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# **Rodney The Partisan**

Harry Castlemon

# Imprint

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CASTLEMON'S WAR SERIES,

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RODNEY THE PARTISAN

BY

HARRY CASTLEMON,

AUTHOR OF "GUNBOAT SERIES," "ROCKY MOUNTAIN SE-  
RIES," "SPORTSMAN'S CLUB SERIES," ETC., ETC.

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## **RODNEY, THE PARTISAN.**

### **CHAPTER I.**

#### **RODNEY KEEPS HIS PROMISE.**

"So you are going to stick to your uniform, are you? I thought perhaps you would be glad to see yourself in citizen's clothes once more, and so I told Jane to put one of your old suits on the bed where you would be sure to see it."

It was Mrs. Gray who spoke, and her words were addressed to her son Rodney, who just then stepped out of the hall upon the wide gallery where his father and mother were sitting. Rodney had been at home about half an hour just long enough, in fact, to take a good wash and exchange his fatigue suit for a sergeant's full uniform.

In the first volume of this series of books we told of the attentions our Union hero, Marcy Gray, received while he was on the way to his home in North Carolina, and how very distasteful and annoying they were to him. We said that the passengers on his train took him for just what he wasn't—a rebel soldier fresh from the seat of war, or a recruit on his way to join some Southern regiment—and praised and petted him accordingly. Marcy didn't dare tell the excited men around him that he was strong for the Union, that he had refused to cheer the Stars and Bars when they were hoisted on the tower of the Barrington Military Academy, and that if a war came he hoped the secessionists would be thrashed until they were brought to their senses—Marcy did not dare give utterance to these sentiments, for fear that some of the half tipsy passengers in his car might use upon him the revolvers they flourished about so recklessly. He was obliged to sail under false colors until he reached Boydtown in his native State, where Morris, his mother's coachman, was waiting for him. Rodney Gray, the rebel, who you will remem-

ber left the academy a few weeks before Marcy did, received just as much attention during his homeward journey. Sumter had not yet been fired upon, but the passengers on the train were pretty certain it was going to be, and gave it as their opinion that if the "Lincolnites" attempted "subjugation" they would be neatly whipped for their pains. Being in full sympathy with the passengers Rodney was not afraid to tell who and what he was.

"I am neither a soldier nor a recruit," he said over and over again, when some enthusiastic rebel shook him by the hand and praised him for so promptly responding to the President's call for volunteers. "I am a Barrington cadet on my way home, and I am under promise to enlist inside of twenty-four hours after I get there. Do you see this gray suit? I shall not wear any other color until the independence of the Southern States has been acknowledged by the world."

Such sentiments as these never failed to "bring down the car," as Rodney afterward expressed it when describing some of the incidents of his journey from Barrington, and many of the passengers assured him that he would be at liberty to put on a citizen's suit in less than six months.

"The fighting won't amount to anything," said one, who talked as if he thought himself able to whip the whole Yankee nation alone and unaided. "It will be over in a good deal less than six months, but you gallant fellows will have to wear your uniforms a little longer in order to escort President Davis to Washington. He will dictate terms of peace in the enemy's capital."

"If our President will only do that, I will stay in the army ten years if it is necessary," declared Rodney, and he meant every word of it, for he was carried away by his enthusiasm.

A good many foolish notions of this sort were drummed into Rodney Gray's head during his two days' journey from Barrington to Mooreville. He afterward had occasion to recall some of them, and to wonder how he ever came to accept them as the truth. But he kept his word so far as his uniform was concerned; that is to say, he returned to the closet the citizen's suit that had been laid out for him, and rigged himself up as if he were going on dress parade. His mother looked at him with fond and admiring eyes as he stepped

upon the gallery and seated himself in the easy chair that one of the attentive darkies placed for him; for Rodney was an only child, and a very fine looking young soldier besides.

"Yes," he said, in reply to his mother's question. "I am going to stick to my uniform. It is the color that has been adopted by our government, and, as I told some of the passengers on the train, I'll not wear any other until we have secured our independence."

"Nobly said!" exclaimed Rodney's mother, who was as strong for secession as Marcy Gray's mother was for the Union. "I was sure you would not stay at home very long after your State called for your services. I don't think you will have to wear the gray for a very great while, but your father thinks he sees trouble in the near future."

"I don't think so my dear; I know so," replied Mr. Gray, in answer to an inquiring look from Rodney. "The North can raise more men than we can."

