

A LITTLE TRAITOR TO THE SOUTH
BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

This is the first installment of "A Little Traitor to the South," the thrilling new war comedy with a tragic interlude, by Cyrus Townsend Brady. Both the book and the author are names to conjure with. This novel is really a little masterpiece, and you will get it complete in three numbers of The Sunday Call.

(Copyright, 1903, by T. C. McClure.)

CHAPTER I.

HERO VERSUS GENTLEMAN.

If there was any person that Miss Fanny Glen especially detested and to whom she was determined she would not submit it was a masterful man. And if there ever was—if appearances counted for anything—a masterful man on earth, certainly Rhett Sempland, at that moment, was he.

The contrast between the two was amusing, or would have been had not the atmosphere been so surcharged with passionate feeling, for Rhett Sempland was six feet high if he was an inch, while Fanny Glen by a Procrustean extension of herself could just manage to cover the five-foot mark; yet such was the spirit permeating the smaller figure that there seemed to be no great disparity, from the standpoint of combatants, between them after all.

Rhett Sempland was deeply in love with Miss Fanny Glen. His full consciousness of that fact shaded his attempted mastery by ever so little. He was sure of the state of his affections and by that knowledge the weaker, for Fanny Glen was not at all sure that she was in love with Rhett Sempland. That is to say, she had not yet realized it; perhaps better, she had not yet admitted the existence of a reciprocal passion in her own breast to that she had long since learned had sprung up in his. By just that lack of admission she was stronger than he for the moment. When she discovered the undoubted fact that she did love Rhett Sempland her views on the mastery of man would probably alter—at least for a time! Love, in its freshness, would make her a willing slave; for how long, events only could determine. For some women a lifetime, for others an hour only can elapse before the chains turn from adornments to shackles.

The anger that Miss Fanny Glen felt at this particular moment gave her a temporary reassurance as to some questions which had agitated her—how much she cared, after all, for Lieutenant Rhett Sempland, and did she like him better than Major Harry Lacy? Both questions were instantly decided in the negative—for the time being. She hated Rhett Sempland, per contra, at that moment, she loved Harry Lacy. For Harry Lacy was he about whom the difference began. Rhett Sempland, confident of his own affection and hopeful as to hers, had attempted, with masculine futility and obtuseness, to prohibit the further attentions of Harry Lacy.

Just as good blood, as fond, ran in Harry Lacy's veins as in Rhett Sempland's, but Lacy, following in the footsteps of his ancestors, had mixed his with water that is not water because it is fire.

He "crooked the pregnant hinges" of the elbow without cessation, many a time and oft, and all the while—usually do—followed en train. One of the oldest names in the Carolinas had been dragged in the dust by this latest degenerate scion thereof. Nay, in that dust Lacy had wallowed—shameless, persistent, beast-like.

To Lacy, therefore, the Civil War came as a godsend, as it had to many another man in like circumstances, for it afforded another and more congenial outlet for the wild passion beating out from his heart. The war sang to him of arms and men—ay, as war has sung since Troy's day, of women, too.

He did not give over the habits of a lifetime, which, though short, had been hard, but he lessened them, temporarily obliterated them even, by splendid feats of arms. Fortune was kind to him. Opportunity smiled upon him. Was it running the blockade off Charleston, or passing through the enemy's lines with dispatches in Virginia, or heading a desperate attack on Little Round Top in Pennsylvania, he always won the plaudits of men, often the love of women. And in it all he seemed to bear a charmed life.

When the people saw him intoxicated on the streets of Charleston that winter of '63 they remembered that he was a hero; when some of his more frightful transgressions came to light, they recalled some splendid feat of arms and condoned what before they had censured.

ever, he would speedily sink back to that level to which he habitually descended, there being nothing to engage his energies, but his acquaintance with Miss Fanny Glen had altered him. Lacy met her in the hospital and there he loved her. Rhett Sempland met her in a hospital, too. Poor Sempland had been captured in an obscure skirmish late in 1861. Through some hitch in the matter he had been held prisoner in the North until the close of 1863, when he had been exchanged, and, wretchedly ill, he had come back to Charleston, like Lacy, to die.

He had found no opportunity for distinction of any sort. There was no glory about his situation, but prison life and fretting had made him show what he had suffered. At the hospital, then, like Lacy, he too had fallen in love with Miss Fanny Glen.

