

## Some Florida Incidents

BY MRS.  
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### "To Die With Boots On."

The title of this paper is ambiguous, but the expression is so identical with accident, violence and personal combat that it particularly attracts individual interest.

The fact that one dies with his "boots on" implies unnatural causes, and we are shocked because of the uppermost desire in the heart of man to live, and the law of self-preservation is so dominant, that we wonder what strange forces are involved in the taking of human life.

The desperate alternative of homicide has its palliatives, and the secretiveness of suicide seems to sanctify the deed; for love and sympathy is aroused for one so indifferent to the laws of existence, and in charity we fear to impugn the motive.

These occurrences are daily, and will continue to be so as long as human passions prevail. But for that order of custom known as the "duel" one can but feel indignation, and disregarding all other situations I shall only write of those wherein a man fights to vindicate his honor, a resort to teach good manners and punish slander, and society has never determined that such law was indispensable, or more honored in the breach than observance.

Men are not always wrong who quarrel, and there are offenses for which there can be no forgiveness; but the alternative of wiping out the stain with human blood is, doubtless, horrible, but such was the tyranny of custom that actually in the long ago a code of laws for the regulation of personal encounter or arbitration, were compiled, which were studied and practiced as a necessity. Duelling was not a modern expedient. The ancient classics tell of many desperate encounters in single combat, but these were generally trials sinew and muscle, and, though seemingly more brutal, the natural forces brought in to test seemed to palliate and equalize conditions—so with the sword, battle axe, spear and other instruments of warfare. But the more modern pistol, how much more quick and undeviating in its fearful work!

The Vendetta is said to be of Vala-ree origin, but it was the Knights of Tara in the Lex Pugnandi of thirty-six commandants, who made the life of a human being as nothing in the settlement of personal difficulties, against which civil law is not entirely adequate, for the most noble-hearted and strong minded, and whose courage is above suspicion, yield to this arbitrary rule of satisfaction, as vide the course and sacrifice of the great and gifted Hamilton.

So it has been, and may be again, that society may be shocked and startled by other duels?

Very early in life I was familiarized with the facts of several personal encounters.

Florida was newly Americanized, but its people were representatives of older localities, whence they had come with new plans in life but bringing with them old prejudices, pro and con.

Commerce had little to do with these "pastures new" in choice—but the impetus was a rush from crowds or severe climate, or that ambition to "grow up" politically with the country.

These people denounced the Bowie knife of the roughs as vulgar, the rapier of the French as frivolous—but the pistol was advocated as the best means of control to society, and the man that referred to the law for protection was stamped as a poltroon. To demand satisfaction made a hero, to refuse, a coward, and this was so much of the atmosphere as to make this a possible truth. Pistols of this hereditary use were preserved as heirlooms; even children were quieted by the promise of these as toys, and the pistol that had killed was preserved and loaned for its distinction.

Education in civilization and refinement has changed all this, and I only offer the following as curios of our

past, remembrances of childhood.

It was Sunday afternoon in the early spring when flowers were blooming, birds singing and love and peace seemed all alive, even in the atmosphere, that I was playing around a recently married couple, when an Indian approached the stoop (now the residence of Judge Whitfield, Tallahassee) offering a basket of early fruit for sale, and Mrs. Campbell was about to bargain for them when her husband said: "Don't buy them for I must leave home tomorrow on urgent business, and I wish you to stay with your uncle's family (that of Gov. Duvals) while I am gone." In twenty-four hours from that time the young husband was brought home dead, killed in a duel, and the wife was told that his death was owing to a fall from a horse, and the facts of the case she did not learn for a year or more, but finally gathered them from an old newspaper, and it was long after that I learned the cause of the duel myself, which was that three brothers (Hambly) had sworn to challenge this man (a lawyer) for advocating the extreme use of the law in a case of prosecution for debt, which result ruined them financially, and the brothers pledged themselves to kill Mr. Campbell in consequence, one failing, the second and third should challenge him to a duel. These brothers were merchants of Magnolia, a town southeast of Tallahassee. The youngest, not married, claimed the privilege of the first encounter, and the result is here stated. The story went that on the morning of the Sunday first referred to. The challenged man accompanied his wife to the church door, and then left her unsuspecting and proceeded to an adjacent forest to practice with the pistol, the wife as unconscious of the contemplated deed as the husband was resolute in preparing for the fatal meeting.