"That was what the colonel said when I asked him to let me come home," exclaimed Rodney. "He said, further, that the Northern people are not cowardly—they are only patient; and that there will come a time when their patience will all be gone, and then they will sweep over us like a cloud of locusts."

"And did you believe any such nonsense?" inquired Mrs. Gray.

"What will

our brave people be doing while the hated Yankees are sweeping over us?

Don't you remember our President said the fighting must all be done on

Northern soil?"

"It takes two to make a bargain," said Mr. Gray, quietly.

"That's just what Marcy said," exclaimed Rodney. "That boy is going to get himself into business before he gets through talking. He's Union to the back-bone, and while I was at the academy he didn't hesitate to speak his sentiments as often as he felt like it. If he keeps that up when he gets home his neighbors may take him in hand."

"I am sorry to hear that about Marcy," said Mr. Gray, thoughtfully. "He is a traitor and his mother must be another. I wonder where Sailor Jack stands. By the way, where is Jack?"

"He was at sea the last I heard, and I suppose Marcy and his mother are greatly worried about him. And well they may be; for of course we'll have a big fleet of privateers afloat within a month after war is declared. But, father, do you think there is going to be a war?"

"I am sure of it," answered Mr. Gray.

"And it will be fought on Southern soil?"

"It will."

"Well, how long do you think I shall have to wear this uniform?"

"If you don't take it off until the South gains her independence, you will have to wear it as long as you live."

"Why, father!" exclaimed Mrs. Gray, dropping her sewing into her lap and looking fixedly at her husband, who leaned back in his big chair watching the smoke from his cigar. "How can you bring yourself to utter such treasonable language in your son's hearing? You know you do not believe a word of it."

"Never fear for me, mother," said Rodney, with a laugh. "I know where you stand and I am with you."

"There was nothing treasonable in what I said, and I do believe every word of it," replied Mr. Gray. "I am as firm a friend to the South as any man in the state, and will make as many sacrifices as the next one to secure her independence. Why shouldn't I? Every thing I've got in the world is right here, and if the South doesn't succeed in her efforts to free herself, we'll be beggars, the last one of us. I wish from the bottom of my heart that when our armies get started they might sweep every abolitionist in the country into Massachusetts Bay; but they'll not be able to do it. The Union has cost the Northern people so much blood and treasure that they will not permit it to be destroyed."

"I reckon the South had about as much to do with the war of the Revolution as the North did," declared Rodney.

"And another thing, the Northern people will not fight," Mrs. Gray hastened to add. "Wasn't it the South that did the most toward whipping Mexico?"

"And wasn't it the North that did the most toward whipping England?" retorted Mr. Gray. "Look here," he added, starting up in his chair when he saw Rodney and his mother look toward each other with a smile of disbelief on their faces. "You must have forgotten your history, you two. During the Revolutionary War the colonies raised two hundred and thirty-two thousand men to fight England, and of this number the North raised one hundred and seventy-five thousand, or more than three-fourths of the whole. Massachusetts gave sixty-eight thousand; Connecticut gave thirty-two thousand; Pennsylvania twenty-six thousand, and New York eighteen thousand; while that miserable little South Carolina gave only six thousand. And yet she has the impudence to talk and act as if she owned the country. It would have been money in her pocket and ours if she had been sunk out of sight in the Atlantic before she was made into a state."

There were three things that surprised Rodney so much that for a minute or two he could not speak—his father's sentiments, the earnest and emphatic manner in which he expressed them, and the items of history to which he had just listened and which were quite new to him, as they may be to more than one boy who reads this story. But Mr. Gray was like a good many other men in the South. He did not believe in disunion (although he did believe in State Rights), but now that the South was fully committed to it, he knew that he must do what he could to make the attempt at separation successful. If it failed, he and every other slave-holder in the South would be financially ruined.

"Then I suppose you don't want me to go into the army?" said Rodney, at length.

"I didn't say so; I didn't so much as hint at such a thing," replied his father, hastily.

"But what's the use of enlisting if I am going to get whipped? I don't see any fun in that."

"Oh, we've got to fight; we have gone too far to back out. We must hold out until England and France recognize our independence—and that will not be long, for England must have cotton—and then we can snap our fingers at the Yankees. You can take your choice of one of two things: Stay at home and look out for your mother and let me go, or go yourself."

"You stay and let me go," answered the boy promptly. "I gave my word to some of the fellows that I would enlist within twenty-four hours after I reached home, if I could get to a recruiting office, and they promised to do the same."

