm was situated between Saluda and Johnston, in South Carolina.[1] However, Travis signed his name William Barrett, and to whatever state he belonged he honored it signally.

With Travis in the Alamo was James Bowie, who, with Fannin, had commanded at the battle at Mission Concepcion. Bowie was seriously ill. He had been disabled by a fall and was also suffering from a severe attack of pleuropneumonia. Therefore, he could contribute little to the defense. Under Travis' command eventually were upward of one hundred and eighty men. His original garrison had been about one hundred and forty. Early in Feb-

[1] See note on pp. 315–16, my book American Fights and Fighters—Border.



A VIEW OF THE ALAMO.

ruary there came to him a certain David Crockett, with twelve other men from Tennessee, anxious and willing to help Texas gain her independence and incidentally to indulge in their natural proclivity for any kind of a fight.

David Crockett, renowned as a pioneer, hunter, and politician, is one of the most interesting characters in our early history. The son of an Irish emigrant, who had proved his devotion by fighting gallantly at King's Mountain during the Revolution, he was born at Limestone, Green County, Tennessee, on the 17th of August, 1786. His parents were very poor. He received no education save in hard work and in pioneering experiences, and at the age of twelve was apprenticed to a teamster and thereafter to a hatter. He returned home at the age of fifteen, determined to get some education. He did not at that time know the "first letter in the book." Six months completed his schooling. He served with credit under Jackson in the Creek War in 1813.

He was a big, brawny, genial, splendid man, the best shot in Tennessee, and very popular with his associates, who elected him a magistrate and colonel of militia in 1821. Thereafter he was successively elected to the State Legislature, and then for two terms to the National Congress, where his humor, his bravery and his shrewdness, made him a figure of national prominence. Failing of re-election because of his hostility to some of the projects of his whilom friend, President Jackson, and finding his political career in Tennessee closed on that account, he determined to go to Texas and help her win her freedom.[1]

After Santa Anna appeared Travis despatched messengers in all directions for help, and thirty-two men from Gonzales, under Captain J. W. Smith, broke through the Mexican lines on the 1st of March and joined him. Fannin was at Goliad with some four or

[1] See my book, American Fights and Fighters—Border, for a sketch of Crockett.

five hundred men. Accompanied by Colonel James Butler Bonham, an intimate friend of Travis, who had brought his appeal to Goliad, Fannin made an effort to join Travis in the Alamo. His ammunition wagons broke down, his transportation failed, he could not get his artillery over the rivers, and he was forced to abandon the attempt. Fannin tried to persuade Bonham to stay with him. "I will report to Travis or die in the attempt!" was brave Bonham's answer. He got through the Mexican lines at one o'clock on the morning of March 3rd. On the 6th of March one of Travis' messengers reached the convention assembled at Washington and laid before it this ringing appeal:

"*To the People of Texas and all Americans in the World—Commandancy of the Alamo.*

"BEXAR, *February 24, 1836.*

"FELLOW-CITIZENS AND COMPATRIOTS:

"I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment for twenty-four hours and

have not lost a man. The enemy have demanded a surrender at discretion; otherwise the garrison is to be put to the sword if the place is taken. I have answered the summons with a cannon shot and our flag still waves proudly from the walls.[1] *I shall never surrender or retreat.* Then, I call upon you, in the name of liberty, of patriotism, and of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all despatch. The enemy are receiving reinforcements daily, and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. Though this call may be neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible, and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country.

"*Victory or Death!*

"W. BARRETT TRAVIS,

"Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding."

"P. S.—The Lord is on our side. When the army appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn. We have since found in deserted houses eighty or ninety bushels and got into the walls twenty or thirty beeves."

[1] That flag was the familiar vertical green, white and red bars of Mexico with the number 1824 in the white bar, to signify allegiance to the Mexican Constitution of that date.