Another time I remember hearing a shot not very far away, on another Sunday morning, it was sharp and quickly followed by two or three more and at the sound, my mother at my side, fell back fainting. Later a wounded man, bloody and weak, was brought into an outer office of the yard accompanied with doctors and friends. I was a little child, not five years old and moreover a delicate girl with curiosity. I mingled with the crowd, straining my little body to catch sight of what I could not understand. Later in life I learned it was a duel fought between a brother of Delegate White and Leigh Reed, the latter demanding satisfaction for remarks made upon his friend, Richard Keith Call, by young White.

The son of the king of Naples, Prince Achille Murat, also fought a duel with Judge Baltzell previous to his seat on the bench. It resulted in the loss of a little finger to the prince. R. K. Call was his second, and to him he said, a few minutes before he took his stand: "I want you to know that I believe in no future," but when death really came, twenty years later, the Catholic priest was at his bedside.

And then there was another duel, the particulars of which I do not remember; but the wife of one of the party, suspecting the absence of her husband, pursued, to find the contenders for honor arrayed face to face. It is enough to say that her precipitation arrested further progress. And there were others, among them one Hackley, a Virginian, rendered helpless for long years of life.

But duelling in Florida ended with the desperate feuds and fights connected with the Alston family, a race of most respectable people, brave, generous-hearted, genial and most high-toned in all respects, wealthy and hospitable. Leigh Reed, who had been a law student of R. K. Call and member of his family, had grown ambitious. Entrusted with high command during the Seminole war by his former friend, in matters con-

nected with the Block House rescue, made for his own excuse and protection certain remarks relative to the directions received from the commander, R. K. Call.

In those days friend fought for friend, and these invidious remarks being addressed to Augustus Alston he resented them and in behalf of his friend, R. K. Call, sent a challenge to Leigh Reed, demanding satisfaction.

It was a chilly, misty morning; the sun itself seemed to shrink away from the direful scene, and men stood apart in groups, silent and solemn, but neither love or law whispered condemnation. Dignified and quiet self-possession on the part of the principals hid all emotion, if any existed.

"Back to back!" And the seconds murmured their fearful directions, and then came the awful order,

"Wheel!" after the regulated steps, and then the count, "One, two, three." But the seconds, aghast counted no more, for Alston had fired and stood hugging his gun to his heart, and Reed, deliberately aiming, sent the ball through the handle of the trigger of his opponent's gun, who fell dead before him.

Even those looking on could not account for it. Colonel Reed had been regarded as a doomed man, not only for his want of skill, but for the noted reputation of his antagonist as a shot. Be that so, there lay the first in rigid death, the other untouched and sorrowful, for impulsively he rushed toward the fallen man. But he was held back, for it did not seem right that he should put his hands on him. Explanations and interpretations followed. It seemed that as Colonel Alston wheeled he lost his balance and did not recover to send his fire, and consequently it went aimlessly into the air. The seconds, astonished, ceased to count, but Reed shot on time, and fatally, and there was no claim of unfairness, as the seconds forgot to count four.

The family of Colonel Alston were so confident of his safety that a great feast had been prepared in recognition of the occasion, and all friends were invited to the adjacent home.

Knowing what the shock would prove, messengers were hurried to carry the unexpected news. The wife swooned, but the sisters refused to believe it, and were only convinced of the fact when the solemn procession approached which bore the dead man to his late home. Doctors were employed to perform miracles, but they could only place the fatal bullet in the hands of the distracted sisters, and with imprecations one of them swore that the same bullet should avenge the brother now so helpless in death.

But subsequently it was claimed that the established laws of the code duello had been violated and assassination was deemed fit for assassination. This is why Col. Reed died with his boots on.

And Col. Reed, what of him? An avenger away in Texas, which was almost a foreign country at that time, had heard of the duel and called it assassination.

He came at once and the first evening of his arrival on entering Brown's hotel, south of the capitol, for supper, Willis Alston recognized Col. Reed at the head of the table and fired upon him at once, more in a spirit of warning than otherwise. Again in seemingly the same spirit he fired upon his carriage within which he and his wife were driving, but this trifling soon ended. Near the corner of Munroe street lived one Ledwith, and on the opposite side of the street were law offices, etc. On an occasion when all seemed peaceful and orderly there issued from one of these Col. Leigh Reed, calmly possessed with his own affairs, when there came from Ledwith's house the fatal bullet that killed Reed, which was supposed to be the same that had killed Augustus Alston and preserved for this purpose, but it entered the unprotected back of its victim, which was deemed scandalous. The shot was fired by Willis Alston concealed, who immediately made his escape to Texas leaving Col. Reed to die after a few hours surrounded by sympathizing friends in the gloom of his law office. Ledwith was indicted as

an accomplice and convicted but after time a petition for pardon signed by citizens so universally as to secure to him peace and respectability—but of Will Alston ask Texas?