By rights the hero, not of this story, perhaps, but the real hero, was much the handsomer of the two—it is always so in romances; and romances—good ones, that is—are the reflex of life. Such a combination of manly beauty with unshakable courage and reckless audacity was not often seen as Lacy exhibited. Sempland was homely. Lacy had French and Irish blood in him and he showed it. Sempland was a mixture of sturdy Dutch and English stock. Yet if women found Lacy charming they instinctively depended upon Sempland. There was something thoroughly attractive in Sempland, and Fanny Glen unconsciously fell under the spell of his strong personality. The lasting impression which the gay and passionate abandon of Lacy could not make, Sempland had effected, and the girl was already powerfully under his influence—stubbornly resistant, nevertheless.

She was fond of both men. She loved Lacy for the dangers he had passed, and Sempland because she could not help it; which marks the relative quality of her affections. Which one she loved the better until the moment at which the story opens she could not have told.

Nobody knew anything about Fanny Glen. At least there were two facts only in possession of the general public concerning her. These, however, were sufficient. One was that she was good. The men in the hospital called her an angel. The other was that she was beautiful. The women of the city could not exactly see why the men thought so, which was confirmation strong as proofs of Holy Writ!

She had come to Charleston at the outbreak of the war accompanied by an elderly woman of unexceptional manner and appearance who called herself Miss Lucy Glen, and described herself as Miss Fanny Glen's aunt. They had taken a house in the fashionable quarter of the city—they were not poor at any rate—and had installed themselves therein with their slaves.

They made no attempt to enter into the social life of the city and only became prominent when Charleston began to feel acutely the hardships of the war which it had done more than any other section to promote.

Then Fanny Glen showed her quality. A vast hospital was established and the young women of the city volunteered their services.

The corps of nurses was in a state of constant fluxion. Individuals came and went. Some of them married patients, some of them died with them, but Fanny Glen abided. Not merely because she stayed while others did not, but perhaps on account of her innate capacity, as well as her careful tenderness, she became the chief of the women attached to the hospital. Many a sick soldier lived to love her. Many another, more sorely stricken, died blessing her.

In Charleston she was regarded as next in importance to the general who commanded the troops and who, with his ships, his forts, his guns and his man, had been for two years fighting off the tremendous assaults that were hurled upon the city from the Union ironclads and ships far out to sea. It was a point of honor to take, or to hold, Charleston, and the Confederates held it till 1865!

Fanny Glen was a privileged character, therefore, and could go anywhere and do anything within the lines. Under other circumstances there would have been a thorough inquiry by the careful inhabitants of the proud strict Southern city into her family relationships; but the war was a great leveler, people were taken at their real value when trouble demonstrated it, and few questions were asked. Those that were asked about Fanny Glen were not answered. It made little difference then. Toward the close of 1863, however, there was an eclipse in the general hospital, for Fanny Glen fell ill.

She was not completely recovered early in 1864, when she had the famous interview with Rhett Sempland, but there was not the slightest evidence of invalidism about her as she confronted him that afternoon in February. Wounded pride, outraged dignity, burning indignation, supplied health enough for a regiment of convalescents. The difference between the two culminated in a disturbance which might aptly be called cyclonic, for Sempland on nearly the first occasion that he had been permitted to leave the hospital

had repaired to Fanny Glen's house and there had repeated, standing erect and looking down upon her bearded head, what he had said so often with his eyes and once at least with his lips, from his bed in the ward—that he loved her and wanted her for his wife.

Pleasant thing it was for her to hear, too.

And Fanny Glen had not rejected him; neither had she accepted him.

She had pleaded for time, she had hesitated and would have been lost had Sempland been as wise as he was brave. Perhaps he wasn't quite master of himself on account of his experience in war, and his lack of it in women, for he instantly conceived that her hesitation was due to some other cause than maidenly incoherence, and that Harry Lacy, of whom he had grown mightily jealous, was at the bottom of it.

He hated and envied Lacy. More, he despised him for his weaknesses and their consequences. The two had been great friends once, but a year or two before the outbreak of the war they had drifted apart.

Sempland did not envy Lacy any talents that he might possess, for he was quite confident that the only thing he himself lacked had been opportunity—Fate had not been kind to him, but the war was not yet over. Consequently, when he jumped to the conclusion that Fanny Glen preferred Lacy, he fell into further error and made the frightful mistake of depreciating his rival.

Assuming with masculine inconsistency that the half acceptance she had given him entitled him to decide her future, he actually referred to Lacy's well-known habits and bade her have nothing to do with him.

CHAPTER II.

SHE HATES THEM BOTH.

