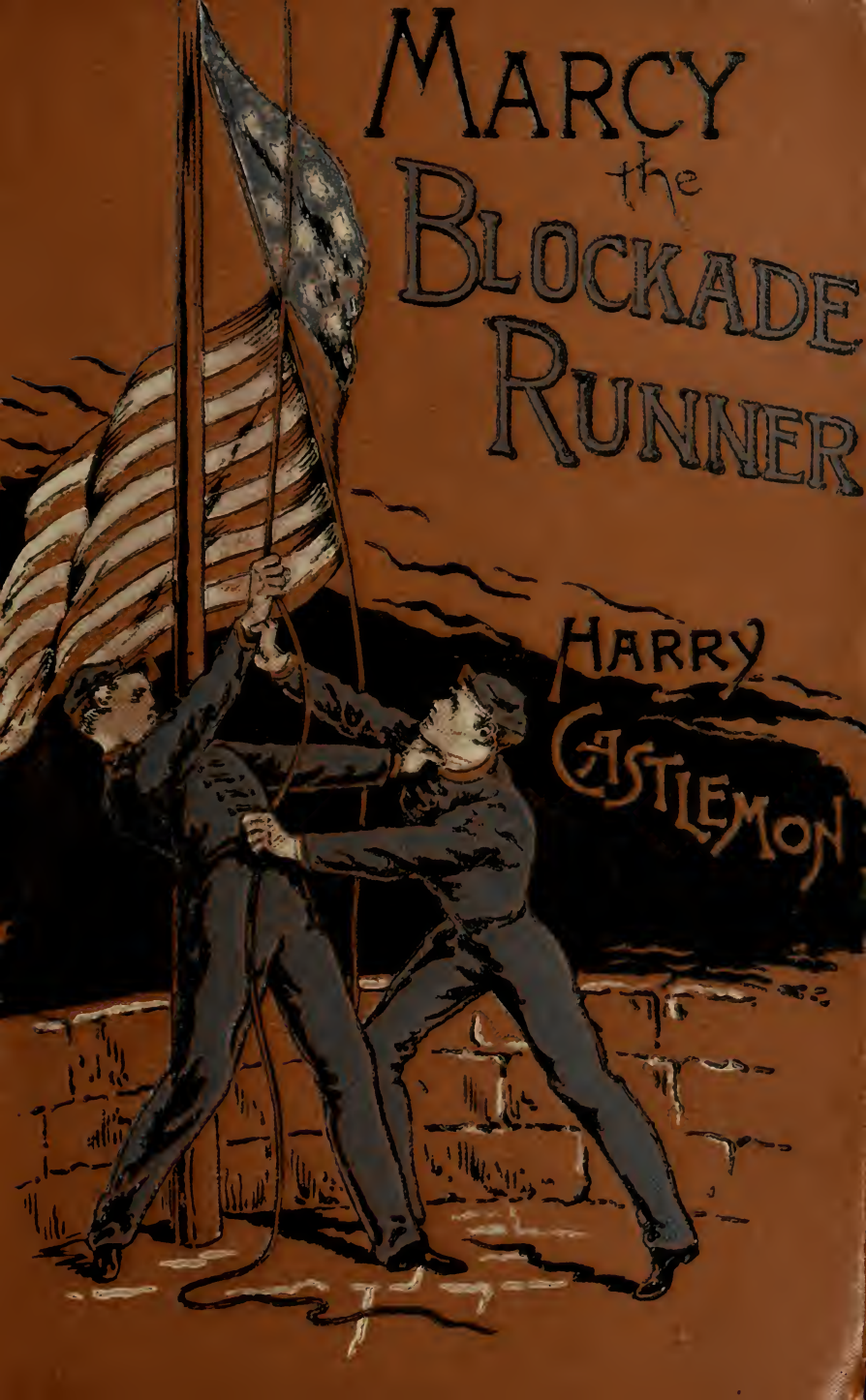


MARCY
the
BLOCKADE
RUNNER

HARRY
CASTLEMAN





MARCY AND THE OVERSEER.

CASTLEMON'S WAR SERIES.

MARCY
THE
BLOCKADE-RUNNER

BY
HARRY CASTLEMON,
AUTHOR OF "GUNBOAT SERIES," "ROCKY MOUNTAIN SERIES,"
"SPORTSMAN'S CLUB SERIES," ETC., ETC.