### "Woodmar."

E. P. THAGARD

Mr. E. P. Thaggard announces himself a candidate for the office of senator from the 20th senatorial district, made vacant by the removal of Hon. C. M. Brown to Miami.

Mr. Thaggard has been a citizen of Marion county for the past twenty-five years and has led a life that has commended him to the favorable consideration of his fellow citizens. In the year 1898, he was elected tax collector over several popular competitors, and made such an exceptionally fine official that he was re-elected two years later without opposition.

While holding this office Mr. Thaggard became perfectly familiar with our whole system of taxation, which will be of value to him as a legislator and which he promises to use to improve and simplify the system.

We are reminded that the Good Book says that there is a glory of the sun and a glory of the moon and a glory of the stars, and that one star differeth from another star in glory.

"Whatever my gifts are," says Mr. Thaggard, "they are not the gifts of eloquence of speech," and he makes no pretense in that direction, but his friends recognize the fact that he possesses a quick and a level head and the priceless boon of plain common sense which, after all, counts in legislation more than impetuous and fiery eloquence.

It is well known that legislation is now done in committee rooms, and after laws have been digested and agreed upon, the open debates which follow rarely make any change of votes.

Mr. Thaggard is sane, conservative, industrious and methodical, and is capable of making a good senator and has in a very large measure the unbounded confidence of his friends.

Mr. Thaggard is a member of the Baptist church, is a prominent Mason, an Elk, and is prominent in various other secret societies.

### A Famous Seed House.

An incident of commercial development and growth to proportions unusual is cited in the career of the well known firm, D. M. Ferry & Co., of Detroit, Mich. Since its establishment half a century ago, the company following out principles of strict business integrity and building upon unquestionable merit, has steadily grown until the name Ferry's Seeds is now a household word with every planter in the land.

Ferry's seeds are famous for their purity freshness and reliability. The greatest of care is exercised in their growing and selection, and only seeds of the highest possible standard are placed upon the market. Every package has behind it the reputation of a house whose standards are the highest in the trade. A fresh stock, just received from the growers, is carried by dealers everywhere.

All farmers and gardeners ought to have a copy of the 1905 Seed Annual of the Ferry Company. It contains information and suggestions that are invaluable. The annual will be mailed free to anyone addressing D. M. Ferry & Co., Detroit, Mich.

### Show Their Appreciation.

Our new sheriff, Mr. Henry Gordon, was recently the recipient of a handsome watch charm in the shape of a gold medal, upon which is engraved the following testimonial of the esteem in which he is held at his former home: "Presented to Henry Gordon by the City of Dunnellon, for efficient services rendered as marshal." On the reverse side is a very beautifully designed elk's head, the emblem of the Elks lodge, of which he is a member. Mr. Gordon feels justly proud of this gift which was purchased for him under a special resolution of the city council.

To us it is the strangest thing in the world that those who march under the banner of the "Prince of Peace" cry loudest and longest for the armaments, splendors and glories of war.

THE

# VARIETY STORE.

NORTHWEST CORNER COURT HOUSE SQUARE.  
OCALA, FLA.

Our store was opened for business last Saturday, the 18th, and our trade on that day was indeed flattering, and we take this opportunity of thanking our friends for their many kind words of encouragement and for the more substantial way they took to show that they meant what they said, viz: Favoring us with a share of their patronage. Our intention is to sell goods cheaper than any other house in the city—in fact, we GUARANTEE to do this. We promise to divide the amount expended by other merchants for high-priced bookkeepers, and that lost by them on absolutely worthless accounts, with our patrons; our method of doing business for CASH ONLY enables us to do this, and still retain a profit on what we sell.

## ONE PRICE TO ALL.

A feature of the VARIETY STORE will be the special Monday sales. At these sales we propose to sell goods of certain lines at prices below what other merchants buy them for—to prove this ask them. On next

## MONDAY, FEB. 27,

We propose putting on sale (for this day only) one of the prettiest and most complete lines of

## ENAMELWARE

Ever shown in this city. Be sure to come in and see what we have to offer and the prices at which they are to be sold.

## WE'LL SAVE YOU MONEY.

On this sale we will put our entire line of ENAMELWARE which consists of

Gray, Blue and Fancy  
White Lined Goods.

Most of this line is now in display in our window.

THIS IS A GENUINE SALE,

COME AND SEE US,

# THE VARIETY STORE.