"You are," he said at last, "a lonely, unprotected young girl. Where you came from or what you have been doesn't matter to me. I know what you are. And that is why I love you. You have no father or brother to advise you. I must do it and I will, much as it pains me. If you won't take my affection you must my counsel"—he called it counsel, but only an expert could have distinguished it from command—"you do not know this man Lacy. He is a dissolute, abandoned—"

"Stop!" cried the girl. "To me he is always a gentleman—a hero."

"The man is brave enough, I'll admit. And he has done some fine things."

"Yes, while other men have escaped dangers by being made prisoner."

"By that unkind remark she lost a large part of her advantage."

"As you say," he returned wincing under her cruel thrust, but persistent, "but we are not discussing me, now, but Lacy."

"Speaking of wickedness, you would better discuss yourself, I think, than him."

"I will not be put off in this way, Miss Glen."

"Miss Glen, please," she interrupted, but he paid no attention.

"Lacy is well enough, as a soldier. There is much to commend in him. He has the manner of a gentleman when he wishes to display it, but nevertheless he is not a fit person to be entrusted with the future of a lovely, pure, innocent young girl like you."

"Shame! Shame!" cried the girl. "You may cry 'shame' upon me," he went on calmly, "and I realize, of course, that I am censurable in speaking thus of my rival."

"You flatter yourself."

"How is that?"

"You are no rival of Major Lacy's."

"No? Well, then, as a friend."

"Of his?"

"Of yours."

"Nor are you a friend of mine."

"Well, then, as an enemy, a fool, anything! I want to tell you that nothing but unhappiness awaits you if you encourage him. I know him, I tell you. I know what sort of a man he is. Unstable as water, fickle, dissipated—"

"I'll hear no more!" cried the girl passionately, turning her head, attempting to leave the room.

"Excuse me," said the man coolly, preventing her by occupying the doorway. "You shall hear me! And hear this first of all. I am not saying anything about Major Lacy which is not a matter of public knowledge and which I have not said to him directly, and which I would not repeat in his presence."

"You tell me that—"

"You do not believe me?"

"No."

"I beg to assure you, Miss Glen, upon my word of honor—and it has not been doubted heretofore—that I told him these very things not longer than half an hour ago. And I informed him that I was going to tell you."

"What did he say?" she asked, her curiosity getting the better of her.

"He laughed. Said that the South had need for such as I," he replied with sturdy honesty, "but that he would take great pleasure in killing me when the war was over if we were both spared."

"Well, sir, was not that a fine reply?"

"It was. It was a gentleman's answer. I admired him for it and told him so. At the same time I told him that he must cease his attentions to you."

"By what right do you dare"—cried the girl almost choking with sudden and indignant protest.

"No right. Unless my love for you, with a desire to serve you, greater than everything save my devotion to that flag yonder, can excuse me."

"And that cannot. Unless love be returned it entails no rights whatsoever."

"And you do not love me?"

"Love you?" cried the girl scornfully. "I know you don't, but won't you?" he pleaded.

"I won't."

"You won't try?"

"No."

other. She could not speak. She was too conscious of that stern iron figure. Yet she would have given words to say "yes" to Lacy's plea.

"Choose, Miss Glen," said Lacy at last. "It was hard for him to wait for anything. You stand between us, you see. I want you if you do not take me, you will take Sempland. Look at him (he smiled satirically)—he always gets what he wants. He is the very incarnation of bulldog tenacity and resolution. If I don't get you he certainly will."

"How dare you comment upon me?" cried Sempland.

"Patience, my good sir," said the other coolly. "You comment upon me in my absence. I comment upon you in your presence. The advantage is mine. As I said, Miss Glen, it is a choice between us. Do not choose me, if you should be so fortunately inclined, because I happen to have had some chance for distinction, for I assure you on my honor, all there is to be had, that if Sempland gets what he chooses he'll do better than I. Choose because you love him—grime."

The girl stared from one to the other in indignant bewilderment. Lacy was an ideal lover. Sempland looked like a stern master and obstinate a mocker. She made a half step toward the handsomer and slighter man, and a half turn toward the homelier and stronger. In her heart of hearts she found in that moment whom she preferred. And as love is wayward, in the knowledge came a surprise for her—and it brought shame. Lacy was handsome and gallant and distinguished, in spite of all, but Sempland was strong—a man indeed.

"Oh," she cried, looking at him, "if you only had done something great, or—"

"What!" he cried, his face alight.

But she turned instantly away. In her words Lacy, subtler and more used to women, read her preference and his rejection. But he smiled bravely and kindly at her in spite of his knowledge.

