

# A Little Traitor to the South--A War-Time Comedy With a Tragic Interlude by Cyrus Townsend Brady



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### CHAPTER I.

#### Hero Versus Gentleman.

**I**F 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 jack 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, au 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 the 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 vices—as they 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—aye, as war has sung since Troia's day, of women, too.

He did not give over the habits of a lifetime, which, though short, had been hard, but he leavened 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 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.

How he happened to be in Charleston was because he had been shot to pieces at Gettysburg and had been sent down there to die. But die he would not, at least



FANNY GLEN LOOKED FROM ONE TO THE OTHER. SHE COULD NOT SPEAK. SHE WAS TOO CONSCIOUS OF THAT STERN IRON FIGURE.

not then. He would not have cared much about living, for he realized that, when the war was over, 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 also. 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 gaiety 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 tactful 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 com-