"Very well," said Mr. Gray, "I shall not say one word to turn you from your purpose, and neither will your mother,"

Mrs. Gray started when she heard these words. She had talked very bravely about "giving her boy his sword and shield and sending him forth to battle," and she had thought she could do it without a tremor; but now that the matter was brought right home to her, she found, as many another mother did, that it was going to be the hardest task she had ever set for herself. Rodney was safe at school, hundreds of miles away from her when she uttered those patriotic words; now he was within hearing of her voice, and all she had to do was to tell him to mount his horse and go. She could not do it; but her husband, who believed that the matter might as well be settled one time as another, continued—

"There is an independent company of cavalry camped about a mile the other side of Mooreville, and I know they would be glad to take you in. The company is made up of the very best men in the county, many of whom are your personal friends, and every member has to be balloted for."

"They are nearly all wealthy, and some of them are going to take their body servants to the front with them," added Mrs. Gray, trying to look cheerful although her eyes were filled with tears. "Your father and I spent an afternoon in their camp, and you don't know how nicely they are situated—all the luxuries the country affords on their tables, and then they are so full of martial ardor!"

"Yes," assented Mr. Gray. "We found it a regulation holiday camp—nothing to do and plenty of darkies to do it. They were hav-

ing no end of fun, lying around in the shade abusing the Yankees. But wait until they meet those same Yankees in battle, and their blacks run away from them, and then they have to do their own cooking and forage for their bacon and hard-tack, and then they will know what soldiering means."

"Now, father," protested Mrs. Gray. "Why do you talk so when Rodney is on the eve of enlisting? You surely do not wish to discourage him?"

"By no means. I only want to make him see, before he swears away his liberty for the next twelve months, that he is not going on a Fourth of July picnic. If he knows what is before him, he will not be surprised or disheartened when the hard times come."

"I know a little something about soldiering, and you need have no fears that anything father can say will discourage me," Rodney said to his mother. "I have passed my word, and consider myself as good as enlisted already. Who commands that company of cavalry?"

"Bob Hubbard is the one who is getting it up, but there isn't any real commander yet. The boys do just about as they please, and will keep on doing so until the officers are elected, which will be when they have eighty men enrolled. Bob says that if they elect him captain, and I reckon he stands as good a chance as anybody, the boys will have to come down to Limerick and quit leaving camp and staying in town over night whenever the notion takes them."

"Have they seen any service at all?" asked Rodney.

"None except what some of them saw while they were members of the State militia," answered his father. "They helped capture the United States arsenal at Baton Rouge and hoist the Pelican flag over it, and you would have thought by the way they acted that they had done something grand. But the work was accomplished without the firing of a shot, the major in command offering to surrender if a force of six or eight hundred men was brought against him. By the way," added Mr. Gray getting upon his feet and tossing aside the stump of his cigar, "I expected you to do just what you have decided upon, and if you feel like taking a walk around to the stable before dinner, I will show you the horse I bought for you last week. Every 'Ranger' (that's what Hubbard calls his men), furnishes his

own horse, the government allowing a small sum for the use of it; and if the horse dies or is killed in battle, the unlucky Ranger is expected to get another the best way he can."

"Where is this company going to serve?" inquired Rodney.

"I don't know, and neither does Hubbard. They have offered to join a regiment that is being raised in New Orleans, but the colonel commanding says he can't take them unless they will give up their independent organization."

"Oh, I hope they'll not think of doing that."

"You needn't worry. More than one Swamp Fox like General Marion will come to the front before this thing is over, and Bob's company will not be left out in the cold. I haven't said much to your mother about your going into the service," Mr. Gray went on, throwing open the door of a box stall and holding out an ear of corn to a glossy, well-conditioned steed which came up to take a bite at it. "While she is strong for secession and very patriotic where other folks are concerned, she don't want any of the members of her own family to go to war. She thinks they are sure to be killed."

"That isn't at all like the women and girls around Barrington," replied Rodney, stepping into the stall and beginning a critical inspection of his new horse. "They'll not have any thing to do with a fellow who isn't willing to prove his devotion to the Confederacy. Where would we get the men to fight our battles if everybody thought as mother does?"

"Of course she hasn't said so," Mr. Gray hastened to explain. "She is too good a Southerner for that, but I know it is the way she feels. What do you think of your horse? He is part Denmark, and that is what makes him so gentle; and his Copper-bottom blood shows in his color. Almost all Copper-bottom colts are roans."

"He's a beauty," Rodney declared, with enthusiasm. "And as long as I keep him I'll never fall into the clutches of the Yankees. He ought to have speed."

