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Came In the Beginning

By RUTH GRAHAM

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* During the middle of the last cen tury, when the old plantation system was an institution in the southern states, there were customs which have now become a thing of the past Alnoug the most notable of these was settling disputes accurding to the code

In the north at the opening of the century the sacrifice of one of the most gifted of American statesmen. Alexander Hamilton, gave dueling its quietus. In the south it lasted much longer. In Tennessee long after the Hamflton-Burr tragedy Andrew Jack son fought under the code. It remain ed for a girl to show the people of that state by a few caustic words now far the world had gone beyond a custom advocated by one no less notable than a president of the United States.

It was shortly after the Mexican war that Miss Belle Conway went to Ten nessee from Ohio to take the position of governess in the family of Colonel Rathbone, a retired planter. That was before it became customary for young ladies to earn their own living. Miss Conway had been educated in Connectleut-western girls and boys usually went east in those days for an educa tion-and had evinced a superior mind She had not long returned from school when her father died, leaving his fam ily without an income: There was then a field in the south for teachers. and northern graduates were sought

Miss Conway was comely, but not beautiful. She possessed character. and it showed itself in her personnel Character in her was allied with good sense. She was more self reliant than most of the southern girls of that day, whose intellectual and practical faculties were not readily developed under system wherein their slightest requirements were attended to by their servants

Miss Conway was treated as a mem ber of the Rathbone family, and where they were invited she was invited. She did not capture those she met as some dazzling southern beauty would have done in the north, but from the first there was a steady growth in her fa vor. Girls of her own age were not jealous of her; they rather admired her for the possession of those traits which they did not possess themselves, for with them beauty and coquetry were more in keeping with their sur roundings than intellect. As for the young men, they saw in her something different from that to which they had been accustomed and were gradually attracted to it

Fortunately there was no son Colonel Rathbone of an age to fall in love with the governess. The man who was most thrown with her was Archibald Dabney, who had recently returned from the University of Vir lighta, where he had studied law, rather with a view to using it in political life than as a profession. Mr Dabney was just the man to be attracted to such a girl as Miss Conway. White she was northern born and bred, he was representative of the best there

Mr. Dabney found Miss Conwas companionable. He loved to talk with her-express his opinions to her and get bers. While be did not realize it was magnifying his views on many subjects, and this is doubtless a reason why he found her interesting. for he had that caliber of brain which is capable of development and could recognize a better position than one he held and step up on to it. Neverthe less, as a typical southerner born and bred under the peculinr systems then gue in the south, be could not step over that gulf of ideas which separated bim from a progressive

Mr. Dabney's pleasant intellectual companionship with Miss Conway rereived a sudden shock. A planter, Markland Carr, a few years older than Dabner, a widower who was looking for a wife, saw her and, benefiting by the experience of a married man, was struck with the idea that Miss Conway was exactly the woman be wanted to preside over his household. He straight way began a courtship as a widower would naturally conduct such an affair. He did not dally, and he did not make undue baste; he planted his foot firmly on each step and, when he considered it advisable, took another step.

The moment Mr. Dabney realized Mr. Carr's intentions a great revolution sprang up within him. It had suddenly been revealed to him that he could not spare Miss Conway. His manner to ward her changed at once. From an ininto friendliness, and from friendli became tender. Indeed, considering the he felt that he had no time to lose.