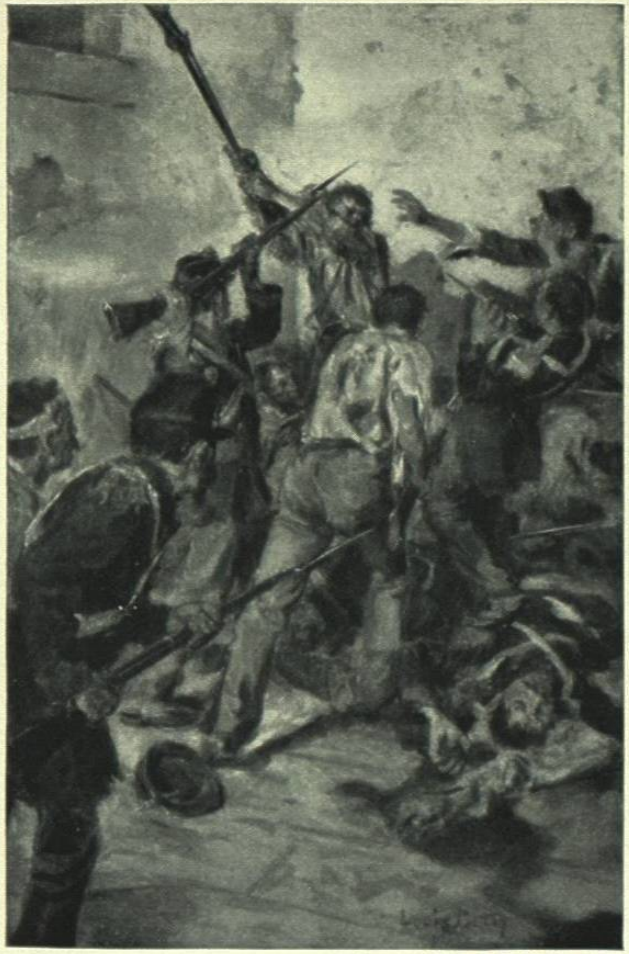
It was moved that the convention suspend its functions and that its members should take arms, and march immediately to the relief of Travis. Such counsel was gallant but injudicious. Important as was the relief of Travis, the work of the convention was much more so, and by the influence of Houston, who declared that the passage of the motion would mean suicide to the state, the members were prevailed upon to remain in session and complete their legislative business. Under such trying circumstances did that convention establish its constitution.

Travis, in other letters, declared his intention of holding the Alamo until he got relief from his countrymen or perished in its defense. There is little doubt that he could have cut his way out and have escaped with his men had he elected to do so. It would have required a thousand men properly to man the exterior line of the Alamo. Travis and his lone hundred and eighty did the best they could for eleven days. Finally the

Alamo fell, after a desperate hand-to-hand battle, on Sunday morning, the 6th of March. The defenders died fighting. Bowie, too ill to rise, lay on his bed in the hospital, and emptied his pistols at his assailants before he was killed. Travis was shot early in the storm, which was undertaken by some twenty-five hundred men. Old Crockett was bayoneted after a supreme struggle in front of the Mission Church. Six people who were in the fort at the beginning of the battle were spared by the Spanish, two women, two children and two slaves—but no soldiers.

The dead, to the number of about one hundred and eighty-two, were gathered into a huge pyramid, layers of wood and layers of bodies in alternation, and the torch applied. The Spanish casualties are variously estimated from five hundred to one thousand, most of their loss being sustained in the final hand-to-hand fighting.

The defense of the Alamo was the most heroic exploit in American history, and one of



THE DEATH OF DAVID CROCKETT.

the most heroic exploits in any history. Santa Anna was universally execrated for his ruthless conduct. Dark stories were prevalent that some of the Texans had asked for quarter, had been refused, and had been ruthlessly butchered by his orders. We may hold him guiltless of this graver charge. The Texans, or the Americans, as they should be called, did not ask for quarter. They died arms in hand. The inscription on the monument erected afterward to the defenders of the Alamo, at the state capital at Austin, is entirely true:

"Thermopylæ had its messenger of defeat,
The Alamo had none."

Santa Anna and the Mexicans were to appear in even worse light. A body of troopers under General Urrea had been despatched to operate against Fannin at Goliad. Fannin's command had been concentrated for the purpose of invading Mexico. His was that Matamoras expedition which had come to naught. Urrea had been completely success-

ful in isolating and overwhelming small detachments, which were invariably put to death. The Mexican Republic had decreed that any foreigners—that is, Americans, of course—captured under arms in Texas and bearing arms against Mexico, should be put to death, and Urrea executed his captives as fast as he took them. His advance was no mere butchering excursion, however, for in each instance he only succeeded after desperate fighting.