Four Illustrations by Geo. G. White.



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MARCY, THE BLOCKADE-RUNNER.

CHAPTER I.

MARCY HAS A VISITOR.

THE boys who have read the first volume of this series of books, in which we followed the fortunes of our Union hero, Marcy Gray, and described the persevering but unsuccessful efforts he made to be true to his colors in deed as well as in spirit, will remember that we left him at his home near Nashville, North Carolina, enjoying a brief respite from the work he so heartily detested, that of privateering. He had made one voyage in the *Osprey* under Captain Beardsley, during which he assisted in capturing the schooner *Mary Hollins*, bound from Havana to Boston with an assorted cargo. When the prize was brought into the port of Newbern the whole town went wild with ex-

citement, Captain Beardsley's agent being so highly elated that he urged the master of the *Osprey* to run out at once and try his luck again, before the capture of the *Hollins* became known at the North. But Beardsley, who was afraid to trust landsharks any farther than he could see them, declared with a good deal of earnestness that he would not budge an inch until the legality of the capture had been settled by the courts, the vessel and cargo sold, and the dollars that belonged to him and his crew were planked down in their two hands. Knowing that it would take time to go through all these formalities, Marcy Gray asked for a leave of absence, which Beardsley granted according to promise, and in less than half an hour after the *Osprey* was hauled alongside the wharf, her disgusted young pilot, wishing from the bottom of his heart that she might sink out of sight before he ever saw her again, left her and went home as fast as the cars could take him. When we last saw him he had reached his mother's house, and was reading a letter from his cousin, *Rodney, the Partisan*, a portion of

which we gave to the reader at the close of the first volume of this series.

“Rodney is full of enthusiasm, isn’t he?” exclaimed Marcy, when he had finished reading the letter. “He says he looks for ‘high old times’ running the Yankees out of Missouri, but I am afraid he’ll not enjoy them as much as he thinks he will. Perhaps the Yankees are not good runners. But Rodney has been true to his colors and I have not. I said I never would fight against the Union, but I have stood by and seen a gun fired at the old flag; and I have no doubt that the skipper of the *Hollins*, when he saw me aboard the privateer, took me for as good a rebel as there was in the crew. Perhaps he will see his mistake some day. I shall have to accept my share of the prize money, for if I don’t Beardsley’s suspicions will be aroused; but I’ll put it away and send it to the master of the *Hollins* the first good chance I get. Has Wat Gifford been here since I went to sea? You know he warned me of two secret enemies I would have to look out for, and hinted that he would some day tell me who the rest are.” [“But I think

I know already," added Marcy mentally.] While he was at sea he had had ample leisure to think over the situation, and had made up his mind that he knew right where the most serious danger that threatened him and his mother was coming from.

"Walter has been here," replied Mrs. Gray, "and I understand that he has since gone back to the army, his furlough, which was a short one, having expired. I was glad to see Walter, for it was a very great relief to visit with some one to whom I knew I could talk freely; but I must say he left a very unpleasant impression on my mind. He told me, in so many words, that we are suspected of being traitors at heart, and that there are but few of our neighbors we can trust."

"And who are they?" inquired Marcy. "When we know who our friends are, it will be no trouble for us to pick out our enemies."

"I asked Walter that very question, and after some hesitation he was obliged to confess that he could not name a single person. There are some who denounce secession in the

very strongest terms, but that doesn't prove anything, for Walter has often done the same thing himself, and he is a rebel soldier," said Mrs. Gray sadly. "Only think of it, Marcy! To not one of the many who were our warm friends in times past, can we go for advice and sympathy, now that trouble is coming upon us. Is it not dreadful?"

"Who cares for advice or sympathy?" exclaimed the boy wrathfully. "We've got each other and Jack to go to when the pinch comes, and outsiders can just mind their own business and live to themselves, and let us do the same. Traitors! That word doesn't apply to us, mother."

"I know it doesn't; but for all that I am afraid that the 'outsiders,' as you call them, will not let us live to ourselves. Young Gifford almost as good as told me that some of our near neighbors intend to keep themselves posted in regard to our movements."

