



Down the River: or Practical Lessons Under The Code Duello (Library Alabama Classics)

George W. Hooper

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This delightful divertissement is a lampoon of dueling culture set in southeastern Alabama, penned by a cousin of the better known humorist Johnson Jones Hooper. Interestingly George W. Hooper did not identify himself as the author, perhaps for fear that some enterprising duelist would decide he had been personally lampooned and take umbrage.

The main character is a figure familiar in outline to readers of John Gorman Barr, J. J. Hooper, Joseph G. Baldwin, and other practitioners of what is known as the humor of the Old Southwest. This tetchy blowhard is able to find a personal slight in every social circumstance of the most casual nature, to determine the only resolution that could preserve his personal honor is a duel, and then to find elaborate reasons why the affair d'honneur must be postponed indefinitely. The protagonist is accompanied by a Watson-like admirer of comparable wooden-headedness, who admiringly keeps track of all this punctilio—and constantly just barely avoids offending his patron at every turn.

The work ends with the provisions of the real “Code Duello,” which cede nothing to the fiction in sheer ridiculousness.

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