After the fall of the Alamo, Houston sent peremptory orders to Fannin to withdraw toward Victoria and join the general force with the commander-in-chief. Fannin had the best of the Texan troops under his command. They were nearly all regularly organized and well equipped bodies from various parts of the United States. It was vitally necessary for the Texans to assemble their forces in the presence of the overwhelming army of Santa Anna. Failing to do this, they would be beaten in detail.

Fannin did not obey immediately; in fact, at first he positively refused to do so, and notified Houston to that effect,[1] but on more mature reflection, he concluded that it would be best for his force to comply with the orders—sad commentary on the discipline of the Texan army, all this! He had despatched one or two parties in different directions, very unwisely, and he felt it necessary to wait for their return. So imperative in Houston's mind was the necessity for quick action that he had directed Fannin to bury his cannon and destroy or conceal such stores as would impede his rapid movements.

Fannin was a brave, capable officer, but military discipline was not strongly enforced and he concluded to wait for the return of his scouting parties. Indeed, he had even despatched some others after the receipt of Houston's orders. The parties never joined

[1] Personal Narrative of General Sam Houston, quoted in American History Told by Contemporaries, vol. iii. Edited by Albert Bushnell Hart.

him. They were attacked and beaten in severalty by Urrea. Those who were captured were put to death and the others were driven in headlong flight to the eastward, only to be captured later on and ultimately to share the melancholy fate of Fannin's command. They did not retreat in any case until practically they were completely out of ammunition, and then they fled for their lives.

Fannin wasted several precious days in trying to assemble these detachments, and finally on Saturday, the 19th of March, he dismantled Fort Defiance and started for Victoria. Again he failed to obey Houston's orders, for he took with him a great train of artillery and supply wagons, drawn by oxen, which was absolutely fatal to rapid motion. That same morning, while on the march, he was surrounded on an open prairie by an overwhelming force of Mexicans under Urrea. At the time Fannin was about four miles from the Coleta River, on which he had hoped to camp for the night. Where he then was

neither water nor wood could be had, nor was there any natural protection. In fact, the army, when caught, happened to be in a depression of land some six feet below the level of the prairie. The Mexicans had hidden in the woodland on the banks of the Coleta and had galloped thence and surrounded them.

A short distance away was a little hillock which offered better defensive possibilities. Fannin unlimbered his cannon, opened fire on the Mexicans and then endeavored to reach this hill, but the breaking down of his ammunition wagons forced him to stay where he was. He drew up his men to the number of three hundred in a hollow square. The oxen and wagons were placed in the middle of the square with the few women and children. There was a four- or six-pounder at each corner. The Georgia battalion carried a flag with a single blue star in its field with these words, "Liberty or Death." There were plenty of rifles and an abundance of ammuni-

tion. The cavalry, being some miles in advance, was prevented from joining the main body by the interposing Mexicans.

Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon the formal battle began. The Mexicans, under cover of a rapid and well-sustained fire, tried to break the American square by bayonet charges. The attacks were repulsed with frightful loss to the assailants, whose artillery had not yet come up. The courage of the Mexicans was remarkable. They came on again and again. The attack culminated in a dashing cavalry charge, led by Urrea in person, which was repulsed with great difficulty. The defenders suffered severely in the fighting. Many were killed and wounded in the Americans' yet unbroken square. The men generally lay down until the enemy were close upon them, when they rose and delivered their fire. Fannin and his officers remained standing.

Toward early evening the Mexican sharpshooters crept close to the Americans, and,

covered by the tall grass, opened fire, inflicting terrible damage. As soon as it grew dark enough for the Texans to mark the position of the sharpshooters by the flashes of their guns, they succeeded in driving them off. Thereafter they were left unmolested during the remainder of the night. Their situation was indeed desperate. It was intensely hot. There was not a drop of water, and there were many wounded. Through some mistake it was found that no food had been brought along. Nevertheless, they kept up a stout heart during the night, and threw up a light line of entrenchments further to protect themselves. They thought they had decisively beaten the Mexicans.