"Major Lacy," she said, giving him her hand, "I esteem you, I honor you, I respect you. I do not believe what this—that has been said about you. But I do not love you." She drew away from him. "You were mistaken. There is no choice between you, for I love neither of you. I do not love anybody. I hate you both!" she flashed out incoherently. "Now go! I don't want to see either of you again."

She buried her face in her hands and burst into tears.

"I will do something to deserve your praise," said Sempland in his deep voice, turning away.

"Miss Glen," said Lacy most graciously (Fanny Glen's presence seemed to call all that was good in him to the surface), "no one has respected me, or trusted me, or honored me as you have, for years. Sempland cannot rob me of that even though he should win you. Good-by, and if it be not grotesque from me, may God bless you!"

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE OPPORTUNITY WAS PRESENTED.

"Well, Sempland," said Lacy, with astonishing courtesy and forbearance under all the circumstances, as he overtook the older man plodding along the shaded street, "you don't seem to be in much greater favor with the young lady than I."

"Lacy," returned the other, "you did well this evening. You are not good enough for Miss Glen, I still think. Nobody is for that matter, but you less than others. My opinion of you, you know—"

"Faith, all the world may know it apparently!"

"That's unjust. I have never mentioned it to any one and should not have expressed it to Miss Glen had it not been to save her. But you showed the stuff that was in you, that used to be in you, to-night. It was fine. I thank you for having said—"

"What?" asked Lacy.

"Why, that about my not having had a chance, you know."

"Oh, that was a trifle."

"I know. But not many men would have said it at the time."

"I tell you what it is, Sempland. I like you. I always have liked you. When I—er—dropped out of the old set, you know, before the war, I didn't mind giving up any one so much as you. And I was sorry for you to-night. You hadn't had a chance. God knows I love the girl, but I am not the man for her. You don't know women, I take it, but I think she will be yours in the end. I give her to you."

"She is not yours to give."

"No, I know she isn't. But I withdraw in your favor."

"I don't want that sort of a fair field, Harry," went on the other man, unconsciously dropping into the familiar form of boyhood, which caused Lacy's face to flush with pleasure; "I am sure she loves you. I thought it was I at first, but since this afternoon I've changed my mind. Why can't you be different? You are not a fit man to marry any honest woman now, and when I thought of your record I doubt-ed that you ever would be. I was sure you would not, but—see here, old man! Throw the past aside! A fellow that's got it in him to do what you have done for the South—why can't you control yourself? Turn over a new leaf. I love her, too. She's more to me than love itself, but her happiness is more



"I HATE YOU BOTH SHE FLASHED OUT."

"Yes."

"Exposed me to this young lady?"

"I have."

"And condemned me as an utter scoundrel, a blackguard?"

"Not quite. I told the truth," replied Sempland calmly, "just as I said to you I would, and for that I am ready to answer in any way you please. We can settle the matter when the war is over."

"Very well. What did you say, Miss Glen?" continued Lacy, turning to the girl.

"I told him it wasn't true," burst out the girl impetuously.

"Ah, but it is," said Lacy softly. "I am all that he says, and more."

"But look at what you have done."

"But little after all. I heard you reproaching Sempland for what he had not done when I came in. That isn't fair. No braver man lives than Rhett Sempland. Why, did it not take courage to defy me, to tell me to my face that I was a scoundrel, a blackguard? And it took more courage to defy custom, convention, propriety, to come here and tell you the same things. No, Miss Glen, Sempland only lacks opportunity. Fortune has not been kind to him. In that settlement after the war there will be struggle, I'll warrant you."

"See! He can speak nobly of you," cried Fanny Glen, turning reproachfully to Sempland.

"I never said he was not a gentleman, could not be a gentleman, that is, when he was—when he wished to be one, that is, as well as a hero. He has good blood in him, but that doesn't alter the case. He isn't a fit match for you, or for any woman. I am not speaking for myself. I know my case is hopeless—"

"Gad!" laughed Lacy, "you have tried then and lost? It's my turn then. Miss Glen, you have heard the worst of me this afternoon. I have fallen low, very low. But sometimes I am a gentleman. Perhaps in your presence I might always be. I can't tell. I'm not sure. Will you take me for your lover, and in good time your husband, under such circumstances? Faith, I'm afraid it'll not be for better, but for worse."

Sempland said nothing. He would not interfere now. Fanny Glen must answer for herself. He clenched his teeth and strove to control himself. In spite of his efforts, however, the blood flamed into his dark face. Fanny Glen grew very white, her blue eyes shone like stars in the pallor of her face under her fair hair. She hesitated. She looked from one to the