YOUNG AIRMAN ACQUITTED OF RAPE CHARGE

London, Today: What was in a girl's mind when, after a cuddle session in a darkened doorway when a village dance finished, she walked in the moonlight through lonely fields with a young airman?

Girl, Elaine Mary Whalley, swore she meant only to enjoy a platonic stroll with the man whose kisses she had accepted with pleasure. Man, Ronald Rowley, 20, swore that she had accepted more than kisses, that she had consented to certain conduct.

An Ipswich Assizes jury, confronted with the 2 conflicting stories, took 25 minutes to decide that, whatever the intentions, the girl had not been raped that night. They acquitted Rowley.

Vital evidence was that given by a doctor, who said he had found no bruising or other signs of a struggle, to indicate that the girl had resisted Rowley, although his examination of the girl corroborated the fact that there had been intimacy.

After the dance, the girl and Rowley—who had known each other for about 6 months and had kissed before—stood cuddling in a doorway for about 15 minutes. Then they decided to walk to her home, a distance of 7 miles.

On the way, they took a wrong turning, had to cross some fields to get

a wrong turning, had to cross some fields to get back to the main road. In the fields, the girl alleged, Rowley pushed her into a ditch and hit her until she submitted.

He committed one offence, she said, and attempted another. She claimed she pleaded with him: "Have you no pity? You might have if you had sisters of your own."

Rowley's story was that he walked home with the girl at her suggestion. As they crossed a field, he said, she tore her skirt, complained about her feet and suggested they should sit down for a while.

They did so, kissed and cuddled, and certain incidents occurred with her consent.

Judge, summing up, told the jury: "No man against whom a charge of rape is made is ever in greater peril.

"One might guess what was in this young man's mind this night—but what was in the girl's mind? Did she expect a merely platonic midnight walk with this young man?"

As stated, Rowley was acquitted and discharged.

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