"The—the impudence of the thing!" exclaimed the young pilot, pounding his knees with his clenched hands. "Who's going to keep them posted? Where do they expect

to get their information? Through the overseer?"

"Through the overseer," whispered Mrs. Gray, in reply.

"Are you afraid to speak the words out loud?" cried Marcy, who had seldom been so excited as he was at that moment. "Great Moses! Have things come to such a pass that we dare not talk in our ordinary tones in our own house, but must carry on our conversation in whispers?"

"I was in hopes that my letters would prepare you for something like this," said his mother slowly.

"Well, they didn't. Of course I knew I should find things changed, but I never thought we should be spied upon in our own house," answered Marcy. "Traitors, are we, when we haven't done the first thing to deserve the name! But is there no way in which that villain Hanson can be got rid of?"

"There is but one way that occurs to me now," was the reply. "When his contract expires we can tell him that we do not intend to employ an overseer any longer."

“And that will be almost a year from now,” groaned Marcy. “How can we live for so many months, knowing all the while that our every movement is watched, and that some one is constantly trying to catch every word we say? I don’t believe I can stand it. Did Gifford say anything about——”

Marcy paused, got upon his feet, and opened quickly, but silently, one after another, all the doors that led from the room in which he and his mother were sitting. There were no eavesdroppers among the servants *yet*, but that was no sign that there wouldn’t be some to-morrow or next day. An overseer who was left as much to himself as Hanson was, held great power in his hands; and some negro servants are as open to bribery as some white people are. Having made sure that there was no one listening at the door, Marcy drew his chair close to his mother’s side before he spoke again.

“Did Gifford say anything about the money—the thirty thousand dollars in gold you have hidden in the cellar wall?” he asked, in suppressed tones.

“He did, and it troubles me more than anything else he said during his visit,” replied Mrs. Gray, glancing nervously around the room, as if she feared that there might be a listener concealed behind some of the chairs or under the sofa. “In spite of my utmost care, that matter, which I hoped to keep from the knowledge of even the most faithful among the servants, has become known. I cannot account for it. It fairly unnerves me to think of it, for it suggests a most alarming possibility.”

“Did Gifford say, in so many words, that you were known to have money in the house?”

“He did not. He said it was suspected.”

“And what is the alarming possibility you just spoke of?” continued Marcy.

“Why, I am afraid that there is some trusted person nearer to me than the overseer is—some one right here in the house who has been watching me day and night,” answered his mother, shivering all over and drawing nearer to her sturdy son, as if for protection. “You don’t know how it makes me feel, or

how keenly I have suffered since young Gifford's visit."

"I wish he had stopped away," said Marcy, almost fiercely.

"I don't," replied his mother. "He meant it for the best, and wouldn't have told me a word if I had not insisted. You must not blame Walter. It is best that I should understand the situation; and Marcy, you know *you* would not have told me a word of all this if Gifford had told it to you."

"Perhaps he did say something to me about it," answered the boy, with an air which said that his mother had not been telling him anything he did not know before. "But I have been more careful of your feelings than Gifford was."

"And did you mean to leave me all in the dark and utterly ignorant of the perils that surround us?" said Mrs. Gray reproachfully. "Do you think that would have been just to me? Don't imagine, because you are my protector and the only one I have to depend on while Jack is at sea, that you have all the courage there is between us. I know you

would shield me entirely if you could, but it is impossible; and you must let me bear my part. I shall have to whether you consent or not. But you haven't yet told me where you have been, how you captured that vessel, what the captain said about it, or—or anything," she added, with a feeble attempt to bring the boy's usual smile back to his face. "Remember, I am deeply interested in all that you do."

"Well, you wouldn't be if you had seen the cowardly work I helped Beardsley carry out," replied Marcy. "In the first place, Crooked Inlet is buoyed in such a way that the stranger who tries to go through it will run his vessel so hard and fast aground that she will be likely to stay there until the waves make an end of her, or the shifting sands of the bar bury her out of sight."

"That's murderous," exclaimed Mrs. Gray, with a shudder. "Is Captain Beardsley about to turn wrecker?"

"He means to wreck any war vessel that may give chase to his schooner," answered Marcy. "If we are pursued, I can take the *Osprey* through all right; but if the man-of-