(And the new horse did have speed, too, as Rodney discovered when he rode him over to the camp of the Rangers that afternoon in company with his father. He moved as if he were set on springs and

showed himself impatient of restraint; but his motions were so easy that his rider was scarcely stirred in his seat.)

"Good-by, my son," said Mrs. Gray, when Rodney's horse and his father's were brought to the door after dinner, and the two stood on the gallery drawing on their gloves. "You belong to me now, but I suppose that when you come back you will belong to your country."

"Oh no: I can't rush things through in that style," answered the boy. "I've got to be voted for, you know. But I shall certainly tell Mr. Hubbard that I am ready to go if he will take me."

During the ride through the village of Mooreville to the camp beyond, the only indications Rodney saw of the martial spirit that everywhere animated the people were the Confederate and State flags that floated over all the business houses, and the red, white and blue rosettes, which were worn principally by the women and girls. Rodney was the only one in uniform, the Rangers not having decided how they would equip themselves when the time came for them to go to the front. Rodney was kept busy returning the salutes he received as he rode along, and now and then some young fellow would rush into the street to shake his hand, and inquire if he was going up to the camp to give in his name. The camp was not such a one as the Barrington cadets used to make when they took to the fields every summer to reduce to practice the military instruction they had received during the year. There were tents in abundance, but they were put up without any attempt at order, there were no guards out, and the few recruits there were in camp seemed to have nothing to do but lounge around under the trees, reading the papers and talking over the situation. Rodney thought they might as well have been at home for all the good they were doing there.

"This is a pretty way to learn soldiering," said he to Mr. Hubbard, who promptly showed himself when he heard the sound of horses' hoofs in front of his tent. "How many men have you? Will you take in my name?"

"You are just the fellow we want and I wish we could get fifty more like you," replied Mr. Hubbard, returning the cordial grasp of Rodney's hand. "The boys will certainly put you in for something or other. We haven't got down to business yet, but will next week. I

suppose that all the military knowledge we get will be by hard knocks, because, being an independent company, we cannot call upon any army officer to drill us. We are studying the tactics all the time, but are in no hurry to get our uniforms until we know whether or not our services are going to be needed."

"Say," exclaimed Rodney, recalling to mind something that had been said to him on the train a few hours before. "If I were in your place I'd lose no time in getting ready to march. President Davis is going to dictate terms of peace in Washington. Wouldn't you like to have your company escort him there?"

"Now, that's an idea," exclaimed Hubbard, while the recruits who were standing around listening to the conversation declared as one man that they would do and dare anything if they could only have a chance to present arms to the Confederate President when he walked into the White House. "The boys will all be here at roll-call to-night and I will speak to them about it. At the same time I will propose you for membership. You'll get in, of course, and perhaps you had better report tomorrow forenoon."

Although Rodney could not see the use of reporting, seeing that there was nothing to be done in camp, he promised to be on hand, and rode away to call upon some of his friends in the village. He found, somewhat to his relief, that there was not a single one among them who believed as his father did that the South was sure to fail in her efforts to dissolve the Union. They all thought as Rodney did—that the Northern people belonged to an inferior race, that there was no fight in them, and that the States having made the nation could unmake it whenever they felt like it. He learned also, to his no small indignation, that his father did not stand as high in the estimation of his neighbors as he might have done if he had not expressed his opinions with so much freedom. As he was about to leave the village for home just before dark, he encountered an old acquaintance of his, Tom Randolph by name, who had just returned from the camp.

"You're in, Rodney," said he, after he had given the Barrington boy a very limp hand to shake. "To-morrow forenoon we're going to elect officers and get down to business. Will you be up?"

Rodney replied that he would, and at the same time he wondered why it was that Randolph treated him so coolly. They never had been friends. They took a dislike to each other the first time they met, and the oftener they were thrown together, the stronger that dislike seemed to grow. They had always tried to treat each other with civility, but now there was something in Randolph's way of talking and acting that Rodney did not like.

"While you were up to camp to-day did any of the boys tell you that I am a candidate for second lieutenant of the company?" continued Randolph.

"You?" exclaimed Rodney, in genuine astonishment.

"Yes, me," replied Randolph, mimicing Rodney's tone and look of surprise. "And why haven't I as good a right as anybody, I should be pleased to know?"

"I suppose there is no law to prevent you from running for office, but you don't know the first thing about military matters. If the company was in line this minute, and you were second lieutenant of it, you couldn't go to your position unless somebody showed you where it was."