Both suitors were prevented from making a declaration by the fact that they met with no definite encourage ment from the lady. Mr. Dabney was uncertain: Mr. Carr did not recognize a sign indicating an invitation to speak Each suspected the other's intentions and each supposed that the reason he between persons of prominence in the did not get the requisite encouragement south. The custom died as it had died was that the other had the preference. In the north. But Dabney after a time All this made the usual bad blood renewed his suit with success

that exists between rivals. Unfortu nately, Mr. Dabney was just enfering the field of politics as a Whig, and Mr. Carr had for some time been a prontinent Democrat. The election that land with Mexico in the presidency wa coming on Carr supported Lewis Case and Dabney entered the field for Zas ary Taylor. There was nothing in this to antagonize the rivals, but, both want ing the same woman, it belped to do so

One evening at a social club where politics was being discussed Daimey cast an aspersion on Carr's motives in supporting his candidate, and Cargave blin the He.

in those days to call a man a that was to receive a blow in return, Bu these two men understood each other both knowing that Dabney's aspersion upon Carr's political status was a noti fication to him that if he wanted Miss Conway be must fight for her, not with his fists, but with the weapon com monly used among gentlemen in thosedays, a Derringer pistol. Dabner mad-

no reply to Carr calling him a liar, but later sent a friend to him demanding retraction and an apology for the lu suit. Carr refused either to retract or apologize, and a meeting was arranged between the two men

The political discussion that had tak en pince between her two sulters and the insuit one had given the other soon came to the ears of Belle Conway, for it was public property. Indeed, at was commented upon by every newspaper in the county No one but the principals in the affair knew the real cause of the difficulty behind the one that was put forward to the world. There was no mention in the journals of a probable duel between the two men, but there was an expectation of one.

Miss Conway saw a mention of the trouble in print, but had no idea of its purport. She neither realized that so slight an affair would lead two men to try to kill each other nor had the faintest suspicion that she was the real cause of it. She could not understand how so gentlemanlike a person as Dabney could accuse another gentleman of impure motives or how the other could fling back the accusation in a way she considered fitted only for a rowdy Nevertheless she knew enough of southern customs to realize that no gentleman there could call another a liar without serious consequences.

During the morning a carriage was driven up to Colonel Rathbone's bouse. and a lady alighted. A few minutes later a colored servant came to Miss Conway, who was at work with the children, and said:

"Missy Belle, Missus Dabney down in de parlo' and wants to see yo' right

Miss Conway looked at the messenger with astonishment. Why should the mother of Archibald Dabney wish to see her and so hurriedly? Leaving the children and their lessons, she went at once to the parlor. There she found the caller evidently moved by a great

"Miss Conway," said the latter, "are so' aware of the cause underlying this quarrel between my son and Mr. Ca'?" "I am aware of no cause except a political difference."

"That is merely a pretext To are the real cause"

"Yes, yo' Had yo' shown a prefer ance fo' one or the other this onfo'tu nate affair would not have occurred." "Why is it so unfortunate?" asked Mbs Conway anxiously

"My son and Mr. Ca' are going to tight a due!"

"Fight a duel? When-where?" "I don't know."

"I must see these men, and together I will decide between them at once. It would be impossible for liss Conway to see them together. There was but one way for her to act in the mat

ter. Mrs. Dubney promised to find out if possible when and where the affair was to take place, and Miss Conway was to be there and make an effort to

The pext morning at sunrise in an open space in a wood near Murfrees boro, while seconds were pacing off the ground for their principals to fight on, a carriage containing Miss Conway drove up, and the lady stepped out She was greeted with astonishment by

"Gentlemen," she said, "you men of the south are men of bonor. As such I ask to know if I in any way enter into the cause of this affair. The question was received in silence

'I have the word of one whom peither of you would question that it I had shown a decided preference for either of you this affair would not have occurred off my informant is correct and you will drop this quarrel I will decide between you."

Though there was no reply it was evident that both principals assented to the proposition

"Do you promise?" asked Miss Con

Both men bowed an assent. "Very well. I would not on any account ally myself with either one of two men who would fight for me in stend of making me the sole arbites

She turned and re-entered her car

Neither of the men helped ber into each giving way to the other. When the lady had gone Dabney said to

"Mr. Carr, as the aggressor in this quarrel I feel it incumbent upon me to recall what I said to you at the It was subsequently appdpinced that

explanations and apologies had passed between Messrs, Dabney and Carr. After this affair there were no duels

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