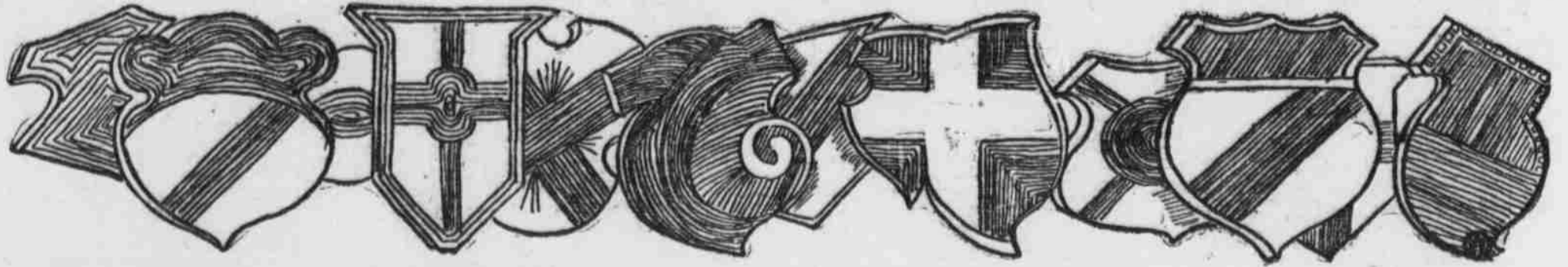


# A Little Traitor to the South--A War-Time Com-



## edy With a Tragic Interlude by Cyrus Townsend Brady

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### CHAPTER X.

#### The Woman Pleads.

**I** THINK they would believe me against even you," answered Sempland. "I would tell them that you—ah—love me and that you are trying to save me. And more, if you say one word to General Beauregard or anyone else about it after you leave this room I give you my word of honor I will declare that I was afraid to go and that I stayed with you."

"Why will you be so foolish?" she asked.

"Because I love you," he burst out, "that's the only reason. I have told you before, but you did not seem to believe it, at least you did not appear to care, but now it won't hurt you to hear it once more. You won't have to hear it again from me. It's the last time. I expect every moment they will be here to summon me before the court-martial, so I must tell you now. You are a cruel, heartless coquette. You encouraged Lacy—"

"I did not!" indignantly.

"And you didn't discourage me."

"How dare you say so?"

"Last night when I held you in my arms and kissed you—"

"I was powerless—"

"When I released you you clasped me around the neck and returned my caress. I'll swear you did and all the time you had another man in your heart."

"Another man?" she exclaimed in great astonishment.

"Yes. That man on the Wabash!"

"Oh, the man on the Wabash!"

"Yes. You wanted to save him, so you played with me. Why weren't you honest about it? Why didn't you tell me the truth? But no, you chose to disgrace me for him. Well, you succeeded. I shall pay the penalty. I shall keep silent for your sake. He may have you and you may have him, but my death will be ever between you. The burden of obligation will be heavy upon you both, more than you can carry."

He had worked himself up into a jealous rage by this time. His self-control was completely gone.

"Who is this man?" he burst out at last, while she took a wicked joy in his misapprehension.

"His—his—name—is—" she spoke slowly and with seeming reluctance as if to spare him.

"Then there is a man? Good God! I had hoped, in spite of everything, that I might have been mistaken, that you acted so for some other reason. Do you love him?"

"Yes," faintly, turning away her head.

"Do you really love him, or are you making a fool of him as you did of me?"

"But I—love you, too," she said, demurely, gently dropping her head so that her face was half hidden from his intent gaze.

"How can you love both of us?" he exclaimed, angered beyond endurance by her apparent coquetry.

"It's—it's—different," she answered, demurely.

"If Lacy were here I suppose he would understand, but women such as you are beyond me."

"It seems so."

"But why prolong this interview longer, Miss Glen? Your secret is safe with me. Probably you came here to learn that. I will not allow you to betray it, either"—how inconsistent he was, she thought—"you know that I love you, and I know that you do not love me, that your heart is with that man on the ship. Won't you please leave me alone? I really shall need all my self-command, my strength, to face the court-martial, and you—you—unman me. I thank you for coming to see me, but—forgive my apparent discourtesy—I would rather be alone. Goodbye."

"Wait," she said. "That man on the Wabash—"

"By heaven!" he interrupted, savagely—he was a man of somewhat elemental passions when he was aroused, and he was thoroughly aroused then—"have you no mercy, no pity? This is too much! I don't want to hear a word about him. Whoever he is—"

"Stop, sir!" cried the girl, impressively, "or you will say something for which you will be sorry."

"Sorry! I should like to have him within reach of my hand!" he said grimly, extending his arm as he spoke, and his expression was not pleasant to see. "I'd—"

"I am sure," she went on hurriedly, cutting him off, "you would not do a thing to him if he stood right here."

"Would I not? And pray, why not?" he asked her bitterly.

"Because—"

She stopped reluctant to disclose her secret. Once she did so her power was gone.

"Because—" she said again.

"Tell me in heaven's name! You torture me!"

"Because he—is—my—"

Again she stopped and again his anxiety got the better of him. He caught her

"No-o-o," with reluctance, "not altogether for him alone."

"Who else then?"

"I told you last night," she answered evasively.

"For me?"

"Ye-es," faintly. "I could not bear to see you lose your—your life."

Slowly she felt herself being drawn nearer to him. She struggled feebly, glad to be overborne by his superior strength. In another moment she was in his arms for the second time. Her head was bent down toward his watch pocket. Holding her safe with one arm he put his hand under

business—or pleasure.

"Then your name isn't Fanny Glen?"

"That's part of it."

"What's the rest of it?"

"Fanny Glen Vernon."

"What! Is Admiral Vernon your father?"

"He is."

"How is that?"

"When the war broke out he stayed with the north, was true to his flag, he said. I had seen little of him since my mother's death, when I was 10 years old. I was a southern woman. It seemed monstrous to me. I begged and implored him, but uselessly, and finally our relations were broken



"THERE IS NO OTHER MAN," SHE WHISPERED. "THERE NEVER WAS ANY ONE BUT YOU."

hands in his own and held them with a grasp that hurt her.

"My God, will you cease this cruelty? He is not your—you are not really married to him, are you?"

"Hardly. Let go of my hands," she answered, striving to draw away; yet for a fairly strong young woman she exhibited an astonishing feebleness in her endeavor.

"Who is he?" with imperious insistence.

"My father—there! Now, will you release me?"

"Your father! And there is no other man?" in great bewilderment, through which the glimmering of great relief began to shine.

She shook her head.

"And you did this for him alone?"

her chin, and turned her face upward. There were blushes on her cheeks, laughter and tears in her eyes. The interrupted kiss trembled upon her lips, and he—well, this time it was longer than the night before and more satisfying. As he kissed her her arms went around his neck again.

"There was no other man," she whispered, "there never was any one but you. I did wrong, very wrong, but my father and you—that was my excuse. And I loved you all the time."

When there was opportunity some moments later for articulate conversation he endeavored to solve the mystery of her paternity, the understanding of which he had put by in the face of more pressing

off. So I dropped the name of Vernon and came here to work for our cause; the rest you know. But I could not let him be blown up unsuspecting, could I? If he were killed in action it would be terrible, but this was a dreadful ending. I thought—I don't know what I thought. I love the south, but—"

"I understand, my dearest," he said, in no condition to understand anything very clearly, and caring little for the moment for anything except that she loved him.

"And you forgive me?"

"Forgive you? With all my soul. This moment with you in my arms, with your arms around my neck, with your kisses upon my lips, with your words in my ear, with your love in my heart—this makes up