"Well, I can learn, can't I?" snapped Randolph. "You didn't know trail arms from right-shoulder shift when you first joined the academy, did you? The company ought to give me that place, for my father has done a heap for it with money and influence. Some who are now recruits held back because they were not able to fit themselves out decently, but father told them that the want of money need not stand in their way. If they would go ahead and enlist, he would see that they had horses, weapons, uniforms and everything else they wanted. He did what he could to promote enlistments instead of preaching up the doctrine that the South is going to be whipped and the slaves all made free."

Rodney knew well enough that this was a slap at his father, but he didn't see how he could resent it, for it was nothing but the truth.

"That's why I say that the company ought to make me an officer," continued Randolph, after a short pause. "I know you are all right, for I heard how you stood up for the Confederacy while you were at school, and I'll tell you what I'll do with you: If you will give me

your vote for second lieutenant, I'll do what I can to have you elected third sergeant. The other places are spoken for."

"I am very much obliged to you," replied Rodney.

"Is it a bargain?"

"Not much. I'll not vote for a man to be placed over me unless he knows more than I do."

"Perhaps you want a commission yourself," said Randolph, with something like a sneer.

"No, I don't. I never thought of such a thing."

"Because if you do, I want to tell you that you can't get it," continued Randolph. "Your father hasn't done half as much for the company as he might have done, and the boys don't like the way he talks."

"Then let's see the boys help themselves," answered Rodney, as he placed his foot in the stirrup and swung himself into the saddle. "Time will show who is willing to do the most for the success of the Confederacy, your father or mine."

So saying he put the roan colt into a gallop and set out for home.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RANGERS ELECT OFFICERS.

When Rodney had left the village of Mooreville half a mile or so behind him, he threw the reins loose upon his horse's neck, thrust his hands deep into his pockets and thought over the conversation he had had with Tom Randolph. He had warned his cousin Marcy that the North Carolina people would be sure to turn the cold shoulder upon him on account of his Union principles, and now it seemed to Rodney that he was in pretty near the same predicament because his father believed and said that the seven seceding States, with two and a half millions of free persons, could not whip the loyal states and territories with twenty-five millions.

"It serves me just right," was Rodney's mental reflection. "I persecuted Marcy on account of his opinions, and now I am going to have a little of the same kind of treatment. No one but a red-hot secessionist has got any business in this part of the country."

When Rodney reached home he found his father there and supper waiting for him. He did not mention Tom Randolph's name, but he spent a good deal of time in thinking about him, and wondered how he would fare if Tom succeeded in winning the coveted commission. There were many ways in which a lieutenant could torment his subordinates, and Tom would be just mean enough to use all the power the law allowed him.

"I'll not take a thing to-morrow, even if it is offered to me," was the resolution Rodney made before he went to sleep that night. "I'll go out as a private and come back as a private, unless I can win promotion in the face of the enemy. Time makes all things right, and we'll see who will come out at the top of the heap—Tom Randolph or I."

The next morning about eight o'clock, Rodney seated himself in the carriage with his father and mother and was driven to the camp of the Rangers. It presented more of a holiday appearance now than

it did the first time he saw it, for it had been cleaned up and decorated in honor of the occasion. The little grove in which the tents were pitched was thronged with visitors, the Rangers were out in full force and there was a good deal of "logrolling" going on. All the candidates had ballots prepared, and Rodney had scarcely set his foot on the ground before he was surrounded by a little group of recruits, all of whom were anxious to serve the Confederacy in the capacity of officers.

"We've got you down for third sergeant," said one. "We've arranged to push you for that position if you will vote for me for orderly and for Randolph for second lieutenant."

"Find out who the other candidates are before you make any promises," exclaimed another; and then, when no one was observing his movements, the speaker gave Rodney a wink and a nod which the latter could not fail to understand. He drew off on one side and the recruit, whose hands were full of ballots, went on to say:

"Randolph doesn't stand the ghost of a chance for the second lieutenancy, and he has good cheek to ask the boys to give it to him. He thinks he is going to run the company because his father has done so much for it."

"And he thinks he and his friends are going to keep me in the background because my father has done so little for it," added Rodney.

"Well, they can't do it, and they will find it out when the thing is put to the test. You have a military education and Randolph hasn't. That's one thing against him, and his overwhelming self-conceit is another. You are rather young to look for a commission in a company of men, but you will come in for the orderly sergeant's berth sure as shooting."

"I am obliged to those who suggested me for that place, but I'll not take it," said Rodney very decidedly. "I enlisted for a soldier."

"Well, what in the name of sense do you call the orderly?"

"I call him a clerk," answered Rodney.

"Why, I thought he was drill-master."