Reinforcements, however, reached Urrea during the night, bringing heavier guns than those of Fannin, which were rendered more or less useless from lack of water with which to sponge them. The Mexican artillery opened fire at daybreak. The Americans replied as well as they could with small arms

until their ammunition gave out, when there was nothing left for them but to surrender. They did not give up until they had passively endured the Mexican fire for some time and observed them making preparations for storm. Fannin, who had been wounded, even then did not wish to raise the white flag, but he was overborne by his officers. Indeed, there was nothing else to do.

This surrender was made in the most formal manner. A solemn convention was drawn up in writing in triplicate, by which the Americans were given favorable terms, the officers' side-arms and private baggage were to be retained, and the whole body of men was to be sent back to the United States under an agreement that none of them should bear arms against Mexico. The men were to be treated as prisoners of war until the agreement could be carried out. The Americans were well aware of Santa Anna's decrees and the treatment which in other respects they might expect to have meted out to them. They took every

precaution possible to pledge their antagonists before they capitulated.

The Mexicans brought them back to Goliad. Urrea seems to have been acting in good faith. In spite of his wound, he allowed Fannin to go to Matagorda to seek for a schooner or other vessel to take his men back to New Orleans. None being immediately available, the American captain, after making arrangements for the future, returned to Goliad. Meanwhile, Santa Anna had been apprised of the capture, and despatched an order to the commanding officer at Goliad, one Colonel Portilla—Urrea being absent in the field—peremptorily directing him to enforce the decree of the government—Santa Anna himself was the government!—with regard to foreigners caught in arms against the Mexican government.

Portilla, to his credit, would fain have disobeyed this order, but he had no alternative. He determined, however, to spare the lives of Captain Miller and a body of Americans, cap-

tured just as they landed in Texas, who had not participated in the battle of the Coleta. He did this on the representation of Colonel Garay, one of his subordinates, an honorable and gallant soldier, who protested vehemently against compliance with the decree in any event.

With the American troops were eight surgeons, who, after the battle, had been of great assistance to the Mexican wounded, and their services were still valuable. These were marched to Garay's headquarters on the morning of Palm Sunday, March 27, 1836, and with them two other men to whom Garay was personally attached. The wife of one of the officers, Señora Alvarez, secreted several other Americans. Of the other prisoners, those who were not wounded were marched out to the parade, and by the Mexican guards divided into three companies. They were then taken to different fields outside the walls and there ordered to sit down with their backs to the soldiers. Most of them did this in bewil-

derment, no one having the slightest inkling of the fell purpose of the Mexicans. Volleys were then poured into these helpless men at close range. Those not instantly killed fled for their lives, pursued by the soldiers. Some twenty-seven of them finally made good their escape, most of them more or less severely wounded. The soldiers then went back to the barracks, where the wounded Americans were, and murdered the helpless men in the hospital.

Fannin was the last man to be killed. He handed the officer in charge of the butchers his watch, and, asking that his ruthless executioners spare his face, struggled to his feet, opened his shirt and was instantly shot in the face in spite of his appeal. His body, with those of the others of his command, was thrown into a brush heap and burned. Some three hundred and thirty prisoners, who had trusted to the solemn word of their captors, were thus ruthlessly slaughtered. Those who escaped numbered less than forty. Coming on top of the bloody work at the Alamo, this brutal and

ferocious act, for which Santa Anna is directly responsible, awakened such a storm of indignation throughout Texas—and what was possibly more important, throughout the United States as well—that all questions of right, wrong, or expediency were lost in a wild desire for revenge. All this culminated in a stern determination to expel the bloody Dictator from Texas, free it from Mexican rule and establish it as an independent state.

The justice of the Mexican contention in the subsequent differences with the United States became obscured and was disregarded, seen as it was, through the butchery of the Alamo and the massacre at Goliad. Mexico, in the end, paid a bitter price for the cold-blooded and inhuman ferocity of her ruler.

CHAPTER VII

SAN JACINTO—THE NEW REPUBLIC —STEPHEN F. AUSTIN